AccessEd & Commonwealth Scholars Training

# Preparing for social impact: strategy planning

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@_AccessEd
#AccessEdTraining

# Welcome to today's workshop

Zoom Housekeeping:

- Please ensure you are **muted** if you are not speaking to the group
- We appreciate if you can keep your camera on for an interactive workshop, but especially for the breakout groups!
- However, if you are having connectivity issues, please try turning off your camera until breakout rooms
- Please use the chat box if you have any questions or require any help as we go.

# AccessEd: Who are we?

- AccessEd is a non-profit organisation committed to supporting postgraduate researchers in their professional development and university access programmes to increase social impact globally.
- AccessEd has expertise working with international students and social enterprises, as well as delivering courses in transferable skills for the 21st century. AccessEd bridges the gap from education to the professional and public sectors.

# Introduction to your trainer

## Ashley Hodges

- Chief Executive, AccessEd
- Has designed, launched and led social impact organisations, such as charity Speakers for Schools and worked for Obama for America
- Expertise in social enterprise projects, community investment programmes and working cross-sector with world-leading corporations and institutions

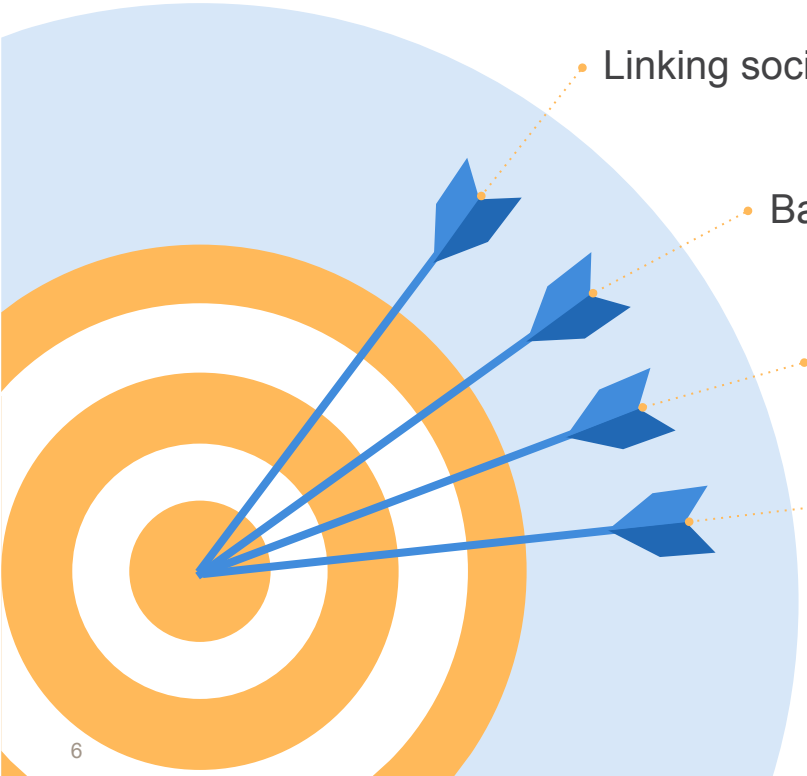
# Why impact strategy planning training?

**This training is good for researchers who:**

- Want to understand how they can think about having future impact even if still formulating their research
- Understand how research can lead to having social impact
- Intend to enter fields related to social, economic and political impact that can improve the lives of others
- Want to discuss their plans and test ideas with peers in this group

# Session learning outcomes

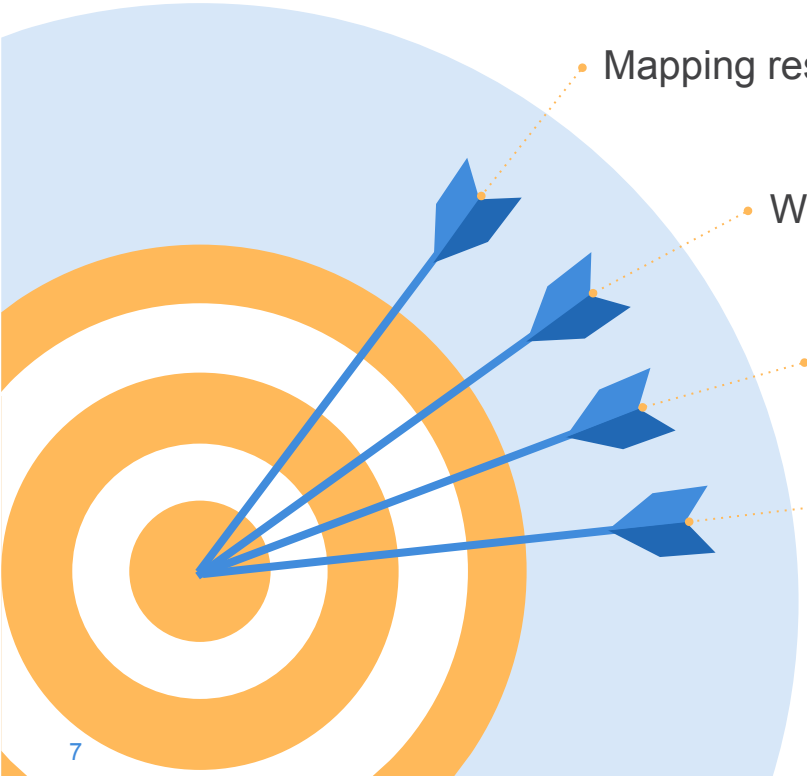
**Understanding of:**



- Linking social impact to the SDGs
- Backwards planning and success factors
- Difference between outputs, outcomes and impact
- Logic models to help map project impact

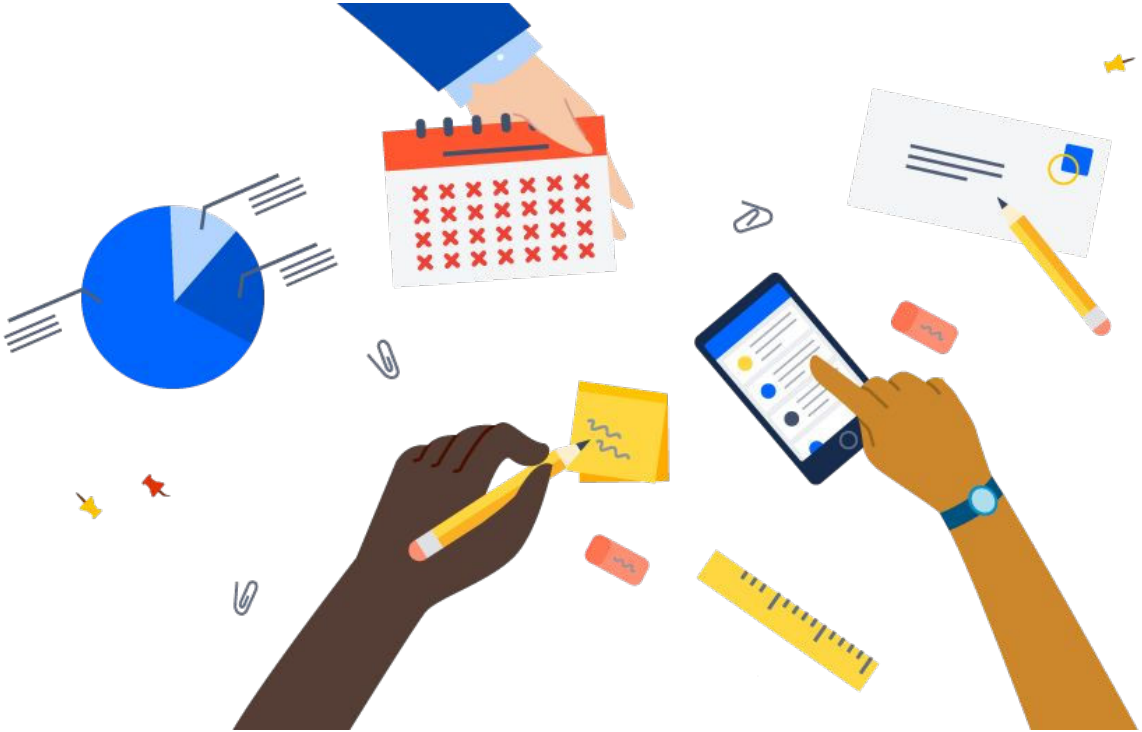
# Session learning outcomes

**Practical experience in:**



- Mapping research to the UN SDGS
- Writing your impact statement
- Backwards planning from Impact Goal to your degree
- Differentiating between project outcomes and impact

# Ice breaker



# Impact

Definitions and impact in your research

# What is research impact?

**Definition:**

***Research impact is broadly defined by Research Councils UK (RCUK) as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy"'.***

For RCUK, impact from research has two main strands, 'academic impact' (or scholarship that influences the academy) and 'economic and societal impact'

# Going beyond academia...

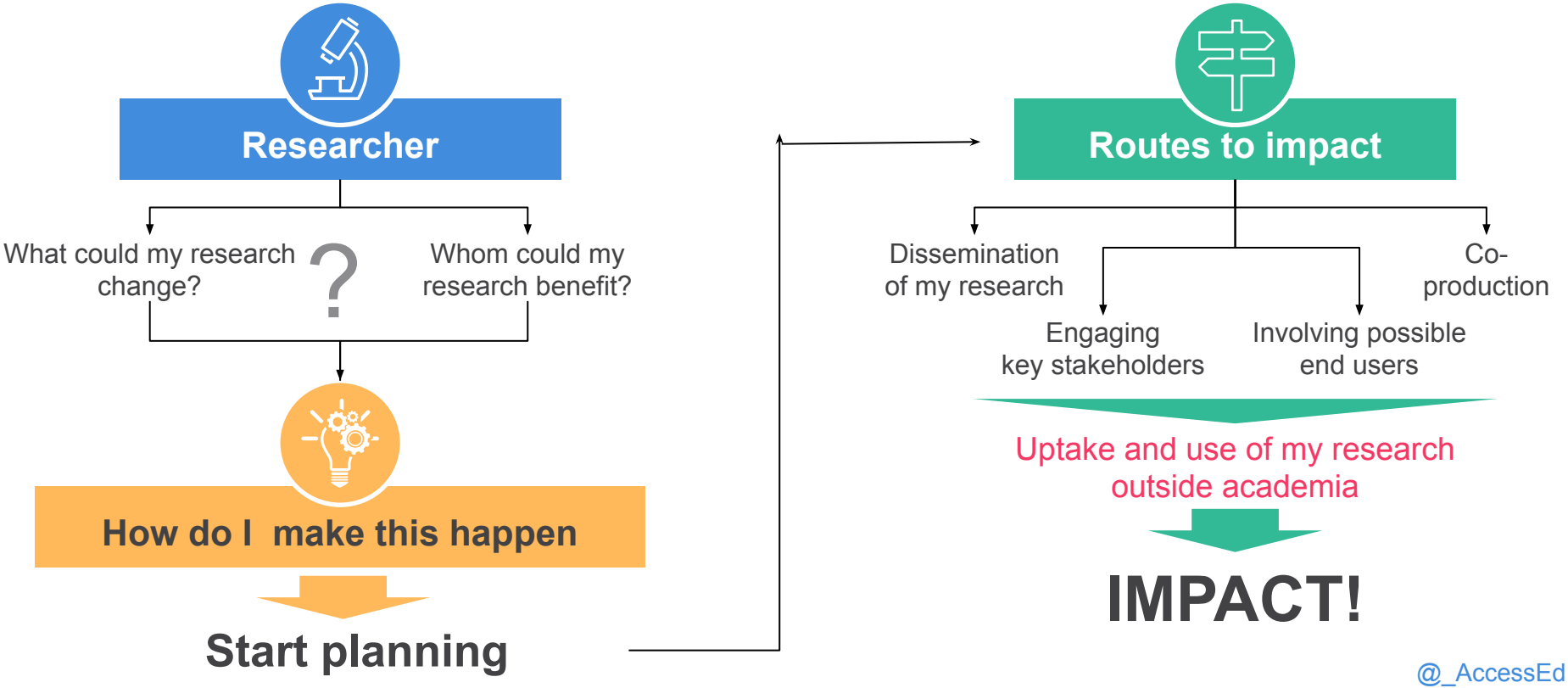
*'It is not enough just to focus on activities and outputs that promote research impact, such as staging a conference or publishing a report. You must be able to provide evidence of research impact, for example, that it has been taken up and used by policy makers, and practitioners, has led to improvements in services or business.' - RCUK*

- **Emphasis on ensuring that impact is made beyond the walls of the university**, beyond contributions to knowledge within academia so that research has some form of effect on, or benefit to the economy, policy, services or quality of life.

# Why does your impact matter?

- Researchers have to demonstrate the impact their research is making in order to either continue to receive funds or to make cases for funding
- It helps narrow how you can amplify or evolve your area of research over time by understanding who it benefits or might in future
- Mapping your impact areas can help you understand potential future jobs, policy areas, organisations and related fields that would be of interest to you
- It could spark a new area of work or a new organisation entirely
- Researchers are at the cutting-edge of human knowledge -- with great power comes great responsibility!

# What does impact look like in the context of research?



# Different types of impact

1. **Instrumental:** influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour
2. **Conceptual:** contributing to understanding, reframing debates
3. **Capacity building:** technical and personal skill development
4. **Culture change and enduring connectivity:** actively building lasting connections between academic and non-academic

# Where does impact research creation come from?

## 1. Responsive impacts

impacts that arise from research conducted in response to an already identified unmet need/problem, e.g. a call for further evidence from a governing body to revise policy.

## 2. Proactively nurtured impacts

**impacts that arise from research that identifies the unmet need/problem. In these instances, stakeholders must be made aware and convinced of the relevance and potential to translate to a benefit of the findings.**

## 4. Passive impacts

impacts that arise serendipitously from research. There is no active engagement with stakeholders and the researcher has very limited or occasionally no knowledge of where, and by whom, their research is being used and the nature of the resulting impact.

## 3. Reputational impacts

impacts that arise where a member of research staff is approached by stakeholder based on their clear track record for impact in a similar field, i.e. the stakeholders seek out the researchers and commission the work.

# Sustainable Development Goals & Millennium Development Goals

https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

# SDGs and researcher impact – what role do you play?

**Researcher education has major role to play in the achievement of SDGs**

- SDGs have become an important framework and inspiration for policy development.
- Investment in research is necessary for the achievement of all the SDGs – e.g. to develop new technologies, inform better policies or to promote societal debates - key to advancing and completing the goals by 2030.
- Great researchers have skills necessary to achieve SDGs such as dealing with ethical dilemmas, assessing potential and risk of new technologies, etc
- It also encourages contributions via cross-disciplinary knowledge!

# Activity: how does your research affect SDGs?

**Group discussion:**

- Which SDG does your research address or fit with?
- What is the impact it would have on the SDG?

# Planning for impact

## Tool 1 - Backwards planning for impact in your field

# Planning for Your Impact

> In planning for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensible
>
> Dwight D. Eisenhower

# Planning for Your Impact

1. **Outline your wider impact goal:** what's the purpose of your research; who does it help? What problem does it solve?
2. **Identify success factors:** These make up your building blocks for your activities
3. **Set long term goals:** These are the broader activities to work towards could see your research make impact
4. **Set short term goals:** These are the building blocks to your long-term goals
5. **Create an action plan for your degree**: Set the activities and timelines of what you want to achieve for your short-term goals

# Step 1 – What's your impact goal?

**Now that you have thought about your link to the SDGs, take a moment to articulate impact you hope to have in your field:**

| What problem are you solving? |
| --- |
| 'Fewer maternal deaths through improved nutritional information by uncovering (insert your research goal)…' |
| 'Change economists awareness of new market models that encourage micro-financing by capturing (insert your research goal)… ' |
| To create an alternative to silicon in electronics by (insert your research goal)… ' |

# Your impact statement

Write an impact statement based on your process

I want to (**impact goal**) by (**research impact**) and (**success factor**). To do this, I will need to (**long-term activity**) through/after (**short term activity**.)

***Example:***

- I want to (*reduce miscarriages in rural areas)* by (*creating improved insights as to the role of minerals and vitamins*) and (*ensuring it is disseminated widely to mothers who are over 12 weeks' pregnant*).
- To do this, I will need to (*have an established profile with health NGOs/be in a delivery role at a health organisation …*) through/after (*funding my additional zinc study/building links with the most international health organisations*.)

# Step 2 – What's required for success?

**Success indicators are the 'vehicle' that makes your research have impact.**

## What will make your impact possible? Examples:

- Disseminating the findings to the public so they can make better decisions
- Support of an institution to change formal requirements or law
- A wider change in how others in your field view the issue
- Creating a proof-of-concept so that people will back you

These might be too big right now, so don't be afraid to start smaller!

# Step 3 - Where do **you** need to be in the long-term?

| What will be key or could be key to ensuring you're in a position to influence success of your research? |
| --- |
| gained a position at the main organisation that deploys this work |
| completed a major project that answers a very specific question |
| developed my profile as a respected academic in this field |
| have a tested prototype of a product and attract funding/partner |

# Stage 4 – Where do you need to be short-term?

| Example of short-term goals to work towards impact: |
| --- |
| Securing a job with a particular role or specific organisation type |
| Attracting funding for a smaller project that builds your data set |
| Exceed expectations in publishing your research |
| Raise your profile through contributing to blogs, events or civil publications |

# Stage 5 – Identify your activities during your degree

| If your goal requires … | You can…. |
| --- | --- |
| Working in a specific sector | Find work experience; networking events; speak to alumni |
| Attracting funding for a project | Attend grant funding workshops; write an impact plan; network; explore who you could partner with to increase interest |
| Raising the profile of your work | write blogs; ask your university how you can contribute to student papers or media outlets; research your conference circuit |
| Improving your academic reputation | give yourself more time to publish; understand the role teaching could play; |

# Tea break

# Breakout room activity

Focusing your objectives: Think about one of your short term goals. What activities do you need to be investing time in during your degree to reach these?

| Short term Goal | Related Activities | What's my next step? |
|---|---|---|
| *e.g. Attract funding from a specific area* | *e.g. Publishing in a new area to show my expertise; attending conferences to meet potential funders; build my profile* | *e.g. sign up to conferences in sector; investigate new outlets to publish that are of interest to these funders; ask the British Council/UKRC* |
| | | |
| | | |

# Impact planning snapshot

| Impact | Success indicator | Long Term | Short term | Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve health equality: Reducing maternal deaths through improved knowledge of zinc | More mother's receiving information to change dietary habits | Be in a role where I can influence public health; Start my own project | Gain experience working with mothers so I understand how research can be used to change outcomes | – Work experience<br>– Volunteering for projects<br>– Raising my profile to interest potential employers |
| Improve wealth equality: Increasing smart investment into micro-financing | Seeing a new wave of micro-financing options taken up | Get my economic model in front of micro-finance companies | Fund my research for two more years to build the model that shows non-agricultural options | – Attend networking events to understand interest<br>– Start to write a business plan<br>– Approach potential partners |
| Improve sustainability and consumption: Reduce reliance on silicon in mobile phones | Seeing an alternative material being used in place of silicon at market level | Be sponsored by a major lab in pro-typing my new solution | Understanding the engineering process so I can refine my research pitch to influence manufacturers | – Work Experience with major companies<br>– Partnering on papers<br>– Attend industry conferences |

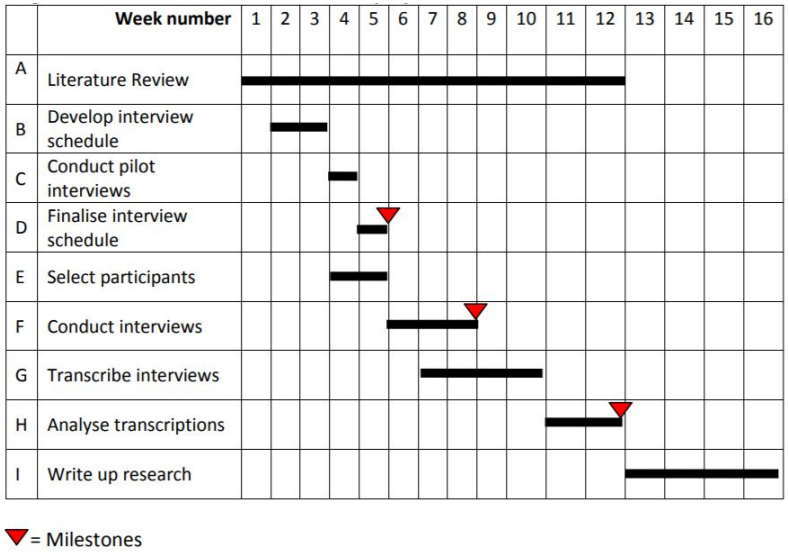
# Managing your plan

- Talk to others about your workload (supervisor, PGRs)
- Set timings by breaking it down into smaller mini-projects.
- Make deadlines, and make them public
- Try to fit the work that you have to do to a specific timeline
- Allow “slippage” time
- Be as realistic as possible!

→ **Research always take 10% longer than you think it will!**

# Managing timelines

## Project plan (A) versus simplified task list (B)




| | Task | Earliest start date (week) | Duration (weeks) | Parallel or sequential | Dependent upon |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Literature Review | 1 | 12 | Parallel | - |
| B | Develop interview schedule | 2 | 2 | Sequential | - |
| C | Conduct pilot interviews | 4 | 1 | Sequential | B |
| D | Finalise interview schedule | 5 | 1 | Sequential | C |
| E | Select participants | 1 | 2 | Parallel | - |
| F | Conduct interviews | 6 | 3 | Sequential | D,E |
| G | Transcribe interviews | 7 | 4 | Parallel | F |
| H | Analyse transcriptions | 11 | 2 | Sequential | G |
| I | Write up research | 13 | 4 | Parallel | A,H |

What can you do if you get knocked off track?

# Planning tips

Remember, your impact planning strategy is iterative. It will change. The process of planning is key in of itself!

# Frameworks for impact

## Tool 2 – Impact planning for a project

# Framework for impact: logic models

**Once you are working towards a project that links to your Impact Goal, you'll need to be able to map it out**

**Logic models:**

1. Helpful tool for planning your approach is to use a logic model.

2. Used by many funders, managers and evaluators of complex interventions to help them plan and evaluate their success

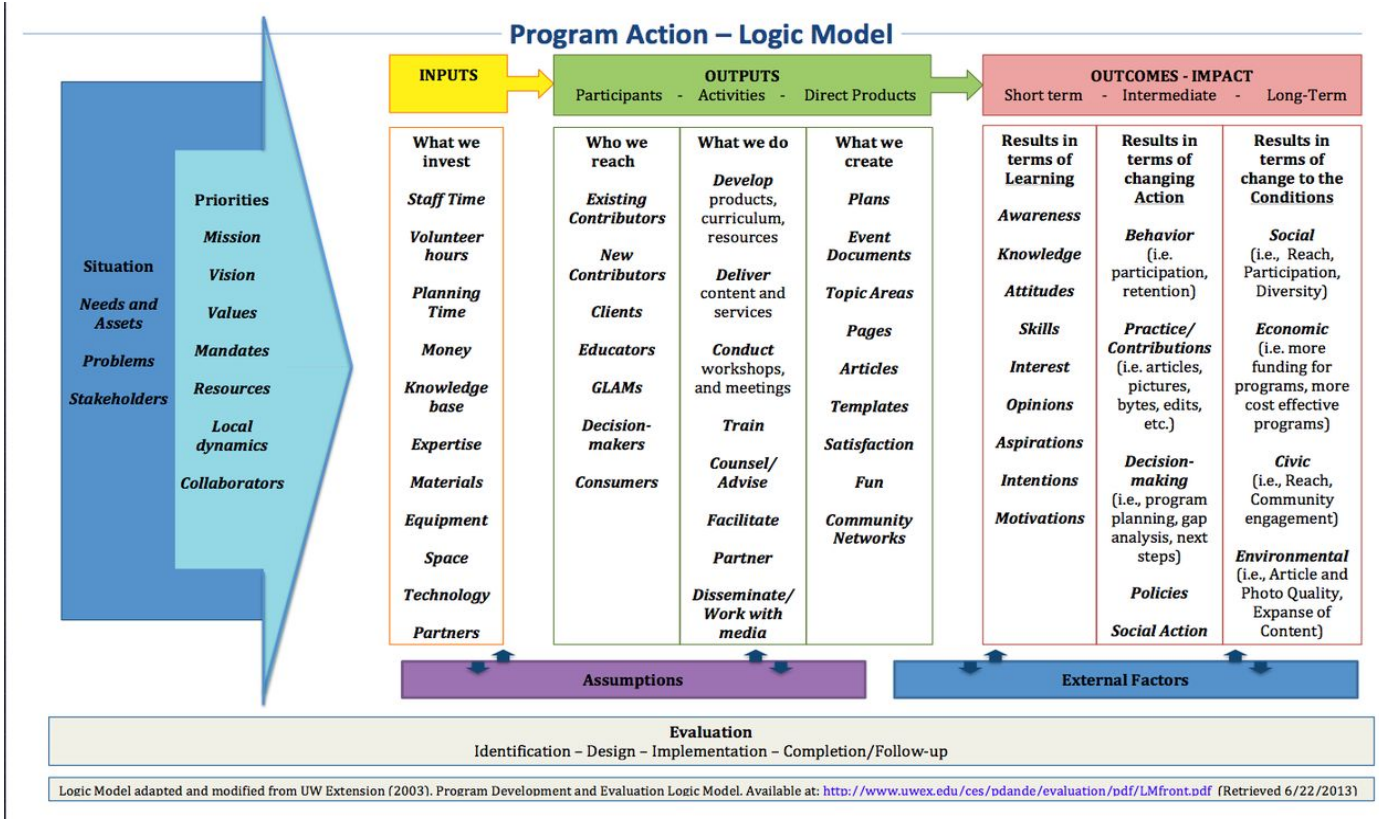
3. Enables you to map your project, considering what you are hoping to achieve, and how you plan to achieve this, and to make your assumptions about change explicit

# Framework for impact: logic models

**Typical logic model will include the following features:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Current situation** | A description of the situation you are trying to change |
| **Aims** | what you hope to achieve |
| **Inputs** | what you will contribute |
| **Activities** | what you are going to do to achieve the aims |
| **Outputs** | what you create |
| **Outcomes** | what happens as a result |
| **Impacts** | what is the long term effect, what problem you are solving |
| **Assumptions** | that you are making in designing your approach |
| **External factors** | that could influence the outcomes of your project |

# Program Action – Logic Model Road map




*Wallace Foundation*

# Outcomes, outputs and impact of research

**Logic models and theory of change focus on Outputs, Outcomes and Impact**

| Outputs – tangible products (give examples related to research) | Outcomes - results of the activity | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| – Online resources including websites; tweets; blogs<br>– Events<br>– Exhibition<br>– Publications including leaflets; articles; reports<br>– Partnerships for projects<br>– Training courses<br>– People e.g. numbers and demographics of participants in the activities | – increased understanding of the topic<br>– Skills development<br>– Attitudinal change<br>– Inspiration and creativity<br>– New experiences | – Conceptual<br>– Instrumental<br>– Capacity building |

Relationship between the three of these

# Framework for impact: logic model activity

Breakout room: Researchers use the logic model thinking to show impact.

Choose a project you are working on or will embark on soon. This could be a research project or a dream project.

Give an example of:
One specific input → output→ outcome → impact

Are there any **assumptions or external factors** are you relying on that mean these will produce impact?

# Learning Portfolio reflections

**Group discussion: what have you learnt in relation to your Learning Portfolio aims?**

- How has this session evolved or changed your thinking on aligning your research and impact to the SDGs?
- What is the lasting legacy you want to have as a CSC Scholar in the next 3 years?



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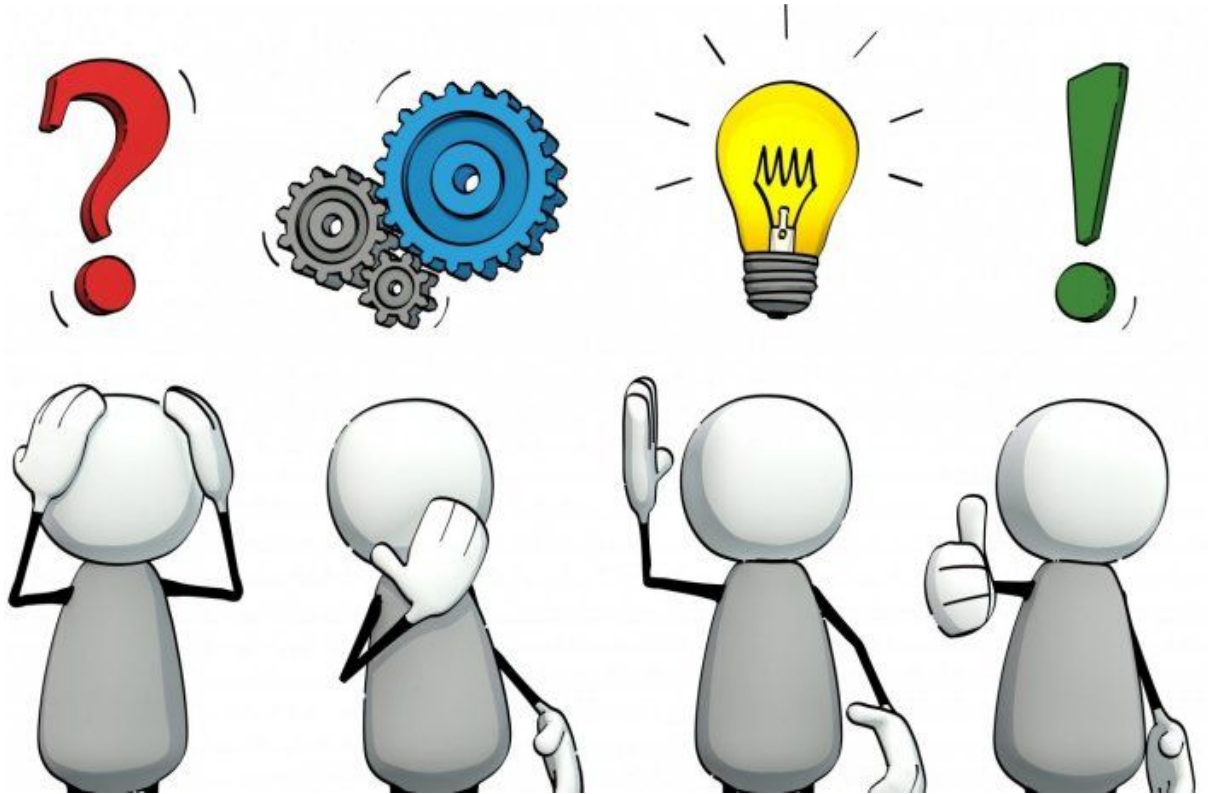
# Interested in more?

**Resources:**

- Researcher Excellence Framework (REF) impact toolkit
- PERT (programme evaluation and review) technique: to help understand likely timelines
- Problem tree: to help refine how your research links to your impact goal

# Reflections



# Thank you & Evaluation form

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