



# Essential Partners' Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System



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## Our Impact: What we measure and how

We look at impact at stages over time, from impact immediately after the project ends to impact one year after the original project. Immediately after a project, individuals leave with one or more of the following shifts, depending on the project:

- Increased understanding of one another
- Increased respect and appreciation for one another
- New skills and/or knowledge for communicating across differences
- Realization that constructive communication is possible, and commitment to engaging differently moving forward, especially in difficult moments.

Over time, we see that as communication habits shift, people begin to trust each other enough to come together, even in difficult moments. When that happens, people feel a greater sense of belonging to their community, and trust that others – even those of different opinions, backgrounds or ideologies – are committed to helping their community thrive. They are able to forge a path forward, cooperate, heal, and innovate to address the issues central to their community. Stronger relationships and new possibilities emerge. Communities and teams that we work with have leaders and systems in place to support conversation, and develop a unique plan that anticipates upcoming challenges and work toward community resilience. Specifically, we see:

- Personal transformation
- Increased social cohesion (including both new relationships and improved relationships)
- Increased sense of belonging and inclusion in communities
- Use and retention of skills, leading to increased resilience within the community

Specifically, we measure the impact of our work in four categories (or domains):

### 1. Understanding of Others and Being Understood

Impact in this area is felt immediately in a conversation and can be measured with quantitative questions in pre- and post-surveys (e.g. rate how you agree/ disagree with the statements: “This process helped me understand the feelings and beliefs of community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine” and “this process helped me feel understood by community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine”).

### 2. Increased willingness to engage across difference using dialogue skills

In the short term, we measure this by asking how people’s willingness to engage across difference has changed since working with us; we ask about how hopeful they are that dialogue skills





(including preparation, structure, questions, facilitation and reflection) can help or impact their communities in the long term.

Over time, we measure personal transformation: how much have these tools become engrained? How have people's habits and behaviors shifted since working with us? How do they embody a different way of engaging now?

### **3. Equipped to engage across difference using dialogue skills**

Immediately after working with us, we begin measuring how equipped people feel to engage across difference through number of people trained and the perception of skills acquired. We ask people to set goals for themselves and articulate clear next steps to prepare them to apply what they've learned.

In the short term, we measure how equipped people remain by asking about perception of knowledge and skills retained alongside use of those skills in daily life.

In the long term, we measure perceived shifts in communication patterns within the community and resilience, defined as the capacity of a community to remain invested in one another in moments that threaten the identities of one or more groups. We measure resilience by looking at progress made on goals and their definition of success as defined at the outset of a project; the existence and recognition of new structures and processes in place to hold conversations across difference in the community; and the identification and recognition both of key community leaders and individual roles that contribute to that community's plan for dialogue.

### **4. Healthy relationships and social cohesion**

We begin to see improvement in trust and belonging immediately after dialogue, but continue to measure the growth and healthiness of relationships over time. Social cohesion measured in four broad ways:

- a sense of belonging or inclusion in the community;
- the sense of cohesiveness of that community;
- improved trust; and
- new/ improved relationships across difference.

#### **Using the Tools**

In each phase, any questions are asked of individuals who participate in Essential Partners work – and/ or in work led by Essential Partners trainees. In addition to these questions, all instruments include questions to understand the Most Significant Change (MSC) following the project.

The following pages go into more depth on each of these categories. Information provided includes details on how we measure each category of impact and the questions we ask to measure each category (or domain). The Indicators below provide the framework for our system; subsequent pages go deeper into how we measure each domain.





# Indicators

Domain	Indicator	Measurement
1. Understanding others and being understood	1.1 Respect	1.1.1 Personal experience of feeling respected 1.1.2 Experience of respecting others of different opinions/backgrounds/ideologies
	1.2 Understanding	1.2.1 Experience of better understanding others of different opinions/backgrounds/ideologies within your community through dialogue 1.2.2 Experience of being understood by others of different o/b/i within your community 1.2.3 Experience of dialogue allowing you to see beyond pre-judgement and stereotypes
2. Healthy relationships and social cohesion	2.1 Sense of belonging and inclusion	2.1.1 Sense of inclusion in/ belonging to community 2.1.2 Opinions feel heard/respected/taken seriously/able to make impact
	2.2 Trust	2.2.1 Trust in individuals of different opinions/backgrounds/ideologies within your community 2.2.2 Trust that community members of different o/b/i are committed to helping your community thrive
	2.3 Cohesion	2.3.1 Perception of community cohesiveness/ Improvement in community cohesiveness 2.3.2 New positive relationships formed across difference 2.3.3 Improvement in quality of formerly negative relationships across difference
3. Willing to engage across difference using dialogue skills	3.1 Commitment to engaging constructively across difference	3.1.1 Committed to use dialogue skills to engage across difference 3.1.2 Belief or hope that using dialogue skills will help us understand each other 3.1.3 Belief or hope that the experience of engaging across difference using dialogue skills is impactful in the long term
	3.2 Personal transformation	3.2.1 Reported change in personal attitude towards dialogue/engagement across differences 3.2.2 Observed change or transformation in community members' attitudes towards engaging across differences 3.2.3 Reported change in behaviors or habits as a result of intervention





4. Equipped to engage across difference	4.1 Communication	4.1.1 Observed positive change in formerly negative communication patterns or interactions with self and/or others 4.1.2 Experience with a successful “difficult” conversation
	4.2 Resilience	4.2.1 Progress identified towards goals or purposes in community plan 4.2.2 New structures or processes put in place to hold dialogues/conversations across difference 4.2.3 Key leaders or facilitators identified that can facilitate dialogues/conversations 4.2.4 Individual roles and skills identified or used for effective contribution to community plan
	4.3 People trained with skills to use Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD)	4.3.1 Number of participants trained with skills to use RSD 4.3.2 Number of participants trained with skills and equipped with a plan to affect change in their community
	4.4 RSD skills acquired	4.4.1 Ability to list some or all components of RSD 4.4.2 Identification of destructive or dysfunctional communication patterns in community or self 4.4.3 Self-reported gain/ retention of skills to communicate effectively across differences (including preparation, structure, questions, facilitation, and reflection)
	4.5 Acquired skills are used	4.5.1 Reported usage of skills acquired, in self or others 4.5.2 Reported number of people affected in the past month through personal application of skills 4.5.3 Number of groups facilitated by EP trainees 4.5.4 Number of groups facilitated in formal dialogues by EP trainees 4.5.5 Number of participants facilitated by EP trainees 4.5.6 Progress identified towards achieving goals or purposes set in individual plan
	4.6 Applicable and relevant materials	4.6.1 Downloads of materials on website 4.6.2 Personal use of materials
5. Marketing	5.1 Promotion	5.1.1 Likelihood of recommending EP to a colleague/friend 5.1.2 Reason for above 5.1.3 Reported referral of EP to a colleague/friend





# Measuring Domain 1: Understanding Others and Being Understood

## BASELINE

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. In this survey, the term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
1.1.1	I feel respected in my community.	1	2	3	4
1.2.1	I understand the feelings and beliefs of community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine.	1	2	3	4
1.2.2	I feel understood by community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine.	1	2	3	4

## POST

	<b>Part One: Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. The term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
	<b>This dialogue/process helped me...</b>				
1.1.1	...feel respected.	1	2	3	4
1.2.1	...better understand the feelings and beliefs of community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine.	1	2	3	4
1.2.2	...feel understood by community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine.	1	2	3	4
1.2.3	...see beyond my misconceptions or assumptions about people who are different than myself.	1	2	3	4





# Measuring Domain 2: Healthy Relationships/ Social Cohesion

## BASELINE

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. In this survey, the term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2.1.1	I feel a sense of belonging to my community.	1	2	3	4
2.1.2	My opinions are heard and taken seriously.	1	2	3	4
2.2.1	I trust individuals whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine within my community.	1	2	3	4
2.2.2	Community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine are also committed to helping our community thrive.	1	2	3	4
2.3.1	My community is cohesive.	1	2	3	4

## POST

	<b>Part One: Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. The term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
	<b>This dialogue/process helped me...</b>				
2.1.1	...feel a sense of belonging to my community.	1	2	3	4
2.1.2	...feel that my opinions are heard and taken seriously.	1	2	3	4
2.2.1	...trust individuals within my community whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine.	1	2	3	4
	<b>Part Two: Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2.2.2	Community members whose opinions and backgrounds differ from mine are also committed to helping our community thrive.	1	2	3	4
2.3.1	My community is cohesive.	1	2	3	4





## LONGITUDINAL

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. The term “community” references _____.</b> <b>SINCE participating in [our program]:</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2.1.1	Dialogue helped me feel more included in my community.	1	2	3	4
2.3.1	My community has become closer and more cohesive.	1	2	3	4
2.3.2	I have formed new, positive relationships across difference.	1	2	3	4
2.3.3	I have experienced improvements in relationships with people who have different opinions or backgrounds.	1	2	3	4





# Measuring Domain 3: Willingness to Engage Across Difference

## BASELINE

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. In this survey, the term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
3.2.1	I feel positive or hopeful about engaging with community members of different viewpoints.	1	2	3	4
3.1.1	I am committed to using dialogue to engage across difference.	1	2	3	4
3.1.2	Using dialogue can help us understand each other.	1	2	3	4
3.1.3	Engaging across difference using dialogue can continue to impact individuals and relationships outside of the dialogue.	1	2	3	4

## POST

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. The term “community” references _____.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
3.2.1	I feel positive or hopeful about engaging with community members of different viewpoints.	1	2	3	4
3.1.1	I am committed to using dialogue skills to engage across difference.	1	2	3	4
3.1.2	Using dialogue skills can help us understand each other.	1	2	3	4
3.1.3	I believe that the experience of engaging across difference through dialogue skills continues to impact individuals and relationships even after the dialogue session concludes.	1	2	3	4





## LONGITUDINAL

3.2.1 Has your personal attitude toward dialogue and engaging across difference changed? If yes, in what ways?

3.2.2 How have you seen any changes in your community, in terms of people's attitude towards engaging across difference?

3.2.1/ 3.2.3 Have you noticed any changes in yourself as a result of the work you did with EP? If so, what have you noticed?

3.2.3 Are there any behaviors or habits you used to do that you no longer do as a result of your work with EP?





# Measuring Domain 4: Equipped to Engage Across Difference

## BASELINE

Community Plans set by participants comprise the baseline for this indicator domain. Goals are set in a way that meets each project’s needs and capacity, and include concrete next steps for implementation.

Picture your community on a 1-10 scale, where 1 is the worst it’s ever been, and 10 is the best it could ever be. On this scale of 1 to 10, where do you think your community is now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Where do you think your community **could** be after implementing your Community Plan?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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## LONGITUDINAL

	<b>Please circle one number that best describes how you feel at this time. The term “community” references _____. SINCE participating in [our program]:</b>	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
4.1.1	I have observed positive changes in formerly negative communication patterns in my community.	1	2	3	4
4.1.2	I have been part of successful “difficult conversations” across difference within the community.	1	2	3	4
4.2.2	There are new structures or processes in place to hold conversations across difference.	1	2	3	4
4.2.3	I can identify key leaders or facilitators who can facilitate dialogue if the need arises.	1	2	3	4

4.2.1 To what extent has your community succeeded in implementing the Community Plan, and how has that resulted in the kind of change that you and your community hoped for?

4.2.4 What have you been doing to contribute to the goal that your community set during the dialogue/training?





4.2.1 What have you observed others (from the training or in general) doing to accomplish that goal?

4.2.1, 4.2.4 After our [intervention], you set a personal goal for applying what you learned to \_\_\_\_\_. In what ways have you been able to do this?

- What obstacles did you face in using what you learned?

4.4.3 What skills did you gain from the training that increase your ability to communicate effectively across differences?

4.4.1 If you were to plan a dialogue, what are the components of dialogue you would consider as you prepared?]

4.4.2 What dysfunctional communication patterns within your community have you identified?

4.5.1, 4.5.3 Since the training, how have you used the skills you acquired in the training, formally or informally?

*(If helpful, prompt thinking by asking specifically about categories where people could have used the skills (e.g. school, work, religious community, community org affiliations/ volunteering, in a formal dialogue, with family, etc.), or how they have used the five components of our model (preparation, inquiry, structure, facilitation, reflection).)*

4.5.2 Think back over the last month, and the opportunities you've had to apply your new skills. About how many people have you affected by using these skills, over the course of this last month?

4.5.1 How have you seen others in your community applying the skills acquired in the training?

4.6.2 Have you used any of the Essential Partners materials and resources you received at the workshop? Have you used any other Essential Partners materials or resources, not introduced at the workshop? Tell us about how you used them.

4.5.3-5 Have you used these skills with any groups, or facilitated any formal dialogues? (Yes/No)

4.5.3 Number of groups \_\_\_\_\_

4.5.4 Number of formal dialogues \_\_\_\_\_

4.5.5 Total number of participants [in dialogues and/or with other groups] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ X amount of time ago, you said your community was at a \_\_\_\_\_#, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst it's ever been, and 10 is the best it could ever be. Where do you think you are now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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What has been the most significant change you have noticed in your community since/as a result of [intervention]?





# Measuring Domain 5: Marketing/ Net Promoter

## AT EACH STAGE

### 5.1.1 Net Promoter

On a scale of 1-10, I would recommend Essential Partners to a colleague or friend.

Not at all likely

Extremely likely

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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### 5.1.2 Why did you answer the way you did? (short answer)

## LONGITUDINAL

### 5.1.3 Since the project, have you referred Essential Partners to a colleague or friend?





# Legend of Terms Used in Essential Partners' Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System

## **Community**

Any self-defined group of people that live, work, study, and/or worship together; A group that must communicate with one another regularly. Communities are defined by people at the outset of a project or planning process.

## **Community Plan**

In a community (see above), the creation of clear goals and purposes for shifting communication patterns within that community - and articulation of clear next steps for how to make progress towards achieving those purposes.

## **Conversations**

Communication that uses the skills of RSD - but may not be a formal dialogue.

## **Dialogue**

The experience of or participation in a formal structured group dialogue using RSD. Also: the process of dialoguing.

## **Dialogue skills**

Using skills of RSD in and outside formal dialogues (e.g. preparation, structure, questions, facilitation, reflection).

## **Reflective, Structured Dialogue (RSD)**

The broad methodology that enables people to harness their capacity to have the conversations they need to have. It includes skills and understanding of preparation, structure, questions, facilitation, and reflection.

## **Resilience**

The capacity of a community to remain invested in one another in moments that threaten the identities of one or more groups. Relational resilience.

## **Social Cohesion**

The cohesiveness of a community, as represented by individuals' sense of belonging; sense of cohesiveness of the community; amount of trust across difference; and amount and healthiness of relationships across difference.

\*Note: these definitions refer only to how these terms are used in EP's MEL system

