ROUND 1 • GROUP 2

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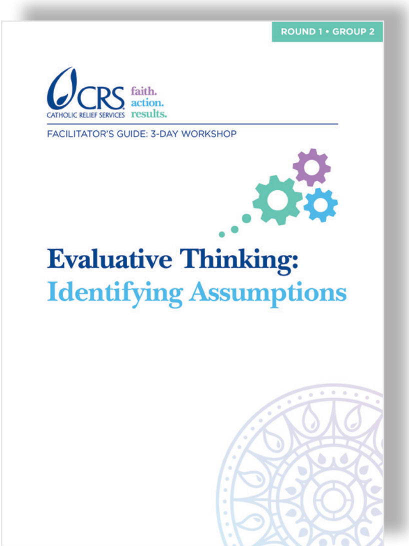
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: 3-DAY WORKSHOP

Evaluative Thinking: Identifying Assumptions



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Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the United States Catholic community. CRS' relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV, health, agriculture, education, microfinance and peacebuilding. CRS eases suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

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Acronyms

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
ET	evaluative thinking
ICT	information and communications technology
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
NGO	nongovernmental organization
SMILER	simple measurement of indicators for learning and evidence-based reporting
ToC	theory of change

Contents

Identifying Assumptions

3-DAY WORKSHOP

There is a paradigm shift taking place in the aid sector away from a predominantly linear-based model of change to one that is more dynamic, reflective and responsive. The evaluative thinking (ET) workshop series is designed to promote ET across an organization and, in turn, increase the quality and efficiency of program planning and MEAL work generally. These in-person workshops are organized into three groups, each intended to be presented annually (although this is not obligatory) over 3 years and facilitated by an ET specialist or MEAL professional. The workshops are also differentiated by group. These groups refer to positions within the organization. Group 1 refers to field-based staff, Group 2 to senior program staff and Group 3 to country leadership.

The following workshop is for Round 1, Group 2 (the first workshop for field-based program staff). The overall goal of this 3-day workshop is to introduce the idea of evaluative thinking and the critical role it plays in program planning, implementation and evaluation work. To this end, participants will practice identifying assumptions, posing questions, suggesting plausible alternative explanations, developing theory of change Pathway Models and critical review.

Learning objectives

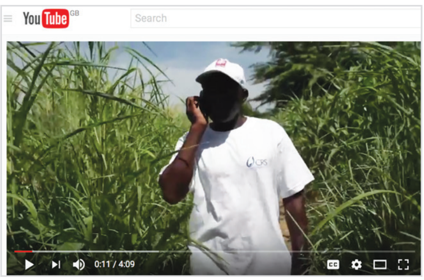
As a result of participating in this workshop, field-based program staff will be able to:

- Talk about and explain ET to others
- Practice ET habits themselves (become reflective practitioners)
- Identify assumptions in program planning and implementation
- Pose learning questions and advise program managers on planning and MEAL work
- Critically review programs and program theories of change
- Promote ET among colleagues in their day-to-day work

In this workshop package you will find:

- A facilitator's agenda
- Slides to present during the workshop (including speaking notes)
- A set of handouts
- Descriptions of how to facilitate each activity
- Workshop planning tips

Watch an overview on evaluative thinking **here**.



Further videos on YouTube

Introducing Evaluative Thinking

Theory of Change Pathway Models

Discovering Assumptions

Developing Project Learning Plans

Making Informed Decisions

Workshop Planning Tips

When planning a workshop, as in planning a program or MEAL work, it is important to allow sufficient time and effort to be thorough in the fine details of the event. To run a successful workshop, there is a lot you need to prepare besides slides and handouts. These planning tips have been developed by experienced evaluative thinking workshop facilitators who have yet to host a flawless workshop!

Consider ET workshop readiness

Before you plan an ET workshop, think evaluatively. Why do you want to plan this workshop? What issue(s) are you seeking to address? When it comes to MEAL work, how intrinsically motivated are members of your organization? Is your program or organization ready to learn about ET? Will there be interest? Are potential participants likely to be engaged by the activities? Is the leadership supportive (will they allow staff to take time away from their regular work)? Is there a need to do a better job with MEAL? The answers to these questions will affect the way you approach planning (see *Responsive facilitation* below).

Participants

Each of the workshops in the ET workshop series is designed for a large group (10-30 people). Most of the activities that make up the workshops are designed for small working groups (3-5 people). When thinking about how many participants to recruit, first consider how many facilitators you will have. Even an expert facilitator working alone should not plan to facilitate more than 4 small groups (12-20 people) at a time. The more facilitators there are, the more groups you can accommodate. However, contrary to the “the more the merrier” idiom, there are diminishing returns to adding more participants and facilitators. It is important that, during large group discussions, all participants can hear each other and feel comfortable enough to share their ideas with a room full of their peer colleagues. Consider issues of office hierarchy when deciding who should attend which workshop, and how the meeting dynamics may differ with, say, junior and senior staff participating in the same workshop.

The next consideration for participant recruitment should be area of work. The workshop series is broken up by “Group.” Group 1 workshops are designed for field-based staff, Group 2 workshops for senior program staff and Group 3 workshops for organizational (country) leadership. For the Group 3 workshop, you will likely generate a shortlist (5-12) of people you would like to recruit. For Groups 1 and 2, you may have to select from a larger population. Consider area of work. Is there one large program that has 4-6 components with its own focused staff members? If so, you can plan for and recruit group members based on this structure. Alternatively, the organization may have a set of 4-6 smaller programs, each with its own staff. This is another excellent way to think about organizing your workshop and recruiting participants. Avoid recruiting participants to be part of a workshop working group that will be focused on a program that they don’t work on. These workshops work best if the activities are authentic; meaning, for example, that participants build theory of change Pathway Models for the program that they actually work on.

Location

Where will you host your workshop? You want to select a location that is affordable and accessible to participants, but also separate enough from their typical work location to avoid distraction and allow for focus on the workshop. In addition, you will also need somewhere that provides some basic workshop amenities: ability to project slides, internet and wifi access, access to refreshments for snack and lunch breaks, and tables and chairs that can accommodate group work. A location that provides access to a printer/photocopier is not a necessity, but certainly a bonus. If you are planning to conduct one of the workshops that involves developing a ToC Pathway Model, you will also need wall space to hang large format paper that participants will need to write on.

Materials

Activity-specific materials are listed in the activity description documents. In addition to these specific items, there are general supplies that the facilitator should have on hand for each workshop:

- Unlined flipchart paper (large format paper that can be used for large group discussions as well as model building)
- Markers (in a variety of colors – a set of four for each group is a good idea)
- Multicolored Post-it notes and/or index cards
- Yarn to serve as a connecting line between objectives in a ToC or Pathway model
- Scissors

- Tape (for hanging chart paper on the wall)
- A pen for each participant
- A camera for recording Pathway Models, brainstorming notes, group work, etc.
- A hole punch if participants wish to insert handouts into their workshop binder
- If you have one, consider taking a “sticky wall”; You never know when it might come in handy!

Timing

There are three types of timing issues to consider: frequency of the workshops over time, timing the workshop within the year, and allocating time on the day for the various activities on the workshop agenda.

The early ET workshops were held on an annual basis. While this worked well for the staff concerned it does not imply that an annual frequency is the only way to organize ET capacity strengthening. You could conduct all three rounds over a shorter space of time, perhaps to try and develop a greater sense of momentum. This decision must be made locally with full awareness of other demands on participants’ time.

Selecting the month and week to schedule your workshop is important. Minimize the burden on participants by selecting a slower time in their program work cycle. It may be a good idea to talk to staff members from each Group in the organization hierarchy to get an idea of what will work best for everyone.

Timing the hours in a workshop day can be one of the most challenging parts of facilitation. Starting and ending on time, while allowing for productive and engaging discussion is often a difficult balance. Two simple tips may help:

1. **Build extra time into the agenda.** The extra 30 minutes at the beginning and end of the day will ensure that the workshop can start on time and that any “housekeeping” items can be addressed, and should ease any concern about running a few minutes over time on any activity or discussion.
2. **Be flexible.** Remember that getting through the agenda is secondary to participants’ learning to think evaluatively. Be responsive – if you are having a very insightful, engaging and productive discussion, let it go on a few extra minutes. If the discussion has waned or feels tedious, move on. Perhaps you will use this time for a productive discussion in the next activity.

Responsive facilitation

The most important characteristics of a good facilitator (like a good program implementer) are responsiveness, timeliness and the ability to adapt. While the materials in this planning package are designed to allow any facilitator in any organization to implement the same set of workshops, each individual workshop implementation should be unique. The context in which the workshop takes place, the individual participants and facilitators, the programs represented, and the dynamics of different groups each significantly affect the way a workshop, or any individual activity, should be facilitated. Workshop facilitators have to be perceptive and open to feedback. They should constantly ask themselves questions like:

> Are participants engaged? If not, how can I help them get engaged? What is their current knowledge/skill group? What is the next step in building their knowledge or skill? Is there an individual in the group that is dominating the others? How can I provide an opportunity for others to contribute? Am I asking participants to do something that is culturally insensitive?

General facilitation tips

- **Focus on preparation:** Have all of the handouts photocopied and in order, other materials organized, and run through the slides on your own as well as with any peer facilitators before workshop day.
- **Be timely:** Take seriously the start and finish times each day and, if possible, after the breaks. It is only fair to those who arrive on time that you should start and finish at the time you previously agreed.
- **Be flexible:** This is worth stating again. If you are not making adjustments to your agenda, you are probably not being as responsive to your participants as you should be. Allow time at the end of each day to reflect and adapt existing plans.
- **Don’t talk too much:** Some “lecturing” is unavoidable, but try to minimize time spent in this way. Research shows that people learn best when they are constructing their own knowledge (via discussion, and thinking activities) rather than having it delivered to them.

Facilitator's Agenda

DAY 1

TIME	TASK	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS	HANDOUTS
8:30am	Introductions and goals		• Consent form • Pre-workshop survey
9:15am	World café	• World café	
10:00am	Break		
10:15am	Introduction to ET and assumptions		• What is evaluative thinking? • What does ET sound and look like? • The MEAL system • Principles for promoting ET • ET strategies and activities • Identifying assumptions
10:45am	Scenario analysis, Thinking hats	• Scenario analysis • Thinking hats	• Scenario analysis • Thinking hats
12:00pm	Lunch		
1:00pm	Introduction to program context and assumptions		
1:30pm	Critical review of anonymous program	• Critical review of program proposal	• Example program proposal • Program proposal review guidance
2:45pm	Break		
3:00pm	Share results of critical review		
3:30pm	Reflect and debrief		
4:00pm	Close		

DAY 2

TIME	TASK	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS	HANDOUTS
8:30am	Simple scenario	• Simple scenario	• Simple scenario
9:15am	Agenda, goals for the day		
9:30am	Introduction to theories of change		• ToC Pathway Models
10:00am	Break		
10:15am	Program mission statement, Develop ToC Pathway Models	• Program mission statement • Developing ToC Pathway Models	• Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models
11:30am	Stakeholder perspectives on theories of change		
12:00pm	Lunch		
1:00pm	Brainstorm context and assumptions		
2:15pm	Break		
2:30pm	Turning assumptions into questions		
3:30pm	Reflect and debrief	• Appreciative pause	
4:00pm	Close		

DAY 3

TIME	TASK	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS	HANDOUTS
8:30am	Goals for the day		
9:15am	Thinking hats, ToC Pathway Model review	• Thinking hats • ToC Pathway Model review	• Thinking hats • ToC Pathway Model review guidance
10:15am	Introduction to working with questions		
10:30am	Break		
10:45am	Question sort: To act or not to act	• Question sort	• Question sort
11:30pm	Learning plan recommendations: MEAL memo	• MEAL memo	• MEAL memo
12:00pm	Lunch		
1:30pm	Role-play: ET conversations, Learning-to-action plan	• ET conversations with stakeholders role-play • Learning-to-action plan	• Learning-to-action plan
2:15pm	Break		
2:30pm	World café: Being an ET champion	• World café	
3:30pm	Reflect/debrief, Post-workshop survey		• Post-workshop survey
4:00pm	Close		

Note to facilitators: The timing of activities (length of time required for each activity as well as their sequence) are suggestions only, based on prior experience and a broad set of priorities. It is often the case that a particular group may need more or less time for a particular task. The facilitator should (a) set their priorities ahead of time so that, in the moment, a quick decision can be made about whether to slow things down or move things along and (b) be prepared to be flexible and make adjustments on the fly. It is good practice to, at the end of each day, review the agenda for the next day, making adjustments based on predetermined priorities and what has been accomplished so far.

HANDOUT LIST

Day 1

Consent form (See Appendix)
Pre-workshop survey (See Appendix)
What is evaluative thinking?
What does ET sound and look like?
The MEAL system
Principles for promoting ET
ET strategies and activities
Identifying assumptions
Scenario analysis
Thinking hats
Example program proposal
Program proposal review guidance

Day 2

Simple scenario
ToC Pathway Models
Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models

Day 3

Thinking hats
ToC Pathway Model review guidance
Question sort
MEAL memo
Learning-to-action plan
Post-workshop survey (See Appendix)

What is Evaluative Thinking?

Evaluative thinking is a relatively new idea in the field of MEAL. Here are some definitions:

> Evaluative thinking is critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation (or MEAL), motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, that involves: identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and making informed decisions in preparation for action.
>
> Buckley, J., Archibald, T., Hargraves, M., & Trochim, W. (2015). Defining and Teaching Evaluative Thinking: Insights from Research on Critical Thinking. *American Journal of Evaluation*

* In the above definition, we define evaluation very broadly, encompassing all MEAL activities and even other reflective professional practice.

> Evaluation is an activity. Evaluative thinking is a way of doing business. This distinction is critical. It derives from studies of evaluation use. Evaluation [or MEAL] is more useful—and actually used—when the program and organizational culture manifests evaluative thinking.
>
> Patton, M. Q. (2014). 'Embracing Evaluative Thinking for Better Outcomes: Four NGO Case Studies'. InterAction report.

A large portion of the capacity necessary to undertake good MEAL involves evaluative thinking.

MEAL requires:

- Knowledge: understanding of the "how" and "why" of basic MEAL concepts, terms, methods and resources
- Working skills: observation, analysis, communication, etc.
- Thinking skills: reflection, questioning, strategizing, mental modeling, perspective taking, decision making, the ability to identify assumptions
- Attitudes: belief in the value of MEAL, an intrinsic motivation to pursue evidence

Evaluative thinking

You know evaluative thinking is happening when you hear things like:

"Why are we assuming X?"
"How do we know X?"
"What evidence do we have for X?"
"What is the thinking behind the way we do X?"
"How could we do X better?"
"How does X connect to our intended outcomes?"
"Stakeholder X's perspective on this might be Y!"

You know evaluative thinking is happening when you see things like:

- More evidence gathering (formal and informal)
- More feedback (all directions)
- Reflective conversations among staff, beneficiaries, leadership, etc.
- More model making/illustrating thinking
- More motivation to do formal evaluation work
- Program evolution/adaptation
- More effective staff and programs

What does ET sound and look like?*

How would you know if someone (or a group of people) was thinking evaluatively? This handout gives some examples of things you might hear people say and see people do that would indicate that they are thinking evaluatively.

Things you may hear:

- Why are we assuming that this will work in this context?
- How do we know?
- What evidence do we have?
- What is the thinking behind the way we do things?
- How could we do better?
- How does what we are doing connect to our intended outcomes?
- What might our participants' perspectives on this be?

Things you may see:

- More evidence gathering
- More feedback covering a range of different perspectives
- Reflective conversations among staff, beneficiaries, leadership, etc.
- More model making/drawings to illustrate thinking
- More motivation to do systematic MEAL work
- Evidence that the program has evolved
- More effective staff and programs
- Greater field staff influence over project decisions

Can you think of anything to add to either of these lists?

Have you seen or heard any of the above in your work context already?

* Developed by Tom Archibald and Jane Buckley

The MEAL System*

This diagram shows the key ways in which monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and accountability and learning (A&L) work together in a MEAL system.

* CRS

Principles for promoting ET*

I. ***Promoters of evaluative thinking should be strategic about engaging learners in evaluative thinking processes in a way that builds on and maximizes intrinsic motivation.*** If staff members in an organization dislike MEAL, yet demonstrate intrinsic motivation to critically reflect on their program's successes and failures as they drive back to the office from a program site together, ET promotion should focus on those naturally occurring discussions as a key starting point.

II. ***Promoting evaluative thinking should incorporate incremental experiences, following the developmental process of "scaffolding"***. A good walker should be coached through progressively more challenging walks and hikes rather than launched immediately into extreme long-distance hikes in difficult terrain. Incremental skill-building is especially important because ET can involve a potentially risky (emotionally or politically) questioning of foundational assumptions. To put this principle into practice, efforts to promote ET should begin by focusing on generic or everyday examples before questioning the philosophical assumptions that may be fundamental to an organization's theory of change.

III. ***Evaluative thinking is not an innate skill, nor does it depend on any particular educational background; therefore, promoters should offer opportunities for it to be intentionally practiced by all who wish to develop as evaluative thinkers***. If an organization's leader asserts that ET is important, yet does not provide opportunities for staff to learn about and practice it, little or nothing will change. Also, efforts to promote ET should not be limited to staff with evaluation responsibilities; ideally, all members of an organization should have the opportunity to think evaluatively about their work.

IV. ***Evaluative thinkers must be aware of—and work to overcome—assumptions and belief preservation***. Promoters should offer a variety of structured and informal learning opportunities to help people identify and question assumptions.

V. ***In order to learn to think evaluatively, the skill should be applied and practiced in multiple contexts and alongside peers and colleagues***. ET can and should be practiced individually, yet applying this principle can leverage the benefits of social learning and help people move away from the notion that ET is done only by MEAL experts and only during formal evaluation events.

* Buckley et al (2015)

ET Strategies and Activities*

1. Create an intentional ET learning environment	**a.** Display logic models in the workplace—in meeting rooms, within newsletters, etc. **b.** Create public spaces to record and display questions and assumptions. **c.** Talk about the importance of evaluative thinking with colleagues. **d.** Highlight the learning that comes from successful programs and evaluations and also from "failures" or dead ends.
2. Establish a habit of scheduling meeting time focused on ET	**a.** Have participants "mine" their logic model for information about assumptions and how to focus evaluation work (for example, by categorizing outcomes according to stakeholder priorities). **b.** In meetings, use opening questions to start an ET discussion, such as, "How can we check our assumptions for accuracy?"; "What plausible alternative explanations are there for this finding?" **c.** Engage in critical debate on a neutral topic. **d.** Develop a meeting checklist that intentionally incorporates time and approaches to encourage ET. **e.** Make time immediately after a community meeting to reflect on what was said and discussed. **f.** Make time at the end of a field visit before heading back to the office.
3. Use role-play when planning evaluation work	**a.** Conduct a scenario analysis (have individuals or groups analyze and identify assumptions embedded in a written description of a fictional scenario). **b.** Take on various stakeholder perspectives using the "thinking hats", or other similar, method in which participants are asked to role-play as a particular stakeholder. **c.** Invite people to play the role of critic in a discussion. **d.** Conduct an evaluation simulation (simulate data collection and analysis for your intended evaluation strategy).
4. Use a diagram or illustration to explain thinking with colleagues	**a.** Have teams or groups create theory of change Pathway Models together. **b.** Diagram the program's history. **c.** Create a system, context and/or organization diagram.
5. Engage in supportive, critical peer review	**a.** Review peer theory of change Pathway Models (help identify leaps in logic, assumptions, strengths in their theory of change, etc.). **b.** Use the Critical Conversation Protocol (a structured approach to critically reviewing a peer's work through discussion). **c.** Take an appreciative pause (stop to point out the positive contributions, and have individuals thank each other for specific ideas, perspectives or helpful support).
6. Engage in MEAL	**a.** Ensure that all evaluation work is participatory and that members of the organization at all levels are offered the opportunity to contribute their perspectives. **b.** Encourage members of the organization to engage in informal, self-guided evaluation work. **c.** Access tools and resources necessary to support all formal and informal evaluation efforts (including the support of external evaluators, ECB professionals, data analyzers, etc.).

* Buckley et al (2015)

Identifying Assumptions*

Program **assumptions** are beliefs about the program and how it will occur. Basic assumptions that are often made about programs include things like, "there is a need for this program," "there will continue to be interest in this program," "this program will be funded." However, program assumptions can, and should, be much more specific than this. For example, "We assume that hands-on field-based activities engage young farmers most effectively." Assumptions like this are often so deep-rooted that they are hard to identify.

- **Explicit** assumptions are those that an individual is fully aware of; and
- **Implicit** assumptions are those that influence someone without them being aware of it.

Why is it important to identify program assumptions?
Identifying program assumptions is important for several reasons. First, assumptions are an inevitable yet essential part of the thinking behind any program. As such, it is important to identify them in order for outsiders to fully understand the program and why it is conducted in the way that it is. Second, program assumptions are legitimate and potentially important focal points for evaluative thinking and learning. For example, if it is assumed that mothers will adopt new hygiene behaviors within a certain time period, we need to check that does actually happen. Providing evidence to support a program assumption helps build the foundation of evidence for the overall logic of the program. Finally, program assumptions can help account for monitoring and evaluation results. For example if the results appear to be "negative" or "below target" the explanation may be that one or more of the assumptions are not accurate.

Remember:
Assumptions are not always "bad." We all make assumptions all the time. The important thing to is identify our assumptions and make a thoughtful choice about how we are going to handle them (Accept? Deny? Question and seek evidence?).

* Developed by Tom Archibald

Scenario Analysis

Staff initiating a 5-year food security project in a rural district in Southern Africa are working on a plan for a 1-day event (10.00-16.00) that will take place at the project office. This event is part of a larger program initiative to engage and inform community members about the planned project activities, new innovative practices that will be promoted and how they hope to engage women to play an active role in the project.

So far, staff have decided that the event will be focused on promoting conservation agriculture and will be open to any family from the district that can make it to the location in the main town when the event will be held. There will be talks, poster boards, a conservation agriculture demonstration site that has been established especially for the occasion, and plenty of opportunities to meet the staff who have already been engaged by the project.

Families will be invited to spend time looking at the poster boards illustrating and explaining conservation agriculture and the agronomic research that underpins it. They will also be encouraged to visit the demonstration site, and to participate actively by asking the demonstrators lots of questions about what they are seeing and hearing. At the end of the day, back in the meeting hall, a film on conservation agriculture will be shown, after which there will be more time for those attending to ask questions and reflect on what they have seen during the day.

As part of their program plan, project staff have designed an evaluation that is focused on demonstrating the impact of this event to the donor. Staff would like to claim that the one-day event has had a positive effect on families' attitudes towards and interest in conservation agriculture. To collect the information needed to make these claims, the staff have decided to use an existing survey* of community members' attitudes toward conservation agriculture to be given to all those attending the event, both before (pre) and after (post) the film showing and discussion, the day's final event. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

ASSUMPTIONS ANALYSIS

1. What assumptions—explicit and implicit—do you think the program staff described in this scenario are working under? (Don't forget about foundational assumptions!)
2. What alternative approaches or interpretations could these characters have used if they were aware of their assumptions?
3. What questions might they need to answer?

* Developed for the original project assessment work as a contribution to project design.

Thinking Hats*

Based on very popular work in organizational management by Edward de Bono, Thinking Hats helps people take on different perspectives to see an issue in different ways.

Six distinct directions of thought are identified and assigned a color:

- **"Big Picture"** (Blue) - What is the subject? What are we thinking about? What is the goal?
- **Factual** (White) - Considering purely what information is available, what are the facts?
- **Emotional** (Red) - Intuitive or instinctive gut reactions or statements of emotional feeling (but not any justification).
- **Negative** (Black) - Logic applied to identifying reasons to be cautious and conservative.
- **Positive** (Yellow) - Logic applied to identifying benefits, seeking harmony.
- **Creative** (Green) - Statements of provocation and investigation, seeing where a thought goes.

Have someone tell a story about a recent event or experience they had, with other people choosing and "trying on" one of the other colored hats. How does it feel to think in those ways?

SCENARIO

You work as a member of a team for a 5-year project that is in its second year of operations. Although there have been the inevitable hiccups as the project is implemented, particularly at start-up time, all the issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the communities, the donor and the senior management team. The donor has indicated that it is interested primarily in the outcomes and impact of the project, although it does have to report annually on the numbers of beneficiaries and services delivered.

The project has a well-developed theory of change that was a major factor in winning the bidding process and being awarded the funding. But already some of the monitoring data is suggesting that not all members of the communities in which the project is working are responding to the project's interventions in the way that was initially anticipated.

As part of an ongoing effort to strengthen project management processes, the senior staff in your project announce that they are going to organize and manage the project quarterly meetings in a way that will encourage evaluative thinking. Although these senior staff members seem enthusiastic about the approach, they don't have much knowledge of ET, nor do they have solid experience from elsewhere in using ET in this manner. They have floated their idea among all staff, and would now like to meet to discuss the matter.

What would you advise?

* De Bono (2010). Scenario by Guy Sharrock.

Example Program Proposal*

Catholic Relief Services proposes the 2-year **Promoting Recovery in Exeland Project (PREP)**. The project aims to reduce the food insecurity of vulnerable individuals in 8 districts of Exeland within 5 years. PREP will not only address the urgent food needs of vulnerable households in the short term, but will also lay the foundation for sustainable recovery of food security in the long term.

The past year has witnessed several promising economic and political developments in Exeland, including a relatively successful harvest and the formation of a Government of National Unity. These are important steps toward creating an atmosphere conducive to recovery from the political, socio-economic, and environmental shocks of previous years.

Nonetheless, food insecurity remains a critical issue for Exeland. Years of deteriorating infrastructure and fading government services have contributed to diminished domestic food production, which is insufficient to meet consumption requirements. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) estimates that 15 percent of the population—2 million people—are food insecure. With annual food commodity shortfalls nearing 250,000 MT, it is vital to address the emergency food needs of transitorily food-insecure people to prevent them from going hungry during the hungry season later this year. Urgent interventions are needed to improve the still-limited availability of, and poor economic access to, food.

The goal of PREP is **reduced food insecurity for vulnerable individuals in 8 districts of Exeland within 5 years.** The PREP consortium will achieve two strategic objectives (SOs) designed to address emergency food needs, and assist households to re-establish their food security.

SO1: Emergency food needs of 151,280 individuals are addressed. To address transitory food needs, PREP will leverage CRS' and the consortium partners' food aid experience to make food available to the most food-insecure populations in targeted areas of Exeland. In rural areas, PREP will directly distribute food to 151,280 individuals through vulnerable group feeding (VGF) during the hungry season, allowing them to conserve assets for the following planting season.

SO2: 91,605 vulnerable households have re-established food security. To lay the foundation for recovery of food security, PREP will implement a series of activities designed to help more than 90,000 households increase their food production. More than 62,000 food aid recipients will create or improve 1,037 productive assets through food-for-assets (FFA) activities that will reduce reliance on rainfed agriculture, and increase crop and livestock production for household consumption and for marketing. In addition, PREP will train thousands of vulnerable farmers in conservation agriculture, farming as a business, and improved livestock production.

To enhance rural livelihoods and improve economic access to food, PREP will employ a market-based approach, including analyzing value chains and engaging the private sector. This will inform trainings for 2,500 farmers in strategies for income generation. PREP will facilitate access to price information and connect these farmers to markets by creating linkages between 100 farmer groups and the private sector. These activities will benefit from the consortium partners' expertise in the value chain methodology.

Finally, to help mitigate the risks of future economic shocks to food security, PREP will form 760 village savings and loan groups to encourage people, mostly women, to accumulate savings and borrow money for income-generating activities, benefiting 11,400 households.

PREP will leverage local knowledge and networks by working in partnership with a core group of strong Exeland NGOs. These NGOs will bring their extensive experience in food aid, agricultural and livestock production, and marketing to SO1 and SO2. They will contribute by helping vulnerable communities sustainably utilize and protect the resources they already have. In partnership with these organizations, the PREP consortium will help vulnerable households re-establish their food security and work toward a resilient and sustainably food-secure Exeland.

PREP will employ a consortium-wide monitoring and evaluation approach that ensures evidence-based programming decisions and detailed tracking of progress towards the objectives described above. A set of indicators, including Food for Peace (FFP) and Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) indicators, will be measured regularly by PREP and partner staff, and reported centrally through the consortium. Initial values and final targets may be adjusted according to the results of a baseline survey. PREP will also track a number of trigger indicators to help indicate the onset of new localized or national food security emergencies in Exeland. With its network of strategic partners in Exeland, extensive experience working with the World Food Programme, worldwide emergency response experience and ongoing programming in other areas of the country, the PREP consortium is well-positioned to respond quickly and shift resources to address the most urgent food needs inside or outside of the PREP target districts.

* Developed by Guy Sharrock

Program Proposal Review Guidance*

1. What is the ultimate goal of this program?
2. In three sentences or less, describe how the authors of this proposal intend to go about achieving this goal.
3. Look for missing information. What questions do you have for the authors?
4. Look for good ideas and note/highlight them. Which activities/plans do think will work best?
5. How have the authors addressed the specific needs of their context? What have they missed?
6. If you see big leaps in logic, or if something in this proposal makes you skeptical, make a note.
7. If you see something that makes you wonder about an issue, add a brief note with a suggestion if possible.
8. Focus on the monitoring and evaluation section of the proposal. What information is missing, if any? Do the authors seem to be asking the "right" questions?
9. What other assumptions are the authors making that you think are important but were not mentioned above?
10. How would you advise the authors of this proposal to revise their plans for this project, if at all?

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Simple Scenario*

Imagine a field staff member visiting one of the communities she is working in. The project she is working on aims to provide advice on the importance of handwashing before handling food and after visiting the latrine. She runs the training and all those who attend are able to demonstrate that they have understood the information she is providing.

Three months later, when she visits them to monitor progress and uptake, she finds that only some are following the advice, some are not, and a few are following it inconsistently according the guidance given at the training. She is surprised and shocked. She had thought that everyone had understood the value of handwashing as she had provided all the evidence and the experiences at other sites, everyone seemed very appreciative, and they had all shown that they understood what was being said.

What might explain this variability in adoption of the message?

Scenario analysis

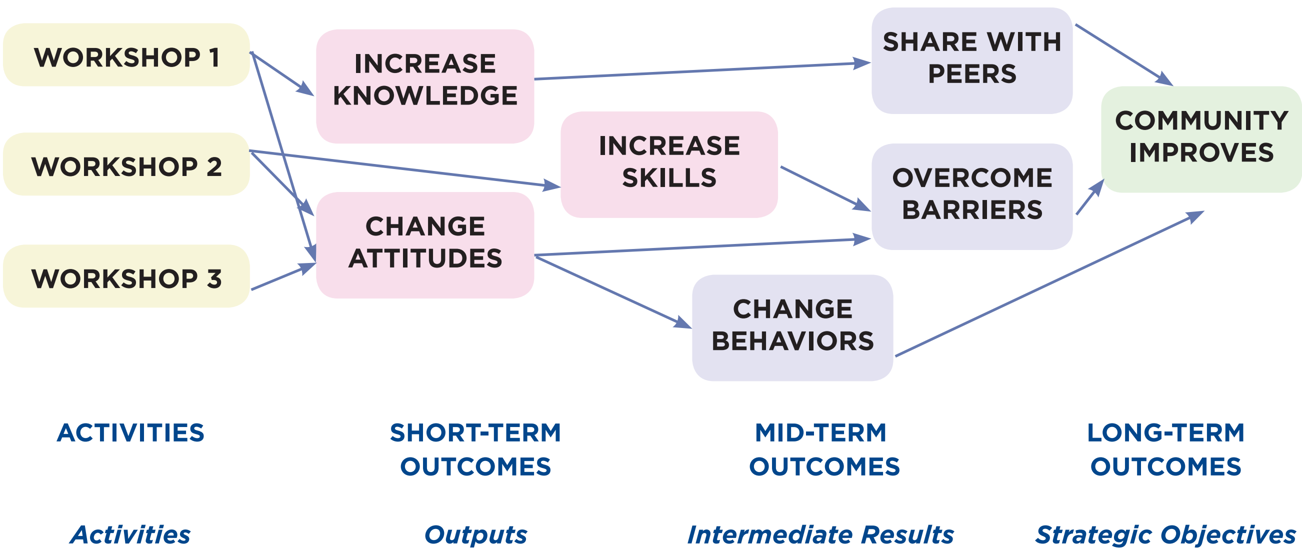
- What assumptions—explicit and implicit—do you think the field staff member might be making in thinking that everyone would adopt the handwashing advice?
- Think of as many assumptions as possible.
- Share your ideas in the large group.

* Developed by Guy Sharrock

ToC Pathway Models*

A theory of change (ToC) Pathway Model is a graphical representation of the relationships between the activities, outputs and outcomes that make up a program or project. Its format is unique in that it illustrates the individual relationships between particular activities and outcomes, instead of just listing them in columns for example. ToC Pathway Models communicate the "story" of a program, that is, the ways in which the program planners imagine the effect of the program activities on the program's intended results. ToC Pathway Models can also be used to inform the scope and questions that guide the evaluation of the program being modeled.

Activities	Outputs	Intermediate Results	Strategic Objectives
... are the primary mechanisms by which program outcomes are achieved. They are often conducted or implemented by program staff.	... are changes directly connected to activities, typically including awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills; these are the first set of outcomes that might be observed following the intervention of an activity(s).	... are changes directly connected to activities, short- or other mid-term outcomes, typically including behavior, or decision making; these are a bridge between outputs and strategic objectives.	... are ultimate changes or impacts, directly connected to mid- or other long-term outcomes, typically including social, economic, civic, or environmental changes.
Examples: • Workshop on [topic] • Site tour(s) • Materials development	Examples: • Increased knowledge • Improved skills • Improved attitudes	Examples: • Participants apply knowledge to outside contexts • Participants adopt and use new methods	Examples: • Change in knowledge of the broader population • Increased economic stability



* Modified from Netway's **Logic Model Definitions and Guidance**
Trochim et al (2012)

Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models*

1. MODEL COMPONENTS

- ***Activities*** are things done by program staff that reach participants or targeted audiences.
- ***Outputs*** *(short-term, or ST, outcomes)* are learning connected to activities, resulting in changed awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, opinions, aspirations and motivations; these are the first set of outcomes that might be observed.
- ***Intermediate Results*** *(mid-term, or MT, outcomes)* are effects connected to activities or outputs, including changes in behavior, practice, action or decision making, policies or social action; these are a bridge between outputs and strategic objectives.
- ***Strategic Objectives*** *(Long-term, or LT, outcomes)* are ultimate impacts, connected to outputs or intermediate results, on social, economic, civic, or environmental conditions; these are the last or 'highest' set of outcomes that might be observed.

2. NOTES ON MODEL BUILDING

There may be ...

- More than one arrow coming FROM an activity or outcome (outputs, IRs, and SOs)
- More than one arrow going TO an outcome
- Arrows AMONG outcomes in a column (outputs leading to other outputs, IR to other IR, etc.)
- Arrows in BOTH DIRECTIONS between two outcomes

There should NOT be ...

- An outcome with no arrow leading to it
- An activity with no arrows leading from it

Ideal level of detail? – It depends on how you intend to use the model and who you intend to share it with.

Look at the completed Pathway Model and ask:

- Are there any activities that are not connected to any outcomes?
- Are there any outcomes that are not connected to any activities? If yes, why do these gaps exist? Was something simply left out of the model?
- Is the program expected to lead to a particular outcome, but does not actually include an activity that would result in that outcome?

* Hargraves et al (2015)

ToC Pathway Model review guidance*

1. Look for good ideas and note/highlight them. These might include particularly good or novel outcomes, good links, whatever deserves acknowledgment and recognition.
2. If you see big leaps in logic, add a brief note with a suggestion if possible. A big leap is where there is an arrow from an activity all the way to an intermediate result or strategic objective, or an output all the way to a strategic objective, etc. It could also be a one-step arrow if there's a big leap of logic, which often indicates something is being skipped over.
3. If you see something that makes you wonder how the program defined an issue, add a brief note with a suggestion if possible.
4. If you see something that is likely to be confusing to an outsider, or that could be worded more clearly, mark it and add a brief note with a suggestion if possible.
5. From your own perspective and what you know of the key stakeholders' perspectives, think about whether the model captures a full view of the program. If necessary, propose an additional outcome or activity.
6. Look for themes or common threads among outcomes and make a note of them.
7. If you think there is a key assumption being made that may have been missed, make a note.
8. If you think there is a key contextual factor that should be mentioned, make a note.
9. Step back and think about the model overall. Prepare some comments and observations to share as appropriate.
10. Which outcomes have existing evidence?
11. Which outcomes do you think need more evidence?

* Hargraves et al (2015)

Question Sort*

No evidence needed at this time	Informal evidence-gathering needed	Formal evidence-gathering needed
Definition: *This question is based on an assumption that we are comfortable with, or we already have sufficient evidence to support, this assumption.*	Definition: *A rapid, relatively informal approach would provide sufficient evidence to address this question.*	Definition: *A formal, systematic approach to evidence gathering is needed to address this question.*

* Developed by Jane Buckley (2016)

MEAL Memo*

The purpose of this activity is to give you the opportunity to reflect on and consolidate the evaluative thinking work that you have done so far about your program. It is also an opportunity for you to have a taste of what it feels like to have MEAL add value to your work.

Steps:

1. Pretend you have the power to make all MEAL decisions for your program or project. You do not have to report to any funder or stakeholder that you don't want to.
2. Write a memo (of about one page) that outlines what you would like to have done. Use the table below to help organize your thinking:

Question you would like addressed	Evidence you require	Intended use of the results (e.g. decision making, reporting to the community, etc.)	Who will do this work? When?
Question you would like addressed	Evidence you require	Intended use of the results (e.g. decision making, reporting to the community, etc.)	Who will do this work? When?

* Developed by Jane Buckley (2016)

Learning-to-Action Plan*

Purpose of exercise: To help you apply the lessons and skills learned here to your work.

Your name: ______________________________

Your program: ______________________________

Think about what you learned in this workshop. Which practices can you use in your program?

____

Name three specific things you will do to promote ET in your program work within the next month.

1) ____

2) ____

3) ____

How do these practices fit with existing activities or approaches in your program?

____

How will you implement these changes over the next month?

____

Name three specific things you will do in the long-term, beyond the next 3 months, to promote ET in your program work:

1) ____

2) ____

3) ____

How do these practices fit with existing activities or approaches in your program?

____

What resources do you have in your organization to support the adoption of new practices in your program? Think about the people, processes and materials available.

____

* Tom Archibald (2016) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

World Café*

OBJECTIVE: To get participants thinking and talking about "big-picture" ideas.

45 MINUTES

IN THREE GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
All ET workshop participants

MATERIALS:
- Three pieces of chart paper (one for each prompt on the *World Café* slide)
- Three different colored markers

SET-UP
Divide all the participants into three groups. Because this activity is not program specific, it is an opportunity to group people differently. For example, you could ask participants to count off by threes, then group the ones together, twos together and threes together.

STEPS
1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Give each group a piece of chart paper and a marker.
3. Assign each group one of the three prompts on the slide. Ask them to write (shorthand is fine) the prompt at the top of the piece of paper.
4. Each group should then spend 10 minutes discussing the prompt they have been assigned.
5. After about 9 minutes have passed, give a 1-minute warning.
6. At the end of 10 minutes, ask the groups to stand up, leave their marker and paper where they are, and rotate (as a group) to the next prompt in clockwise order.
7. Repeat steps 3 to 5.
8. When each group has had a chance to respond to each prompt, gather the large group together for a roughly 15-minute discussion. Working through each prompt, ask participants to share the most salient points that arose in their small-group discussions.

APPROACH
- The World Café is an activity often used at the beginning or end of a workshop. It is a good tool for prompting open-ended, big-picture thinking. To that end, it is important to be inclusive of all ideas that arise.
- This may be your first opportunity to demonstrate to participants that they all have an important voice at this workshop and in their program's MEAL work. Be explicit about wanting everyone's ideas to be represented in the notes that result from this activity.

- When used at the beginning of a workshop, the World Café can be an efficient way of previewing the concepts that you will cover in subsequent slides and activities.

TIPS

- At the first rotation, ask groups to briefly review what the previous group recorded so that they do not duplicate it.
- Circulate between the groups to ensure that participants understand the language used in the prompts. Try NOT to join the conversation, or provide ideas. Reserve this only for groups who have truly stalled their conversation.

* Brown and Isaacs (2005)

Scenario Analysis

OBJECTIVE: To give participants experience in identifying assumptions and, more generally, thinking evaluatively about a safe, "neutral" scenario.

45 MINUTES

IN PROGRAM GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers and field-based staff

MATERIALS:
- One copy of the handout *Scenario Analysis* per participant
- Participants' own pen and paper for notetaking

STEPS
1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute the handout to each participant.
3. Ask each participant to take 2 to 3 minutes to read over the scenario provided on the handout
4. Working with their group members, participants should spend about 30 minutes working through the following three tasks: Identify...
   a. What assumptions—explicit and implicit—do you think the program staff described in this scenario are working under? (Don't forget about foundational assumptions!)
   b. What alternative approaches or interpretations could these staff have used if they were aware of their assumptions?
   c. What questions might they need to answer?
5. Give a 5-minute, and then a 2-minute warning before moving to a large group discussion.
6. Spend the remaining time (about 10 minutes) reflecting on the activity. Consider using prompts like:
   a. How were you able to identify the assumptions being made by the staff in this scenario?
   b. How did this activity contribute to your ability to think evaluatively?
   c. How did talking with your fellow group members contribute to (or inhibit) your ability to identify assumptions and think evaluatively?

APPROACH

- A scenario analysis allows the participant to consciously practice evaluative thinking. Because the scenario is realistic, the thinking that goes into the analysis is very similar to the thinking participants would do about their own program. However, because the scenario is fictional, participants' thinking is not influenced by their personal assumptions about their program, relationships with their colleagues, etc.
- According to the principles for promoting ET, activities must be experienced incrementally. The scenario analysis is one of the first steps in this incremental process. In other words, the scenario analysis is an important prerequisite for later activities, including the Pathway Model and learning plan critical review.

TIPS

- Unlike some other small group discussion activities, during the scenario analysis, it is a good idea for the facilitator to join the conversation and model (demonstrate) what it means to identify an assumption. However, it is important for the facilitator to then retreat and allow the group to continue their discussion without the facilitator.
- Use the plenary group at the end of this activity to talk about the process of thinking evaluatively. Later, when groups are working on their own program materials, it will be harder to step "outside" and reflect on the thinking process itself.

Thinking Hats*

OBJECTIVE: To practice the skill of critique consciously, by adopting the various attitudes represented by the various different colored hats. The hope is that, in future work, participants will use the Thinking Hats strategy when considering how to approach a problem, review a program plan or model, etc.

30 MINUTES

IN GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
All participants

MATERIALS:

- Copies or viewable display(s) of the material to be critiqued.
- OPTIONAL: Different colored hats for participants to wear. Alternatively, you could use name tags with the color and type of attitude displayed.

SET-UP

The "thinking" part of the Thinking Hats exercise can be applied to almost anything: a theory of change, program plan, newspaper article, essay, event, etc. Set-up will be determined by what you plan to think about. In the case of theory of change Pathway Models, be sure that each model is readily viewable by participants, either as a poster or an individual handout.

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Review (describe) each of the six thinking hat perspectives: positive, creative, "big-picture", factual, negative and emotional
3. Ask participants to assign themselves a hat color. No color should be repeated within a group unless that group has more than six participants.
4. Participants should spend about 3 to 5 minutes silently looking over the materials to be critiqued, considering how they might think about the materials from the perspective they have selected.
5. Group members should then spend 20 to 25 minutes taking turns commenting or engaging in a role-play conversation about the materials while remaining "in character."
6. Return to the large group and debrief:
   a. How did it feel to wear the hat you were assigned?
   b. What came up during your discussion?
   c. How did this activity help you think evaluatively?
   d. How could you use this activity (or something like it) in your work?

* De Bono (2010)

Critical Review of Program Proposal*

OBJECTIVE: Participants will use evaluative thinking skills to critically review an anonymous or peer program. In particular, participants will identify assumptions and pose questions about the program as well as consider the program context and stakeholders.

45 MINUTES

GROUPS OF 2-5 PEOPLE AT A TABLE

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Any/all members of a program/organizations

MATERIALS:
- One copy per participant of the handout *Program Proposal Review*
- Chart paper and marker to record notes and recommendations

STEPS
1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute handout.
3. Participants take about 2 minutes to read the materials silently to themselves.
4. Groups take 30 minutes to discuss their responses to the provided questions/prompts.
5. Groups then share the results of their discussion with the facilitator and any other groups via a large group debrief (about 10 minutes). Notes are taken on chart paper.

APPROACH
- This activity is designed to build a basic and fundamental ET skill, namely the ability to critique. The focus should be on practicing ET rather than on the particular content of the materials. However, participants should be encouraged to consider how the program described in the materials is similar or dissimilar from their own program.
- Ideally, participants will be conscious of their ET practice, and will push themselves to offer alternatives, uncover less obvious assumptions, etc.
- Participants should, instinctively, put themselves in the shoes of the authors of the program. For example: How would they have written this proposal differently? Would they be able to offer the same types of critiques to their peers? Themselves?
- This kind of critical review of a program proposal is a type of evaluation that can, theoretically, be acted upon. For example, in reviewing their own proposal documents, participants may realize that an important activity needs to be added to the program in order for the ToC to be plausible.

TIPS
- The facilitator(s) should circulate during this activity, moving around the room to listen in on each conversation. It is important that the facilitator allow each group to have some unobserved work time as some participants are more likely to speak when the facilitator is not listening in. It is also important that no group be overlooked, as they may get off track or mired down in details.
- Facilitators should look for (and use) opportunities to push groups further. Try using opening questions like:
    - What makes you wonder about that assumption?
    - What foundational assumptions can you identify?

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Simple Scenario*

OBJECTIVE: Participants will gain an initial understanding of how assumptions underpin so much of development work and, more generally, how to think evaluatively about a simple handwashing scenario.

20 MINUTES

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers and field staff

MATERIALS
- One copy of the handout *Simple Scenario* per participant
- Pen and paper per participant for notetaking

STEPS

a. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.

b. Distribute the handout to each participant.

c. Ask each participant to take 2-3 minutes to read over the simple scenario. Working with their group members, participants should spend about 7-8 minutes identifying what assumptions the field staff member might have made?

d. Give a 2-minute warning before moving to a large group discussion.

e. Spend the remaining time (about 10 minutes) collecting the assumptions that participants have identified, and then reflecting on the activity. Consider using prompts like:
- How were you able to identify such assumptions?
- How did this activity contribute to your ability to think evaluatively?
- How did talking with your fellow group members contribute to (or inhibit) your ability to identify assumptions and think evaluatively?

APPROACH

- This example allows the participant to consciously practice evaluative thinking. Because the scenario is realistic, the thinking that goes into the analysis is very similar to the thinking participants would do about their own program. However, because the scenario is fictional, participants' thinking is not influenced by their personal assumptions about their program, relationships with their colleagues, etc.
- According to the principles for promoting ET, activities must be experienced incrementally. The handwashing analysis is one of the first steps in this incremental process. In other words, it is an important prerequisite for later activities including the ToC Pathway Model and learning plan critical review.

TIPS

- The facilitator should join the conversation and model (demonstrate) what it means to identify an assumption, and then allow the group to continue their discussion.
- Use the large group at the end of this activity to talk about the process of thinking evaluatively. Later, when groups are working on *their own* program materials, it will be harder for them to reflect objectively on the thinking process itself.

APPROACH

- This activity embodies two key approaches to promoting ET: perspective-taking and critique. It is an opportunity to practice ET as well as to produce real-life feedback to a peer or peer program.

TIPS

- Encourage participants to stay in character. It is fine to exaggerate the attitude; in fact, it helps.
- Have fun with this. Bring silly hats, etc. The more participants feel that they can use their hat as an explanation for their comments, the more they will contribute to the role-play.
- Remind participants that we all take on each of these perspectives at some point, maybe even all of them within the same workday. The point is to recognize the power of these attitudes/approaches, as well as the power of being able to consciously move between them.
- Point out to participants the value of wearing hats to depersonalize critical comments, should such commentary be needed.

* Developed by Guy Sharrock

Program Mission Statement*

OBJECTIVE: To have participants identify the ultimate goal of the program, and state it as briefly as possible.

15 MINUTES

INDIVIDUALLY, AND THEN WITH A NEIGHBOR

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

Program managers and field staff

MATERIALS:

- Pen and paper

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Participants take about 5 minutes to write one sentence that clearly describes the overall goal/purpose of the program.
3. Once participants have finished writing their individual sentences, ask them to turn and talk to someone sitting next to them (who is working on the same program):
   - How are your sentences the same? Different?
   - What might explain these differences?
   - How might these differences be reflected in the model? How will you resolve this (if needed)?

APPROACH

- This activity is designed as a warm-up for model building. The intention is to get participants engaged in “big picture” thinking about their program. In addition, noticing differences among their peers and colleagues may help prepare them for the differences of perspective and opinion that are likely to arise during the model-building process.

TIPS

- Remind participants to restrict themselves to one sentence. This may involve selecting priorities, and that is part of the point. We are interested in how one individual’s priorities may differ from another’s.

* Trochim et al (2012)

Developing ToC Pathway Models*

OBJECTIVE: To have participants identify the ultimate goal of the program, and state it as briefly as possible.

75 MINUTES

PROGRAM GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers and field staff

MATERIALS:

- Index cards (yellow, pink, blue and green)
- Black markers (2-3 per group)
- Tape or glue stick
- Large format paper
- Pencils

SET-UP

Each group will need wall and table space to build the model. Prior to the workshop, the facilitator may decide to create a "starter set" of index cards. To do this, the facilitator will need to review any available program documents (a proposal for funding works well) in order to identify a short list of activities, outputs, intermediate results and strategic objectives. These lists should then be transcribed onto separate color-coded index cards (yellow=activity, pink=output, blue=intermediate result, green=strategic objective). In other words, the facilitator should write one activity on each yellow card until the list is completely represented, and so on. When this is complete, the facilitator may want to put the whole set into a small plastic bag in order to keep them together until it is time to provide them to the program group.

In some cases, the facilitator may decide not to create a starter set of cards. But in cases where the program is brand new, hasn't been implemented yet, or needs total revision, returning to previously documented thinking can be detrimental.

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute and review the handout *ToC Pathway Models.*
3. Explain "starter sets" of cards (where they came from, that they can be revised and added to) if applicable.
4. Allow at least 60 minutes of work time.

APPROACH

- Building ToC Pathway Models is the landmark activity in the ET workshop series. Representing thinking visually is a key skill of evaluative thinkers. In addition, building the model necessitates evaluative thinking conversations; building the model has an evaluative process use; and the completed model is an important starting point for developing a high-quality program learning plan.

- The idea is that evaluative thinking will lead to the development of a newer, better version of the theory behind the participants' programs. If the ToC Pathway Model is significantly different from the theory or framework they walked in with, that might be a really good thing. Talk to participants about the significant changes they have made and why. This will drive home the value of ET and developing a ToC Pathway Model.

TIPS

- When a starter set of cards has been provided, some individuals/groups will want to start with strategic objectives, others with activities. Still others will want to stay seated at the table and review all the cards before working on the wall. All of these strategies are good ones. The key for program groups is to figure out how to work together productively.
- When a starter set of cards has not been provided, it is better to start with the strategic objective(s) and plan down towards activities.
- The facilitator(s) will need to actively rotate between groups during this work time. This is an activity that facilitators will need to "dive into"; don't be afraid to insert yourself into a group and their conversation, ask probing questions, offer suggestions. Each group will *need* an outside perspective on their thinking.
- Advise groups not to draw lines in ink (use pencil at first) until the end of the work period. They are sure to change their minds several times.
- There is a "sweet spot" for level of detail. Models can easily have too many or too few boxes and/or arrows. Ask yourself:
    - Is it readable? If not, what are our priorities and what can we eliminate?
    - Is it complete? Would a reader understand what we are thinking without any large leaps in logic? If not, what do we need to add?

* Trochim et al (2012)

Appreciative Pause*

OBJECTIVE: To stop and show respect and gratitude to colleagues who may have offered or received critique as part of an evaluative thinking activity or exercise.

15 MINUTES OR LESS

LARGE OR SMALL GROUP OR ONE-ON-ONE

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
All participants

MATERIALS: None

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Ask participants to consider one or more of the following:
   a. A comment that opened up a whole new line of thinking.
   b. A comment that helped identify an assumption.
   c. A comment that identified a gap in reasoning that needed to be addressed.
   d. A new idea that is intriguing and had not been considered before.
   e. A comment showing the connection between two other ideas or contributions when that connection hadn't been clear.
3. Ask participants to share something they brainstormed above with the group. These comments should be stated positively, as compliments or statements of thanks.

APPROACH

- One of the most significant barriers to ET is organizational culture, including social norms. Evaluative thinking, which often involves critique, depends on a culture of trust, respect and appreciation. This activity is a simple way to bolster this social foundation for ET.

TIPS

- Encourage participants to take this seriously. Sometimes being positive can be as awkward as being critical, if not more so. Both are important.
- If participants are having trouble getting started, demonstrate with your own appreciative comment!

* Brookfield (2016)

ToC Pathway Model Review*

OBJECTIVE: To use evaluative thinking skills to critically review an "anonymous" or peer Pathway Model. In particular, they will identify assumptions and leaps in logic, and pose questions about the program. Participants will complete this activity with an understanding of the "evaluative value" of ToC Pathway Models and related work.

45 MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS (2-5 PEOPLE PER TABLE)

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Any/all members of a program or organization. Participants should have some basic knowledge of how to read ToC Pathway Models.

MATERIALS:
- One copy per participant of the handout *ToC Pathway Model Review Guidance*
- One large format copy to share, or one page-size copy per participant of the ToC Pathway Model to be reviewed (If using an "anonymous" program model, the content should be understandable to participants)
- Chart paper and marker to record comments during the plenary "debrief"

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute handout and ToC Pathway Model to be reviewed.
3. Ask each group to assign a note taker. This person should take note of all suggestions for addition and revision to the model in enough detail and clarity so that they can be shared with the members of the group whose work is being reviewed.
4. Participants take approximately 2 minutes to read the model silently to themselves.
5. Groups take 30 minutes to discuss their responses to the provided questions/prompts (while the note taker takes notes).
6. Groups then share the results of their discussion with the facilitator and any other groups via a large group "debrief" (10 minutes). Notes are taken on chart paper.

APPROACH

- This activity is designed to build a basic and fundamental ET skill, namely the ability to critique. The focus should be on practicing ET skills rather than on the particular content of the model.
- Ideally, participants will be conscious of their ET practice, and will push themselves to offer alternatives, uncover less obvious assumptions etc.
- Participants should, instinctively, put themselves in the "shoes" of the authors of the model, that is thinking about how would they have built this model differently? Would they be able to offer the same types of critiques to their peers? Themselves?

- This kind of critical review of a ToC Pathway Model is a type of "evaluation" that can, theoretically, be acted upon. For example, in reviewing a model, you may realize that an important activity needs to be added to the program in order for the ToC to be plausible.

TIPS

- The facilitator(s) should "float" during this activity. Meaning, move about the room and listen in on each conversation. It is important that the facilitator allow each group to have some "unobserved" work time, as some participants are more likely to open up when the facilitator is not listening in. It is also important that no group be completely ignored, as they may get off track or mired down in details.
- During the 30 minute work period, groups may not get to all of the items on the handout. That is OK. However, it is important that each group experience a variety of approaches to conducting a ToC critique (as represented on the handout). Therefore, if the facilitator notices that a group has "stalled" on one point, they should help the group summarize their reflections so far and move on to another prompt.
- Facilitators should look for (and use) opportunities to push groups further. Try using opening questions like:
  - What makes you wonder about that assumption?
  - What foundational assumptions may be underlying the leaps in logic you are identifying?

* Trochim et al (2012)

Question Sort*

OBJECTIVE: To enable participants to understand that not all questions require formal evaluation and that one must think evaluatively about whether and how to act on a question.

15 MINUTES

IN GROUPS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers

MATERIALS:
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Optional: Easel

SET-UP
This activity is designed to take place after a program group has brainstormed a list of questions about their program based on their theory of change Pathway Model.

STEPS
1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute the handout *Question Sort.*
3. Groups should select one person to be the notetaker. This person should be the only one to hold the marker during the activity, and should only record what is a representation of the consensus of the group.
4. The notetaker should draw three columns on a piece of chart paper. Those columns should be given the following titles: no evidence needed, less formal evidence gathering, formal evidence gathering.
5. Groups should then follow the instructions on the handout and sort their list of brainstormed questions into these three categories.

APPROACH
- One of the key goals of the ET workshops is to expand the way participants think about MEAL. This activity begins to accomplish this goal by giving participants the experience of identifying questions that *do not* require any evidence as well as those that could be addressed with relatively informal evidence.
- This activity is consciously designed to *end* before getting into the details of learning planning, as that is a significant and (somewhat) separate thinking task.

TIPS

- The facilitator(s) should circulate during this activity.
- Watch out for:
  - Groups that have placed a disproportionate (and/or unrealistic) number of questions in one category
  - Groups whose discussion has diverged into the details of learning/ evidence-gathering plans
  - Groups who are experiencing crippling disagreement
- Use prompts like:
  - How would evidence addressing this question be used?
  - What are your priorities?
  - What counts as evidence in this case? To whom?
  - What are our various stakeholders' interests?

* Developed by Jane Buckley (2016)

MEAL Memo*

OBJECTIVE: To give participants the opportunity to reflect on and consolidate the thinking work they have done so far. It is also an opportunity for individuals who have historically felt like a "victim" of MEAL (something that they have to do, but gets in the way of their "real" job), to have a taste of what it might be like if MEAL worked for them! Participants will pretend that they are in charge of all MEAL work for their program. As such, they will write a memo outlining the MEAL work they would like to see done.

30 MINUTES

IN PAIRS. BOTH PARTNERS SHOULD WORK ON SAME PROGRAM.

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers and field-based staff

MATERIALS:
- Pen and paper

STEPS
1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Distribute the handout *MEAL Memo*.
3. Review instructions on the handout:
   - Pretend you and your partner have the power to design all MEAL work for your project.
   - Write a memo (of about one page) that outlines what you would like to be done.
4. Participants have 20 minutes to write their memo.
5. Use the last 10 minutes to have two or three pairs share what they have designed and discuss it as a group.

APPROACH
- This activity is meant to have an empowering effect and highlight the "big-picture" ways in which MEAL can be useful to program managers and staff. Therefore, it is important to not get mired down in the details of evaluation design at this point. Instead focus on the utility of the evidence that may be collected.
- The fact that this activity is designed for pairs of participants is key. Working with a group and negotiating everyone's opinions into one memo would not produce the same empowering effect. On the other hand, working alone would not allow for the rich evaluative thinking that can only come from talking with another person.
- Notice that on the handout we provide a table format to help organize participants' thinking before they write their memo. A table allows the user to see at a glance how their thinking "hangs together" and whether or not they have addressed everything.

TIPS

- Invite participants to unburden themselves of the demands and restrictions they typically work under (funder and leadership requirements in particular). Money is no object. However, the number of staff available and hours in the day should be grounded in reality. Remember to focus on utility!
- Participants should imagine themselves as benevolent MEAL bosses. Though they are all-powerful, they should maintain the best interests of the program, beneficiaries and staff.
- Encourage participants to have fun with this. Don't worry about writing the perfect paragraph. The point is to do the thinking and get it recorded in some way.

* Developed by Jane Buckley (2016)

Role-play: *ET conversations with stakeholders**

OBJECTIVE: To give participants the opportunity to practice talking to their peers, supervisors, participants, etc. about ET so that they will be best prepared to promote ET when they return to their normal work environment.

30 MINUTES

IN PAIRS

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
Program managers and field-based staff

MATERIALS:

- Stakeholder cards (index cards with the titles of stakeholders written on them. There should be enough cards for half the group, repeats are OK).
- Conversation prompts posted on a slide.

SET-UP
One partner in each pair should role-play as themselves. The other should draw from a pile of stakeholder cards to determine which stakeholder they will be. (See *Steps* below for more details on how to assign roles.)

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal.
2. Ask participants to count off by twos. Ask the ones to all move to one side of the room. Ask the twos to all move to the other. Tell the ones that, for the purpose of this activity, they will be themselves. Tell the twos that they will draw from the pile of stakeholder cards to determine their role
3. Distribute cards to the twos.
4. Ask the twos to find someone from the ones to partner with. This person should (ideally) be someone who is NOT in their typical program group.
5. Once partners have been identified, ask participants to spend about 10 minutes discussing the prompts. In particular, the stakeholder should ask the program staff person the following questions and the program staff person should provide an answer to each prompt that is specific to the stakeholder they have been paired with.
   a. What is ET?
   b. Why is ET important?
   c. How should ET be practiced?
   d. What does it mean to be a learning organization?
5. For the last roughly 10 minutes of allotted time, facilitate a plenary group discussion. How did this role-play feel? How do you think these conversations would go in "real life?"

APPROACH

- This activity is designed to be direct practice for conversations you hope participants will have in real life. The idea is that practicing will make this less intimidating.
- This activity will also highlight a critical barrier to ET, namely, organizational culture and social dynamics. The idea is that, by highlighting and better understanding this barrier, participants will be better prepared to overcome it.

TIPS

- The facilitator(s) should circulate during this activity, moving around the room and listening in on each conversation. It is important that the facilitator allow each group to have some unobserved work time, as some participants may be more likely to open up when the facilitator is not listening in. It is also important that no group be completely ignored, as they may get off track or mired down in details.
- Facilitators should look for (and use) opportunities to push groups further. Prompt participants who are role-playing to dig deeper into the perspective of their character. In particular, stakeholders should challenge program staff to convince them of the importance and role of ET.
- In the plenary group discussion, be sure to point out the sociocultural barriers to ET and learning. How do these play out in this organization (in reality). What can be done to overcome this?

* Developed by Jane Buckley (2016)

Learning-to-Action Plan*

OBJECTIVE: To increase the likelihood that participants adopt evaluative thinking activities and habits into their work by asking them to state (in writing) which behaviors they intend to engage in. This activity is also a data collection tool for research on/evaluation of the ET workshop(s).

30 MINUTES

INDIVIDUALLY

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
All ET workshop participants

MATERIALS:
- One copy per participant of the handout *Learning-to-Action Plan* **OR** computer access to the online version of same handout

STEPS
1. Introduce the task, including a clear description of the goal and your intention to collect (and/or make a copy) of their responses
2. Distribute the handout and briefly preview items
3. Give individuals as much time as necessary to completely fill out the form (it typically does not take more than 15 minutes)
4. If possible, make a copy of all completed forms and return to participants so that they have a written record of what they intended to do.

APPROACH
- This task is designed to be treated as an informal "contract". After 3 months, facilitators will ideally follow up with participants, either in person or electronically, to see how they did with implementing the specific activities they indicated that they had intended to do.

* Developed by Tom Archibald (2016) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Surveys and consent

As part of this package of materials for facilitating an ET Workshop, we have included tools that can be used to measure the types and frequency of evaluative thinking behaviors that participants are engaged in both before and after participating in a workshop. As a facilitator, it is up to you to choose if and how you will use these tools. If you do distribute the survey, it is important to obtain consent (using the consent form provided) and follow any applicable guidelines or protocols related to human subjects in your context.

Though there is no formal plan to do so now, there may be an effort in the future to share data collected using this survey across contexts. In that case, you may receive a request to share the data you collect, but would not be required to do so.

Consent Form

Dear Evaluative Thinking Workshop Participant,

Thank you so much for participating in this workshop. We really look forward to learning with you over these next three days. To help us learn, we would like to collect some data from you before and after the workshop. This will help us to put into practice the type of evaluative thinking that we will be talking about. We really would appreciate if you could fill out the attached form. Your data and insights will be used to improve the program and to contribute to the research knowledge on evaluative thinking.

If you are willing to participate in this evaluation of the workshop, please review and sign this form below and fill out the survey attached. This should take about five minutes to complete.

I. Purpose of this research project
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the evaluative thinking workshop to improve the program and to contribute to the knowledge base about evaluative thinking.

II. Procedures
This study consists of a pre-survey, a post-survey (at the end of the workshop) and a follow-up survey that will be emailed to you after three months.

III. Risk
There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of participating in this study. Your decision whether to participate in the study or not will have no impact on your participation in the training program.

IV. Benefits
There is no direct benefit to you for participating in the study, although the knowledge generated could be beneficial to your organization.

V. Extent of anonymity and confidentiality
Your participation in this study will be kept confidential and identifying information will be removed from any data to be analyzed. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Tech may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation
Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study in any way. There will be no monetary or academic gain for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to withdraw
You are free to withdraw from this study at any time; to do so, please notify the investigators at the contact information below.

VIII. Subject's responsibilities and permission
I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have read this Informed Consent Form and the conditions of this project. By signing here, I offer my consent to participate in this evaluation.

Full name: ______________________ Signature:______________________ Date: __________

Should you have any questions about this research or its conduct, you may contact either of the following:

- Investigator: Tom Archibald, +001-540-231-6192, **tgarch@vt.edu**
- Chair, IRB: David M. Moore, +001-540-231-4991, **moored@vt.edu**

Pre-Workshop Survey

Welcome to the Catholic Relief Services Evaluative Thinking Pre-Workshop Survey. This survey is meant to serve as a baseline for your knowledge about evaluative thinking. Please take your time and answer the questions to the best of your ability. It should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and participation!

1. Which of the following best describes your professional role? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Community Partner
- ☐ Program Staff
- ☐ Program Manager
- ☐ Country Leadership
- ☐ MEAL Specialist
- ☐ Administration

2. How long have you worked in this role (please round to the nearest whole number)

☐ years

3. Is this your first ET workshop?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "No", how many workshops have you attended previously

☐ One ☐ Two If more than two, how many? ________

4. Consider the following behaviors. How often do you:

	Never	Less than once a month	One to three times a month	Once a week or more
Have a reflective conversation with a colleague about your program (e.g. why do you think we are noticing this outcome?)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collect informal evidence (not part of formal MEAL plan) about your program	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identify assumptions about the way your program is planned?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pose questions about your program in a meeting or conversation with colleagues?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Refer to your program's ToC in conversation with colleagues and/or program stakeholders?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use diagrams or illustrations to communicate your thinking to a colleague	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seek evidence to support claims made by colleagues and/or program stakeholders?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ask colleagues to identify assumptions you might be making?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Talk to your program stakeholders (participants, colleagues, leadership, etc.) about evaluative thinking?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consider how various program stakeholders might view and/or think about your program?	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Please answer the following questions in reference to the barriers to engaging with ET and the supports for using ET in your work.

	Prohibitive barrier		Neither barrier, nor support		Enabling support
	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural context (local community, country-wide norms, etc.)					
Program leadership					
Country leadership					
Personal motivation					
Personal skills					
Program culture (staff and management)					
Organization culture					
Peer colleagues					
Funder requirements					

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never
I discuss evaluation strategies with my colleagues.						
I am eager to engage in evaluation.						
Diagrams and/or illustrations help me think about ideas.						
I am wary of claims made by others without evidence to back them up.						
I describe the thinking behind my decisions to others.						
I take time to reflect on the way I do my work.						
I try to convince others that evaluation is important.						
I consider alternative explanations for claims.						
I brainstorm with colleagues to develop plans and/or ideas.						
I believe evaluation is a valuable endeavor.						
I use diagrams and/or illustrations to clarify my thoughts.						
I suggest alternative explanations and hypotheses.						
I reflect on assumptions and claims I make myself.						
I pose questions about assumptions and claims made by others.						
I enjoy discussing evaluation strategies with colleagues.						
I describe the thinking behind my work to my colleagues.						
I offer evidence for claims that I make.						
I use diagrams and/or illustrations to communicate my thinking to others.						

Post-Workshop Survey

Thank you for participating in the Evaluative Thinking workshop. We'd like feedback on your experience with the aim of improving future learning events such as this.

1. Thinking of your various work activities and your organization, please read each of the statements below and check the appropriate box to indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. This workshop will be helpful to me in my work.						
2. I enjoyed this workshop.						
3. The level of material presented in this workshop was too difficult for me to understand.						
4. Through this workshop, I learned how to do better MEAL.						
5. Through this workshop, I gained a better understanding of what evaluative thinking is.						
6. Through this workshop, I learned something new about why evaluative thinking is important.						
7. I am an evaluative thinker.						

2. What was most valuable to you about the Evaluative Thinking workshop?

3. What was least valuable to you about the Evaluative Thinking workshop, and why?

4. What suggestions do you have to make this workshop better?

5. What assumptions do you think the facilitators held that had a negative effect on the workshop?

6. What assumptions do you think the facilitators held that had a positive effect on the workshop?

7. What other comments do you have about the Evaluative Thinking workshop?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND

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