



The
IGUANA Project
Improving Education Together

IGUANA LEARNING PROGRAMME ASSIGNMENT

MODULE	Organisational Intelligence
ASSIGNMENT	1: Theory of Change
VERSION	1
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About this Document

This document sets out an assignment which is intended to help IGUANA users apply what they have learned from the Organisational Intelligence (OI) self-assessment and learning programme to address challenges and support innovation in their own school.

This particular Assignment covers: “Developing and applying a ‘Theory of Change’ “

The Situation

Members of the school governing body have completed the Organisational Intelligence self-assessment process.

Following a review meeting to discuss the results of the self-assessment, the governing body identify areas of improvement for the school.

They decide to develop a two year Innovation Plan for their school. This Plan will focus on the improvement areas they have identified.

They have a vision and a set of expectations about what will be the outcomes for their school at the end of the two year plan.

They want to put this vision into a framework so they can have a clear representation of where they are going, how they will get there and how they can assess how far the school has travelled along its 'change journey'.

The Assignment

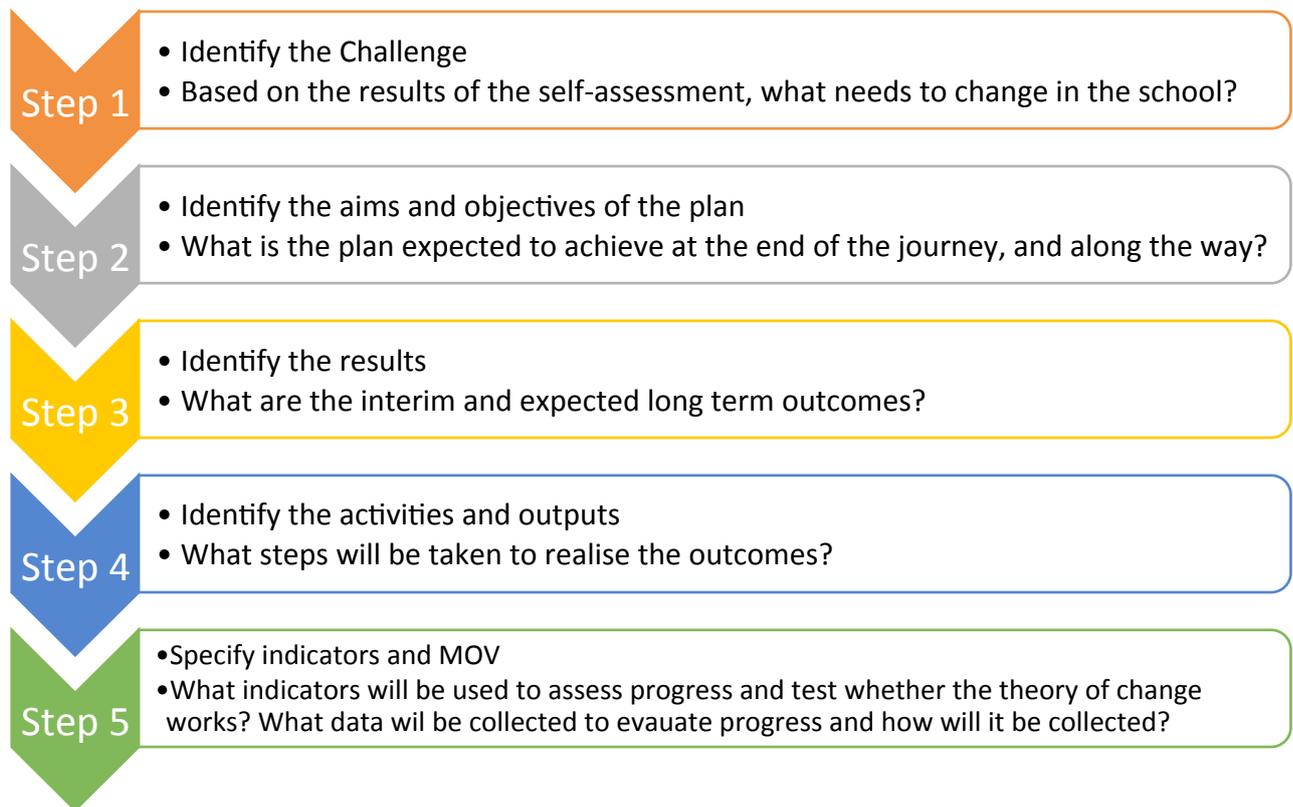
Develop a 'theory of change' that will feed into the school's Innovation Plan.

Link the theory of change to a logical framework so that the complete Theory of Change specifies:

- The 'problem' that needs to be changed
- The underlying factors that 'cause' the problem
- The 'model of action' that is expected to 'solve' the problem
- The objectives that are expected to be carried out to solve the problem
- The activities to implement the objectives
- The short-term outcomes that are expected to happen as a result of implementing the objectives
- The longer-term impacts that are expected to happen through the continued achievement of these outcomes
- The indicators used to measure the outcomes and impacts
- The 'means of verification' (the evaluation methods and tools used to collect data for the indicators)
- The 'assumptions' that need to be in place if the theory is to work

Doing the Assignment

Doing the Assignment entails putting the flesh to the 'bones' of the above specification. It entails five main steps:



STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE CHALLENGE

From the results of the self- assessment carried out in your school, and from any discussions you have had about the outcomes of the self-assessment, write down in the space below the problem or problems your Innovation Plan will aim to address.

The problem(s) our Innovation Plan will address are:

Now write down in the space below the **causes** of the problem. Identifying the causes of the problem is important as this will help to clarify the step-by-step changes you want to see implemented in the Innovation Plan. For example, you may have identified the problem that needs to be addressed as “The level of staff absences is too high”. Your theory of why this is the case could be “Staff absences are too high because of the high level of stress in the work environment” and then your theory of how stress levels could be reduced might be “Designate a dedicated time every week for an external holistic therapist to come into the school. Assign an empty classroom at this time as a ‘pop-up’ space for aromatherapy. Invite staff to drop in for a therapy session”.

The causes of the problem(s) are:

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The main problem or problems you are addressing should be reflected in their long-term resolution – the long-term aim of the innovation plan. This is the starting point for your theory of change. Summarise this long term aim in a clear statement in the space below. This statement should describe the broad difference – change – the plan is intended to realise. Taking the above example, this might be: “Our long term aim is to reduce the level of staff absences in the school”.

The long-term aim of our Innovation Plan is:

You then need to work back from this long term aim to think about the changes - specific objectives - that your Innovation Plan needs to bring about in order to achieve this long term aim. Try to think of all the specific areas that might need to change. Taking our example further, these might include:

the school environment - e.g. to improve the design of the workspace

attitudes – e.g. to support the staff in feeling good about themselves

behaviours – e.g. to increase stress-avoidance behaviours by staff

skills and competences – e.g. improve the emotional intelligence of staff

organisational change – e.g. to restructure the timetable to allow for pop-up therapies

The specific objectives of the Innovation Plan are:

STEP 3: MAPPING RESULTS

Once you have identified your long term aims and specific objectives, the next step is to work backwards from each objective. Take each specific objective in turn and think about the changes needed to achieve it. You need to think about the **assumptions** behind each specific objective - what needs to happen for this objective to be realised? To continue with our example, one specific outcome might be “To support the staff in feeling good about themselves”. To achieve this specific objective could require:

- staff having a better understanding of what causes them to feel not good enough
- staff having more competences in personal confidence development
- a change in organisational systems and practice to enable staff to explore their feelings without fear of being labelled or victimised

Once you have identified outcomes, you can begin to work out the order in which they need to occur. For each outcome, you need to think: what change is necessary to make this outcome happen? How does this outcome relate to other outcomes? By going through this process, you can map the **change pathways** in your theory of change and in the Innovation Plan. It is helpful to show these change pathways in a visual form – for example a flow chart or map of objectives and their expected outcomes and the relationships between them.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

This step requires you to think about what activities need to be implemented to realise the desired outcomes of the plan and what concrete outputs will be delivered as a result of the activities. As for Step 3 you will need to think about the **assumptions** behind these activities and outputs – particularly the sequencing of different activities and outputs, i.e. what needs to be done in what activity before another can be started. Continuing with our example, if staff are to have a better understanding of what causes them to feel not good enough then the school will need to design and implement a new continuing professional development programme in the school that includes hands-on training using the IGUANA tools and learning programme.

STEP 5: SPECIFY INDICATORS AND MEANS OF VERIFICATION

The final step in developing the theory of change is to identify indicators. These are measurable items of data that enable you to assess how far the school is achieving the expected outcomes of the Innovation Plan and how far along the change journey’ – in our example reducing the level of staff absences in the school:

- Output indicators typically measure concrete products or actions, for example the number of training workshops in emotional intelligence delivered
- Process indicators typically assess how well a plan is being implemented, for example the actual time taken to deliver the EI training programme compared with planned time
- Outcome indicators typically assess progress towards achieving specific objectives and aims, for example increase in the emotional intelligence competences of staff.

It is also useful to specify the Means of Verification for each indicator. This describes the kind of data and how those data are collected. For example, for the above outcome indicator - increase in the emotional intelligence competences of staff – the means of verification could be the IGUANA EI self-assessment tool.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

To give you an overall picture of the theory of change and how it all fits together, it is useful to summarise the different components of the framework. You can do this in the form of a diagram – like a flowchart – or a Table, or both. Examples of both are shown below.

Flow chart for Theory of Change – ‘Reducing Level of Staff Absences’

