

Give Where You Live Foundation

THEORY OF CHANGE AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

WHAT IS A THEORY OF CHANGE?

A theory of change is the articulation of the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide a program and that are identified as critical to producing change or improvement. A theory of change outlines what activities and interventions will be used to create change, and what outcomes are thought to be achievable through those interventions.

A theory of change should tell the story of how activity is linked to outcomes. It uncovers why we think particular interventions will result in specific outcomes, both in the short term and in relation to broader goals (to which a particular program may only contribute to creating, along with other programs and organisations).

The Give Where You Live Foundation has embarked on articulating its Theory of Change to help focus our work so that it aligns with the broad goal we are seeking to contribute to: *"A reduction in entrenched disadvantage and greater social and economic participation that ensures greater equity of opportunity in the G21 region, so that ALL people and places thrive."*

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

While the Give Where You Live Foundation operates in a region that has prospered in recent years, it still faces many challenges. There are pockets within the region where people still face significant barriers to economic participation and where access to opportunities is much more limited.

The graphs and data presented in the figures here indicate the nature and focus of some of these barriers. This 'disadvantage' is about more than living on a low income. It involves a lack of opportunity, and social isolation. See Deep and Persistent Disadvantage, Australian Government Working Paper, 2013.

The work of the Give Where You Live Foundation seeks to focus intentionally on ensuring that people and places experiencing disadvantage have equitable opportunity to benefit from the growing prosperity of the region - and as a result, they too are able to thrive. The Give Where You Live Foundation understands that ensuring that people and places are able to access opportunities requires a range of approaches that can address the intertwined issues that create barriers for people across their life course.

The solutions are not simple, so the Give Where You Live Foundation has developed a Theory of Change that focusses not only on grantmaking, but on ensuring that all our work is innovative and joins together collaboration, evidence and transforming outcomes.

At the core of the Give Where You Live Foundation's work sits our strategic grantmaking - investments and support for programs and organisations focused on three areas: education, employment and life crisis. Research has found that interventions - including early and preventative interventions in these three areas have significant linkages to positive outcomes for people and places.

The first two are also supported through an analysis of data linked to the well-being of communities in the Geelong region. The third area (life crisis) is one that is built on evidence that addressing fundamental needs such as food and shelter, ensuring people build resilience, and have positive connections to others are all critical if people are to not only survive but thrive. For example see Maslow, 1942; UN Sustainable Development Goals; AIFW, 2017.

It is increasingly evident that achieving transformative outcomes in, with and for communities experiencing disadvantage requires collaboration. The Give Where You Live Foundation recognises that this does not 'just happen', but requires common agendas, an intentional investment into convening, and a focus on building up and sharing the evidence base for what works in building social and economic participation. See for example recent research from 'The Winch' North Camden, London. This may require not only collating evidence, but also convening conversations and collaborations across the region to share 'what's working' or to catalyse what could work. It may also mean investing in demonstrating what and how an intervention could work - as the Give Where You Live Foundation is currently doing with the GROW initiative.

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GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE FOUNDATION THEORY OF CHANGE

Collaboration across areas and sectors has multiplier effects in relation to achieving positive outcomes for addressing disadvantage: *“To empower individuals and organisations united in pursuit of a shared mission, we must broaden the scope of systems change programs and invest resources in building foundational components: a shared awareness and language, methods for shared learning and a culture of experimentation, new peer-to-peer governance models, new financial instruments for system-wide investment, peer-validated and data-driven impact evaluation mechanisms, organisational capacity, a sense of agency and plausibility, and the convivial spaces (both literal and metaphorical) for the participation of citizens and professionals alike.”*

Building Impact Movements, The Winch, North Camden, London, 2017

In Australia research has consistently highlighted the links between education, school completion, and positive outcomes in a range of life indicators - from health, to employment, to housing stability. According to recent research: *“The research shows a clear and persistent relationship between socio-economic status and educational outcomes in Australia across all the milestones. While Australia’s highest-achieving students are among the best in the world, the vast differences in educational opportunity across socio-economic groups challenge Australia’s claims of an education system that is fair and competitive by international standards. Socio-economic disadvantage has a greater impact on educational opportunity than any other factor... Differences in outcomes are compounded by differences in access to educational services. Socio-economically disadvantaged students attend fewer hours of early childhood education, have lower attendance at school, are more likely to leave school early, and are less likely to go to university. The effects of socio-economic disadvantage persist well beyond school, reflected in higher chances of not finding full-time work and not being in education and training.”*

Educational Opportunities in Australia, The Mitchell Institute, 2015

IF WE



Invest in and support programs and local organisations

BY

Funding activities and investing in building capability that grows opportunities in:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Assisting people through significant life crisis

THE CHALLENGE

Despite growing prosperity in the region, some people are still doing it tough.

While small program grants have created individual change and connected us to community they have not enabled systematic change.

Indicators of disadvantage haven't changed significantly despite lots of monetary investments to people and places.



Convene and connect people organisations and programs to create strategic and effective solutions

Bringing people and organisations together and aligning effort behind common agendas

Identifying critical issues and advocating for policy, behavioural and cultural change

Leveraging and aggregating knowledge, skills, experience and funding

Creating, collecting and sharing evidence to identify effective solutions



Raise money and awareness

Influencing public opinion and articulating calls to action

Engaging existing and growing new generations of donors and partners

Leveraging other funding

Although the raising of money is critical for the success of any interventions, more money alone does not necessarily lead to better outcomes. The Give Where You Live Foundation also recognises that evidence that points to the role of greater awareness, and the commitment of people from across the region to addressing disadvantage.

“People can’t overcome structural disadvantage when all the odds are stacked against them. These communities are not failing – Australia is failing these communities.”

Dropping Off the Edge, Jesuit Social Services, 2015

Early and preventative intervention can help people and families build resilience over time. However there is also a need to support families when they are in crisis. Evidence suggests that:

“Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise when families encounter a crisis such as domestic / family violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.” Centre for Study of Social Policy, 2012

It is also the case that strong social and community connection can act as a protective factor when people are in crisis. *“Being socially connected is not only influential for psychological and emotional well-being but is also has a significant and positive influence on physical well-being and overall longevity.”*

Loneliness & Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality, Perspectives on Psychological Science, Holt-Lundstad et al., 2015

The strong relationship between unemployment and disadvantage is well established in economic and social policy research. Further, employment has been shown to offer a significant pathway out of disadvantage, (though the journey may not be an easy one).

“Employment is a key trigger for leaving disadvantage... But while paid employment can be a route out of a state of disadvantage, it does not guarantee an absence of recurrent disadvantage as some jobs, particularly low-skilled jobs, are low-paid and hours of available work not assured. Living in a job-poor household is experienced by more people, and appears to be more likely to be long term than joblessness.”

Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia, Australian Government, 2013

The evidence suggests that it is ‘quality’ jobs, that is, jobs with a living wage, opportunities for training and progression and jobs that offer more than casual hours are key to ensuring that employment creates a pathway out of disadvantage.

THIS WILL RESULT IN

More people overcome barriers to education, training and employment and are motivated to acquire and utilise new life and work skills

More equitable access and opportunity for job seekers with employers

Alleviation of a life crisis for more people

More children and young people acquire the basic skills for life and learning

AND EVENTUALLY LEAD TO

Increased learning opportunities and educational attainment in places and for people experiencing disadvantage

Access to, readiness for and retention of sustainable and sustaining jobs for people and places where unemployment is a key part of disadvantage

Reduction in entrenched ‘crisis’ as an inhibiting factor in people’s lives

Creation of effective and innovative networks and partnerships focussed on better solutions and outcomes

Increased capacity of partners and networks to implement effective solutions

More efficient and effective use of limited resources

Building of knowledge, skills and evidence that increases collaboration and support for what works

More committed and engaged donors (current and new)

Stakeholder and donors (current and new) who have understanding and empathy for the issues and the potential change

Increased support and greater resources

AND CONTRIBUTE TO A BROAD GOAL OF

A reduction in entrenched disadvantage and greater social and economic participation that ensures greater equity of opportunity in the G21 region so that ALL people and places thrive.



If the Give Where You Live Foundation is to make a contribution to the broad goal, then there is a need to do things differently, not just to make grants, but to work strategically to build the art and science of making a difference. *“Tackling (complex) problems is an evolving art. They require thinking that is capable of grasping the big picture, including the interrelationships among the full range of causal factors underlying them. They often require broader, more collaborative and innovative approaches. This may result in the occasional failure or need for policy change or adjustment.”*

Tackling Wicked Problems: A Public Policy Perspective, Australian Government, 2012

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The Give Where You Live Foundation also recognises the importance of building a region which understands and supports those who are experiencing disadvantage. Economic research underpins the notion that socio-economic disadvantage and inequality are not just bad for those places that experience them, but also for the regions in which they exist. In effect, disadvantage is bad for everyone - and it's bad for business (see Benner and Pastor, 2012; OECD, 2015).

The Geelong region is one that is changing rapidly. Economic restructuring has resulted in a very different employment and industry base in the region, and the increasing pressure on house prices in neighbouring Melbourne means that more people are migrating towards regional centres like Geelong. This will create all sorts of benefits and challenges for the region. Further, the changing demographics in the area will also add to the opportunities and challenges the region will face. For example, the Geelong region has an ageing population, and so aged care, health and social services are a growing industry in the region. On the other hand, the region also has one of the highest intakes of humanitarian settlement in Victoria - meaning there are opportunities for harnessing a growing diversity of skills and assets in the region. The Foundation's Theory of Change has been designed to adapt and be responsive to an environment that will no doubt change significantly over coming years.

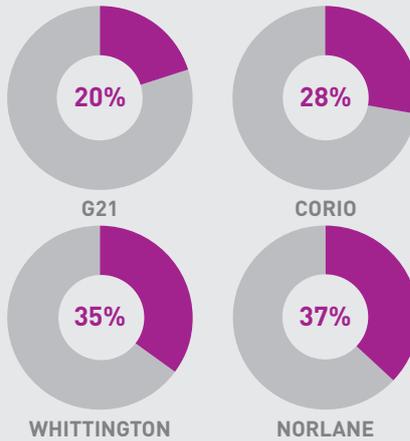
HOW WILL THE THEORY OF CHANGE BE USED?

The Give Where You Live Foundation will use the Theory of Change for both strategic and evaluative purposes. It will serve as a guiding framework for our internal decision-making and our external work. It may also help us to evaluate our work over time, and to guide how we ask partners to think about and evaluate their work. A theory of change is not fixed or perpetual. It should be a living document and grow with the work and the contexts in which it is created. Therefore, the Give Where You Live Foundation's Theory of Change is just the beginning of our journey and will evolve over time.

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

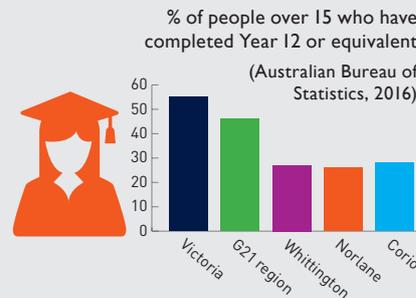


In some parts of the region between one quarter and over a third of households live on low incomes (less than \$650 per week). (Department of Health & Human Services, 2017)



SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES

In some areas, the school completion rate is almost half that of the Victorian average.



6.8% EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY

(Department of Health & Human Services, 2017)



29.5% HOUSEHOLDS IN RENTAL STRESS

(Department of Health & Human Services, 2017)

UNEMPLOYMENT



There are pockets of significant rates of unemployment - up to twice or three times the average across the region.

HUMANITARIAN NEW SETTLER ARRIVALS



Greater Geelong is ranked 7th amongst Victorian Local Government Areas for the number of humanitarian new settler arrivals who are settled in the region. (Department of Health & Human Services, 2017)