

Identifying outcomes and measures

Tools and templates

You've decided that you need to assess whether your program is getting any results... Now what?

An organization that is just beginning to consider how to assess the “outcomes” (or results) of its program must begin by clarifying what *end goal* or result it is working towards.

It also needs to make explicit its assumptions about how those results are to be achieved: What *strategies* and *activities* will the organization undertake to leverage those assumptions into results? What *short-term and intermediate outcomes* are stepping-stones to the end goal?

Together, this group of assumptions that link activities to intended result(s) *is* your program theory. Any defensible, logical, effective program needs to be rooted in a *theory of change* – in other words, a theory of how you will effect change among your clients or within your community.

This package contains worksheets, templates and completed examples that will be helpful to your organization as you create a theory of change and build a logic model for your program, in an “Applying Outcome Thinking to your program” work session.

The first section of this document provides a worksheet and blank templates, along with some examples of completed templates, to help you create a *theory of change* for your program.

Once you have articulated your theory of change, you can identify – for planning purposes – the resources you'll require to implement your program activities effectively. These are your *inputs*. With those inputs, what *outputs*, or *products* of your work, can you achieve, and in what volume? You may already be tracking the output of your work: numbers of sessions, numbers of participants per session, etc. These data capture what you produce, and are important to track as a first level of program information.

Assessment of program *results*, however, requires you to think beyond outputs and to concentrate on *outcomes*. What change in your clients or community do you anticipate as a result of your program activities? Identifying expected short-term outcomes for your clients points the way to identifying *indicators*, or observable evidence that such change has indeed occurred. Measuring results involves collecting *data* that allows monitoring changes in indicators over time.

These components of your program plan – inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, and sometimes the indicators and data that measure those outcomes – are all the components of a program **logic model**. Logic models also speak to the relationship between the various program components and provide a framework for aiding your articulation of those components.

The second section of this document provides a simple logic model template, along with some examples of completed logic models, to help you build your own program's logic model.

Determining how and where to collect *data* in order to assess your outcomes, and developing a plan for data collection and analysis, is the final step in designing a program assessment. This needs to take place at the operations level, so that, as much as possible, data collection is integrated with program delivery and builds on information and relationships that are part of your normal delivery system.

A final template provides a planning tool for your data collection process.

The hard-copy versions of the documents that follow can be reproduced and completed as-is. The electronic versions can be adapted to allow for more complex or alternatively shaped program models.

Supplemental resources and additional guidance and examples can be found among the resource materials identified within the solution.

This material was developed by Community Resource Exchange (CRE), a not-for-profit consulting group that provides strategic advice and technical services every year to over 350 community-based organizations that fight poverty and HIV/AIDS. For over 25 years, CRE has been committed to providing these front-line community groups with the information, skills and leadership training to leverage their resources within their organization and communities.

Theory of change worksheet

End Goal/Result

What change do you hope to see in your community? What is your work contributing to as an end goal for your community? State one community goal.

Client(s)

Who are your clients? Whom do you work with and focus on?

How would you describe them? What needs or issues are we trying to address?

Activities

What are you doing for the clients you have identified? How do you serve them? What are the categories of activities that capture the major elements of your program?

1:

2:

3:

Short-term Outcomes

What are short-term/direct outcomes for each of your program activities? What changes in clients' knowledge, attitude, behavior, skills, or condition do you expect to see?

For Activity #1: _____

For Activity #2: _____

For Activity #3: _____

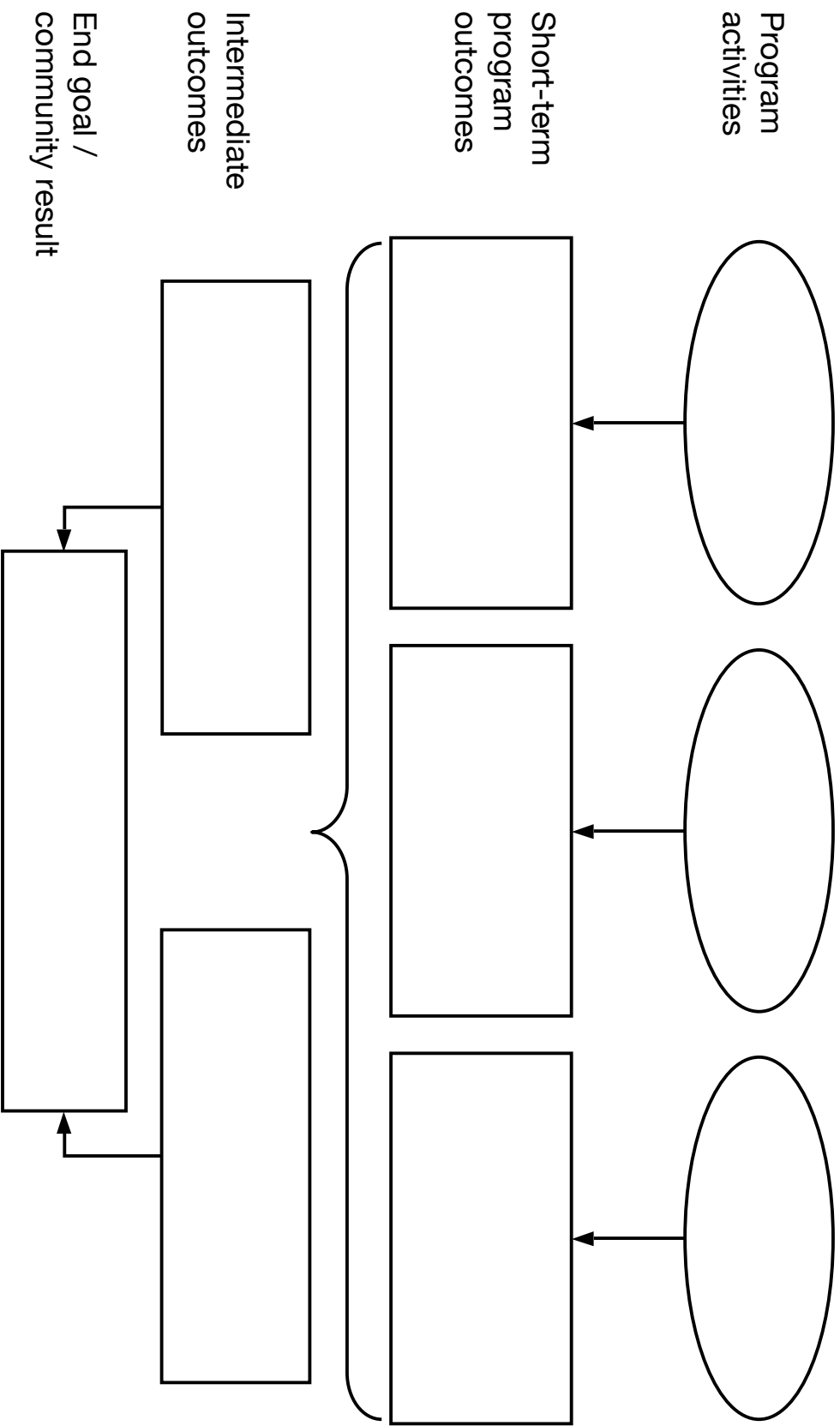
Transfer your Activities, Short-term Outcomes, and End Goals to one of the Outcome Maps on the following pages. One is simple, the other more complex. You may want to make multiple copies and experiment with which one suits your situation best.

Intermediate Outcomes

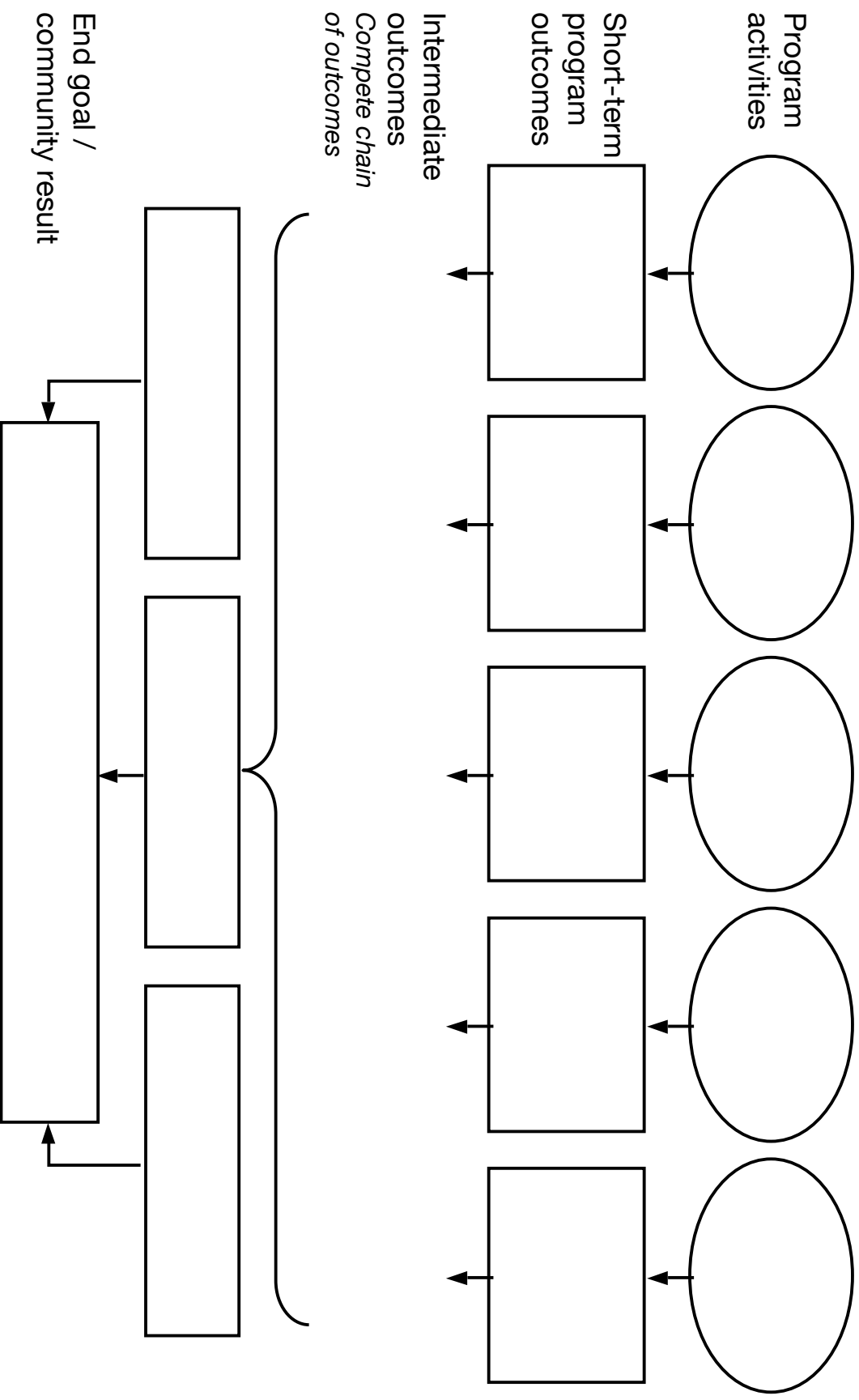
What next-level changes in your participants, in their families, or in the community do you believe will follow from these immediate, short-term outcomes? If you achieve the short-term outcome(s), then what do you assume will result from that? You seek to achieve the short-term outcome so *that* what will happen?

Complete the "chain" of Intermediate Outcomes on the Outcome Map to capture your assumptions, pressing yourself to explain what each level of Outcome will lead to, until you reach the final End Goal. With each Outcome, ask yourself, "so that..." until you have explained the full set of links between your activities and the end goal for the community.

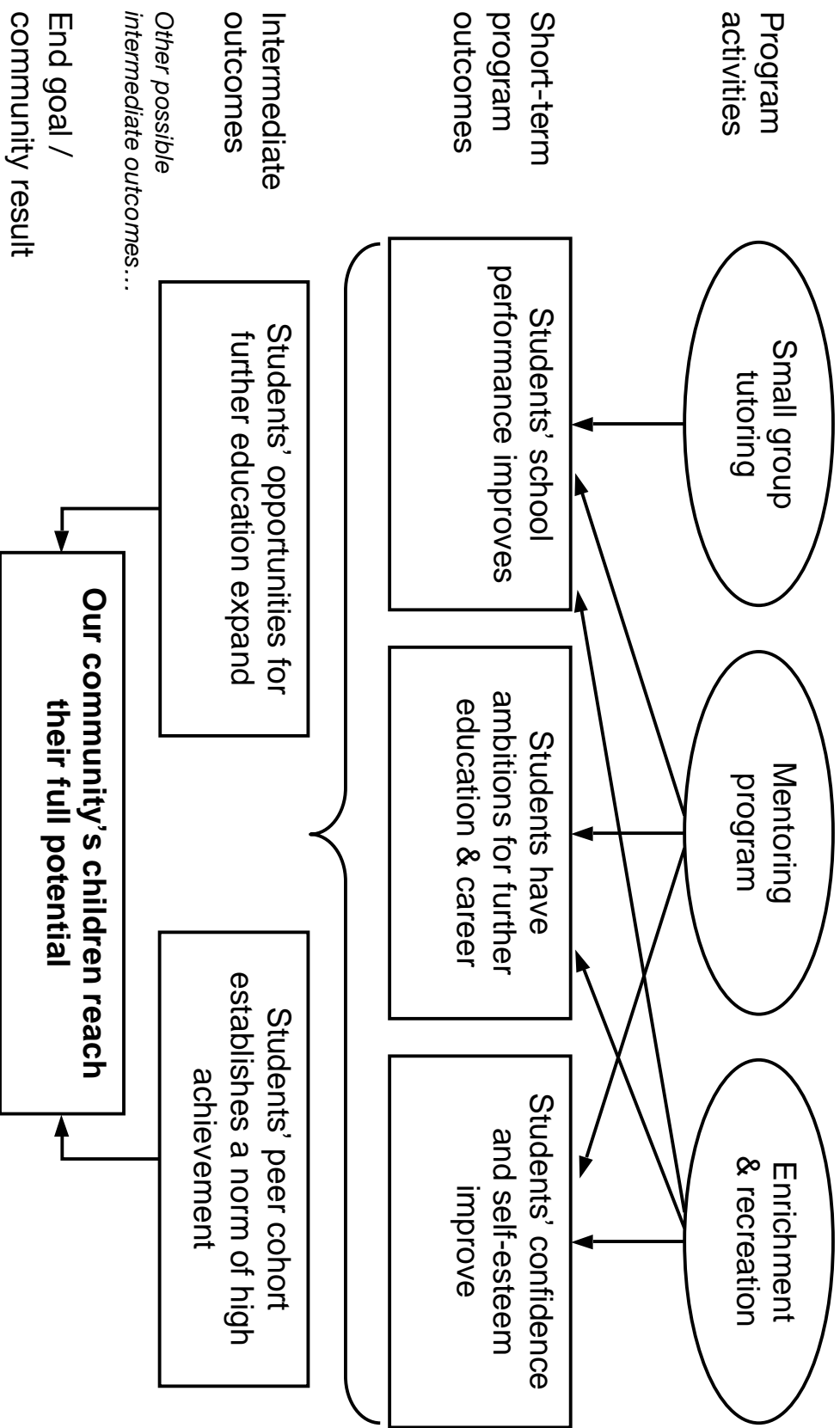
Outcome Map: Template #1



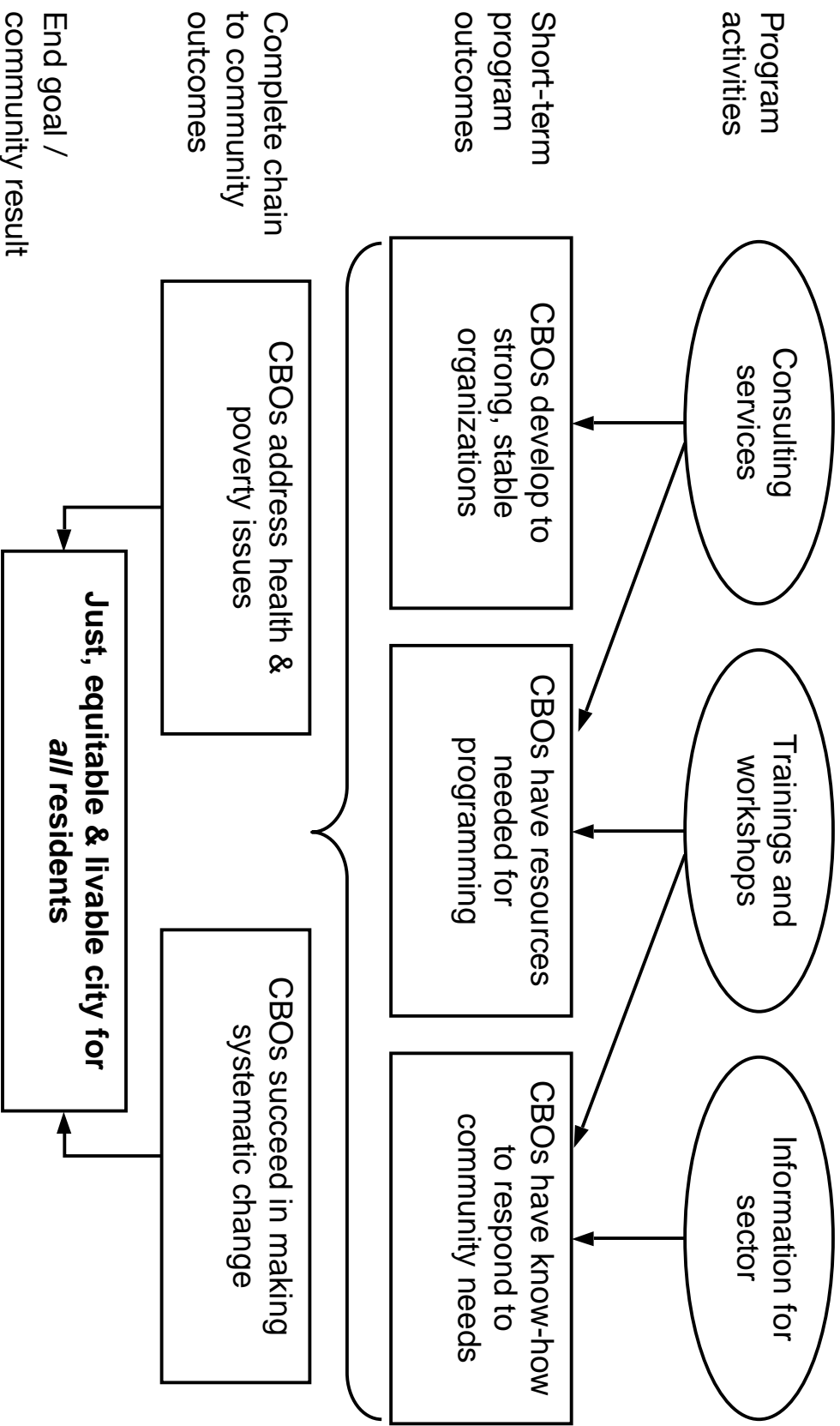
Outcome Map: Template #2



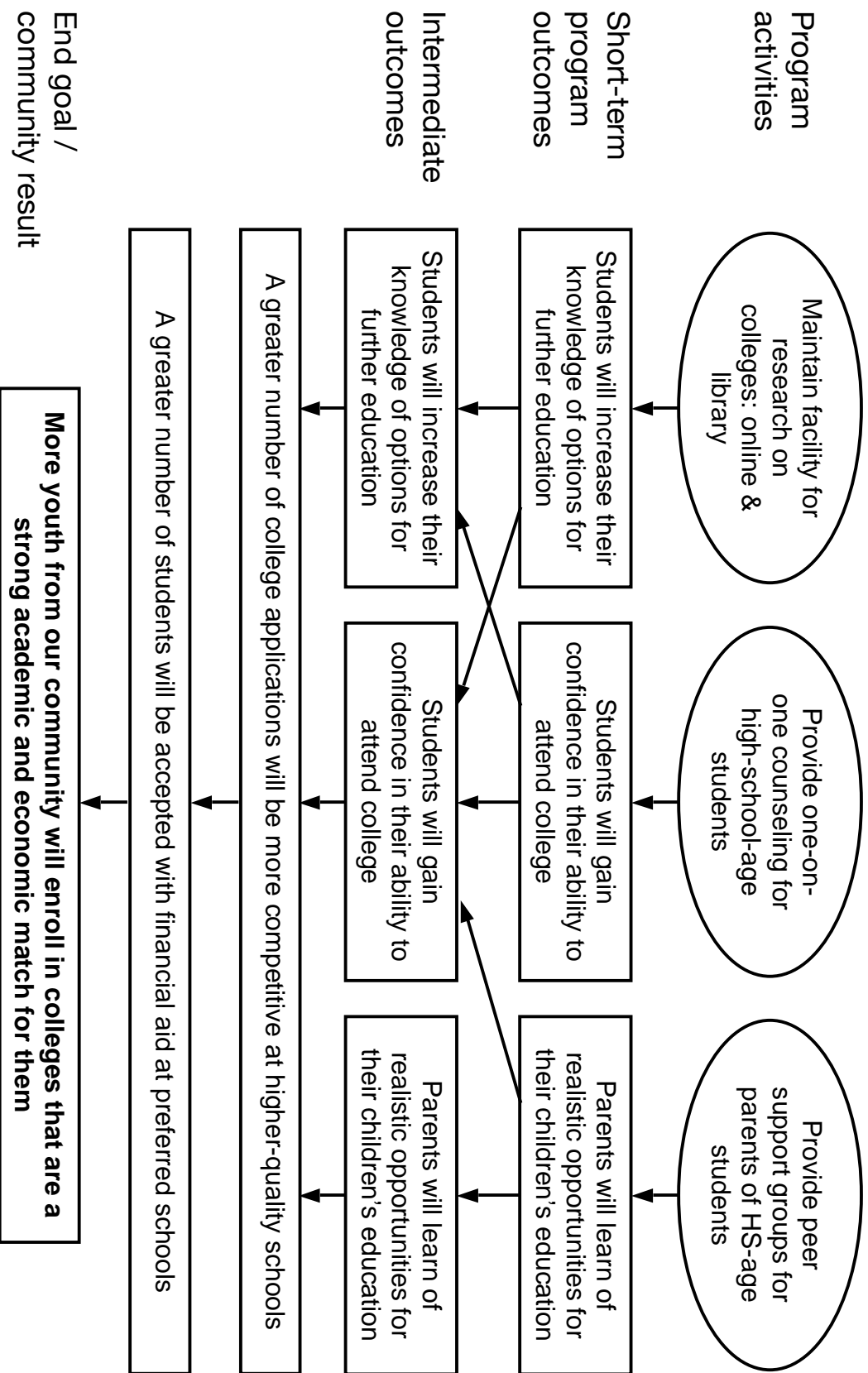
Sample Outcome Map: After-school program



Sample Outcome Map: Technical assistance organization



Sample Outcome Map: College counseling program



Logic Model template

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term outcomes	Indicators	Intermediate outcomes	End goal(s) / results

Sample Logic Model: After-school program

Inputs (resources)	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators	Results
Coordinator 2 tutors Part-time counselor Activities specialist Study room; gym Innovative materials Grant \$\$ 28 under-performing 4th/5th graders	After-school programs Tutoring Enrichment program: culture, arts, entertainment Sports & recreation program Mentoring program	28 students in twice-weekly peer & small-group tutoring sessions for an 8-week period, 4 times per year 6 half-day cultural enrichment trips with 28 students 4-team sports league with 12-game sessions 28 mentor matches sustained for 30 weeks min.	Students' school performance improves Students have ambitions for further education & career Students' confidence and self-esteem improve	Report cards show _____-to-full grade improvement in core subjects Test scores increase by 10% Students identify 10-15-year aspirations Teachers report student behavior is improved	Participants: Have dreams of academic & career achievement Pursue academic and community achievement Perform well in higher education and careers

Sample Logic Model: Technical assistance organization

Inputs (resources)	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators	Results
20 experienced consultants experienced in all areas of nonprofit mgmt. & development Funding for salaries, office space Communications technology for...	One-to-one consulting services in areas of organizational management, development and governance	300 completed consulting relationships with nonprofit organizations / year 16,000 hours of consulting services delivered to community organizations	Improved management systems in place for community-based organizations (CBOs) ↓ CBOs develop to strong, stable orgs CBOs have resources needed for programming Community organization leaders expand knowledge of management tools & techniques	Increased number of boards report availability and use of financial information on regular basis Fewer number of terminated contracts with nonprofits reported by city govt. Increased number of grants and level of funding, self-reported by clients	CBOs address health & poverty issues across the city CBOs succeed in making systemic change ↓ Just, equitable & livable city for all residents
4-6 conference rooms & training space 2 dedicated training staff Curriculum for training modules	Public offering training & workshops for nonprofit managers & Board members	64 half-day workshops, for average of 20 participants each (= 4000 hours of training received) 5 seminar series for 12 Executive Directors (= 1500 hours of training received)			
Online resources on all areas of nonprofit management Links to foundation directories	Web-based information exchange for nonprofit leaders	1800 downloads of informational documents per year			

This is not a complete chart for all three activities; it provides a sample of information for each.

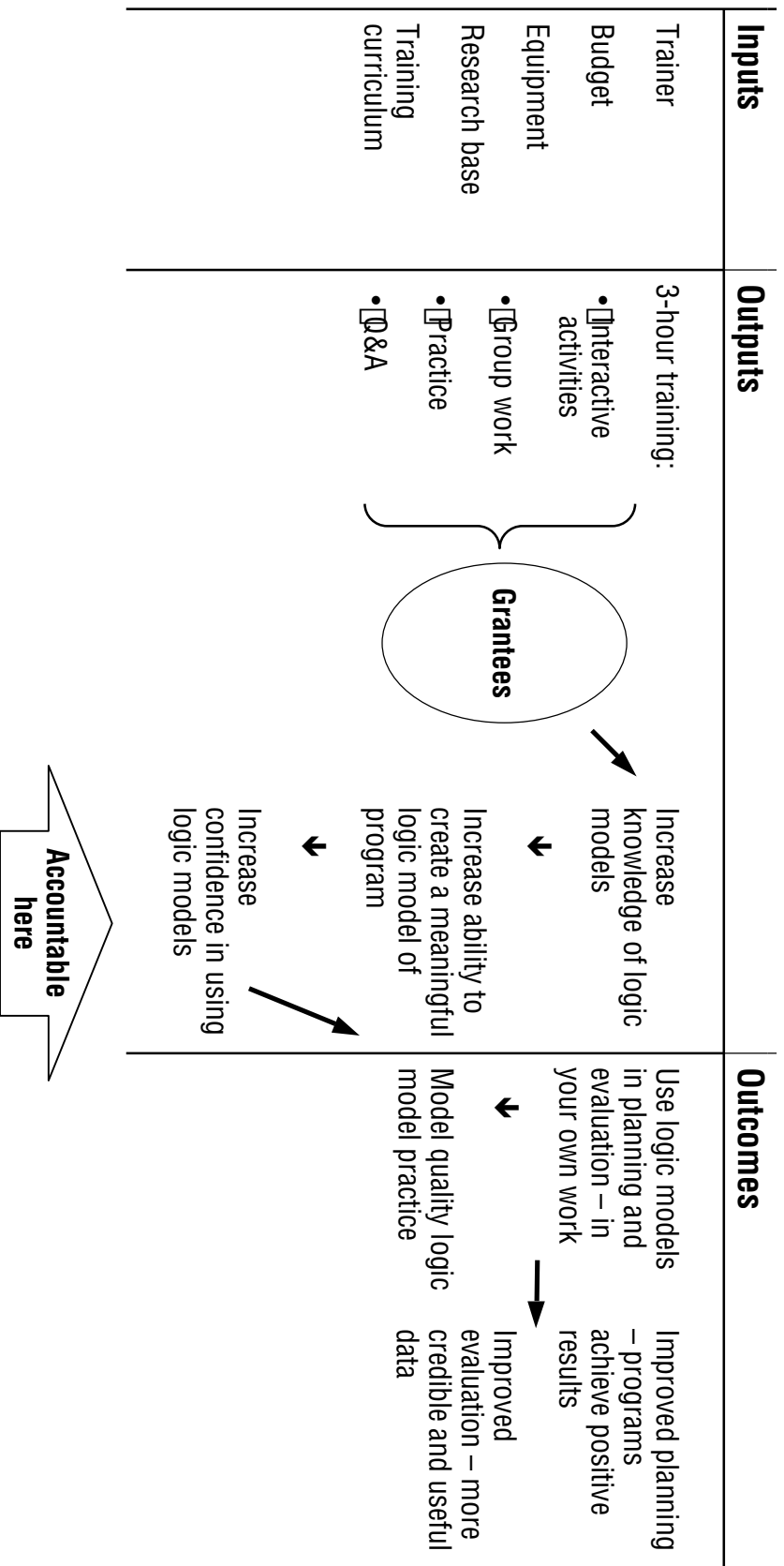
Sample Logic Model: College counseling program

Inputs (resources)	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators	Results
3-4 computer stations with high-speed Internet connection Collection of current college directories Current materials from colleges: gen. info, course bulletins, financial aid packages	Maintain facility for research on colleges: online & library	15 1-hour individual counseling sessions per week 3 group goal-setting sessions with 6-10 youth per week	Students will increase their knowledge of options for further education Intermediate: A greater number of college applications will be more competitive at higher-quality schools	Increase in self-reporting about college research activities completed Increase in self-reported knowledge about schools, application process Increased number of applications completed and submitted	A greater number of students will be accepted with financial aid at preferred schools More youth from our community will enroll in colleges that are a strong academic and economic match for them
30-hour/week academic counselor Group & individual counseling & rooms	Provide one-on-one counseling for high-school-age students	Average of 30 completed phone inquiries per month 8 group sessions with 6-10 parents each	Parents will learn of realistic opportunities for their children's education	Increased number of applications, acceptances at schools with higher academic ranking	
Phone line w/answering machine 10-hour/week counselor	Provide peer support groups for parents of HS-age students				

This is not a complete chart for all three activities; it provides a sample of information for each.

Sample: Logic Model – for a logic model training workshop

Situation: Funder requires grantees to include a logic model in funding request. Grantees have limited understanding of logic models and are unable to fulfill the funding requirement.



Data collection planning tool

Outcome	Indicator/s (may be several for each outcome)	Data source	Data collection method	Frequency / time frame	Key players