# Theory of Change: A thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes

## Description

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IÃ±igo Retolaza Eguren, HIVOS/DD/UNDP, May 2011 Available as pdf.

â??This guide has been jointly published by Hivos and UNDP, and is aimed at the rich constellation of actors linked to processes of social development and change: bilateral donors, community leaders, political and social leaders, NGOâ??s representatives, community-base organizations, social movements, public decision makers, and other actors related to social change processes.

The Theory of Change approach applied to social change processes represents a thinking-action alternative to other more rigid planning approaches and logics. When living in complex and conflictive times, we need to count with more flexible instruments that allow us to plan and monitor our actions in uncertain, emergent, and complex contexts from a flexible and non-rigid logic. As known, this thinking-action approach is also applied to institutional coaching processes and to the design of social development and change programs.

In general terms, the Guide synthesizes the core of the methodological contents and steps that are developed in a Theory of Change design workshop. The first part of the Guide describes some theoretical elements to consider when designing a Theory of Change applied to social change processes. The second part describes the basic methodological steps to develop in every design of a Theory of Change. For reinforcing this practical part, a workshop route is included, illustrating the dynamics in a workshop of this kind.

The approach and contents of the guide emerge from the learning synthesis of the author, IÃ±igo Retolaza, as facilitator of Theory of Change design processes where social change actors from several Latin American countries have been involved. His two main bodies of experience and knowledge are: (i) the learning space offered by Hivos, where he could facilitate several Theory of Change workshops with Hivos partner organisations in South and Central America, and (ii) his professional relation with the Democratic Dialogue Regional Project of UNDP, from a research-action approach around dialogic processes applied to various areas of the socio-political field: national dialogues on public policy making and adjusting and legislative proposals, facilitation of national and regional dialogue spaces on several issues, capacity building on dialogue for social and political leaders from several countries in the regionâ?•

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