

Workshop: Theory of Change

To Understand this Valuable Tool and Get Practice in Creating One

Nonprofits seek change. They see problems and seek to solve them. They know positive change does not just happen. It requires work. But how can they know that the work they plan to do will succeed in bringing about the change they hope to see? That's where a *Theory of Change* comes in, and why funders often require one.

What does it look like?

A *Theory of Change* document is five pages or less and examines a specific program, initiative, or organization. It concisely but carefully describes the problem to be addressed, the goal to be achieved, the context, the basic plan to address the problem, and the set of assumptions that support the idea that this proposed plan will succeed. The heart of it is the set of assumptions, that are carefully examined, tested, and confirmed. A *Theory of Change* is a thorough type of due diligence.

What does the seminar look like?

The seminar is not intended to produce a *Theory of Change* document, but to help participants understand the tool and the processes behind it, and to give them practice in the skills required. It can involve up to 20 participants, usually from several teams. The day-long seminar is typically divided between four segments, each of which includes a presentation of content, practical exercises in breakout groups, and further reporting, review, and discussion.

Topics include:

1. What a *Theory of Change* is, why it is valuable, and how it is used.
2. The process for developing a *Theory of Change* and where it fits into wider planning.
3. How to consider and describe the problem, the goal, the context, and the basic plan.
4. How to uncover and test assumptions.

How to get this seminar?

First, you and Michael discuss and agree on the project. Then:

1. Michael works with the seminar coordinator to confirm details.
 2. Michael leads the one-day event.
 3. After the event Michael provides a *Post-Seminar Memorandum* to help the organization going forward.
- + Standard cost: \$2,500.
 - + Standard timeframe: one month.
 - + The content can also be presented in a two-hour seminar, without practical exercises, for less cost (and less impact).

If this sounds interesting to you, please contact Michael for a no-obligation, initial conversation.



Michael Jaffarian is a consultant to nonprofits, with an emphasis on research. He

served as the executive director of a thriving nonprofit in Singapore, has worked as a professional researcher for 30 years, and has written and published 130+ articles and book contributions in the field. Michael helps nonprofits thrive and change the world!

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