# Theory of Change Guide
# No. 4 : Activities and Inputs

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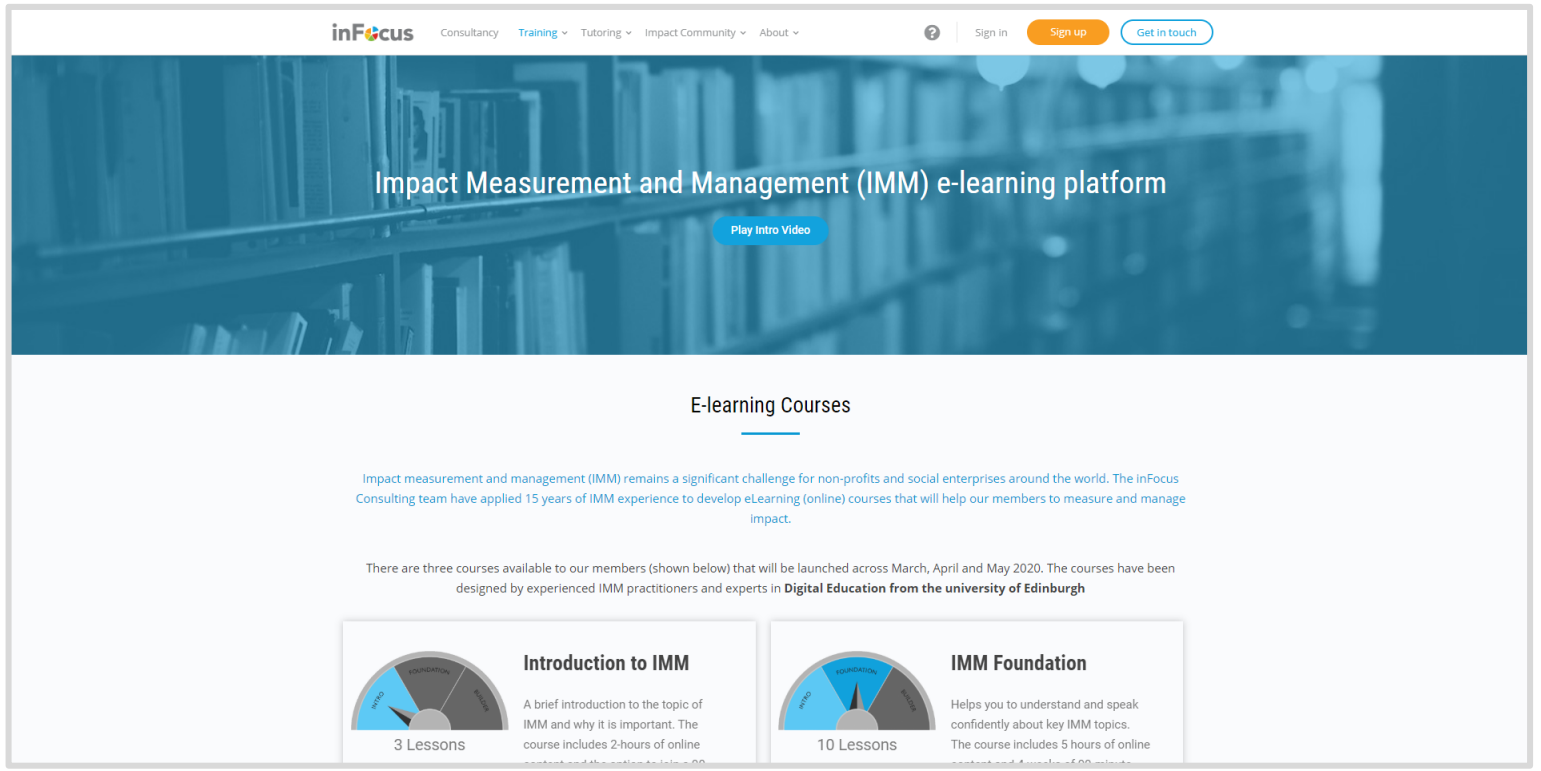
# Introduction

This guide forms part of the inFocus Impact Measurement and Management (IMM) eLearning course (https://impactinfocus.com/e-learning/). This is one of a series of five guides that each look at how to develop each section of a theory of change.

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# *When to develop* 'Activities and Inputs'

We map out activities after the outcomes pathway as this helps to identify to what extent services and products contribute towards outcomes, and where the work of other stakeholders fits in.

## 1. Situation

### Problem

The social or environmental problem or challenge that the organisation is seeking to address

### Target Audience

The target audience that will be directly supported by the organisation's services or products

### Stakeholders

The stakeholders that can influence the problem positively, or negatively

## 3. Outcomes pathway

Outcomes are the changes needed from the organisation and in the wider system for the impact to take place. These are often called preconditions, as they relate to the conditions required for the outcomes or impact to occur.

## 2. Impact

Impact refers to the longest-term social or environmental change that your service or product contributes to in your local and wider social context.

## 4. Activities and Inputs

The specific activities that are directed towards bringing about outcomes and impact through a service or product. This could also include activities of partner organisations. These are mapped against the outcomes or outcomes pathway to identify any missing outcomes and the extent to which organisations are contributing to impact.

## 5. Assumptions

Assumptions explore existing beliefs about how the theory of change works.

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*What* are 'Activities and Inputs'

## What are activities and inputs?

**Activities** are the specific activities that are directed towards bringing about outcomes and impact through a service or product. This could also include activities of partner organisations. These are mapped against the outcomes or outcomes pathway to identify any missing outcomes and the extent to which organisations are contributing to impact.

For example, **inclusivEd** uses two main activities:

**eLearning courses and online resources** to help teachers to take a more inclusive approach in lesson planning and delivery

**On-site live training** for teachers and school management on how to take a more inclusive approach in lesson planning and delivery

**Inputs** are the resources that go into the running of the activities. Examples from InclusivEd follow below:

**Inputs** include our staff time and expertise, the eLearning site, and teaching resources

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*Why* develop 'Activities and Inputs'

## Why develop activities?

- Activities are important to telling the story of a theory of change and how a service or product leads to outcomes and impact.
- Mapping activities can help to identify gaps in your activities or outcomes, for instance, if a key activity appears to be underrepresented within your outcome pathway or certain changes are unaccounted for by your activities.
- Mapping activities helps to identify to what extent and by what means you are contributing to the outcomes you have identified in the outcomes pathways. This is often called *attribution*, the degree to which you are contributing to the changes in the theory of change: *´an assessment of how much of the outcome was caused by the contribution of other organisations or people…it shows the part of deadweight for which you have better information and where you can attribute outcomes to other people and organisations´ (SROI network)*
- Up to this point we have been focusing on outcomes, which refer to the changes brought about by our activities, mapping activities also helps to define *output indicators* which help to measure the organisations engagement through its programmes and the immediate results of your activities (e.g. attendance of participants in activities).

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*How* to develop 'Activities and Inputs'

## How to map activities?

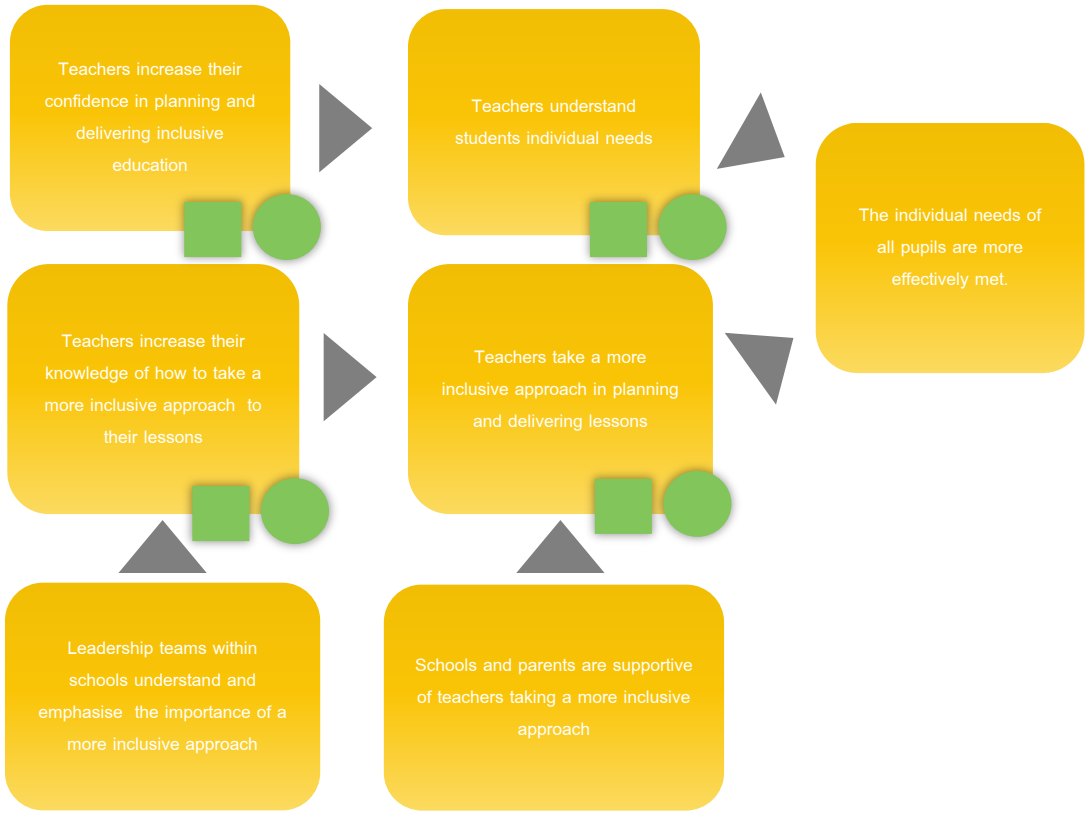
In addition to describing activities, it can be helpful to map your activities from your services and products against outcomes. This can help to identify the extent to which you are contributing to the outcomes in your theory of change.

### **Step 1 –** List your activities

**eLearning courses and online resources** to help teachers to take a more inclusive approach in lesson planning and delivery

**On-site live training** for teachers and school management on how to take a more inclusive approach in lesson planning and delivery

### **Step 2 –** Map activities against outcomes




### **Step 3 –** Identify any gaps where there are no activities against outcomes and decide as a group if the gaps need to be addressed