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FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: HALF-DAY CULMINATING CONFERENCE

Evaluative Thinking:
Taking Action

ROUND 3 • ALL GROUPS

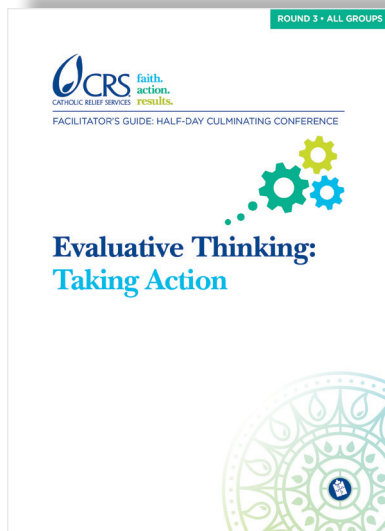**CRS** faith. action. results.
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Evaluative Thinking:
Taking Action

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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

Making Decisions

HALF-DAY CULMINATING CONFERENCE

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 workshop you are looking at now is the Culminating Conference (a final workshop to be attended by all three groups in the third round). The overall goal of this half-day workshop is to introduce strategies for motivating and supporting utilization as well as to celebrate and continue to motivate all ET work.

Learning objectives

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

- Talk about and explain utilization to others
- Use presented strategies to motivate and support utilization
- Identify barriers to utilization and employ strategies to overcome them
- Facilitate learning discussions with staff and other stakeholders
- Offer suggestions to program managers and MEAL leadership on how and why to promote utilization
- Identify ways to respond to the MEAL Competency Model, Competency #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**.
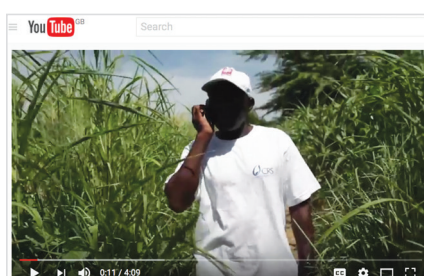
Further videos on YouTube

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 flip chart 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

CULMINATING CONFERENCE

TIME	TASK	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS	HANDOUTS
8:00am	Introductions and goals		• Consent form • Pre-workshop survey
8:30am	Introduction to utilization and decision making and the role of ET therein		
8:45am	Participatory interpretation	• Interpret summarized results • Explain and defend interpretation of results	• Interpret summarized results • Explain and defend interpretation of results
9:45am	Action planning	• Action plan	• Action plan
10:15am	Break		
10:30am	ET review	• Workshop review • Activity report guidance • Learning-to-action plan	• ET workshops • Activity report guidance • Learning-to-action plan
12:00pm	Lunch/Close		• Post-workshop survey

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

Half-day
Consent form (See Appendix)
Pre-workshop survey (See Appendix)
Interpret summarized results
Explain and defend interpretation of results
Action plan
ET workshops
Activity report guidance
Learning-to-action plan
Post-workshop survey (See Appendix)

Interpret Summarized Results*

Goal: Systematically consider reasonable explanations for patterns and anomalies found in the data (formal and informal).

Instructions:

- Select one group member to be the manager and keep the discussion on track according to the instructions below.
- Select one group member to be the recorder to take notes of the discussion on chart paper.
- Look over the data summary you have prepared.
- With your group, complete the following tasks:

1. Describe what you are seeing, one observation at a time

Going around the table, take turns making *one-sentence* observations about the data. These should be clinical in nature. For example (NOTE: These examples are not taken from *this* case study):

- *"The number of participants engaging in proper handwashing increased from 30 percent to 40 percent in the last year."*
- *"There are more women than men participating in our community meeting activities."*

At this point, the only comments from other group members should be about accuracy (*"I think you meant to say 45 percent."*)

2. Brainstorm plausible alternative explanations

Addressing the statement brainstormed above one at a time, brainstorm at least 5 to 10 plausible alternative explanations for the pattern or anomaly identified.

At this point, you should NOT discuss which interpretation might be "true". Just brainstorm.

3. Weigh alternative explanations

Going back to the statements that you agree are most important, review the list of alternative explanations you have generated by answering the following questions:

- Are there any that we can eliminate right away? Why?
- Which of our interpretations and/or explanations have evidence to support them? How reliable, accurate, and credible is that evidence?
- Can we agree on a few (three or fewer), that seem most likely and could serve as the basis for our action plan?

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Explain and Defend Interpretation of Results*

Goal: Defend the explanation(s) of the results that you've chosen to focus on for action planning

Instructions:

• Select one group member to be the manager. This person should keep the discussion on track according to the instructions below.
• Select one group member to be the recorder. This person should take notes of the discussion on chart paper.
• With your group, complete the following tasks:

1. Transcribe the results of Step 3 from the activity *Interpret Summarized Results* (At this point, you should have a list of 2 to 3 results statements, each with 1 to 3 most likely explanations. Choose one result to focus on, and record it and your chosen explanation(s) on the table below, using short-hand as needed.)

Result 1:	Explanation 1:
	Explanation 2:
	Explanation 3:

2. Defend chosen explanations for results

For each explanation you have listed above, you should be able to clearly and confidently defend your choice. Defending your choice means citing what evidence you have and why you feel that evidence is credible.

Using the remainder of the time allotted for this activity, work your way down the right hand column of the chart you have just created. For each explanation, make note of what evidence you have to support your explanation and why you think that evidence is credible. Organize your notes below.

Action Plan*

Goal: Develop a plan for whether and how you (as a program) will act on the new information you have just reviewed and interpreted.

1. **What are the key results that have motivated this plan?** (*Look at the list of statements you generated for the interpretation activity.*)

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **What are the parts of your program** (*i.e., the activities and/or activity-outcome links*) **you will be addressing with this plan?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **What are the specific actions or changes you are suggesting, if any?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. **What evidence do you have to support your decision?** (*Look back at your interpretation notes*)

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. **What evidence do you have (if any) that supports your suggested action or change?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. **What changes should be made to the learning plan as a result of this action?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

* Developed by Jane Buckley

ET Workshops

Round 1: Identifying Assumptions

☐ Introduction to Evaluative Thinking
☐ Program Context
☐ Program Assumptions
☐ Theory of Change Pathway Models

Round 2: Seeking Evidence

☐ ET Activities and Strategies
☐ Mining the Model
☐ Learning Questions
☐ Project Learning Plans

Round 3: Making Decisions

☐ Summarizing Results
☐ Interpreting Results
☐ Action Planning
☐ Communicating Results

Activity Report Guidance

We would like to hear from you about your current interpretation of ET and any ET-related activities you have been engaged in since we last met. To that end, we would like you and your team to consider the questions below. Some of the questions may be more applicable to you or your group. Please feel free to focus on whichever is most appropriate for you and please be as specific as possible. However, please be sure to address the two questions highlighted in bold.

1. **What do you see as your team's/home office's current understanding/definition of ET?**

2. What ET work/activities have you done so far?

3. What has gone well?

4. What has not worked?

5. How have you modified/developed ET activities, if at all?

6. What contextual contributors to ET practices have you noticed/experienced?

7. **What contextual barriers to ET practices have you noticed/experienced?**

8. What have you imagined doing in the future to foster a culture of ET?

9. What could CRS country program leadership do more or less of to foster a culture of ET?

10. If you were asked to name up to three good ET practices that have taken place since we last met, what would they be?

As you generate answers to any of these questions, record them on a Post-it note (one idea/ answer per Post-it).

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

Interpret Summarized Results*

OBJECTIVE: Enable participants to practice the thinking skills (and they are real skills that should be practiced) of brainstorming plausible alternative explanations for results, weighing those alternative explanations and determining which explanations are most plausible/ should be pursued. Because this activity uses real data provided by the program or project, participants will also do genuine utilization work in a participatory way. The intention behind this activity is to demonstrate the power of participatory interpretation and therefore motivate participants to use a similar method/protocol in their future work

30 MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS (3-5 PEOPLE)

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

All culminating conference workshop participants

MATERIALS

- Real MEAL data (of any type), summarized and prepared for interpretation. This could include quantitative data summaries (tables and/or charts), qualitative data summaries (quotes, thematically sorted qualitative results, etc.). This might be results of a previously planned annual survey or the results of a learning plan implemented as a result of participating in ET workshops, Round 2. All participants should have copies of the data to be interpreted. Given that this workshop only allows 30 minutes for this activity (just a taste), the data summary should be no longer than 1 to 2 pages long.

- Copies of the handout *Interpret Summarized Results*

- Chart paper and markers for each group

SET-UP

This activity should be done in small groups of 3 to 5 people. The groups should be mixed, meaning that, as much as possible, there should be field staff working with senior program staff also mixed with country leadership.

STEPS

1. Distribute handout and describe the goal of the activity.
2. Ask participants to follow the instructions on the handout, which will lead them through a systematic interpretation process (25 minutes)
3. Debrief
   - Was it difficult to come up with alternative explanations?
   - Is this a process you could/would use in your typical work cycle or routines?
   - What role does evaluative thinking play in this exercise?

* Developed by Jane Buckley

APPROACH

- Brainstorming plausible alternative explanations is a foundational evaluative thinking skill. It gets at the core of not taking things at face value and not allowing bias to keep us from the most accurate and useful information about our programs. However, in this case, we are practicing with a real MEAL result related to a real program, rather than a simulation. Also, in this case, brainstorming plausible alternative explanations is being introduced as a formal step in interpretation and utilizing results.

TIPS

- Point out to participants that there are no 'wrong' answers, only explanations that are more or less plausible.

- If the group comes up with less than 10 explanations, ask them to dig deeper. Perhaps thinking about the result from the perspective of a participant might help? Another stakeholder?

Explain and Defend Interpretation of Results*

OBJECTIVE: To enable participants to practice the thinking skills (and they are real skills that should be practiced) involved in explaining and defending an interpretation of MEAL results. This activity builds directly on (is a next step after) the *Interpret Summarized Results* activity.

30 MINUTES

IN SAME SMALL GROUPS AS PREVIOUS ACTIVITY

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

All culminating conference workshop participants

MATERIALS

- Notes and completed handouts from the previous activity.
- Copies of the handout *Explain and Defend Interpretation of Results*
- Chart paper and markers for each group

STEPS

1. Distribute handout and describe the goal of the activity
2. Ask participants to follow the instructions on the handout, which will lead them through a systematic interpretation process (20 minutes)
3. Debrief
   - Why is it important to do this extra step of explaining and defending your choice? Was is difficult? Why or why not?

APPROACH

- Asking participants to explicitly and systematically explain and defend their interpretation of MEAL results is a critical way of operationalizing evaluative thinking. It is easy to allow assumptions, lack of perspective, and other barriers to ET to 'creep in' at this stage. Interpreting one's own data and defending that interpretation, it could be argued, requires the highest level of evaluative thinking: not taking things at face value, having to be objective, asking 'how might others see this?', etc.
- The mixed groups (in terms of personnel) used in this activity offer a first opportunity, within an ET workshop, for the different groups to share and build upon their ET knowledge in a collaborative way. Have the participants from the various groups bought in to ET enough to overcome their hierarchical culture?

TIPS

- Remind all participants that every person's perspective is valuable. In terms of interpretation, all participants should be treated as equal. It is critical that no participant, or type of participant (e.g. country leadership staff) 'take over' this activity.
- On the other hand, remind participants that this is practice! Even though we are looking at their real data, and the results of this conversation might influence future work on utilizing this data, the purpose of this workshop is to experience the process of utilization and to practice working across participant groups.

* Developed by Jane Buckley

Action Plan*

OBJECTIVE: To practice the thinking skills involved in planning for action based on the (carefully considered and interpreted) results of a learning plan or other MEAL work. Action planning includes deciding if, as well as how, to act (make changes to the program collect more information, etc.) based on new information. Because this activity uses real data provided by the program or project, participants will also do genuine utilization work in a participatory way. The intent of the activity is to demonstrate the power of participatory action planning and therefore motivate participants to use a similar method/protocol in their future work.

30 MINUTES

IN SAME SMALL GROUPS AS PREVIOUS ACTIVITY

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

All culminating conference workshop participants

MATERIALS

- Notes and completed handouts from the previous two activities
- Copies of the handout *Action Plan*
- Chart paper and markers for each group if desired

STEPS

Distribute a copy of the handout to each participant. Introduce the activity, including a clear description of the goal and the guidelines:

1. Distribute the handout Action Plan.

2. Describe the goal of this activity.

3. Ask participants to follow the instructions on the handout (20 minutes).

4. Share out and debrief. Each group should have a chance to, very briefly, describe the action plan they have come up with and why they are advocating for that particular plan. Then, use the following prompts to debrief:

   - Was this exercise harder than you expected? Why or why not?

   - What role did ET play in your decision-making process?

   - When you were considering the evidence for your decision, what made you feel that the evidence was sufficient (or insufficient)?

APPROACH

- As in the previous two activities, this activity demonstrates how an open-ended decision-making process can be systematized, simplified and made participatory within an organization.

- This activity also demonstrates how important it is to draw a direct, plausible and agreed-upon connection between a result or set of results and a plan of action.

- Remind all participants that every person's perspective is valuable. In terms of interpretation, all participants should be treated as equal. It is critical that no participant, or type of participant (country leadership staff) dominate this activity.
- On the other hand, remind participants that this is practice! Even though we are looking at their real data, and the results of this conversation might influence future work on utilizing this data, the purpose of this workshop is to experience the process of utilization and to practice working across participant groups.

[*] Developed by Jane Buckley

ET Workshop Review*

OBJECTIVE: To reflect back on all of the ET workshops, recall and celebrate the work that has been done so far, and prepare to carry that work forward in a way that is meaningful and contextually appropriate.

20 MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS OF ABOUT 5

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

For all culminating conference workshop participants

MATERIALS

- Copies of the handout *ET Workshops*
- Chart paper and marker(s) for each group to be used to take notes

STEPS

1. Distribute the handout and describe the goal of this activity.
2. Assign a notetaker in each group
3. Ask participants to review the list of workshop topics and tasks listed on the handout.
4. Each group should discuss the following (15 minutes):
   - Which topics and/or activities were their favorites? Why?
   - Which topics and/or activities had the greatest impact on their organization? Explain.
   - Which topics, activities or themes would they like to see carried forward in their organization? How do they see this happening?
5. Ask each group to highlight a couple of key points that came up during their discussion to share with the larger group.
6. Debrief: Ask each group to share a couple of key points/themes that came up during their discussion (not all of their responses/notes).

APPROACH

- This should be a simple reflection exercise and a chance for participants to chat with each other about the most meaningful aspects of the ET workshops.

TIPS

- Keep the large group debrief to a minimum. Participants will have more opportunity to share during the *Activity Report* and *Learning-to-Action Plan* activities.

* Developed by Guy Sharrock

Activity Report Guidance

OBJECTIVE: Participants will reflect and report on their ET insights and work since the last ET workshop.

45 MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS (2-5 PEOPLE)

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

Those who participated in the previous workshop. Any who did not attend the previous workshop should be encouraged to listen and contribute if possible.

MATERIALS:
- One copy per participant of the handout: *ET Activity Report Guidance*
- Post-it notes
- Nine sheets of chart paper, each with one of the nine prompt questions from the worksheet written at the top
- Chart paper and marker to record comments during the debrief

STEPS:

1. Distribute the activity handout.
2. Each group should select one person to be the notetaker. This person will be responsible for making sure their group members' ideas are recorded on Post-it notes as described below.
3. Ask groups to discuss the prompts listed on the handout one at a time (first 20-25 minutes). Some groups may focus on one or two prompts and skip others. This is ok. However, the first and seventh prompts should be addressed by every group.
4. As group members respond to the prompts, individual ideas/points should be recorded on Post-it notes. *Ensure that only one idea is recorded per Post-it.*
5. The notetaker should organize these notes by the prompt they correspond to in readiness for posting onto the sheets of chart paper around the room.
6. For the last 5 minutes of the discussion time, participants should add their Post-it notes to the corresponding sheets of chart paper around the room.
7. Ask for nine volunteers to stand at each of the sheets of chart paper. They will summarize and share the responses collected on the prompt they represent.
8. Facilitate any emerging questions or discussion while ensuring time remains to address all prompts.
9. For Prompt 7 (contextual barriers to ET), take the extra step of sorting the responses into themes. These might include things like "time," "lack of opportunities to communicate" or any other thematic categories that best capture the responses provided.

APPROACH:
- This open-ended discussion is not just an opportunity to report out. It is <u>primarily</u> 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.

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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