National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

How to…

…develop a strategy for your public engagement support programme

Using logic modelling to develop your plans

Developing a strategy for your support programme

Over the last twelve years the NCCPE has been lucky to work alongside some brilliant individuals and teams, with whom we've built a robust body of knowledge about 'what works' in developing effective, strategic interventions to improve how their institutions support public engagement. Together, we have found that developing a 'change strategy' can really help a small team punch above their weight.

We think there are three key things that a good strategy helps you to achieve:

- To articulate a robust rationale and purpose for the activities you are planning in your change programme.

- To take account of the context in which you work, as this will shape what it is possible to achieve.

- To define success measures to give you clear goals to aim for, help you to judge your progress and share your success.

There are some tried and tested methods to help with strategy development. One example which many public engagement professionals use is a 'theory of change' approach. In particular, they have chosen to use 'logic models' to help them develop effective, strategic implementation plans, and to involve key partners in the process.

Logic models also help you to develop an evaluation plan, and in **another guide** we demonstrate how this can work.

We invited Mary-Clare Hallsworth to develop this guide, and to share how she used a logic model approach to develop a strategy for supporting public engagement at Birkbeck, University of London. This work took part as part of RCUK's SEE-PER programme. Mary-Clare outlines the process step by step, and at the end shares the logic model that she developed at Birkbeck to finesse her support programme.

We hope you find this a really helpful guide, and that you can draw on it to support your own strategy development and planning. You may also find the linked guide to **Evaluating your Culture Change Programme** a useful, complementary publication which also uses a logic model approach.

Paul Manners, NCCPE

For me a logic model is all about activity - what needs to happen and when - whereas a theory of change focuses on why a problem exists and how you might go about trying to change it. Using the approach we've detailed here has enabled me to unpick the complex problem of 'how to embed support for public engagement at Birkbeck', what attitudes and behaviours lead to public engagement not being embedded, and what interventions might be able to change these attitudes and behaviours. I think it all revolves around three key questions: Why is it this way? Can it be changed? And how might this change affect things?

Using this approach has enabled me to map out answers to those theoretical questions and break it down into practical, useful activities which are most likely to create change.

Mary-Clare Hallsworth, Public Engagement Consultant

Why use a theory of change to develop your approach?

A theory of change is a tool to help you describe the need you are trying to address, the changes you want to make (your outcomes), and what you plan to do (your activities). This guide focuses on one particular approach to developing a theory of change – what is often referred to as 'logic modelling'.

This is an approach I used at Birkbeck to develop our strategy for supporting public engagement. It provided an effective way of involving lots of people in planning *how* we expected to achieve change and where to focus our attention for the most effective impacts, while helping us to make our assumptions explicit. It also helped us to then finalise an evaluation plan for our project. A linked **NCCPE guide** covers how to use a logic model to plan your evaluation. In this guide I want to share how I used the approach to develop a strategic plan for our work.

A typical logic model will focus on these areas:

- Context - a description of the situation you are trying to change.
- Resources / inputs – what you will invest to support the planned activity.
- Activities – what you are going to do to achieve the aims.
- Outputs – what you plan to create, usually tangible products.
- Outcomes – the short-term changes you expect to see.
- Impacts – the long-term change you hope to achieve.
- Assumptions – the assumptions you have made in designing your approach.
- External factors – external factors that could influence the outcomes of your project.

Typically, people will use a template like the one below to capture this information, although there are many other frameworks which have been developed. We provide links to some useful resources at the end of this guide.

Logic Model template

Theory of Change Template

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes	Impacts

Assumptions

So what are outputs, outcomes and impacts?

Before working through the process I followed, it is worth clarifying terms.

Outputs are usually tangible products, and as such are relatively easy to capture. Examples of outputs for a support programme might include:

- Public engagement award scheme operational.
- Promotion criteria for all grades now include public engagement.
- Performance review paper work references public engagement.
- A published definition of public engagement.

Outcomes are the results of the activity and could be described as immediate impacts. Impacts relate to longer term change. Typical **outcomes** for a support programme might include:

- Greater awareness amongst staff about what public engagement means and confidence in the agreed definition.
- Staff make use of strategy and definition in informing their PE work.
- Senior staff champion engagement in key meetings, and tackle areas where engagement is not supported well.
- The quality of public engagement activity increases, due to effective evaluation and support.

In thinking about longer term **impacts**, it can be helpful to categorise these into three types:

- **Conceptual impacts**: changes in knowledge, understanding, attitude, or awareness. For instance:

    o A robust, shared understanding of Public Engagement.
    o Staff recognise the value of public engagement to the university.

- **Instrumental impacts**: changes to policies, behaviour or practices,

    For instance:
    o Additional funding is secured to support high quality public engagement with research.
    o Engaged staff are rewarded for their engagement work alongside their research and teaching work.
    o More effective engagement leads to mutually beneficial impacts that are captured through evaluation.

- **Capacity building impacts**: development of skills to do engagement well.

    For instance:
    o Larger numbers of staff offer leadership for engagement, across all levels of the institution
    o Partnerships with key organisations enhance the work of the university, as well as delivering value to the partners involved

Steps to building a logic model

Developing a logic model, or a broader theory of change, takes time and commitment to the process. It is important to know who will be leading the work, and to identify the people who need to be engaged in the process. It is important to involve people who you will rely on to help you deliver the resulting programme of work.

Plan in time for research, workshops, conversations, writing, and thinking time.

It is an iterative process so you may find it useful to revisit steps as you work on it and it may go through multiple versions.

It can help to start at the end – thinking about the long-term impacts you want to achieve, then work backwards to identify the previous steps you'll need to get there. This was the approach we followed at Birkbeck.

To help you to 'tune in' to what a completed logic model might look like for a culture change programme I have provided a worked example below.

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes	Impacts
Staff costs	Staff responsible for PE hired	Institutional approval for hiring staff	There is investment in PE expertise	Public Engagement forms part of the institutional strategy	Public engagement is prioritised in the institution's official mission and in other key strategies, with success indicators identified. It is a key consideration in strategic developments in the institution.
Staff time	Staff briefings to include PE	Allocated resources	Leaders at all levels take responsibility for PE	Staff are recognised and rewarded for the value their public engagement work brings to the university	
Funding for seed funds, awards costs, training	Awards for public engagement	Job descriptions for public engagement professional	PE expertise is integrated into institutional decision making	Opportunities to develop PE skills through training are offered, including evaluation	
Advisory group time	Seed funding for public engagement	Job description for public engagement champion/s	A 'bank' of staff rewarded for their PE work through awards, funding, increased publicity or through formal promotions/ performance mechanisms.	Peer-to-peer networks exist for staff to support each other's PER practice	All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement and are encouraged to do so.
Other people's time (trainers; consultants; publics)	Training for PE skills	Case studies of PE from within the institution		Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding PE	
Institution facilities and resources	1:1 support and advice for researchers on their PE	Communications/ blog posts and announcements celebrating PE work		Researchers have a clear understanding of where to go to get support for PE	
Events venues		Promotions/ performance criteria which include PE			

Assumptions
The university values PE as a key part in their success for REF, KEF, TEF and the civic university agreement.
Resources are available for hiring of staff

1. Agree long term impact

In the example above I identified two long-term impacts which you might recognise from the NCCPE's EDGE tool:

- Public engagement is prioritised in the institution's official mission and in other key strategies, with success indicators identified. It is a key consideration in strategic developments in the institution.

- All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement and are encouraged to do so.

Agreeing some ambitious high level goals is a great place to start. What are the key priorities of the institution and how can your change programme work to support these? In developing these, make sure you involve key decision makers that can champion change and enable the process.

With culture change projects, the 'ultimate goal' you'll likely be working towards is embedding support for public engagement within your institution or department. What this embedded support actually looks like, and where change needs to happen to get there, will be unique to your context. Logic modelling can help you address this in a systematic way.

2. Long-term outcomes – what changes need to happen to achieve the impact you want?

Working backwards from your impacts, think about what changes need to happen in order to achieve them. What barriers will you need to tackle? What will help you tackle these?

The **EDGE tool** (and **mini EDGE Tools**) provide a great place to start, because they highlight the kinds of practical interventions that you can make. If you have used the EDGE tool already, this will provide useful evidence and insight to inform which outcomes you prioritise, for instance by identifying areas where your institution is under-performing which you might want to prioritise.

You might also find our guide, **'A culture change indicator bank'**, a useful source of inspiration. In it we list a range of indicators that you might use to evaluate your progress, and provide concrete evidence that change is happening.

3. Intermediate outcomes

Next, work backwards again and add more detail to the proceeding stages needed to achieve your long-term changes. For example, to achieve the long-term outcome 'public engagement forms part of the institutional strategy', the preceding stages may include:

- o Recruiting public engagement expertise
- o Leaders at all levels take formal responsibility for public engagement
- o Public engagement expertise is integrated into institutional decision-making processes

Think about how these outcomes relate to each other, arrange them so you can see the order in which they will occur. Is there anything else that you need to do to make those changes happen?

4. Activities

'Activities' invites you to think about what you need to <u>do</u> to ensure your outcomes. It is easy to come up with lots of ideas for activities (and this is often where people start), but try to make sure they are connected to the outcomes you want to achieve. For example, to achieve the outcome 'Public engagement expertise is integrated into institutional decision-making processes', the activity might be:

- Recruit public engagement expertise.

It can be easy to get carried away with wanting to do interesting activities (e.g. why don't we do a film festival?) but make sure to sense check: will that activity help you achieve your outcomes? If the answer is no, move on.

5. Outputs

'Outputs' invites you to describe what your activities will actually deliver – the tangible products. As activities and outputs are intrinsically linked, you might find it easier to tackle these together. It's also worth emphasising that you would expect to have several attempts at working out the links between the different areas of the theory of change – progressively refining your model.

Here's an example of how an outcome, activity and outputs might be linked in your theory of change:

- **Outcome**: Investment in public engagement expertise
- **Activity**: Recruit public engagement team
- **Potential Outputs**
  - o Business case for recruitment
  - o Institutional approval for hiring staff
  - o Allocated resources
  - o Job description for public engagement professional
  - o Job description for public engagement champion

Some of your outputs and outcomes will need collaboration across departments or need input from other services. Public engagement teams tend to be small, with limited resources, and so having productive working relationships with other parts of your institution will be critical to your success. Make sure you highlight these dependencies as part of your logic model.

If you are creating a logic model for an existing project, rather than starting from scratch with a new plan, this can be a good opportunity to think about how well your current outputs and activities are delivering your anticipated outcomes. Plotting this out can be a really useful tool for working out if any of your activities need revision.

6. Assumptions and context

Throughout the process you should be thinking about the assumptions you are making whilst developing your plans. Challenge yourself and your colleagues to keep reflecting on **why** they are committed to a particular course of action and why they think it is important. These assumptions will need to be tested as you begin to deliver your plans. For instance, you might be working on the assumption that colleagues will be highly motivated by the Research Excellence Framework, and so choose to focus your services on supporting them to develop impact case studies featuring public engagement. What evidence do you have to back up that assumption?

Your **context** will also have a huge influence on what you can achieve and where it is sensible to focus your efforts. For instance, if your university has chosen to prioritise 'civic' engagement in its new strategy, then this might be a useful hook for you to exploit in the activities you deliver. If it is about to enter a new strategy-setting process, then you might want to focus on ensuring public engagement is foregrounded in those conversations. There may be other risks or dependencies which will affect what you will be able to achieve – spelling these out is really important, and a logic model invites you to do just that.

7. Timelines and resources

Finally, a key part of the development process is to factor in timelines and budget, and to describe the resources (or inputs) that will need to be invested to make things happen. This is a vital reality check. Consider the resources you will need to deliver those activities, including budget, numbers of staff, staff time, and skill level, and your ideal timeline. You may find that you only need significant staff input or funding at critical points so you can plan to distribute your resources around those areas, perhaps taking on freelance help or secondments. These inputs might be very tangible (like a dedicated budget, or staff roles) but might also include less tangible things like the support of key individuals or networks.

You may find that the resources available to you do not match what you need, in which case you may need to re-think the scale of your interventions. Alternatively, you might use your logic model as a starting point for internal discussions about increased investment.

Involving colleagues

It is important to involve colleagues in these conversations. In developing the logic model at Birkbeck, I ran several sessions. During a kick off meeting, which included some key academics and colleagues from professional services, I introduced the approach and used the wall to create a mock-up template. We used post-it notes to begin building a shared model. This allowed us to work iteratively, sharpening our goals for the work, and focusing down on the essential activities we would need to make the changes we wanted to see. I then wrote this up to create a first draft. Subsequent meetings allowed me to involve other people in the process, and to finesse the details. I also shared the draft with colleagues working in other institutions, to get their feedback and advice.

Logic models are often criticised for being too simplistic, and for failing to reflect the complexity of real life where things rarely happen in a predictable, linear way. This is a valid criticism - but as a tool for developing a 'theory' or hypothesis about what you want to change and how best to go about achieving that change, they can be really powerful. By involving other people in the process, you can build a robust, shared understanding of *why* your planned project is important, and agree on sensible activities to get you moving in the right direction.

Inspire me!

We provide a 'worked example' of a logic model below. This is the logic model I created at Birkbeck over a period of several months. Creating this proved invaluable, helping me to set a clear direction of travel for our work, get significant buy in from colleagues, and to develop a very effective plan of action

You can also review the **logic model** prepared by the PE team as St Andrews. They used a spreadsheet to lay out the finished logic model.

There are lots of guides to using a theory of change approach online. We would recommend the following as a good place to start:

- Creating your Theory of Change: NPC's practical **guide**

What next?

Your completed logic model will be an invaluable tool. It will help you explain your strategy – what you are prioritising and why, and what success will look like.

It also provides a robust framework to develop an implementation plan – to translate the 'theory' into action. The Delivering your Support Programme section of our website guides you through this process.

In particular, your logic model will provide you with the basis for an evaluation strategy. Our **How to Evaluate your Support Programme** guide shows how you can use a logic model to underpin a robust evaluation plan.

For ideas of indicators that you might use to evidence your progress, take a look at our **Culture Change Indicator Bank**

It also provides you with the basis for a business plan to secure the investment you need, based on a robust logic and with benefits clearly spelt out. Our '**Develop your Business plan**' guide explains how.

Exemplar logic model

Included below is the logic model prepared by the Public Engagement team at Birkbeck College as part of their SEE-PER project. You will notice that the team chose to also include a list of internal and external risks, to capture the key contextual factors that might influence the project. You can access **Birkbeck's final project report** to see how the project worked out in practice.

Inputs/Resources

Public Engagement Manager (1FTE)
Public Engagement Coordinator (1FTE)
Public Engagement Evaluator (0.6FTE)
Public Engagement Champion (BRED project PI – 0.2FTE)
Project working Group
Project strands – broader teams
Events Assistant in Corporate Comms
Experienced engaged researchers at Bath
Support from School Deans, Impact Officer
Links with other areas of Birkbeck
- Birkbeck Graduate Research School
- Development and Alumni
- Communications
- Web Team
Existing good practice
Funding:
- Six months RCUK funding
- £25000 Wellcome funding
- College match funding to Wellcome and BRED

Activities

Strategic influence
Influence on the University Strategy
Influencing school level and departmental level strategies
Seeking opportunities for building community/non-academic relationships
Infrastructure
Establish infrastructure and procedures for assessing and granting seed funds –(reconcile these with current Wellcome seed funds).
Develop a systematic approach for the new PE team to respond to researchers seeking advice and guidance on PE and its evaluation
Reward and Recognition for engagement
Annual showcase to celebrate and encourage public engagement with research
Raising Awareness and Supporting Researchers
Review and refresh of Birkbeck's Public Engagement webpages
Coordinate across known Birkbeck networks and contacts to highlight potential opportunities and platforms for PE
Meetings with Deans and appropriate fora
Training courses for PhD students and academic staff
Development of Birkbeck-focussed case studies
Development of resources to support engaged research
Coaching and facilitating researchers
Evaluation
Establish procedures and mechanism for monitoring progress of BRED aims

Outputs

Strategic influence
Clear messages throughout the university about what is public engagement with research
Infrastructure
Seed funding guidelines
A series of funded projects with embedded evaluation
A collection of projects to call on for public engagement case studies

Reward and Recognition for engagement
Prize-winners with funds for further engagement with their research
Raising Awareness and Supporting Researchers
Good practice guides and case studies
Internal web presence
Training programme for PG and academic researchers and associated resources
A set of engaged researchers who are able to site public engagement achievements in their professional development
Evaluation
Best practice reports or reflective blog posts
Reliable data to influence further planning

Outcomes

Short-term 1-3 years
The focus here is on establishing the need for infrastructure
Strategic influence
- All senior managers recognise the importance of PER and support the culture change
-The team is given sufficient resources to continue sustainably
- We have strong working relationships with other professional service departments to embed engaged research in practice
- Birkbeck have strengthened and built new relationships with communities, audiences and practitioners
Reward and Recognition for engagement
Staff applying from all Schools and departments for public engagement awards
Raising Awareness and Supporting Researchers
- All staff think that Birkbeck values PER and believes it to be important
Staff and students use available opportunities to gain, develop and build PER skills, and encourage others to do so
- Increased involvement of researchers with the PER team and improvement in quality of interactions
Evaluation
- We have an enhanced external reputation for engaged research
- External organisations know how to access research at Birkbeck

Medium-term 3-5 years
- Departments have implemented engaged research strategies
- Engaged research committed to in our strategic plans and communications
- Collaborations are built across the College and good practice/learning and evaluations are shared
- We have new ways of working with publics as resources/inputs for research and beneficiaries and new research methods commonly employed
- Societal understanding of what research happens at Birkbeck
- Researchers have time and money for engaged research through external and internal research funding
- We are doing better at securing funding as a consequence of engagement and the support of the PER team
- Birkbeck provides a range of opportunities for engaged research, e.g. access to festivals, joint projects
- Evaluation is standard practice as part of the engaged research process

Impacts

Long-term 7+ years
- Birkbeck has a presence/vision for engagement across London
- The College is known for its high quality engaged research in certain fields
- We have strong partnerships with local and regional communities
- Impact is implicit in what we do
- Our culture encourages, tracks, evaluates, rewards and recognises engaged research
- Staff and students at the College seek to engage and collaborate with broad publics in research, learning and teaching
- Increasing quality of research and research proposals
-Increased motivation and engagement of UGs and PGs
- There is a sustainable Public Engagement presence within the College support services
- We can easily provide evidence of the impact of our engaged research
- All new academic appointments and chairs include aspects of and expectations of engaged research practice

Assumptions

Being an Engaged University is beneficial to the Birkbeck, University of London, the community and businesses.
We have an ability to influence at a strategic level
There is sufficient capacity and interest in the local community and publics at different levels to engage with Birkbeck research
Funding is available for engagement with research, from multiple sources including Research Councils, Learned Societies etc., but acknowledge that this is a moving target
Establishing infrastructure will enable the PER team to have enough of an impact on the Birkbeck research culture in the short time frame to evidence the need for the team.
Current and future policy encourages public engagement with research and the desired culture change
HEFCE and RCUK (now the Office for Students and UKRI) continue to push the PER and impact agenda
We have time and resource to commit to the project and capacity to deliver, and access to other funding sources
We are going to add to our good practice and not break it
There will be a mixed response to change
We have people who are prepared to be 'case studies' for the College and best practice more widely
We have an awareness of what is going on elsewhere and access to new information and learning

Internal Risks/Factors

Limited capacity of a small core team and potential end of the PER team after the end of the RCUK 1 year grant
Confusion between the impact and public engagement agendas
Perception of engagement as divorced from research and an additional workload or tick-box exercise
Competing agendas and pressures on departments and individuals reducing desire and capacity to conduct engaged research
If we engage badly we could damage the reputation of our research
Don't succeed in bringing in extra funding for engaged research
Minimal evaluation of activities, so can't gauge quality, capture learning nor share and improve
Lack of support from the broad academic community who don't see benefits or relevance to research

External Risks/Factors

A decrease in support (verbal and financial) from funders due to adverse economic climate
BIS reduces support for engagement if seen as 'education' and not skills essential for research
Links of public engagement to REF, TEF and KEF not clear or well established by funders
That we miss opportunities and aren't on track with global trends
Competitor institutions are moving forward with public engagement, so we need to keep apace or in front