

## Step 2: Define how to assess the impact of the EAP activation

The goal of impact evaluation is to determine how and whether the early actions mitigated the prioritized impact. Did the actions make a difference in the lives and livelihoods of people at risk? To what extent? Do people in FbF-assisted communities experience less adverse impacts on their lives, health or property than people who were not assisted through FbF? Impacts will be measured on key indicators related to health, well-being, physical assets and productive capacity.

Develop the impact assessment section of your EAP MEAL plan, as follows:

- Define indicators (see examples in Table 2). Define your counterfactual approach.
- Choose data sources, data collection tools
- Develop/modify data collection tools.
- Define if the impact evaluation (and/or cost benefit analysis) will be conducted by the NS itself, by the IFRC or jointly, or via an external contract- e.g. academic institution, consultant etc.).

Assess household /community level impacts.

Investigate whether FbF has contributed to improve humanitarian outcomes. How you measure your impacts will vary according to your interventions.

### Tip:

Keep in mind gathering impact data on the success of your FbF interventions will depend on the type of intervention. For example, early actions for shelter are immediately observable directly after the disaster event, while early actions such as the distribution of water purification tablets to prevent a cholera outbreak could take weeks to show full effect.

The following materials can support you in planning your impact assessment.

- [Guidance on the evaluation approach: When and how to measure impact? \(Guidance from the FbF M&E Guide, Section 3.2\)](#)
- [Post-disaster survey questionnaire \(example\)](#)
- [Key informant interview \(KII\) guide \(example\)](#)
- [Focus group discussion \(FGD\) guide \(example\)](#)
- [Impact survey – mobile data collection template](#). Please note you need to create a (free, for humanitarian organisations) account on

## Brief list of common indicators/ measures of success

### **Counterfactual approach**

For example, “did households who were assisted through FbF experience fewer disaster impacts than households who did not receive this type of early help?”

How can we say with certainty that it was FbF assistance that led to the achievement of positive results, such as reduced suffering and fewer disaster impacts, rather than other interventions or external factors?

**The use of counterfactuals has become an accepted and widely-used approach to causal inference in social science research.**

In the context of FbF, a counterfactual is employed to answer a question such as: “What would have happened if the community hadn’t received assistance through forecast-based actions?”. The impact of FbF is estimated by comparing counterfactual outcomes (what would have happened without FbF) to those observed under the intervention (what happened with FbF assistance).

**The challenge is that the counterfactual cannot be observed directly.**

They must be approximated with reference to a comparison group that resembles the conditions of the counterfactual as closely as possible.

**In practice, FbF teams will usually aim to use one of two types of comparisons (or both) to estimate the counterfactual:**

## Historical impact data

## Impact data from comparison communities or households

**Using a counterfactual is not necessary but strongly recommended** given the current stage and funding of FbF projects. Otherwise, the analysis cannot show a causal relationship between the intervention and outcomes convincingly.

**It is unlikely in the case of FbF, there are situations where non-experimental approaches (without a comparison group) are the only feasible research design.** For example, when a programme/project is implemented universally and every exposed and vulnerable person is being reached, there are no more isolated comparison groups. Unfortunately, FbF programmes – with their limited amount of funding – are far from this scenario. Therefore, the use of experimental or quasi-experimental assessment designs with comparison groups to assess the impact of FbF projects/programs is strongly recommended.



## **MEAL Tasks and Tools**

### **Review the availability of reliable secondary data sources**

- [IFRC M&E Guide](#) on assessing the availability of secondary data (section 2.2.2, p. 33)

### **Identify a comparison group**

- [2-page summary guidance](#) on identifying comparison groups for FbF projects.
- [BetterEvaluation.org](#) overview of randomized controlled trial (RCT) methodology, including case study examples how to select comparison (or “control”) groups
- [Overview: Strategies for Causal Attribution \(unicef\)](#)