# **Evaluative Thinking**

# **Seeking Evidence**

**ET WORKSHOP** 

ROUND 2 • GROUP 2





#### Introductions

Please share:

- Your name
- Your job title
- Your project(s)/area of work
- What you love most about where you live?





## **ET Workshop Series**

	Target audience	Round 1 Identifying Assumptions	Round 2 Seeking Evidence	Round 3 Taking Action
Group 1	Field-based staff			
Group 2	Senior program staff		Х	
Group 3	Country leadership			





#### **ET Workshop Series**

#### NINE WORKSHOPS IN ALL: 1 PER GROUP PER ROUND



#### **ROUND 1**

- Introduction to evaluative thinking
- Identifying assumptions
- Multiple perspectives
- Theory of Change (ToC) Pathway Models

#### **ROUND 2**

- Using the ToC Pathway Models to determine learning plan scope
- Developing learning questions
- Components of a learning plan
- Learning plan alignment

#### ROUND 3

- Making meaning from results
- Participatory analysis
- Making informed decisions (utilization)
- Communicating results

## A little housekeeping...

- Shared norms for the workshop
- Consent form and pre-workshop survey
- Post-workshop survey

Feel free to ask questions at any time!





**Workshop Goals** 

You will...

- 1. Reflect and build on ET work so far
- 2. Learn how to use ET to develop a project learning plan
- 3. Learn about ET and evaluation use
- 4. Identify barriers to ET and brainstorm strategies for overcoming these barriers
- 5. Leave feeling motivated, with a new perspective on MEAL, so that you can continue to make the greatest impact with your program(s)



# **Workshop Outputs**

You will leave this workshop with...

- A draft Learning Agenda for your project in line with the MEAL policies and procedures (8.2)
- A plan for completing/finalizing your plan

We will leave this workshop with...

• Experiences and feedback from you on how we can improve our ET workshop structure, content and delivery





### **Your Workshop Goals**

What would YOU like to get out of this workshop?

### "For me, this workshop will be a success if..."

- 1. Jot down a couple of ideas for yourself.
- 2. Share: As we go around the room, select one goal to share that has not been shared by someone else.





Agenda Day 1

Time	Task		
9:00am	Introductions and goals, consent form, pre-workshop survey		
9:15am	ET review and activity report		
10:30am	Break		
10:45am	Revisiting the ToC Pathway Models		
11:00am	ToC Pathway Model review		
12:30pm	Lunch		
1:30pm	ToC Pathway Model peer review		
2:30pm	Break		
2:45pm	Introduction to Mining the Model		
3:30pm	Reflect and debrief		
4:30pm	Close		





# What is Evaluative Thinking?







What is Evaluative Thinking? "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" Michael Quinn Patton Preface to 2014 InterAction Report, Embracing Evaluative Thinking for Better Outcomes: Four NGO Case Studies

# **Evaluative Thinking: Formal definition**

ET 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:

- 1. Identifying assumptions
- 2. Posing thoughtful questions
- 3. Pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and multiple perspective taking
- 4. Making informed decisions in preparation for action (BUCKLEY, ARCHIBALD, HARGRAVES & TROCHIM, 2015)



# **Evaluative Thinking**

#### Where it fits in

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

What does Evaluative Thinking sound and look like?



Photo by CRS staff



# **Evaluative Thinking**

What it sounds and looks like in a program work context

#### Things you may hear:

- 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?
- "Different community members perspectives on this are X, Y, and Z..."

#### Things you may see:

- More evidence gathering and sharing
- More feedback (all directions)
- Reflective conversations among staff, beneficiaries, leadership, etc.
- More ToCs/illustrating thinking
- More motivation to do systematic MEAL work
- Program evolution
- More effective staff and programs
- Greater field staff influence over project decisions

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

# **ET Activity Report Guidance**



#### **Break**





HANDOUT

#### **The MEAL System**



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

HANDOUT

### **Theory of Change Pathway Models**





# **Theory of Change Pathway Models**

- Tell the story of your program
- Capture complexity
- Follow a believable sequence
- Are used for planning and MEAL
- Have an evaluative thinking process use





## **Theory of Change Pathway Models**



# **Theory of Change Pathway Model**





# **Theory of Change Pathway Model**



Primary caregivest generally refer to hological mothers and fathers. However, in the context of HIV in Soothers Africa, the primary caregives may be a grandmother a unit or other kim while cares for the shild and provides him/bet with meak and supports basic hereb.

Looks complex? Programs are complex! We should reflect this complexity in our models, and consider it in planning and MEAL work!

# **Theory of Change Pathway Model**



- Can be vertical too!
- The ToC makes clear how and why certain actions will produce desired changes in the environment where the project will be implemented. A ToC is a concise, explicit explanation of: "If we do X [action]...., then Y [desired change] ... because Z [rationale and assumptions]"

# How ToC Pathway Model and Proframe relate

PROFRAME	ToC PATHWAY MODEL	
Inputs		Causality/ Program Theory
Assumptions Indicators	Core program model elements: Activities, outputs,	Shows "sub-programs"
Measurement	intermediate results, strategic objectives	Identifies questions Tells "story"
		graphically

# Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models

- Are there any Activities that are not connected to any Outputs/IRs/ SOs?
- Are there any Outputs/IRs/SOs that are not connected to any Activities?
- If yes, why do these gaps exist? Was something simply left out of the model, or is there a program Activity that does not really address the program goals?
- Is the program expected to lead to a particular Output/IR/SO, but does not actually include an Activity that would result in that Output/IR/SO?



#### **Revisit and Revise**

Revisit and revise the ToC Pathway Model from Round 1





#### Lunch





ENERGIZER

#### **Bottle Race**





# **ToC Pathway Model Peer Review**

- If you see big leaps in logic, suggest new cards as needed.
- If you see something that is likely to be confusion to an outsider, or that could be worded more clearly, suggest changes to it!
- Consider the arrows the team has drawn. Are they the right arrows? Too many? Too few?

Thinking hats:

- 1. Black hat critical
- 2. Yellow positive
- 3. Green hat creative

HANDOUT

### **ToC Pathway Model Review Guidance**

(PARA)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION





#### **Break**





ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

HANDOUT

# Mining the Model

# Mining the Model





# Mining the Model




## Reflection

#### **Thinking about ET:**

• How would you explain ET to a colleague?

#### Thinking about today's workshop:

- What did you like about today's workshop?
- How could today's activities better meet the goals? set out in the morning?
- What are you still unsure about?
- What are some key "takeaways" for you?

## Handouts from Day 1

- Consent form
- Pre-workshop survey
- What is ET?
- ET strategies and activities
- ET activity report guidance
- The MEAL system
- Theory of Change Pathway Models
- Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models
- Pathway Model review guidance
- Mining the model



## Have a great evening! See you tomorrow

# Good morning!

## Any questions from yesterday?



## Agenda Day 2

Time	Task
9:00am	Goals for the day
9:15am	Finish Mining the Model
10:00am	Introduction to learning plans and learning questions
10:30am	Break
10:45am	Developing learning questions
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Alignment, developing learning plans
2:15pm	Break
2:30pm	Developing learning plans
4:00pm	Reflect and debrief
4:30pm	Close



## **Goals for the Day**

- Share the results of Mining the Model
- Develop learning questions based on ToC work and knowledge of alignment
- Develop project learning plans
- Peer review project learning plans



## **Determining Learning Scope**

- Now that you have finished Mining the Model, you should be able to identify a small area of your model (just a few boxes and arrows) that represents the parts of your program on which you would like to focus a learning plan. This is called the learning scope.
- Take a few minutes to discuss the results of the Mining the Model activity with your group. Then, draw a circle (maybe an oval or other odd shape) around your agreed upon learning scope.



## **Report out on Mining the Model**

- Which area(s) of your model have you chosen to focus on?
- Why did you choose this area?



## **Learning Planning**



How do we use the "results" of our ET? (Assumptions we found, questions we posed, and reflections we had?)

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

## **Learning Planning**

#### EVALUATIVE THINKING





## **Project Learning Plan**

- A learning plan is a document that guides the implementation of an evidence-gathering strategy and is essentially the response to a learning question. It includes a description of the program, the program model, the overall goal of the plan, the learning question, 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 program staff or external parties, but program staff should always have a voice in developing the plan.



## **Project Learning Plan Development**

- Every plan will be different depending on your purpose.
- It must allow a stranger to step in, understand the thinking behind your plan, and effectively implement it
- Includes two main parts:
  - Program information
  - Evidence-gathering plan





## **Project Learning Plan Development**

#### **Project description**

- Copy of model
- Brief description of project
- Key assumptions
- Context
- Key stakeholder interests
- Brief history of program (if applicable)

#### **Evidence-gathering plan**

- Purpose statement
- Learning questions and intended claims
- Who? What? When? Where? and How? of evidence gathering /data collection
- Copies of any measurement tools
- Outline of how gathered evidence will be handled, analyzed and used, as applicable

## **Project Learning Plan Development**

#### **Project description**

- Copy of model
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#### **Evidence-gathering Plan**

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- Outline of how gathered evidence will be handled, analyzed and used, as applicable







What kinds of questions might a program be asking about this component of their work?





What kinds of questions might a program be asking about this short-term outcome?



### LQ1

Is participation in activity X associated with outcome Y?

## LQ1A

Does activity X cause outcome Y?





## Learning Questions guide Learning Plans

- Learning Plan Table of Contents
- Learning Plan Purpose Statement
- Learning Questions
- Measurement
- Sample
- Design
- Data Management
- Analysis
- Reporting and Utilization
- Timeline



**Learning Questions** 

#### **Examples:**

- Is activity X associated with outcome Y?
- Do participants report that they are satisfied with activity X?
- Does activity X cause participants to experience outcome Y?
- Do participants report experiencing outcome Y?
  - Which participants do/don't report experiencing outcome Y?
  - What differentiates them and the experiences they report?











## Claims

Claims are what you can say with more certainty once you have answered the learning question.

- Learning question: Is Activity X associated with outcome Y?
- Claim: Activity X is associated with outcome Y OR
- Claim: Activity X is not associated with outcome Y





## Claims

Learning question	Claim
Do participants report they are satisfied with Activity X?	
Does Activity X cause participants to experience Outcome Y?	
Do participants report experiencing Outcome Y?	
Which participants do/don't report experiencing Outcome Y?	
What differentiates them and the experiences they report?	



## **Break**





## **Developing Learning Questions**



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUTS

## **Brainstorm Learning Questions**

#### See handouts:

## Guidance for Wording Learning Questions and Developing Learning Questions (Part I)





## **Brainstorm Learning Questions**

On flipchart paper, with your team: Brainstorm a list of three draft learning questions



#### Constructs

# Those hard-to-define variables that you often want to collect evidence about. Such as:





#### Constructs

Learning question example: Do participants in my program have access to healthy foods?

#### Evaluative thinking: •

What assumptions are we making in posing this question? How would our stakeholders define this construct? How are we defining this construct?



#### See handouts:

## Developing Learning Questions (Part II) and Key Constructs and Measurement





## **Select One Learning Question**

• The question you select now will determine the direction of your project learning plan/learning agenda for this cycle.





## Lunch





HANDOUT

## **Alignment defined**

A project learning plan is 'aligned' when the methods proposed will lead to the collection of the evidence/data that will allow the evaluation question to be credibly addressed.

*In other words:* A project learning plan is well aligned when the question, methodology and intended claim "match up."

See handout: Alignment defined

## **Evidence Gathering**

# Selecting the right method for the job

Simple post-event satisfaction surveys are not really adequate for ensuring good ("big") decisions about a long-established, consistently implemented, and possibly large program.

Complex strategies (perhaps with control groups and randomization) are inappropriate for evaluating newly developed programs, or for making relatively "small" decisions.
# Alignment

Question	Method	Analysis	Intended Claim
Is participation in our ET training program associated with an increase in knowledge?	Measure knowledge using a survey both before (pre) and after (post) the ET training program	Score pre- and post-surveys and compare scores for each individual participant	Participants demonstrated an increase in ET knowledge after participating in the ET training program as
0	1 0		compared to

before.

1: A PACK

Alignment

Words matter!

What is the difference between these two claims: *"Participants report that they are doing outcome Y"* and

"Activity X contributes to outcome Y"

# Misalignment

Question	Method	Analysis	Intended Claim
How do participants intend to change their behavior after participating in the ET training program?	Post-program focus group	Record responses, look for and report themes related to behavior change	Participants change their behavior as a result of participating in the ET training program
Do participants report satisfaction with the ET training program?	Pre-post survey with control group	T-test for change, check for statistical difference with control group	Many participants have reported satisfaction with the ET training program



# **Alignment Reflection**

- How does ET help with alignment?
- What would a project learning plan without ET look like?





**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

# Learning Plan Purpose Statement

#### With your team:

- Based on the LQs you've developed, come to a consensus about the overall goal of this evidence-gathering effort (Will this be a formal evaluation designed to meet stakeholder needs, managed by someone other than program staff? Or are you designing a less-formal learning plan, possibly for internal purposes?)
- Compose a short paragraph or list that describes your overall goal, what you want to know and/or be able to claim at the end, and a defense of your choice.



#### **Break**





### **Project Learning Plan**

The WHY **WHAT WHO** HOW and **WHEN** of evidence gathering



#### Measurement



# **Broad categories of Measurement**

Quantitative Measurement provides numerically quantifiable data Qualitative Measurement provides non-numerical data

#### **Direct Measurement**

collects information using interviews with and observations of those being studied, or of those close to the object of study

#### **Indirect Measurement**

collects information using a proxy for those or that being measured



#### **Recall Constructs**

#### (what we are trying to measure)



#### Indicators

Ability to apply knowledge in a new context

Ability to explain/teach new knowledge

Self report

Knowledge

Third party report

Ability to demonstrate skills

Ability to answer questions

(PATA)

#### **Indicators**



## Sample

The sample is the set of individuals you intend to collect information from or about. The sample is either equal to, or is a portion of, the population of interest.





Sample = population

# **Selecting a Sample**

- 1. Think about the learning questions and the kinds of claims you want to be able to make based on the learning plan findings.
- 2. Who (or what) has or embodies the information you want to collect?
  - participants?
  - publicly available records?
  - eligible non-participants?
  - potential future participants?
  - family members of participants?
  - others?



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

#### **Learning Plan Development**

The WHY WHAT **WHO** HOW and **WHEN** of evidence gathering



HANDOUT

#### **Learning Plan Development**

See handouts: Project Learning Plan Learning Plan Template Learning Plan Template: Table Format



# Reflection



#### Thinking about today's workshop:

- How are evaluative thinking and learning planning related?
- Why is ET important even in cases when you are not part of the learning planning team?
- What are you still unsure about after today's workshop?
- How could today's activities better meet the goals set out in the morning?



# **Handouts from Day 2**

- Guidance for wording learning questions
- Developing learning questions
- Key constructs and measurement
- Alignment defined
- Learning plan purpose statement
- Project learning plan
- Learning plan template
- Learning plan template: Table format





# Have a great evening! See you tomorrow

# **Good morning!**

### **Questions from yesterday**



Agenda Day 3

Time	Task
9:00am	Goals for the day
9:15am	Learning plan peer review
10:15am	Break
10:30am	Learning plan utilization
11:00am	Learning plan simulation
12:30am	Lunch
1:30pm	Overcoming barriers to ET
2:30pm	Break
2:45pm	Being an ET champion
4:00pm	Reflect and debrief/post-workshop survey
4:30pm	Close



## **Goals for the Day**

- Conduct peer reviews of learning plans
- Explore how ET fits in with interpretation and reporting of results
- Understand the relationships between ET, MEAL, and program development
- Brainstorm strategies for overcoming barriers to ET
- Discuss what it means to be an ET champion



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

# **Learning Plan Peer Review**

See Handout:

• Learning Plan Review Guidance





#### **Break**





# Using information gained from implementing learning plans

#### **Report to stakeholders**

- What you learned
- What evidence you have
- What changes will be made

#### Improve the program

• Make or recommend changes based on evidence collected

#### Plan for future learning

• Revisit the ToC, revise, identify new assumptions, pose new questions



#### Utilization

#### Often we think of this ...



... and forget about this



# **Utilization and Program Development**



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



## **Utilization and Program Development**



# **Utilization and Program Development**



## Reflection



Think back on your learning plan outline from the point of view of utilization and program development:

- Do you think you plan will be useful? In what specific ways?
- Does thinking about utilization and program development inspire you to make any revisions to your learning plan? If so, what?





**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

# **Learning Plan Simulation**

#### See Handout:

### • Learning Plan Simulation





- 1. Read the program description, LQs and purpose statement. Discuss the following prompts with your group.
  - What assumptions might these program implementers be making? In the purpose of the program, the LQs and/or the learning purpose statement?
  - Brainstorm a few alternative definitions for the constructs laid out in their LQs.



2. Read the survey questions. Do the following with your group:

- Identify which survey questions address which LQ(s). Do you think these survey questions were well written?
- What claims WILL they be able to make with the results of these survey questions? Does this line up with their purpose?



- 3. Consider this learning plan overall. With your group, come up with a recommendation for this project:
  - What changes should be made to the learning plan and measurement strategy (if any)? Why?



#### **Share out / Reflection**




#### Lunch





## **Barriers to Evaluative Thinking**

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

# **Overcoming Barriers to ET**

#### Working in groups:

- Think through several strategies for overcoming the barrier you've been assigned
- Prepare a short presentation for the larger group
- See also handouts Overcoming Barriers to ET and Principles for Promoting ET





HANDOUT

### **Principles for Promoting ET**



#### **Break**





#### World Café

- 1. What does it mean to be a champion of ET?
- 2. How could this group work together to promote a culture of ET/learning?
- 3. What are some strategies for talking with colleagues, beneficiaries, supervisors, funders, etc. about ET, MEAL and learning?



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** 

HANDOUT

## **Learning-to-Action Plan**

• See handout: Learning-to-Action Plan





## **Handouts from Day 3**

- Learning plan review guidance
- Learning plan simulation
- Overcoming barriers to ET
- Principles for promoting ET
- Learning-to-action plan
- Post-workshop survey



### **Organizing your ET notebook**





# **Organizing your ET notebook**

Day 1 Handouts	Day 2 Handouts	Day 3 Handouts
Consent form	Guidance for wording learning questions	Learning plan review guidance
Pre-workshop survey	Developing learning questions	Learning plan simulation
What is evaluative thinking?	Key constructs and measurement	Overcoming barriers to ET
ET strategies and activities	Alignment defined	Principles for promoting ET
ET activity report guidance	Learning plan purpose statement	Learning-to-action plan
The MEAL system	Project learning plan	Post-workshop survey
Theory of Change Pathway Models	Learning plan template	
Notes for developing ToC Pathway Models	Learning plan template: Table format	
Pathway Model review guidance		
Mining the model		



#### **Post-Workshop Survey**

#### • Please fill out the Post-Workshop Survey



# Thank you!

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