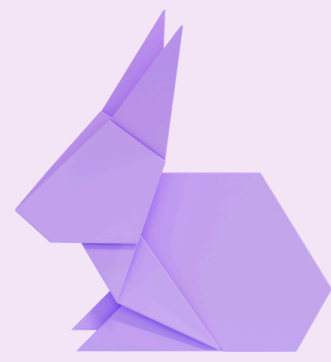


Beyond 'How did it go?'

Evaluating Research Culture Using Theory of Change

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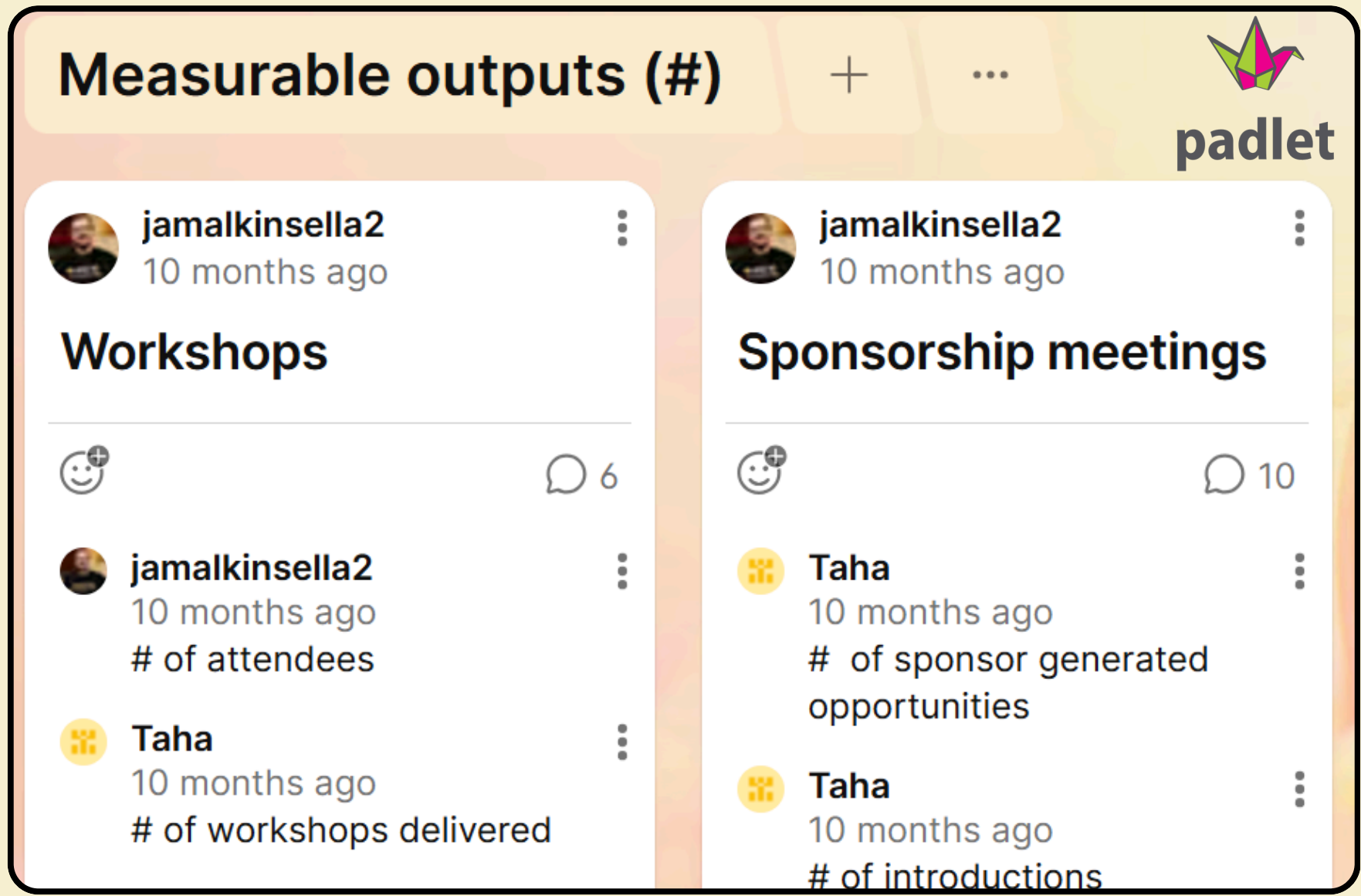
Evaluation often captures specific activities, outputs, and experiences without showing a causal link. This creates a fragmented picture of change.

Theory of Change¹ provides a holistic and transparent model that links what your research culture project does with what changes in the short term, what develops over time, and how these changes contribute to wider impacts.

Your step-by-step guide to making a Theory of Change

Step 1. Define your activities

- a) Define all the activities you'll run in your project
- b) Collaborate to brainstorm all possible outputs, outcomes, and impacts



Example: I used Padlet to map these with my steering group

Step 2. Review all outcomes

- a) Review all outputs, outcomes, and impacts raised
- b) Record your justifications and consider having blind, independent reviewers to increase interrater reliability²

Outputs	Accept?	JK justification
# goals made	Y	Links to coaching & sponsoring
£ funding gained	N	Not applicable to programme
↑ confidence	Partial	Change: ↑ confidence networking

Example: Two reviewers reviewed all steering group comments

Step 4. Develop your theory

- a) Align impact themes with project aims
- b) Separate what you'll measure (outputs), what changes over time (outcomes), and overall change(s) you want to see (impact)
- c) Write a theory for each project activity

Emergent themes for RISE@Manchester:

1. *Visibility & Opportunities*
2. *Career & Development Clarity*
3. *Professional Identity & Confidence*
4. *Belonging & Community*

Step 3. Identify recurring themes

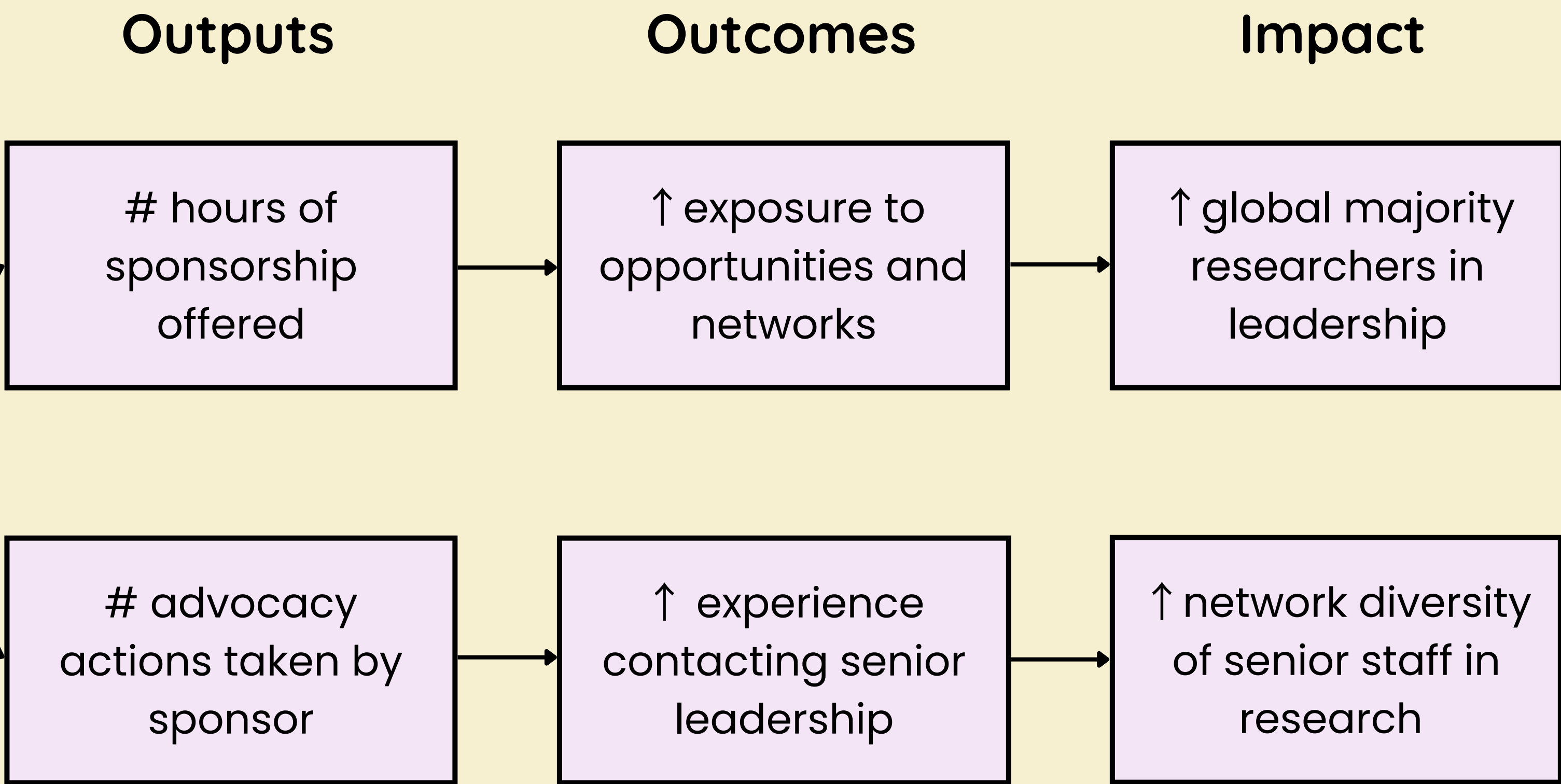
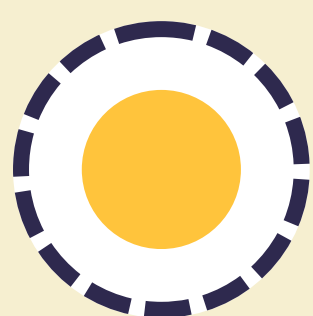
- a) Tag outcomes data with all possible impact themes
- b) Define core impact themes within recurring and overlapping tags
- c) Tie all accepted outcomes and impacts to core impact themes

Outcomes	Tags	Theme
↑ leadership contacts	Visibility, networks	Visibility & Opportunities
↑ meetings attended	Opportunities, influence	Visibility & Opportunities

Example: The key project themes I identified using thematic analysis³

Step 5. Create the full graphic

Convert the written pathways into a visual logic model to complete your Theory of Change!



Example: My simplified Theory of Change for RISE@Manchester's sponsorship model

References

¹ Weiss, C.H. (1997). Theory-based evaluation: Past, present, and future. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 1997: 41-55. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1086>
² Gisev, N., Bell, J.S., Chen, T.F. (2013). Interrater agreement and interrater reliability: Key concepts, approaches, and applications. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 9: 330-338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2012.04.004>
³ Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1: 385-405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410100100307>