

Evaluation Approaches for *Finding Your Inner Strength*

THIS IS A SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE FOR **FINDING YOUR INNER STRENGTH: WORKSHOP ON BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY**
(FOLLOW-UP FROM PAGE 3 OF THE MANUAL)

Introduction: Although it may not be possible to conduct a survey or formal evaluation after every workshop, there are several ways to determine the effectiveness of the workshop during the training (e.g., at the end of each day) and after it is completed. The simplest way is to ask participants for feedback/questions they may have. However, remember to tailor your feedback to the literacy level of your participants - i.e., do not assume in advance that they can read and write.



As part of your activity feedback data collection, whether through daily evaluation forms or a wrap-up interactive group exercise, you might also consider asking participants about:

- **Favorite Activity or Exercise:** This could be an open-ended question or a ranking activity where you ask participants to select their favorite activities. Consider asking for explanations for identified or selected activities/exercises to get more information about why these activities/exercises are preferred by participants.
- **Least Favorite Activity or Exercise:** In addition to knowing which activities/exercises participants like the most, it would be helpful to know the opposite. Knowing why participants dislike certain activities/exercises could help you make future adjustments.
- **Suggestions for improvement:** Asking your participants specifically about what should be done differently in future workshops may reveal topics for further discussion about what participants value and consider important.

Because the **Theory of Change** is to improve people's mental and emotional well-being so that they can better cope with shocks and stresses, it may take time for improvements to become evident. Therefore, collecting daily feedback or conducting a survey immediately after the workshop may not capture this information.

Theory of Change (from the handbook)

IF trauma sensitivity and social cohesion in conflict-affected and food-insecure communities are integrated with mainstream resilience components, **THEN** the mental and emotional well-being of individuals will be improved, and in so doing will enhance the ability of individuals and their communities to cope with shocks and stresses, **BECAUSE** healthy, productive relationships between and among community members and their leaders produce more stable, peaceful, and resilient societies.

Background: Finding Your Inner Strength assumes that most people (if not all) have experienced trauma and loss in their lives. In response, the workshop manual focuses primarily on enhancing the bonding and attachment dimensions of human development and well-being. Through the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, it aims to help participants in their social contexts expand and strengthen their mental and emotional capacity to acknowledge and move beyond past losses and traumas. In doing so, it frees conflict-affected people to recognize and seize opportunities, regardless of the circumstances. This can help them feel better about themselves, work more cooperatively with others, and be more proactive in improving their lives, such as improving nutrition, youth livelihoods, social cohesion, personal and group savings, community sanitation, and civic life.

Perhaps most importantly, the workshop activities will equip participants with skills to improve personal, intra-group, and inter-group relationships. It is hoped that by participating in the exercises in this manual, participants will learn to cope with shocks and stresses, to envision a better life for themselves, their families and their communities, and ultimately to pursue personal paths to greater resilience.

Evaluation approaches: You may want to consider conducting follow-up surveys to allow participants time to reflect on what they learned in the workshop and to allow changes to manifest. Below are some initiatives you can take to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop.

Light monitoring activities¹

Light monitoring refers to a practical approach that provides timely and relevant data. It allows staff to act promptly to ensure that progress is on track and assumptions are accurate. Light monitoring focuses on new activities, locations, or target groups, and addresses areas where staff may have less confidence. As the name of the approach suggests, light monitoring is "light" because it has a limited scope of questions that seek to check for problems, uses simple monitoring methods, uses small non-representative sample sizes or incomplete/partial data sets that are "good enough" to anticipate trends and identify potential issues for adaptive project management, and can be integrated into project activities where feasible.

Light monitoring to check the effectiveness of the workshop can take the form of a post-activity survey or interviews (e.g., 2 weeks after the workshop, 1 month after the workshop, etc.) with a small sample of respondents. You may consider using critical case sampling to select your respondents. For example, in the context of food security and resilience, you may use available project information (i.e., assessment data and/or monitoring data) to identify individuals or groups who have experienced the most difficulty in achieving project outcomes (i.e., who you think are least likely to achieve food security and resilience). Then, 2 weeks (or a month) after the workshop, you can ask them questions like these:

- *As a result of what you learned and experienced in the workshop, do you feel different about yourself in any way? If so, how?*
- *Has what you learned and experienced in the workshop affected your activities in the project?*
- *Since the workshop, have you changed your attitude or behavior toward others in any way? If so, how?*
- *What (else) do you hope to contribute in the future?*
- *What additional support do you need to find your inner strength and improve your wellbeing?*

Most significant change (MSC)²

This is a participatory methodology in which participants and other stakeholders share stories of change and assign meaning to project outcomes. MSC is an excellent method for identifying unanticipated or less tangible changes, whether positive or negative, and for understanding how different changes are valued by different community members. MSC can be used as a stand-alone methodology or in combination with more traditional MEAL methods, and

is recommended for mid-term and final evaluations, and can be used in ongoing monitoring or as part of special studies, as appropriate. When using MSC to evaluate workshop effectiveness, be mindful of the timing of story collection and ensure that there is sufficient time for participants to experience changes as a result of the workshop.

Stories about the workshop would answer these questions: ***“Thinking back over the Finding Your Inner Strength workshop, what changes have you seen (positive or negative) as a result of the workshop? Which of these changes is the most significant, and why?”***. Ideally, the stories should have a beginning (What was the situation before the change happened? *“Before the start of the workshop...”*), middle (What happened? *“Then the workshop started...”*), end (What’s different? *“Now things are...”*), and the significance (Why is this significant? *“This is important to me because...”*)³.

Below are the key steps needed when planning and implementing the MSC process as described in the [CRS MEAL Guidance Series: Most Significant Change](#):

- ➡ Step 1: Determine if MSC is the right fit
- ➡ Step 2: Plan for MSC.
- ➡ Step 3: Train Story Collectors
- ➡ Step 4: Collect Stories
- ➡ Step 5: Prepare Stories for Selection
- ➡ Step 6: Select Most Significant Change
- ➡ Step 7: Categorize Stories
- ➡ Step 8: Reflect on MSC
- ➡ Step 9: Document MSC

Integration with monitoring and evaluation plan

If it is possible to include outcome-level indicators directly related to the workshop in the project’s LogFrame, consider including at least one that measures the effectiveness of the workshop in improving the mental and emotional well-being of individuals to enhance their ability to cope with shocks and stresses. The workshop will most likely be a component of a larger intervention and not as a stand-alone activity unrelated to the overall project strategy. Having an indicator measuring its effectiveness will also be useful in evaluations and project learning. The CRS Protection and Psychosocial Measures Compendium provides a list of psychosocial resilience indicators⁴ that you can consider.

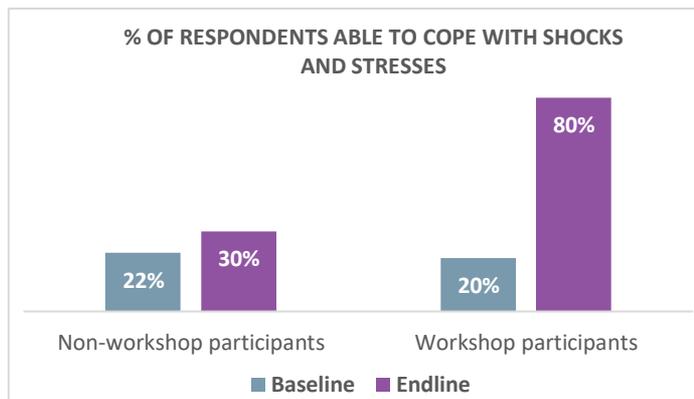
Integration with project or country program learning agenda⁵

Developing learning questions that focus on exploring how the workshop contributes to improving the mental and emotional well-being of individuals to increase their ability to cope with shocks and stress can help generate evidence and test the theory of change. Learning questions are different from evaluation questions, but they are not mutually exclusive. Both learning and evaluation questions aim to support learning within a project’s theory of change (TOC), although they differ in scope, data requirements, and timing. Evaluation questions focus on standard criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) to document performance and validate results. In contrast, learning questions address areas of uncertainty by exploring links between approaches and outcomes. While evaluation questions require additional data collection, learning questions can often be answered using existing project data. Evaluation questions are refined during project implementation, while learning questions are forward-looking and can inform adjustments throughout the project.

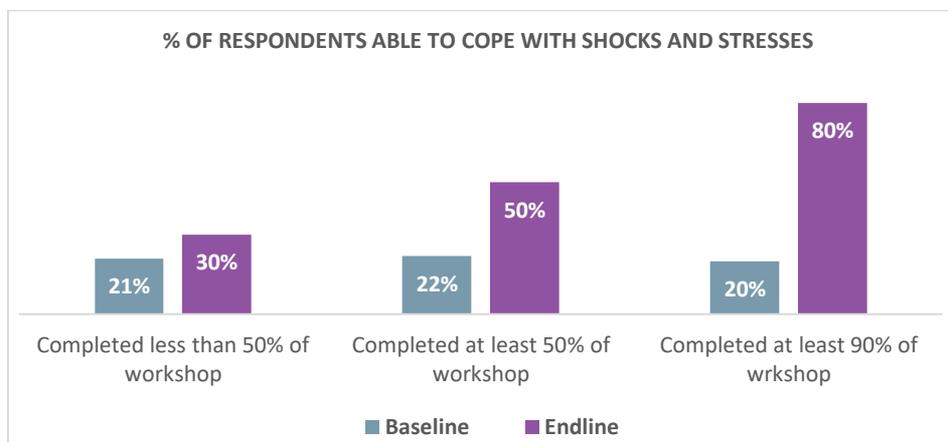
Quasi-experimental analysis⁶

A quasi-experimental design is like a randomized control trial (RCT), but with one important difference: a comparison group is selected based on convenience rather than randomization. The goal is to ensure that the comparison group closely matches the intervention group. Quasi-experimental designs are often used when it’s not practical or ethical to randomly assign groups to receive or not receive an intervention. Similar to an experimental design, the comparison between the intervention and non-intervention groups represents the counterfactual.

For example, if your project has an indicator for the effectiveness of the workshop in improving the mental and emotional well-being of individuals to increase their ability to cope with shocks and stress, and the project can measure this on another subset of the project population who will not attend the workshop, then the project has the opportunity to compare the results of workshop participants and non-participants to check for attribution. The figure at right shows an example of a visualization for this type of analysis.



If the project does not have the opportunity to measure the indicator with another subset of the project population, the project may consider a less rigorous approach in the form of a **Doer - Non-Doer** analysis. In this approach, the project can measure the indicator among workshop participants, but compare the results between Doers and Non-Doers. Doers can be those who completed the workshop (or have a high completion rate), while **Non-Doers** can be those who were not able to complete the workshop (or have a low completion rate). Below is an example of a visualization for this type of analysis:



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Endnotes:

- ¹ [Monitoring for Problem-Solving, Adaptive Management, Reporting and Learning | CRS](#)
- ² [MEAL Guidance Series: Most Significant Change \(draft version\)](#)
- ³ [Most Significant Change Ex. Planning Worksheet 2023 11.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- ⁴ <https://crsorg.sharepoint.com/sites/Protection-Measures/SitePages/Psychosocial-Resilience.aspx>
- ⁵ [Establishing a learning agenda guidance and template 201702.pdf \(usaidealarninglab.org\)](#)
- ⁶ [Mixed Methods Evaluations Technical Note.pdf \(usaid.gov\)](#) and [mod7b impact evaluation designs.pdf \(usaidealarninglab.org\)](#)