Software for Visualizing Theories of Change

INTRODUCTION
Results from Pelican exchange July 2017 in answer to the question: what do you use to "type up" a theory of change or framework (after a participatory development process with stakeholders in a workshop or other)

Some criteria for useful software: 1) easy to edit; 2) electronic to enable sharing with virtual teams and networks; 3) not web-based in light of poor connectivity in many places where partners work; 4) free as everyone, in particular partners in developing countries, can have access to their own copy, take ownership, modify to their future needs (don't use jpgs or pdfs that are not manipulable); 5) ideally part of a software package that everyone uses to overcome learning barrier (such as microsoft office word/excel/smartgraphs though these tools are not ideal)

SOFTWARES

*VUE (Visual Understanding Environment), open source 'mind mapping' freeware from Tufts Univ.
http://vue.tufts.edu/about/index.cfm
Requires sign-up to an account to download. Free.

Omnigraffle
https://www.omnigroup.com/omnigraffle
For Macs only. Paid, not free.

Draw.io
https://www.draw.io/
Successor to Visio. Looks to be free. Online, so internet quality is important.

*Lucidchart
https://www.lucidchart.com/
Flowchart maker, requires account, sign up for free

TOCO Online
http://www.theoryofchange.org/toco-software/
Register is free, premium version available. Online only. Beta version

Coggle
https://coggle.it/
Free version but your diagrams are public (three can be private). Better security / features for $5/month – i.e. all diagrams are private. Online; internet quality is important.

MIRADI
Adaptive Management Software for Conservation projects
https://www.miradi.org/
Free trial for 60 days. $30 for a self-declared low-income individual. $285 to $300 for standard subscriptions.

Standard charting and graphic tools in **Word, Powerpoint, Google Docs, OpenOffice** etc

*Scapple
For drawing interconnected "items" and to use for results-chain diagrams.
https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scapple.php

*LOOPY
useful tool for drawing complex systems and relationships:

http://ncase.me/loopy/

*Decision explorer
http://banxia.com/dexplore/

Very flexible and allows complexity of arguments about change to be represented. This means the analyst/evaluator has to work on the ordering of the components of the theory. But there is a set of tools designed to help.

The model may need simplifying and re-presenting for others' consumption.

*Excel/Word
part of Microsoft Office which everyone has and is more or less familiar with.

*yEd Graph Editor package
Free, standalone https://www.yworks.com/products/yed