

## **Contextual Background and Analysis**

Commercial sex trafficking in Greece contributes to a variety of complex social, economic, and geopolitical issues. Greece is both a destination and transit country for human trafficking, particularly for women and girls exploited in the commercial sex industry. Its geographic position at the southeastern border of the European Union, combined with significant migration flows from the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe, contributes to persistent vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit (European Commission).

A key contextual factor is Greece's role as a geographic crossroads and major entry point into Europe. Migrants and asylum seekers arriving from regions such as Syria, Afghanistan, and West Africa often face legal and economic struggles, making them particularly vulnerable to coercion and exploitation. Organized crime networks that facilitate the smuggling of migrants into Greece frequently overlap with trafficking operations, using deception and violence to force individuals, especially women, into prostitution once they arrive in Greece. These networks operate transnationally and may involve actors from multiple countries, including Greece, Albania, and other Balkan states. The U.S. Department of State reports that most identified trafficking victims in Greece are foreign nationals, reflecting the key relationship between migration flows and human trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2024).

Commercial sex trafficking in Greece is embedded in a broader commercial sex industry that includes both legal and illegal sectors. Prostitution itself is legal and regulated but only under strict licensing conditions enforced by the Greek government. In reality, the vast majority of sex work occurs outside this legal framework. Less than 1,000 individuals are registered as legal sex workers, while an estimated 20,000 people are involved in illegal prostitution, many of whom are migrants or economically marginalized women. This system creates opportunities for traffickers to hide exploitation within unregulated brothels, escort services, and online advertisements (U.S. Department of State, 2024).

The scale of trafficking is difficult to measure due to underreporting, challenges in victim identification, and lack of coordination between law enforcement officials nationwide. However, law enforcement data does indicate ongoing efforts to combat the problem; in 2024, authorities investigated dozens of trafficking cases and secured numerous convictions, most related to sex trafficking. However, victim identification and protection remain inconsistent. International observers and NGOs have criticized insufficient screening procedures, especially in migrant reception centers and refugee camps, where potential victims may be treated as irregular migrants rather than trafficking survivors (European Commission).

Overall, commercial sex trafficking in Greece must be understood as part of a broader system involving migration pressures, organized crime, legal ambiguities in the sex industry, and gaps in victim identification and protection. While the Greek government has demonstrated an interest in strengthening its legal framework and enforcement measures in recent years through the issuing of nationwide standard operating procedures, structural challenges, including the identification of victims, protection of migrants, disruption of transnational trafficking networks,

and lack of staffing and implementation resources, continue to shape the country's ongoing struggle against commercial sexual exploitation (U.S. Department of State, 2025).

### **Theory of Change Narrative**

Increased awareness encourages community reporting, improves early victim identification, and reduces stigma that often prevents survivors from seeking help. In the Greek context, where trafficking frequently intersects with migration and unregulated sex markets, sustained educational initiatives can empower at-risk groups, mobilize local communities, and complement law-enforcement efforts by addressing the social conditions that allow commercial sex trafficking to persist. Raising public awareness also contributes to the degree to which the government will consider more aggressively combatting issues of commercial sex trafficking. This interest could provide an entry point for partnerships between the Greek government and NGOs already conducting successful small-scale programs to identify and protect survivors. While this kind of collaborative intervention is unlikely to occur in the near future, there are long-term outcomes that can plausibly occur. For example, international organizations such as A21 have created both print and digital materials in recent years designed to appeal to a Greek cultural context, identifying locations, professional fields, and other situations where human trafficking is prevalent (A21 Greece). While public outcry for increased anti-trafficking efforts has not been notable, the Greek government has, in recent years, made steps to develop a national action plan and publicize what data they do have pertaining to human trafficking in migrant populations (U.S. Department of State, 2025). The accuracy of the data is debatable due to widespread underreporting, but this interest exhibited by the Greek government can provide a slim entry point for NGOs who also wish to strengthen national anti-trafficking capabilities. Therefore, interventions that shift social attitudes towards evident support for government action, such as public awareness campaigns, should be viewed as a toe in the door to gaining traction and further input with government officials. It is important to note that these interventions assume that public opinion can be swayed and that Greek officials would have any willingness to discuss national plans with non-government actors, running the risk of NGOs putting key resources towards interventions that are not impactful. However, by emphasizing how human trafficking poses a threat, not only to national security, but to the personal safety of civilians, it is possible that public education efforts will produce valuable outcomes. Additionally, risks can be mitigated through thorough research on the front end of development, including digital and print marketing tactics, what tone is most appropriate in certain contexts (uplifting of survivors vs. the realities of those currently being trafficked), and effectiveness of pooling resources with NGOs who have already developed similar interventions.

Another key intervention is the development of a law enforcement curriculum that prioritizes human-centered design and trauma-informed care to work with survivors and better maintain tracking, reporting, coordination, etc. While similar trainings have been utilized for officers in refugee camps by Greece's Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, lack of coordination in how these trainings are implemented have resulted in varied success rates (European Commission). Therefore, a curriculum that emphasizes the

manner in which human trafficking is reported, treatment of victims, and inter-agency coordination would address a variety of systemic issues that are preventing law enforcement from being effective in anti-trafficking operations. Due to social stigma, potential criminalization, and re-traumatization, trafficking survivors do not report themselves as such, which leads to underreporting and a lack of information that can be used to identify trafficking operations. However, by creating training protocol that educates law enforcement officers in trauma-informed care and appropriate interview tactics, this widespread stigma and fear can slowly be uprooted. By involving anti-trafficking NGOs and survivor advocates into curriculum design and delivery, frontline practices can be shifted from enforcement-first approaches to survivor-centered engagement, ethical interviewing, improved digital case tracking, and cross-agency coordination. While the entry point of direct engagement with law enforcement would be difficult without government policy to back up these efforts, there are preexisting relationships between some anti-trafficking NGOs and members of law enforcement. These relationships must be further developed in order for enough trust to be present that discussing a curriculum of this nature is productive rather than offensive, assuming that law enforcement would be open to any form of dialogue. One example of successful implementation of law enforcement programming is the Greek Anti-Human Trafficking Hotline, created by A21 in 2012. According to the organization, “Calls are handled by specially trained operators who speak Greek and English, while there is the possibility of direct tele-interpretation in more than 200 languages” (A21 Greece). This hotline provides victims with opportunities for reporting trafficking activities, whether through self-identification or anonymously, and has been utilized by law enforcement in investigations and subsequent trafficker prosecutions. The manner and care with which these reports are handled has informed law enforcement officers of appropriate trauma-informed tactics they should utilize when conducting such investigations. Furthermore, this hotline can connect survivors with rehabilitation services, ensuring future protection and opportunities for long-term aftercare that exemplify the necessary follow-up for individuals identified as victims of commercial sex trafficking (A21 Greece). While A21 has seen success in the implementation of this program, there are various risks present for the development of a training curriculum that is intended to render similar results. For example, there is the possibility of rejection by law enforcement agencies due to distrust or territorialism. For this reason, as is important in every invention discussed, inter-institutional relationships must be prioritized. Already established NGOs in this space can leverage what contacts they do have in law enforcement to introduce the idea of a curriculum of this nature, delivering on the short-term goal of law enforcement awareness.

## Works Cited

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# Theory of Change

## Long-Term Outcomes

- Public attitudes towards trafficking victims shift from uncaring to sympathetic
- Increased public interest in anti-trafficking efforts provides leverage for NGOs to inform Greek anti-trafficking policy
- Law enforcement implements trauma-informed curriculum, contributing to improved tracking, reporting, coordination, and prosecution of traffickers

## Short-Term Outcomes

- Public awareness/education campaign is distributed via print and digital media
- Curriculum presented to law enforcement, increasing awareness about issues associated with current tactics
- NGOs foster relationships with existing contacts in the government and law enforcement

Output

Public awareness/education materials ready for distribution

Intervention

Development of public awareness/education campaigns

NGOs

Output

Curriculum ready for implementation

Intervention

NGO-led law enforcement curriculum development

Greek government

Key actor in outcomes

Law enforcement

### Assumptions

- Public opinion can be swayed
- Greek officials are willing to discuss national plans with non-government actors

### Risks

- NGOs ultimately waste resources on materials that do not appeal to a wide audience, are not compelling enough, etc.

### Assumptions

- Law enforcement are willing to work with, or at the very least, discuss current practices with anti-trafficking NGOs

### Risks

- NGOs face a brick wall and are rejected by law enforcement agencies due to distrust and territorialism

## Actors

NGOs

Greek government

Key actor in outcomes

Law enforcement



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## **THEORY OF CHANGE DEVELOPMENT**

A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING OR  
STRENGTHENING THEORIES OF CHANGE

# INTRODUCTION

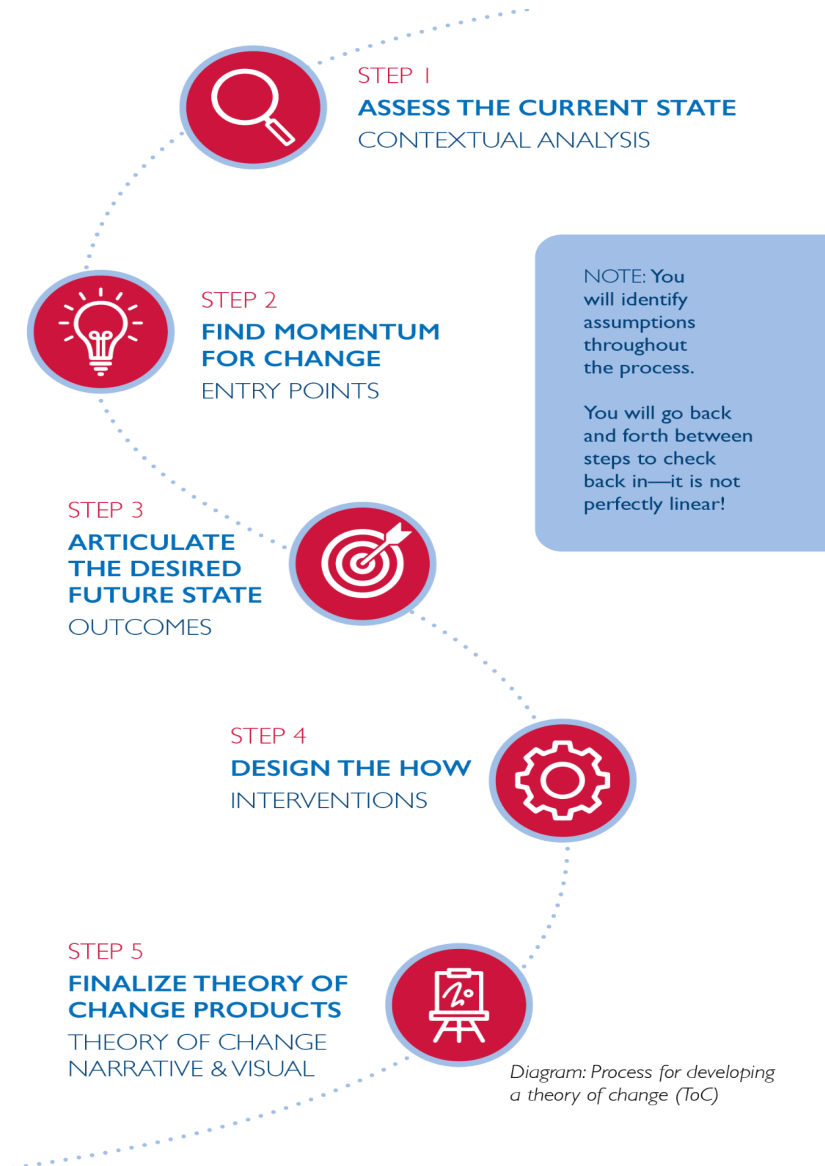


Figure 1: Process for developing a Theory of Change (ToC)

This workbook was originally created for the USAID/Vietnam theory of change clinics for implementing partners, and has been refined through several rounds of use and feedback from USAID/Vietnam and partners. It can be used by design and start-up teams to develop or strengthen their theories of change with local stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

This theory of change process helps users determine the four key elements of a strong theory of change:

- **Outcomes:** What is the change we are trying to achieve?
- **Entry points:** Where is there momentum to create that change?
- **Interventions:** How will we achieve the change?<sup>2</sup>
- **Assumptions:** Why do we think this will work?

A strong theory of change process leads to stronger theory of change products, which include:

- **the theory of change narrative:** a 1-3 page description of the context and responses to the questions above and
- **a logic model:** a visual representation of the theory of change narrative.

Strong theories of change are:



Figure 2: Strong Theories of Change

<sup>1</sup> The process outlined here is inspired by *systems thinking*, and you will find overlaps and similarities to other approaches like *problem-driven iterative adaptation* and *context-driven adaptation*. The process also borrows from tools such as *USAID's 5Rs framework* and *USAID's applied political economy analysis framework*. Ultimately, it is aligned with *Collaborating, Learning & Adapting (CLA)*, USAID's approach to strategic collaboration, organizational learning, and adaptive management. For questions on this workbook, contact the author, *Monalisa Salib*.

<sup>2</sup> Note that USAID design teams may not include interventions in their theories of change in solicitations or design documents; instead, the interventions may be left to the offerors to outline or further detail during implementation.

Teams should invest in a more robust and collaborative theory of change development process because it:

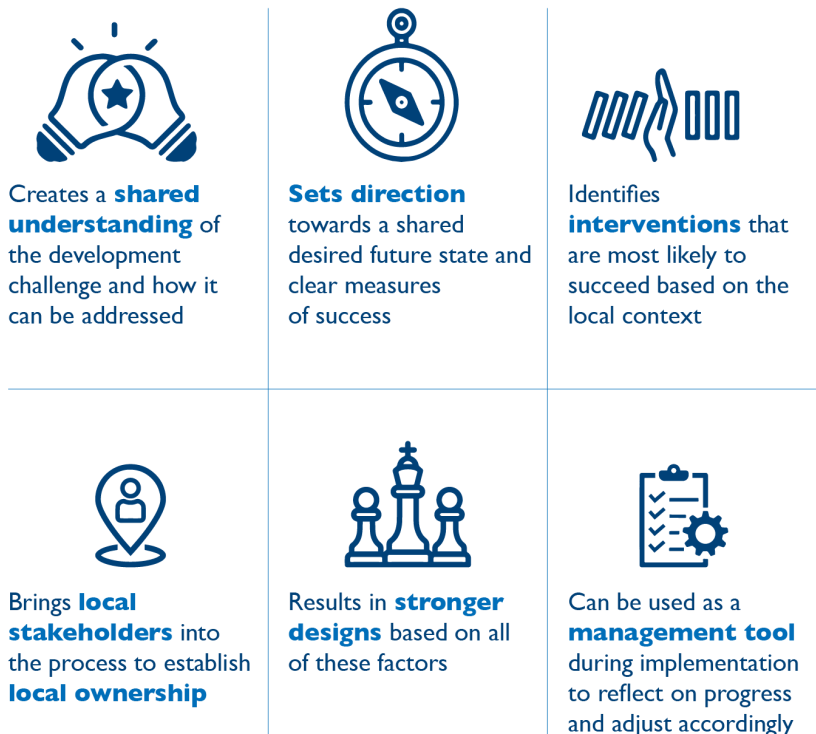


Figure 3: Reasons to Invest in Collaborative ToC

**This workbook helps teams accomplish the above whether they are starting the theory of change from scratch or strengthening it during start-up.** It is for development practitioners designing new programs or for teams who may have an initial theory of change that they want to strengthen at the start of implementation so it is context-specific, realistic, and representative of a shared vision among staff and local stakeholders.

**The process of developing the theory of change is arguably more important than the final products created.** It is in that collaboration and conversation with colleagues, local stakeholders, and other partners that the magic happens: we gain and learn from various perspectives on the challenge, the entry points, and anticipated outcomes. These conversations are then synthesized into the products (narrative and logic model), but nothing can replace the experience of those conversations for bringing stakeholders together (in person or virtually) around a shared vision and approach. And ultimately, it is this **collaborative, intentional theory of change process that leads to strong theory of change products** (the narrative and logic model).

Theory of change development should be **highly participatory** and, most importantly, include **local stakeholders**. Working through these steps without local stakeholders risks missing out on important contextual information and developing a theory of change that lacks local buy-in from those most affected.

Before jumping into the process, **review these two critical considerations** on the ToC process and products:

- **On the process:** While it is presented as a linear, step-by-step process, you might find yourself jumping back and forth between steps. There is clearly a build-up between steps but don't be discouraged or surprised if that happens—it is normal!
- **On the products:** Theory of change products will never be truly final; they are always a work in progress, and because of that, will never be perfect. During implementation, theories of change should be revisited regularly to reflect on whether implementation is unfolding as theorized. For this reason, the theory of change is often the starting point for the Activity's Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (AMELP). Following the steps laid out in this workbook helps set you up for effective monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptive management practices throughout implementation. We should regularly be asking ourselves:
  - Are the entry points panning out? Are new entry points emerging?
  - Are assumptions holding?
  - Are we on track to achieve outcomes? Are interventions leading to outcomes?

Depending on the answers, we should update our theories of change accordingly so they more accurately reflect the reality of implementation.



## STEP 1

# ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

**WHY?** Without this step, your theory of change will not be specific to the context and you will be unable to identify entry points in Step 2.

**PRO-TIP:** If you get to this stage without having done a contextual analysis (or having worked on the challenge for some time), you may find that you do not know enough about the current state. If that is the case, it is a great time to articulate learning questions (you can borrow from the questions below) that can inform some kind of assessment to better understand the challenge.

### PART A: YOUR DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

What is the development challenge<sup>3</sup> your activity intends to address? Use the table below to articulate it. Be as specific as possible.<sup>4</sup>

*Table 1: Your Development Challenge*

#### What is the development challenge?

Human trafficking, especially commercial sex trafficking, in Greece is a significant human rights issue that has many negative effects in various areas of development. Trafficking networks exploit vulnerable populations including migrants, refugees, and economically disadvantaged women who are often driven by unemployment, poverty, or lack of legal protections. This exploitation perpetuates cycles of inequality, weakens labor markets, and strains social services by increasing demand for healthcare, law enforcement, and victim support. It also damages Greece's international reputation and tourism sector, which are important to national development.

#### Why does it matter? To whom does it matter?

<sup>3</sup> Similar terms include issue, problem, target result.

<sup>4</sup> Note that this workbook assumes users already have a clear development challenge or problem that they are working through. If you want to spend more time on problem articulation, consider using [this resource](#) (sections 1 & 2 specifically).

The issue of commercial sex trafficking matters because it perpetuates cycles of violence, causes severe human rights violations, traps individuals in poverty, and can weaken social and economic development. Additionally, trafficking exploits and puts pressure on a variety of sectors such as healthcare, law enforcement, and social services, diverting resources that could otherwise support national development. This issue matters to many different groups, from the victims and their families to the Greek government and local communities who cannot fight this issue on their own. Furthermore, because human trafficking is often a transnational issue, international organizations such as the EU and Interpol are concerned with tackling this issue.

## PART B: THE CONTEXT OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

**Directions:** Consider the contextual situation of your development challenge using the guiding questions.

*Table 2: Contextual Situation – Current state guiding questions based on USAID's [Applied Political Economy Analysis Framework](#), the [5Rs framework](#), and gender integration guidance (ADS205)*

Questions to consider <i>(Note: you do not need to answer each question; they are here as a guidepost to generate ideas &amp; discussion.)</i>	
<b>Foundational factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the factors that are fixed or slow to change (such as geography, natural resource endowments or class structures) that affect the development challenge?</li> <li>● What are the specific gaps<sup>5</sup> that exist between men, women, or other gendered identities related to the development challenge?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Your responses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The public is not overly invested in encouraging the government to address this issue because it is not something they are forced to encounter in their daily lives</li> <li>-Greek culture can be protectionist, not concerned with helping refugees post-refugee crisis</li> <li>-women are predominantly affected by sex trafficking and trafficking-related activities</li> </ul>	
<b>Current outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What outcome is the local system currently producing? Are there trends (increasing, decreasing) in the outcome over time?</li> <li>● Do beneficiaries experience differential outcomes?</li> <li>● Are these differences based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, or other differences pertinent to the local context?</li> <li>● How are the current outcomes produced by the local system viewed by local actors ?</li> <li>● What other outcomes (positive/negative) do actors note about the local system?</li> <li>● Does the challenge have a high profile in national or local politics, and why? How does the government view it?</li> <li>● How adaptive, resilient, or self-sustainable does the local system seem to be?</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> These gaps should consider the Domains of Gender Analysis outlined in ADS 205.3.2 - (1) laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices that influence the context in which men and women act and make decisions; (2) cultural norms and beliefs; (3) gender roles, responsibilities, and time use; (4) access to and control over resources; (5) patterns of power and decision-making

**Your responses:**

-Current interventions are rendering various levels of success; the government is working towards prosecuting more perpetrators with longer prison sentences, but there is a lack of coordination amongst law enforcement

-NGOs have been especially helpful with awareness campaigns and other public education efforts, but there are still mixed feeling from the public due to prejudices against refugees, other immigrants, sex workers, etc.

**Rules (formal and informal)**

- Are there relevant formal (laws) or informal (norms) rules that affect, enable or bring about the development challenge?
- What are the informal rules of the game (how things really get done) that affect the development challenge?
- What incentives and disincentives are in place that affect how actors behave in the system?
- Are relevant rules enforced? How well? Effectively? Equitably?
- Are actors able to modify the rules and/or incentives that affect them? Are certain groups better able to do that than others?

**Your responses:**

-Prostitution is legal in Greece, making government interventions limited/increasingly difficult

-Negative public attitudes towards refugee populations (those highly affected by trafficking)

-government tends to rely on NGOs to combat this issue

**Actors and their roles**

- Who are the main actors interested in addressing the challenge and why? What roles are these actors currently performing?
- Who needs to care more about this challenge, and why? What might influence them?
- Are interests and priorities across these different actors/stakeholders/groups aligned? If not, why not?
- Who are the potential champions and spoilers? Who has influence and in what direction?
- Are some roles being played by different types of actors, such as government, the private sector, or civil society?
- Do men and women play distinctly different, gendered roles?
- Are donors or other third parties playing prominent roles?
- How effectively are actors fulfilling the roles they have taken on? Are there any roles that seem to be absent? Why?

**Your responses:**current interventions mainly being led by NGOs, both local and foreign

-must become a government priority for sustained change, must influence law enforcement

-not much incentive from private sector to cooperate currently

-both men and women are affected, but women are most at-risk

**Relationships & power dynamics**

- What types of relationships exist between role-players (formal/informal, contractual/hierarchical/reciprocal) described above?
- How strong are these relationships? How valued are these relationships? Are they collaborative? Conflictual?
- Are there relationships identified as missing, weak, unnecessary or illegitimate?
- What are the power dynamics among actors? Consider champions and spoilers, and differences related to gender or social status.
- Are certain groups excluded from decision-making bodies or processes (whether formal or informal)?

*Your responses:*

- Government and law enforcement can be territorial, not wanting to collaborate with NGOs, especially foreign based ones
- Culturally uncommon for private businesses to participate in the nonprofit sector in any way
- Groups most at risk such as migrant women are not well-represented in decision-making institutions

**Resources**

- What resources (financial, technical, etc.) are currently being used by the local system in producing current outcomes?
- What are the sources of those resources? Are they reliable and secure?
- Are there needed resources that are missing or insufficient to address the challenge?
- Are there trends (increasing, decreasing) or patterns (cyclical) in resource inflows?
- Are there trends or patterns in who controls resources and how that affects resource flows?

*Your responses:*

-Most resources available are from NGOs: safe houses, legal services, mental health services, childcare, etc. Some of these organizations are Greek and receive minimal funding from the government, relying heavily on foreign donors especially those in the US. However, changes in the American political climate have led to some organizations witnessing a decrease in donations, but this is occurring at varying rates.

**CONNECTION TO MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING DURING IMPLEMENTATION:** As mentioned, ToCs are also helpful management tools during implementation. This step is a learning exercise, and can be revisited throughout implementation to identify any changes in the context that may require adjustments to the theory of change or implementation approaches. Return to this, in particular, when there are significant context shifts that have ripple effects on your programming.



## STEP 2 FIND MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE: ENTRY POINTS

**WHY?** Without this step, you will not have clear entry points, which are critical to determining which interventions are likely to be successful in achieving outcomes. You may also end up working on interventions that are unlikely to succeed (i.e., brick walls described below).

**PRO-TIP:** If we had to choose which step is most critical to establishing a sensible, context-driven theory of change, it would be this one. Spend as much time here as you need; everything else flows from this step.

### PART A: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Directions:** Based on the contextual analysis above, answer the discussion questions below.

*Table 3: Discussion Questions*

#### Where is there momentum for change?

- What, if anything, about the context is changing, creating openings to enable change?
- Are there likely future opportunities to address the challenge? Why? Timing, actors, and openings?

*Your responses:*

The Greek government has discussed interest in sustainable development, including justice system reforms and law enforcement trainings. This interest could be a launch point for long-term systemic change.

#### Where are the dynamic areas where change can have a ripple effect (a ripple effect occurs when change in one area can spark change in other areas)?

*Your responses:*

Changes in the government's attitude and treatment of human trafficking can influence public opinion. If high-powered, influential representatives emphasize the ways in which all sectors are affected, citizens are inclined to acknowledge the issue and potentially take a more proactive stance against it.

#### Where are there bright spots that can be built upon (bright spots are areas of current success or positive change)?

*Your responses:* Many NGOs combatting this issue in Greece have seen success, especially those whose work pertains to holistic, trauma-informed aftercare for victims. This work cultivates survivor leadership, which feeds back into already-existing public awareness campaigns and other educational programs designed to illustrate that while sex trafficking is a serious issue, when it is addressed, there is hope for survivors.

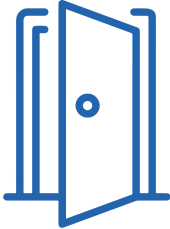

## Where is the system frozen / stuck?

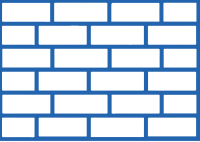
*Your responses:* The main frozen point is in the government. Without actual policy changes, there is only so much sustainable work that can be done.

## PART B: IDENTIFY OPEN DOORS, LOCKED DOORS, AND BRICK WALLS

**Directions:** Based on the discussion in Part A, determine your entry points (open and locked doors) and what is not an entry point (brick walls) as described below. In the subsequent steps, focus on those open and locked doors, and avoid the brick walls.

Table 4: Determine Entry Points

Type	Definition	Your responses: Where do you see open doors, locked doors, and brick walls in relation to your development challenge?
<b>Open doors</b> 	<p>Opportunities for change or reform in which a broad constituency already exists that requires only a catalyst to achieve progress.</p> <p><b><i>If you have an open door, go for it!</i></b></p>	<p>Collaboration and cooperation between NGOs tackling this issue is already common, so there are definitely opportunities to expand programming and join forces. These joint efforts could provide enough leverage to get high-powered institutions to listen.</p>
<b>Locked doors</b> 	<p>Opportunities for which change is possible, but will require concerted effort to open them.</p> <p><b><i>To unlock the door, you need the right key.</i></b></p>	<p>Direct engagement with law enforcement that does not have policy to support it is unlikely to be well-received. Most likely, reforms need to come from a governing body in order for change to be implemented. However, some NGOs have existing relationships with members of law enforcement that could provide potential entry points.</p>

<p><b>Brick walls</b></p> 	<p>Certain reforms or changes are likely to face such entrenched resistance that it may be a misallocation of resources, political capital and time to attempt to shift them.</p> <p><b><i>Avoid, stop, turn around.</i></b></p>	<p>The national government and EU officials are well-aware that sex trafficking is a major issue. They have demonstrated interest in combatting it and making progressive changes, but there needs to be a stronger push in order for widespread policy changes and reforms to occur.</p>
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### PART C: CHECKING IN ON ASSUMPTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

**Directions:** Answer the discussion questions below to help inform your theory of change (assumptions) and any additional information you need to gather before or during implementation.

*Table 5: Assumptions and Knowledge Gaps*

<p><b>What assumptions are you making about the context and your entry points?</b></p>
<p><i>Your responses:</i></p> <p>My perception is largely influenced by my own personal experiences. I have more of a frame of reference for how NGOs are currently operating in this space, while I am having to make more assumptions pertaining to the government's perspective. It is possible that the government is more cooperative than what I perceive and also that law enforcement is more willing to implement change than I give them credit for.</p>
<p><b>What information about the current state do we still need? What are our gaps in knowledge that are essential to fill?</b></p>

*Your responses:*

There is minimal public information about how law enforcement is addressing this issue, especially about what has been successful. There are also some gaps in data pertaining to victims and actual prevalence of sex trafficking in Greece specifically because it is so difficult to track with the legalization of prostitution.

**CONNECTION TO MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING DURING IMPLEMENTATION:** As mentioned, ToCs are also helpful management tools during implementation. This step is a learning exercise, and can be revisited throughout implementation to identify any changes in entry points that may require adjustments to the theory of change or implementation approaches. Return to this, in particular, when there are significant context shifts that have ripple effects on your programming.



## STEP 3

# ARTICULATE THE DESIRED FUTURE STATE: OUTCOMES

**WHY?** Knowing where you are headed is essential for a strong theory of change. It brings participants together around a shared North Star.

### PRO-TIPS:

- Focus on outcomes that are possible given the local context and the entry points identified.
- Very important: you may need to return to Step 2, Part B after thinking through this step. Now that you have your outcomes, you may need to confirm entry points. There is a back and forth between steps 2 and 3 especially; this is normal.
- Make sure you are articulating outcomes (real changes in the status quo), not outputs (see this resource for a detailed discussion on the [distinction between outputs, outcomes, and impact](#)).
- In some cases, participants will know they will work on the development challenge for many years to come after the period of performance. If this is the case, you can think about this question in stages - you may have a 10 year vision but a five year program; simply make sure the time matches the resources you have and be clear about expected outcomes for this specific program.

### PART A: WHAT TYPE OF IMPACT IS POSSIBLE?

**Directions:** Review the [six models for impact](#). Determine what type of impact is possible given your discussions in the previous steps. This will help you determine how you articulate your outcomes. Note that you may have multiple types of impact depending on which aspect of the activity or project you are focused on, but try to consider overall impact. And, yes, as we have been asked several times, participants can come up with their own impact model as long as it makes sense.

Type of impact (see options [here](#))

Rationale (Why did you choose this one?)

<p><i>Your responses:</i></p> <p>Proactive</p>	<p><i>Your responses:</i></p> <p>The Greek government, as well as other powerful international organizations, have already demonstrated an interest in combatting commercial sex trafficking. There have been minor, slow interventions implemented such as reporting systems and training curriculums for law enforcement, but they have not been overly effective due to a lack of coordination. The foundation for growth is there, but it requires innovation and collaboration between sectors for sustainable change to occur.</p>
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**PART B: DETERMINE REALISTIC OUTCOMES BASED ON ENTRY POINTS**

**Directions:** Identify realistic outcomes based on the entry points you have identified using the discussion questions as a guide.

*Table: Desired future state guiding questions based on USAID's [Applied Political Economy Analysis Framework](#), [5Rs framework](#), and [gender integration guidance](#).*

<p><b>Questions to consider based on identified entry points</b>  <i>(Note: you do not need to answer each question; they are here as a guidepost to generate ideas &amp; discussion.)</i></p>	
<p><b>Overall outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the target outcomes around which you can define possible success based on the entry points identified? Are the target outcomes valued by local actors? Which ones?</li> <li>• What other positive outcomes can the future system produce? What negative outcomes can the future system stop producing?</li> <li>• What unintended outcomes may emerge from the future system?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Your responses:</i></p>	<p>-Success rates can be tied to number of victims identified and ultimately rescued, number of perpetrators prosecuted, policies developed and ultimately adopted by the government, etc.</p> <p>-The future system must encourage a human-centered, trauma-informed approach that is empathetic towards victims, not discriminatory against them</p>

<b>System level change</b>	<p>To enable the local system to function well, and based on the entry points identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What <b>rules</b> (informal and formal) can realistically be changed?</li> <li>● What <b>incentives</b> can realistically be changed?</li> <li>● What changes in <b>relationships</b> between actors can be realistically achieved?</li> <li>● What changes in <b>power dynamics and gender relations</b> between actors can be realistically achieved?</li> <li>● What <b>roles</b> can be realistically added, subtracted, or changed? Consider also gender roles here.</li> <li>● What <b>barriers</b> can realistically be removed or reduced to achieve equitable outcomes among target groups?</li> <li>● What changes in <b>resource</b> flows or <b>control of resources</b> can be realistically achieved?</li> <li>● What <b>opportunities</b> can realistically be created for previously under-represented or under-served groups?</li> </ul>
<i>Your responses:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Leverage relationships between NGOs to garner more attention from the government</li> <li>-Tailor public awareness campaigns to show hope and restoration for survivors, not pity</li> <li>-Educate the public and frame it as a Greek issue, not a migrant issue; it affects everyone, and all sectors suffer as a result</li> </ul>	
<b>Individual change</b>	<p>To enable the local system to function well, and based on the entry points identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What changes in <b>knowledge, skills, mindsets, or mental models</b> can realistically be achieved?</li> <li>● What changes in <b>behavior</b> can be realistically achieved?</li> </ul>
<i>Your responses:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mindsets around refugee and migrant populations need to shift; find ways to show the traffickers as the 'bad guys,' identify them as the public enemy rather than those who are actually being victimized</li> <li>-Provide education for how human trafficking negatively impacts healthcare, economy, business, politics</li> </ul>	

## PART C: REVIEW OUTCOMES IDENTIFIED

**Directions:** Review the outcomes you have brainstormed using the discussion questions below; then, make adjustments as needed above.

- Are these the highest level outcomes we can hope to achieve or contribute to within the local system during the program period?
- Are they outcomes (changes in the local system) and not outputs (project deliverables)?
- Are there SMART outcomes: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound? Why do you think they are likely to be achieved? Are there any outcomes that are unrealistic given the local context or the amount of time and money available? (Note the connection here to monitoring during implementation.)
- How are the outcomes related to each other? Do certain outcomes need to happen before others? (Note the connection here to assumptions.)
- Can the program be solely responsible for these outcomes? Or do other actors outside of the program need to contribute to achieve these outcomes? (Note the connection here to assumptions.)

**CONNECTION TO MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING DURING IMPLEMENTATION:** As mentioned, ToCs are also helpful management tools during implementation. This step will set you up for more meaningful and effective monitoring of key outcomes during implementation.



## STEP 4 DESIGN THE HOW: INTERVENTIONS

**WHY?** Participants are starting to build a coherent narrative in this step, leading directly into Step 5 (ToC products). This step also helps participants integrate and synthesize all they have talked about in previous steps.

**PRO-TIP:** It is important throughout, but particularly here, to identify your assumptions about how change will happen. These assumptions may start to become most obvious in this step.

### PART A: BRAINSTORM INTERVENTIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

**Directions:** Brainstorm interventions based on your desired future state and entry points using the tables and discussion questions embedded below. The first three boxes (current state, desired future state, and entry points) are discussions you have already had that simply need to be summarized; boxes 4 and 5 are new discussions in this step. Start with (1) desired future state (which priority outcomes are you ultimately working toward?) → then move to the (2) current state vis-a-vis those outcomes → then considering your (3) entry points → identify (4) interventions that bridge the gap between the current state and the desired future state and finally → (5) assumptions that we are making based on how we think change might happen. *If you have distinctly different outcomes under your program, we recommend having one table per outcome.*

*Table 1: Brainstorming interventions and assumptions based on previous steps*

2 Current state	1 Desired future state
<p><i>Sentence summary based on Step 1: Articulate the current state vis-a-vis the desired future state (what is the challenge like now?)</i></p> <p>The Greek government is currently slow to implement widespread programming for law enforcement that effectively combats human trafficking, leading to coordination issues, lack of transparency, and overall ineffectiveness.</p>	<p><i>Sentence summary from Step 3: Articulate the priority outcomes (If you have distinctly different outcomes under your program, we recommend having one of these tables per outcome.)</i></p> <p>The Greek government adopts policy for coordinated law enforcement action that effectively contributes to justice system reforms that target perpetrators, rescue victims, and protect potential victims.</p>

### 3

#### Entry points

*Summarize from Step 2, Part B: Articulate the entry points that will be the jumping off point for moving from the current state to the desired future state*

Because NGOs are the most proactive institutions currently addressing commercial sex trafficking in Greece, partnerships and coordination with one another are a key entry point to promoting sustainable change.

### 4

#### Interventions

**Based on the identified entry points:**

- *What set of interventions could realistically bridge the gap between the current state and desired future state?*
- *What could motivate actors to behave differently in the local system?*
- *How can we support these changes? Who else needs to do what in order to realize the desired future state?*
- *Is there potential for [collective action](#) among stakeholders that USAID could catalyze? What could this look like and achieve? Who needs to come together? How? (Check [this link](#) for several useful USAID collective action resources, including [this resource](#) on how to incorporate collective action into designs and [this resource](#) on how implementing partners can best facilitate collective action during implementation.)*

Intervention 1: Public awareness campaign designed to shift public attitudes towards trafficking while also providing info on how to report it

Intervention 2: Designing trauma-informed curriculum for law enforcement that would improve reporting, tracking, victim identification, etc. that can be presented to

Etc.:  
government officials

# 5

## Assumptions about how change could happen

- *Why do we think this will work?*
- *What assumptions are we making about the local context or about how change could happen?*
- *Note your confidence and risk levels for your assumptions (low, medium, high). Assumptions with low confidence and / or high risk (if it does not hold, the program is in jeopardy) may influence whether you prioritize an intervention and/or should be prioritized for tracking during implementation.*

Assumption 1: xx (low confidence, high risk)

Assumption 2: xx (medium confidence, low risk)

Assumption 3: xx (high confidence, medium risk)

Public awareness/education is low-risk but has delivered varying success levels so medium confidence.

Creating a curriculum for law-enforcement to be presented to a government official is high risk but also potentially high reward. There would need to be a more clearly marked entry point for this to be feasible, so low confidence.

## PART B: PRIORITIZE INTERVENTIONS

**Directions:** Consider the following reflection questions and update your thinking above, as necessary. You may not need to do this step if you have sufficient resources for all the intervention ideas above.

- Which interventions are **most important**? You can use something like the resource-impact matrix or [action-priority matrix](#) to help you prioritize. Consider prioritizing interventions that are high impact and low resources or high impact and high resources (assuming resources are available). You can also use assumptions to help prioritize. Interventions with faulty or low confidence / high-risk assumptions may be deprioritized.
- Are there any considerations for **sequencing of interventions** to achieve the desired future state / outcomes? What needs to happen first?

**CONNECTION TO MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING DURING IMPLEMENTATION:** As mentioned, ToCs are also helpful management tools. To set your team up for using the ToC during implementation, we recommend after this step to:

- Determine which of your assumptions are low, medium, or high confidence. Later you will want to determine how you will track assumptions, particularly those that are low confidence and/or high risk through monitoring and learning activities.
- You may also find here that you still have significant knowledge gaps that make it difficult for you to feel confident in your theory of change. If that is the case, you can use this as an opportunity to articulate learning questions that will resolve those knowledge gaps and strengthen implementation.



## STEP 5

# DEVELOP THEORY OF CHANGE PRODUCTS: NARRATIVE & VISUAL

**WHY?** This is the synthesis of your thinking thus far that you return to throughout implementation. It articulates the what, why, and how of your program!

### PRO-TIPS:

- Do this step as quickly as possible after any facilitated sessions or dialogues following the steps above. You don't want to forget all that great thinking and fail to include it in your theory of change narrative or visualization!
- Each team is different—some may want to start with writing, while others may want to start with the visual. Either way is fine!
- All steps of this process are participatory, but this may be where participants break as a group and identify a skilled writer and/or visual thinker to assemble. It is still participatory in that other stakeholders should review the draft, but it is also often inefficient to write a theory of change narrative or visualize it by committee. Consider who should do these initial drafts, who should review, and who ultimately approves your ToC narrative and visualization (known as the logic model).

**GUIDANCE:** Rather than providing step-by-step instructions here, we have simply described what should be included in both the ToC narrative and logic model. Please refer to these [examples of strong theories of change](#).

Table 2: Developing ToC Narrative and Logic Model

	ToC Narrative	Logic Model
<b>What?</b>	1-3 page write-up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contextual analysis:</b> description of the current state of the development challenge and what is holding the challenge in place</li> <li>• <b>Entry points</b> within the local context that enable change</li> <li>• Intended changes / <b>outcomes</b> that described the desired future state</li> <li>• <b>Interventions</b> that bridge the gap between the current state and the desired future state</li> <li>• <b>Assumptions</b> that make explicit the beliefs about the context that make it likely for the theory of change to hold</li> </ul>	<b>Visual representation</b> of the ToC narrative; no required format.

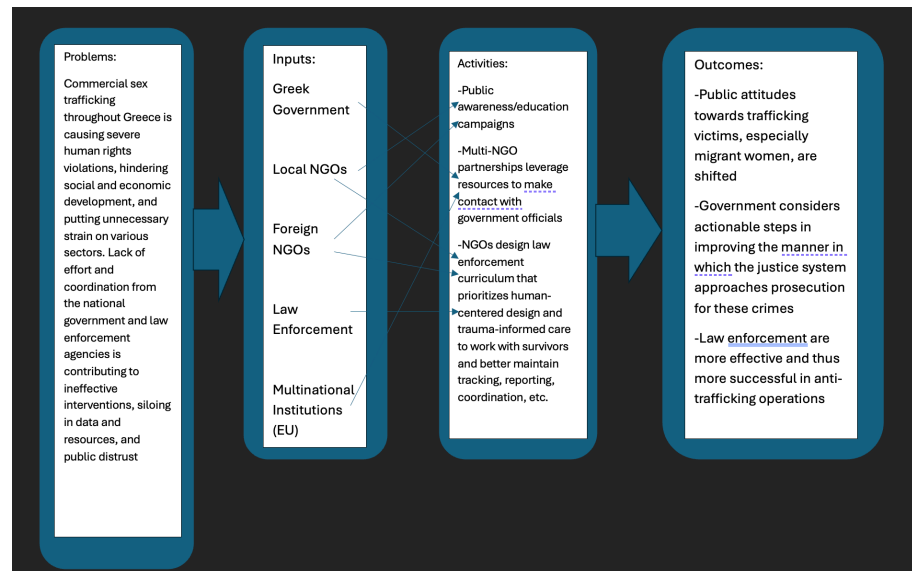
ToC Narrative		Logic Model
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know where the activity or project is headed</li> <li>And how we think it will get there</li> <li>Helps make sure your approach is realistic and achievable based on the context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes communication and engagement with local stakeholders easier</li> <li>Easy reference point to review and reflect on</li> </ul>

Make sure your ToC narrative answers the following questions:

- Context:** What are the important elements of your analysis of the current situation / system to highlight in the ToC narrative? What is holding the challenge in place?
- Entry points:** Where is there momentum to create that change? Identify your prioritized entry points and build the rest of the narrative from the entry points.
- Outcomes:** What is the change we are trying to achieve? Identify 2-3 key outcomes (not outputs) that you will track over the life of the Activity to know if your Activity is contributing to change.
- Interventions:** How will we achieve the change? Do your proposed interventions take advantage of the entry points? Why are they likely to actually work?
- Assumptions:** Why do we think this will work? What are your assumptions (context and programmatic)? Are your assumptions reasonable?

**Make sure your visualization (known as the logic model)** clearly identifies the entry points, outcomes, interventions, and assumptions. The visual will always be a shorthand and will typically not be able to capture the nuance or complexity of the narrative. It is meant to take a complex situation and visualize it as clearly and simply as possible for users to be able to understand quickly what the program does and how it thinks change can be achieved.

**Theory of Change Logic Model DRAFT**



## ANNEX I DEFINITIONS

ASSUMPTIONS	The stated conditions and/or critical events outside the control of the activity that must be in place for outcomes to be achieved. Assumptions form part of the complete theory of change regarding the conditions under which change is envisioned to occur. They may be listed within the logic model itself, or to the side. (ADS201)
CONTEXT (OR SYSTEM) OR CURRENT STATE	In which the development challenge is situated. This includes root causes or drivers underlying the development challenge, as well as circumstances or conditions in the operating context that may affect intended Activity's outcomes and are likely to change.
DESIRED FUTURE STATE	What stakeholders hope the situation will look like once the development challenge is addressed; described by SMART outcome statements.
ENTRY POINT	Momentum concerning the development challenge that could be leveraged to commence or expand an intervention.
INDICATORS	They are used to measure the most important expected Activity outcomes and assumptions. Indicators can be listed alongside the outcomes or assumptions that they represent within the logic model. At a minimum, they must be captured in the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. (ADS201)
INTERVENTIONS	What the Activity intends to implement to directly or indirectly influence a set of outcomes
LOGIC MODEL	A visual or graphic depiction that is a snapshot of a more complete (narrative) ToC. (ADS201)
OUTCOMES	The conditions of people, systems, or institutions that indicate progress or lack of progress toward achievement of program goals. They are any result higher than an output to which a given output contributes, but for which it might not be solely responsible. (ADS201)
OUTPUTS	The tangible, immediate, and intended products or consequences of an activity within USAID's control or influence; the direct result of inputs. (ADS201)
RESULTS	They are significant and intended changes in a development condition that affect people, systems, or institutions. They are outputs and/or outcomes and are achieved as a result of the Activity's interventions. (ADS201)
THEORY OF CHANGE	A narrative description, usually accompanied by a graphic or visual depiction (the logic model), that describes how and why a purpose or outcome is expected to be achieved in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. (ADS201)

## **ANNEX 2 SAMPLES**

Follow the link for [Theory of Change narratives and associated logic models](#).

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