



# TURNING INNOVATIVE IDEAS INTO IMPACTFUL PROGRAMS

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# TODAY'S WORKSHOP

By the end of this workshop, we hope you will:

- Learn how to move ideas into structured, fundable programs
- Practice designing a Theory of Change
- Apply tools to evaluate, measure and communicate impact
- Learn from peers through discussion and group work

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Dignity was started in 2015 because homelessness is not okay. I could no longer be a spectator, standing by and watching the injustice of homelessness.

Suzanne Hopman, Dignity CEO





## TODAY...

- Homelessness Prevention Programs

Food Relief – 20 locations across Australia

Community Engagement – 21 school partners



- Homelessness Response Programs

Supported TA – up to 350 guests per night

Longer-term Housing – up to 100 residents per night

# WHY INNOVATION STALLS

Common challenges in the sector:

- Great ideas with no pathway to implementation
- Limited resources and funding constraints
- Lack of data
- Difficulty measuring or proving impact
- Burnout and change fatigue

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# A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

From idea to impact:

1. Cultivate a Culture of Ideas
2. Understand the Problem
3. Design for Impact
4. Build Strategic Partnerships
5. Secure Program Funding
6. Measure & Share Impact



IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA

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# CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF IDEAS

Innovation thrives when:

- Everyone's voice is valued
- Frontline insights are captured
- Leadership creates an encouraging and safe space for idea development
- Clear pathways exist for sharing ideas

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# CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF IDEAS

Practical ways to cultivate and capture great ideas:

- Make idea-sharing a regular occurrence at team meetings
- Simple ways for ideas to be submitted

**Don't forget to close the loop!**



# UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

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# UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Strong program design doesn't start with the solution, instead it starts with:

- Evidence and data
- Lived experience engagement
- Systems thinking
- Clear problem definition

**Start with the problem, rather than the solution**



# DESIGN FOR IMPACT

# THE THEORY OF CHANGE

What is it and what is it for?

- A roadmap from activities to outcomes
- Explains *how* and *why* change will occur
- Supports funding opportunities
- Defines evaluation
- Alignment

# THEORY OF CHANGE COMPONENTS

Key elements, starting with:

- **Problem statement** *a clear, shared understanding of the problem, not the solution*
- **Inputs** *what you invest (staff, funding, partnerships, resources)*
- **Activities** *what you do with those inputs (case management, outreach, training, advocacy)*
- **Outputs** *are countable and immediate. They describe volume, not impact.*

# THEORY OF CHANGE COMPONENTS

## Key elements:

- Outcomes

*Short-term outcomes = knowledge, skills confidence or access*

*Medium-term outcomes = behavioural or situational*

*Long-term outcomes = sustainable, systemic or life-changing*

- Assumptions

*Things we believe must be true for the program to work*

# DESIGN A THEORY OF CHANGE

## Small Groups – 15 minutes

- Choose an existing or new program idea
- Define the problem
- Map activities and outcomes
- Identify key assumptions



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

# BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Why partnerships matter:

- Add capability and expertise
- Improve outcomes for participants
- Increase sustainability and scale
- Share risk and resources

**Partnerships should be strategic—not just opportunistic!**

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# WHAT MAKES A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

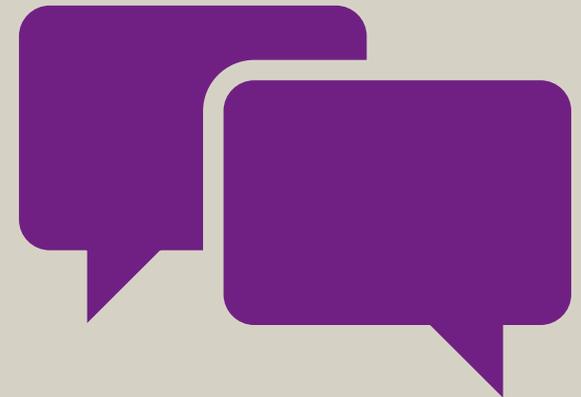
Effective partnerships are:

- Values aligned
- Clear on roles and expectations
- Mutually beneficial
- Focused on participant outcomes

# GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's share:

- What partnerships have worked well?
- What specific value did they add?
- What made them successful?





# PROGRAM FUNDING

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# PROGRAM FUNDING

## Diversified funding sources:

- Grants and philanthropy
- Corporate sponsorships
- Donations and fundraising
- Government contracts

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# ALIGNING FUNDING WITH MISSION

## Considerations:

- Mission fit
- Reporting requirements
- Long-term sustainability
- Impact expectations



# MEASURE & SHARE IMPACT

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# MEASURING AND SHARING IMPACT

## Why impact matters:

- Improves programs
- Strengthens funding applications
- Builds trust with stakeholders
- Supports sector-wide learning

# WHAT TO MEASURE

## Examples:

- Outputs (services delivered)
- Outcomes (changes experienced)
- Lived experience feedback
- Cost effectiveness indicators
- Social Value & SROI

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# SHARING IMPACT

Ways to communicate success:

- Published reports
- Stories and case studies
- Funder briefings
- Grant acquittals
- Sector presentations and forums



# RECAP OF THE ROADMAP FOR GREATER IMPACT

# FROM IDEA TO IMPACT

1. Create space for ideas
2. Ground solutions in evidence
3. Design with outcomes in mind
4. Partner strategically
5. Fund sustainably
6. Measure and share learning



A young girl with curly hair is looking down at something in her hands. A woman's face is partially visible in the background on the left. The word "Dignity" is written in a purple, cursive font across the center of the image.

*Dignity*



**Theory of Change**

**Name of Program:**

**Problem statement:** What is the problem we are trying to solve? Who is experiencing the problem? What evidence tell us this is a real issue? What happens if this problem remains unsolved?

Impact	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
<b>What is the Long Term Change / Outcome</b>	What changes for participants? Includes short-term (changes in knowledge, skills, confidence or access) and medium-term (behavioural or situational changes)	What is delivered? Immediate and countable e.g. number of people, sessions delivered or support plans completed.	What are we doing to bring about this change? These will be the core actions to address the problem e.g case management, training.	What do we invest into the project? e.g staff, funding, partnerships, facilities, infrastructure
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
<b>Assumptions</b>				