UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

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ONLINE

01 JUN 2026 - 03 JUL 2026

Theory of Change for UN Practitioners: Applying Theories of Change for Design, Management, and Evaluation- Spring Edition

Change and transformationData and Evaluation Management



LANGUAGE
English

DURATION
4 weeks

ENROLL BY
02 Jun 2026

PRICE
1,100 USD

LOCATION
ONLINE

TARGET
Everyone

CONTACT elp@unssc.org

This 4-week online course equips UN staff with practical skills to develop and apply Theories of Change (ToCs) that strengthen programme design, implementation, learning, and evaluation. Through interactive webinars, group exercises, and personalized feedback, participants will learn to create evidence-informed and actionable ToCs tailored to their specific UN contexts.

Introduction

In today's complex and interconnected global landscape, the United Nations operates through initiatives that aim to achieve transformative and sustainable impact. Most programme and policy work within the UN system increasingly relies on the use of Theories of Change (ToCs) to articulate how specific interventions contribute to broader organizational mandates and collective results.

A well-designed ToC helps UN practitioners make explicit the logic of change behind the interventions, linking activities to outcomes, surfacing assumptions, and identifying the conditions necessary for success.

This course responds to the growing demand across UN entities for stronger analytical and design capacities in programme planning. Over four weeks, participants will explore the essential components of ToCs and how to apply them in real UN settings, supporting adaptive learning and strategic communication. Through interactive webinars, group work, and individual feedback, the course will equip UN staff to create actionable and context-sensitive ToCs that enhance coherence, effectiveness, and shared understanding across teams and partners.

Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain what theories of change are and how they are broadly used in different UN contexts.
2. Identify and describe the key components of an effective ToC.
3. Use theories of change to support design, management, and reflection.
4. Apply strategies to engage diverse stakeholders in developing and refining ToCs.
5. Critically review and communicate ToCs for different audiences.
6. Develop and present a clear and coherent ToC for a chosen initiative.

Course methodology

This is an instructor-led online course consisting of eight 1.5-hour webinars delivered over four weeks.

Participants will get access to the UNSSC UNKampus platform, where they will find relevant resources, as well as the opportunity to reflect in their personal blog and interact in the asynchronous discussion forum with the UNSSC instructor and team.

The webinars will be conducted in Zoom. The webinars will take place every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM CET. Participants need a computer (or mobile device), a reliable internet connection and either a headset with a microphone to connect to the audio through a computer, or a telephone. We recommend accessing audio through your computer. No special software is required, but participants must be able to access Zoom. We will send access instructions to registered participants, and we recommend that you download the application and test your setup in advance.

Course contents

The course is organized in 4 weekly modules, as follows:

Week 1 – Understanding Theories of Change

- Key Concepts in Theories of Change
- Uses of Theories of Change

Week 2 – Designing your Theory of Change

- Constructing and reconstructing theories of change
- Practical examples of theory of change in different UN contexts

Week 3- Communicating and Applying ToCs

- Visualising and Communicating Your ToC
- Using ToCs for Learning, Planning, and Adaptation

Week 4- Reviewing and Strengthening ToCs

- Assessing the Quality of a Theory of Change
- Integrating ToCs into Evaluation and Results Management

There will be a final assignment, due one week after Week 4, in which participants will develop or refine a Theory of Change for an initiative of their choice (programme, project, or policy). Alternatively, a case study can be provided. Participants will receive written feedback on their submissions.

Target audience

This course is designed for:

- Programme managers and planners seeking to strengthen design and results frameworks.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning professionals who use ToCs in planning and assessment.
- Development practitioners and team leads who coordinate or oversee multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Anyone interested in using ToCs for reflection, communication, and learning.

Cost of participation

The course fee is $1,100.