ROUND 2 • GROUP 3

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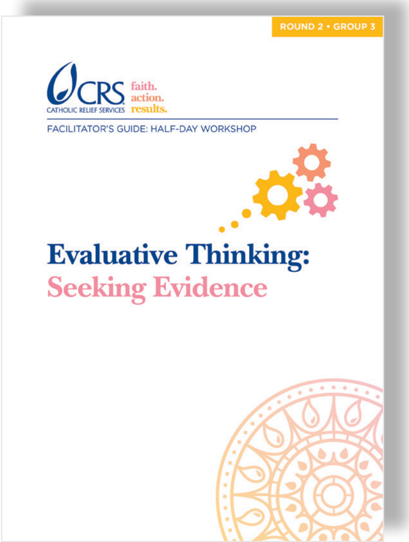
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: HALF-DAY WORKSHOP

Evaluative Thinking: Seeking Evidence



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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
LQ	learning question
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
NGO	nongovernmental organization
ToC	theory of change

Contents

Seeking Evidence

HALF-DAY WORKSHOP
(3.5 HOURS)

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 evaluative thinking across an organization and, in turn, increase the quality and efficiency of program planning and MEAL work generally. The workshops are organized into three rounds. Each round includes an in-person workshop facilitated by an ET specialist or MEAL professional and is intended to be presented annually (although this is not obligatory). 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 2, Group 3 (the second workshop for country leadership). The overall goal of this half-day workshop is to demonstrate how program staff and leadership can use ET to set learning plan priorities and develop learning plan strategies, as well as to further develop practical strategies for promoting and supporting ET, including overcoming barriers to ET.

Learning objectives

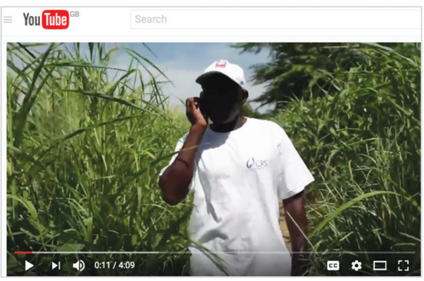
As a result of participating in this workshop, country leaders will be able to:

- Talk about and explain ET to others
- Support ET activities and habits
- Work to overcome barriers to ET
- Use ToC Pathway Models to systematically set learning priorities
- Develop learning questions and outline learning plans to address these questions
- Continue to identify ways to respond to the MEAL Competency Model, Competency No. 6: Analysis and Critical Thinking

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

TIME	TASK	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS	HANDOUTS
8:00am	Introductions and goals		• Consent form • Pre-workshop survey
8:30am	Defining, defending and supporting ET	• Review learning-to-action plan • Overcoming barriers to ET for leadership	• What is evaluative thinking? • Principles for promoting ET • Learning-to-action plan • Overcoming barriers to ET for leadership
9:00am	Setting learning priorities	• Mining the model	• ToC Pathway Models • Mining the model • Example model: Reaching for their potential
10:00am	Break		
10:15am	Learning plan development for leadership	• Learning plan development for leadership	• Guidance for wording learning questions • Key constructs and measurement • Project learning plan • Learning plan template: Table format
11:30am	Reflect and debrief		• Post-workshop survey
12:00pm	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

Consent form (See Appendix)
Pre-workshop survey (See Appendix)
What is evaluative thinking?
Principles for promoting ET
Learning-to-action plan
Overcoming barriers to ET
Theory of Change Pathway Models
Mining the model
Example model: Reaching for their potential
Guidance for wording learning questions
Key constructs and measurement
Project learning plan
Learning plan template
Learning plan template: Table format
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

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)

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

Overcoming Barriers to ET*

Barrier to ET:	
Description/definition	**Specific strategy(ies) to overcome**

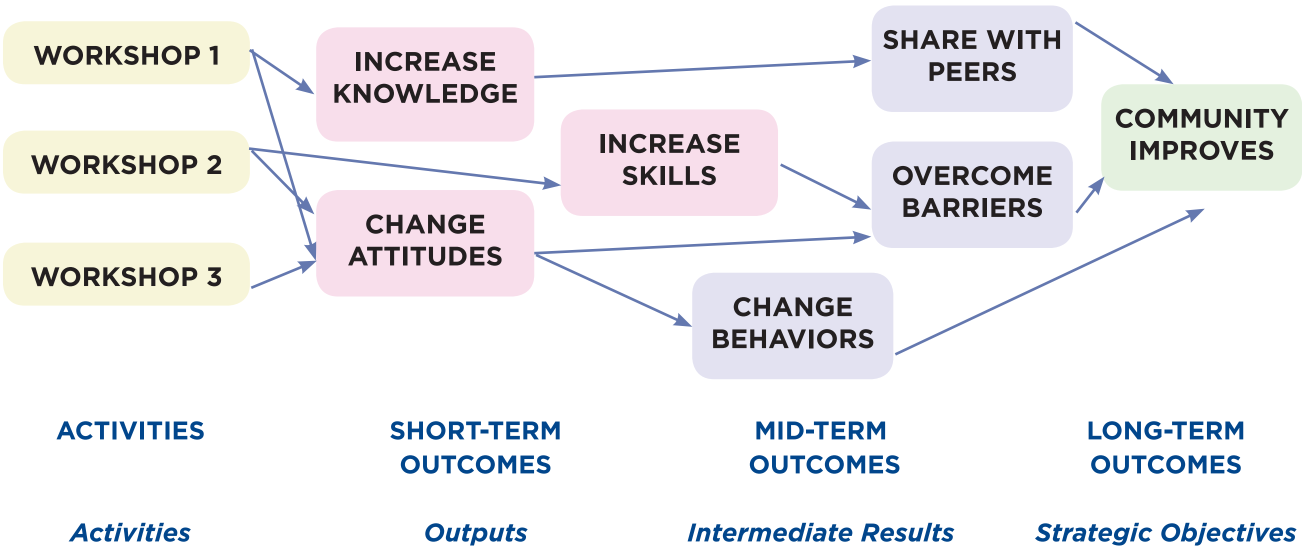
Barrier to ET:	
Description/definition	**Specific strategy(ies) to overcome**

* Developed by Jane Buckley

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)

Mining the Model*

The steps below guide you through a series of questions to identify important considerations prior to selecting priority learning questions. When finished, step back and weigh the MEAL priorities that have emerged and assess what would be the best feasible purpose(s) for the coming evaluation cycle.

1. **What does the model show you about key program outcomes?** Use one color marker to circle key outcomes – ones that have a lot of arrows going into them or out of them, or both. For example, look for:
   - **Prime destinations** (outcomes that have a lot of arrows going *into* them)
   - **Gateways** (outcomes with lots of arrows going *out from* them)
   - **Hubs** (outcomes with lots of arrows going *in and out*)

2. **What are some key links?** Some things are important even if there are not a lot of arrows going in or out of them. Each arrow, or link, represents some change that your program leads to or contributes to. Which ones do you think are important in the program? Mark these key links with a second color marker.

3. **What are the key pathways, or main story lines in the model?** Think about what is essential to the way your program works and succeeds – the main story lines. (If you had to strip down your model to just a few through-lines, which story lines would you insist on keeping?) Mark one or two of these key pathways with a third color marker.

4. **Thinking about your key pathways, what assumptions are you making?** Are there assumptions (or notes about context) that would be essential to point out in order for an outsider to understand (and buy into) the program theory?

5. **Identify key external stakeholders and their priorities:** List one to three key external stakeholders to your program (ones you are likely to report to in the coming year, or ones involved in important decisions about the program):

   A. ____

   B. ____

   C. ____

Think about what each of these stakeholders cares most about in your program. Mark the external stakeholder priorities by writing the letter for each stakeholder next to the nodes or links that they are most interested in.

6. **Mark important internal priorities, if any.** Mark one or two nodes that are of particular importance to you – these are internal stakeholder priorities. Put a star or asterisk next to these.

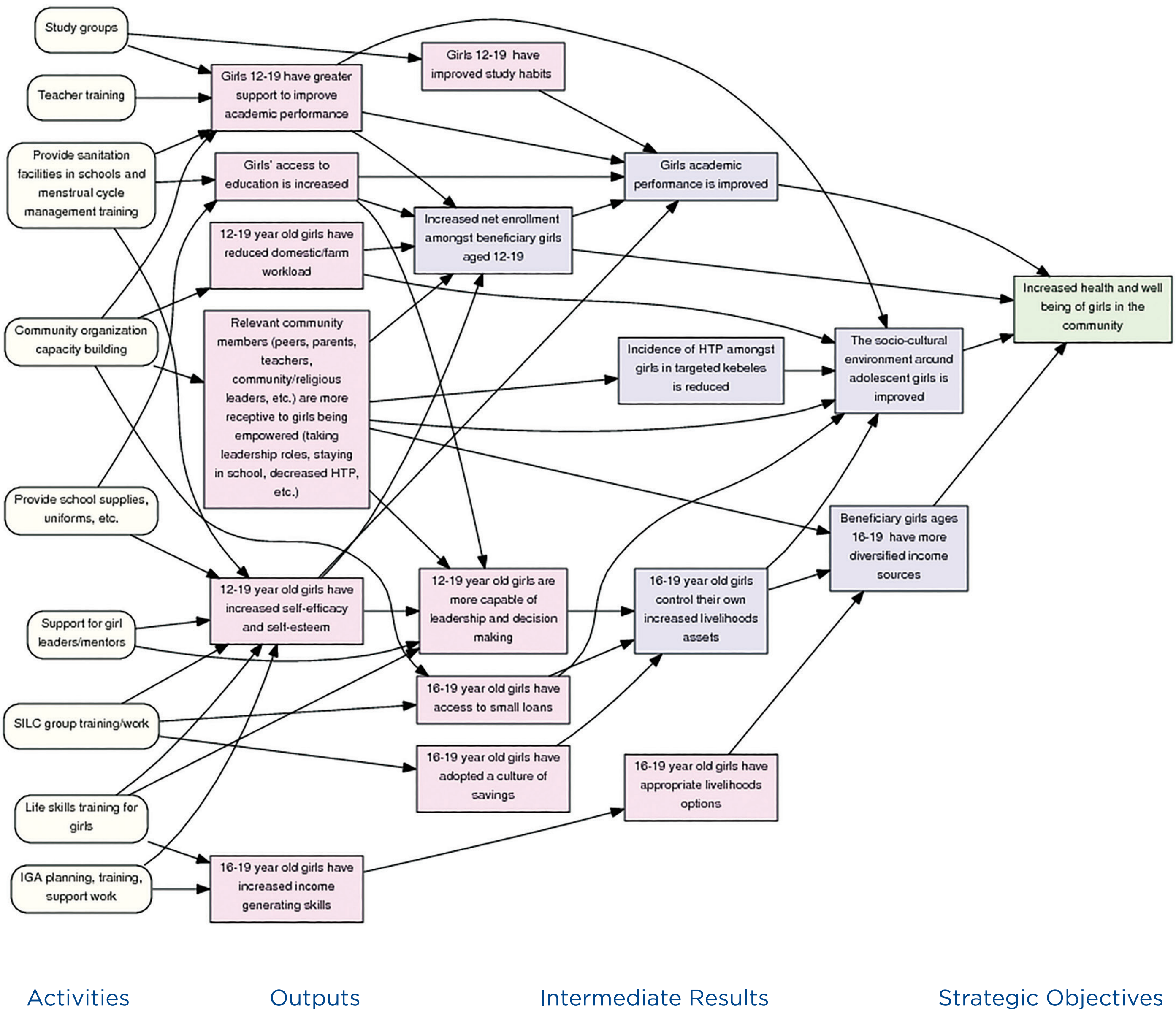
7. **Which nodes and/or links have existing evidence?** This could include existing evaluation data (formal or informal, quantitative or qualitative), or existing research literature.

8. **Which nodes and/or links do you see as in need of evidence?**

Having completed this process, you are now better placed to identify priority learning questions to take forward.

* Hargraves et al (2015)

Example model: Reaching for their potential



* CRS Ethiopia

Guidance for Wording Learning Questions*

Learning questions are the starting point for gathering evidence for assumptions made in your theory of change. For example, you might want to know:

- Is activity X being implemented well? *(process evaluation)*
- Is activity X associated with desired outcome Y? *(outcome evaluation)*
- Do activities X and Z have an effect on desired outcome Y? *(outcome evaluation)*

Note: Learning questions are *not* the same as survey questions or things you would directly ask participants, such as:

- What is your knowledge of X?
- Are you satisfied with the program?

It is crucial to be cautious with the wording of learning questions. The words you choose will determine the evidence-collection method you will use and the claims you will be able to make based on the evidence you collect and later analyze and interpret; for example, a common claim could be something like "Our program's training activities are associated with an increase in participants' knowledge."

Consider the difference between these two questions:

1. Do participants in my program have access to healthy foods?
2. After completing my program do participants report that they can identify sources of healthy food in their community?

- How might the evidence-collection strategy be different for these two questions?
- How would the claims you would be able to make as a result of collecting evidence for each of these questions differ?

* Trochim et al (2012)

Key Constructs and Measurement *

Goal: Brainstorm measurement approaches while maintaining alignment with learning questions.

Instructions: For each learning question, identify the construct(s). *("Construct" refers to the thing you wish to measure; it is the sometimes hard-to-define idea or variable in your learning question. For example, "knowledge", "engagement", "uptake" and "interest" are all constructs commonly found in program evaluation learning questions.)* For each construct, brainstorm as many indicators and possible measurement tools as you can; you can select from these options later.

EXAMPLE:

Learning question: Do program participants have access to healthy foods (as defined by the nutritional guidelines)?			
Construct to be examined	**How do you define this construct?**	**How do you know it when you see it? (What are some possible indicators?)**	**How might it be measured? (What tool(s) would you need to capture it?)**
Access to healthy foods	**Ability to obtain foods that have been identified as healthy by the nutritional guidelines**	**Participants have healthy foods in their home**	**A checklist of foods that would be used during a home visit/observation**

Learning question:			
Construct to be examined	**How do you define this construct?**	**How do you know it when you see it? (What are some possible indicators?)**	**How might it be measured? (What tool(s) would you need to capture it?)**
Learning question:			
Construct to be examined	**How do you define this construct?**	**How do you know it when you see it? (What are some possible indicators?)**	**How might it be measured? (What tool(s) would you need to capture it?)**

* Hargraves et al (2015)

Project Learning Plan*

A project learning plan is a document that guides the implementation of an evidence-gathering strategy. It includes a description of the program or project, the ToC Pathway Model, the overall goal of the plan, the learning questions, and a detailed description of the evidence-gathering strategy (sample, measurement, measures, design, analysis plan, etc., as applicable).

Depending on the goal, the plan may be implemented by project staff or external parties, but project staff should always have a voice in developing the plan.

WHY
Why have you chosen this subject for learning? Why are you collecting evidence? To explore assumptions, check for implementation fidelity? Prove a connection between activities and outcomes? How will the results be used? *Include your ToC Pathway Model and/or description, your purpose statement.*

WHAT
What evidence are you looking to collect? What are the constructs you are looking for evidence of? *Include your learning questions and definitions of constructs.*

WHO
Who will collect evidence? Program staff? Outside evaluators? Who will the evidence be collected from? Participants? Existing data sources? Third parties? *Include sampling plan, staffing plan.*

HOW
How will you collect the evidence? What tools will you need, if any? How will the data/evidence be recorded and stored? *Include data collection plan, data management plan.*

WHEN
What is the timeline for this effort? When will the tools be developed? When will the data/evidence be collected? Before and after? After only? As possible? *Include timeline, design.*

OTHER
How much will this cost? Who "owns" this learning plan?

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Learning Plan Template: Table format

Question	Measurement *(How?)*	Sample *(Who?)*	Design *(When?)*	Notes on Analysis/ Data Management
1.				
2.				
3.				

Review Learning-to-Action Plan*

OBJECTIVE: To enable participants to reflect and report on their ET work since the last ET workshop; in particular the goals they set in the learning-to-action plan.

30 MINUTES

INDIVIDUALLY AND THEN A DEBRIEF IN PLENARY

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

For any/all participants of the previous leadership workshop. Those who did not attend the previous workshop should be encouraged to listen carefully and contribute if possible.

MATERIALS

- Every participant will need a copy of their learning-to-action plan from the previous leadership workshop
- Chart paper and marker to record comments during the debrief

STEPS

1. Describe the objective of the activity.
2. Each individual should read over their own learning-to-action plan and reflect on which actions they were able to take and how well they went. Participants should be encouraged to take brief notes as they go.
3. Then, as a large group, individuals should be asked to share the items on the learning-to-action plan, what went well and what didn't. The facilitator should encourage participants to describe:
   - How they might change their learning-to-action plans at this point
   - Any additional actions they have taken since the last workshop that are not listed on their learning-to-action plan
   - Any general barriers they faced in their efforts to promote ET (these can then be referred to during the *Overcoming Barriers to ET* activity)

APPROACH

- This activity is not just an opportunity to report out. It is primarily designed as an opportunity for participants to be further informed and motivated to practice and promote ET in their everyday work life. To that end, the approach to the debrief should be positive: "How might these challenges be addressed?" or "How might you make this idea work in your context?".

TIPS

- Make sure that staff who were not present in the previous round do not all end up in the same group.
- Groups do not need to be organized by program or project team. In fact, this activity presents a good opportunity to have mixed groups.

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Overcoming Barriers to ET for Leadership*

OBJECTIVE: To generate strategies for overcoming the barriers to ET.

30 MINUTES

GROUPS OF 2-3 OR AS A LARGER GROUP

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
All leadership workshop participants

MATERIALS

- One copy per participant of the handouts *Overcoming Barriers to ET for Leadership* and *Principles for Promoting ET*
- One sheet of blank chart paper for each barrier the group generates on which to list possible strategies for overcoming that barrier
- One marker per group

STEPS

1. Divide participants into groups and distribute copies of the handouts to each participant, and one sheet of chart paper and a marker to each group.
2. Describe the objective of the activity to participants.
3. Groups should then do a quick (5-minute) brainstorm of barriers to ET in their organization/ project team.
4. Next, groups should select two or three barriers from their brainstormed list to address. Each of these should be written on the top of a sheet of chart paper. (Examples: Time, communication habits, cultural barriers, etc.)
5. For each of the barriers selected, the group should then spend 5-7 minutes brainstorming strategies to overcome each barrier.
6. At the end of the activity, the facilitator should conduct a debrief, allowing each group to describe several (likely not all) of the strategies for overcoming barriers that they have generated.

APPROACH

- The purpose of this exercise is to anticipate and address barriers to practicing and promoting ET before participants experience them or are able to use them as an excuse.
- Participants are the most expert in what barriers they have faced or are likely to face, as well as the best strategies for overcoming them. It is much more likely that participants will overcome barriers to ET if they themselves have identified those barriers and the strategies for overcoming them.
- Participants are more likely to be inspired by the creative, context-appropriate suggestions of their peers than by the generic suggestions of the facilitator.

TIPS

- Consider using some or all of the themes identified under "Enabling Environment / Culture" in USAID's Collaborating-Learning-Adapting Framework: 1. (Lack of) Openness, 2. (Challenges in) Relationships and Networks, 3. (Absence of) Continual Learning and Improvement. See USAID Learning Lab: **https://usaidlearninglab.org/lab-notes/exploring-cla-framework**
- Ask participants to think creatively but also realistically, and to consider strategies for different time frames – not everything can be solved in a year.
- During the debrief, ask participants to comment on if/how the strategies presented would work for them.

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Mining the Model*

OBJECTIVE: To provide a step-by-step process for using ET to establish the focus and scope of a potential learning plan directly from the program or project's previously developed ToC Pathway Model. Participants will carefully reconsider several of the concepts covered in Round 1 (stakeholders, assumptions, context, etc.) to make several strategic decisions about how to narrow down their focus for learning planning.

60+ MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS (2-5 PEOPLE PER TABLE)

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
For all workshop participants working as part of a program or project team

MATERIALS

- Previously created ToC Pathway Models
- One copy per participant of the handout *Mining the Model*
- Post-it notes (one pad per group)
- One set of markers (with at least three colors) per group

SET-UP

Each participating group will need to have a complete (though not necessarily perfect) ToC PM.

STEPS

1. Distribute copies of the handout *Mining the Model*, Post-it notes and markers to each group.
2. Describe the objective of the Mining the Model activity to participants.
3. Allow at least 45 minutes of work time.

APPROACH

The Mining the Model activity represents a crossroads between the very practical objective of the ET workshops to help participants develop learning plans and the more foundational goal of practicing and building ET skills. The conversations that group members will have will be evaluative in nature and will encourage the core ET skills of identifying assumptions, gaining insights through multiple perspective taking, developing learning questions, and making careful decisions.

TIPS

- The facilitator(s) will need to circulate between groups. 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, and make suggestions. Each group will need an outside perspective.
- Groups must complete each step. However, if they choose to work out of order or spend more time on one item than another, that is ok.
- Note that the handout does not include the final step of establishing (circling) the intended scope for the learning plan. The facilitator may decide to add this as a final step, or may wish to have a debrief or other discussion before asking groups to make that final decision.

* Trochim et al (2012)

Learning Plan Development for Leadership*

OBJECTIVE: To give participants the chance to practice outlining a plan for collecting the information necessary to address a set of learning questions. This includes what information needs to be collected; when, how and from whom it should be collected; and how the program team intends to use it.

30 MINUTES

GROUPS OF 2-5

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS
For all leadership workshop participants

MATERIALS

- One copy per participant of the handout *Learning Plan Template: Table Format*
- For reference: One copy per participant of the handouts *Project Learning Plan, Key Constructs and Measurement* and *Example Model: Reaching for their Potential*

STEPS

1. Distribute copies of each handout to every participant.
2. Describe the objective of the activity. Use the *Project Learning Plan* handout to go over the questions that teams should consider as they complete the *Learning Plan Template*.
3. Explain that the participants will be outlining (brief) learning plans for the one to three learning questions they brainstormed for the *Example program: Reaching for their Potential.*
4. Allow enough work time for each group to completely outline a learning plan for each of their learning questions.

APPROACH

- This activity has two purposes. First, for any participant who hasn't been involved in developing a learning (or MEAL) plan, this activity will provide an introduction to the concepts and considerations that go into this work. Second, for leadership in particular, this exercise demonstrates how developing a learning plan is as much (if not more so) a thinking task as a technical one. The goal is to have leadership recognize that the process of outlining a learning plan is something that can and should be accessible to any and all members of their organizational system and that thinking through the aligned parts of the plan is essential to making sure that the results of the learning plan are useful and credible.

TIPS

- 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, and make suggestions. Each group will *need* an outside perspective on their thinking.

* Developed by Jane Buckley

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 3 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 it 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 5 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 3 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 of 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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