

Methodological guide for incorporating qualitative techniques in youth-oriented extension

Workbook No. 2:
Participatory appraisal and baseline
survey techniques





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1. Purpose of the workbook

Workbook No. 2: Participatory Appraisal and Baseline Survey Techniques is a practical tool designed to strengthen the capacities of those facilitating training, organizational, and extension processes in rural territories, with a particular emphasis on extension agents. It frames appraisal and baseline surveys not only as technical exercises for data collection, but also as pedagogical and relational processes in which extension agents build trust, foster participation, and create the conditions to understand—together with rural youth—the starting point from which change will be driven.

It is grounded in ethical and pedagogical principles that promote safe, respectful, and inclusive environments. It proposes the use of appraisal and baseline survey tools with clear purpose, closely linked to the objectives of each project or process, as well as to the territorial context in which they are implemented. It incorporates approaches based on interculturality, inclusion, human rights, women, mutual care, and intergenerational dialogue. It offers simple criteria to help extension agents select and adapt instruments according to group characteristics, community dynamics, and the specificities of each territory.

It explicitly recognizes the strategic role of rural youth as rights-holders and as key sources of information about their own realities, challenges, and aspirations. The suggested techniques go beyond an external and purely technical perspective, enabling young people to express how they live in their territory, as well as to discuss their productive and care activities, forms of organization, and experiences related to land, work, education, participation, and community life. In this way, baseline surveys become not only a static snapshot of reality, but also a space for collective reflection.

This is a flexible resource that can be adapted to each extension agent's style and to the realities of each territory. By using different appraisal and baseline tools in the early stages of processes, it contributes to more participatory and responsive extension work, aligned with human dignity, the strengthening of the social fabric, and care for the territory. The information generated constitutes not only a set of data, but also a key input for planning, decision-making, and monitoring the changes that communities and youth seek to promote.

2. Methodological foundation for participatory appraisal and baseline survey techniques

The appraisal and baseline survey tools included in this workbook are grounded in the tradition of popular education, participatory methodologies, and contemporary extension approaches with a territorial perspective. From this standpoint, understanding the situation of participants from the outset of training is not a formal procedure, but a strategic action that involves listening to multiple voices, recognizing inequalities and potential, and jointly establishing—together with rural youth and communities—the starting point and the goals to be achieved.

They are also inspired by the principles of horizontality, dialogue of knowledge, meaningful learning, interculturality, and youth leadership, as advanced by Latin American popular education and

participatory action research. This implies that the baseline is not constructed solely from quantitative indicators, but also from narratives, maps, life stories, perceptions, and collective agreements that enable a deeper understanding of initial conditions. The experiences of young people, their relationship with land and territory, their responsibilities in productive and care spheres, and their personal and community life projects serve as key reference points.

These tools were selected and adapted according to the specific characteristics of rural youth: territorial diversity, community identities, work and family responsibilities, unequal access to technologies, and diverse forms of organization. They also respond to the needs of extension agents, who require clear, practical, and culturally relevant instruments. The workbook includes methods such as participatory mapping, timelines, problem trees, social cartographies, simple baseline matrices, rapid surveys, appraisals by areas of life (productive, organizational, educational, and socio-emotional), and prioritization exercises that have proven effective in community development and rural planning processes.

In addition, recognizing that the role of the extension agent is to facilitate dialogue and mediate learning—not merely to collect data—baseline data collection is conceived as an opportunity to share information back with the group, compare perceptions, identify agreements and disagreements, and jointly interpret the initial situation with youth. In line with an extension approach that acknowledges the dignity and transformative capacity of young people, this workbook promotes an appraisal and baseline survey approach that goes beyond measurement to support understanding, critical reflection, and anticipation of desired changes, grounded in the voices and experiences of the communities themselves.

2.1. What is meant by appraisal and baseline?

Within the framework of extension processes, community strengthening, and work with rural youth, appraisal and baseline surveys are fundamental steps for understanding the initial situation from which change and collective learning processes will be driven (Guiskin 2019; Zabala Perilla and Knobloch 2021). Although closely related, each serves a specific and complementary function.

An appraisal is a participatory process of analysis aimed at developing a broad and contextualized understanding of the reality of a territory, community, or specific group (Anyaegbunam et al. 2008; ActionAid 2008). It is used not only to collect data, but also to promote joint reflection on problems, opportunities, actors, power relations, available resources, everyday practices, and living conditions that influence the processes to be strengthened. Appraisals recognize young people as key actors in interpreting their own territory and helps make visible inequalities, capacities, aspirations, and social dynamics that must be considered in planning (Guiskin 2019; Zabala Perilla and Knobloch 2021).

A baseline, on the other hand, is the systematic collection of specific and quantifiable information, along with some qualitative data, on the initial conditions of a project or program, usually linked to defined indicators (IICA 2012). It serves as a reference point that makes it possible to measure changes, progress, and results over time. The baseline is built on organized and verifiable data that

describe the situation prior to the start of activities, allowing for the assessment of how processes evolve in subsequent stages (IICA 2012).

Whereas appraisals provide a comprehensive and critical view of the context, the baseline survey establishes concrete initial values to monitor change. Used together, they support more relevant planning, more informed decision-making, adjustments to work strategies, and a clearer understanding of the real effects of interventions on the lives of rural youth and their communities (ActionAid 2008; IICA 2012). In this workbook, both processes are addressed from a participatory, intercultural, and inclusive perspective, ensuring that the information generated is useful, ethical, and respectful of the dignity of all those involved (Guiskin 2019).

The combined use of appraisal and baseline survey is particularly important at the outset of support, training, or community intervention processes, which require a clear understanding of the initial conditions of both the territory and the participant group. When an institution, organization, or extension team needs to plan actions that are context-sensitive and aligned with the realities of rural youth, these tools help identify not only current problems and challenges, but also the resources, capacities, and expectations that can be strengthened (ActionAid 2008; IICA 2012). Using them from the beginning ensures that decisions are not based on assumptions or isolated perceptions, but on collectively constructed knowledge supported by concrete data.

These tools are also essential when measuring change over time, particularly in projects aimed at strengthening skills, improving living conditions, promoting youth participation, or driving transformations in productive, organizational, or community practices (IICA 2012; Zabala Perilla and Knobloch 2021). Appraisals help interpret the complexity of the context, while the baseline establishes a point of comparison that facilitates the evaluation of progress and the adjustment of strategies. Using both is key when accountability to communities, institutions, or partners is required, as it ensures transparency, cultural relevance, methodological rigor, and a rights-based approach that respects territorial diversity and the voices of rural youth (IICA 2012; Guiskin 2019).

2.2. Methodological steps to carry out the participatory appraisal

Given that it is a process of collective analysis, rural appraisal requires a flexible and systematic methodology adapted to the characteristics of the territory and of rural youth. While tools can be adjusted to suit each extension activity, several common methodological steps guide its development (Anyaeibunam et al. 2008; ActionAid 2008; Guiskin 2019):

1. Preparation and planning of the process

This step includes defining the purpose of the appraisal, identifying the facilitation team, conducting a preliminary analysis of the territory, and developing a work plan with an intercultural approach. It also involves selecting tools, establishing a timeline, organizing logistics, defining ethical criteria, and ensuring meaningful participation mechanisms for rural youth.

2. Identification and mapping of stakeholders

This activity involves an initial recognition of community actors, including youth groups, local leaders, organizations, institutions, and key stakeholders influencing territorial dynamics. It helps make visible power relations, alliances, conflicts, resources, and the spaces in which young people are engaged.

3. Participatory data collection

At this stage, qualitative and quantitative techniques are used to understand the reality of the territory based on multiple voices, including:

- Formation of focus groups based on shared characteristics of participants;
- Interviews with key stakeholders;
- Community mapping and social cartography;
- Problem trees and objective trees;
- Historical timelines; and
- Field observation.

Methodologies should be adapted to cultural contexts to ensure that rural youth can share narratives, perceptions, and experiences without risk or exclusion.

4. Collective data analysis

Together with participants, the information collected is organized and interpreted to foster critical reflection on problems, opportunities, inequalities, practices, capacities, and life projects. This stage enables a deeper understanding of the territory.

5. Participatory validation

Preliminary findings are presented to the community—particularly to rural youth—to confirm, refine, or complement the information. This validation ensures legitimacy, transparency, and alignment with local perceptions.

6. Systematization and preparation of the appraisal report

Results are consolidated into a clear, contextualized, and decision-oriented document that incorporates intercultural and human rights approaches. This report serves as a key input for baseline construction and the planning of extension actions.

Based on the perspectives of participants and the territory, participatory appraisal makes it possible to understand the main factors shaping the identified problem or challenge. From this, baseline data collection defines a measurable and verifiable starting point that enables tracking changes throughout the intervention.

2.3. Methodological steps for baseline surveys

The purpose of the baseline is to establish initial values for indicators or key conditions before the intervention begins. Its methodology requires rigor, conceptual clarity, and consistency with the monitoring and evaluation system of the process (IICA 2012). Its development involves the following steps.

1. Definition of indicators and variables

This step establishes the qualitative and quantitative indicators that will be used to measure changes over time. They must be relevant to the context, sensitive to cultural aspects, and aligned with the project's objectives.

2. Design of data collection instruments

Based on the indicators, surveys, interview guides, checklists, and participatory tools are developed to obtain comparable information. Their design should incorporate inclusive language and ensure methodological clarity and accessibility for rural youth.

3. Selection of the sample or target population

This step determines who will be included in the data collection, based on representativeness criteria (such as age, ethnicity, sex, geographic location, education level, and community participation, among others). It also defines sample size and sampling methods.

4. Collection of baseline data

Data are collected in the field or through digital platforms, depending on territorial conditions, with emphasis on informed consent, confidentiality, and the safe participation of young people.

5. Processing and analysis of information

Data are organized both statistically and qualitatively to determine the initial status of the group or territory. Trends, characteristics, and relevant gaps are described, and baseline values for each indicator are established.

6. Preparation of the baseline report

Information is presented in a structured and accessible format, showing initial values, sources of verification, and the methodology used. This report serves as a reference for future monitoring and evaluation processes.

7. Alignment with the appraisal and validation

The baseline is compared with diagnostic findings to ensure coherence and complementarity. As with the appraisal, it is recommended to include a feedback and validation stage involving rural youth and the relevant institutions.

2.4. Integration of both processes

An appraisal can contribute to a holistic understanding of the context—identities, inequalities, aspirations, and socio-productive and cultural dynamics—while the baseline provides concrete and measurable data to assess how these elements evolve over time. Together, they enable:

- Identification of real rather than assumed needs,
- Context-informed decision-making and strategy development,
- Strengthened youth participation across all phases of the project,
- Greater transparency and accountability, and
- The promotion of ethical, inclusive, and territorially relevant interventions.

3. Techniques

The participatory appraisal and baseline survey techniques presented below are practical resources designed to facilitate training, organizational, and extension processes with rural youth. They are strategies aimed at participatorily building a clear picture of the initial situation in areas such as community organization, living conditions, access to resources, participation, land use, productive practices, and future expectations. Through simple, visual, and collectively agreed tools, they seek to support young people in expressing themselves, making their territorial diversity visible, and fostering a climate of trust and shared responsibility regarding the information generated.

Although these techniques are primarily used in the initial phase of a project or accompaniment process, they can also be applied at later stages to compare progress and assess whether initial conditions have been maintained or whether new challenges have emerged. They are designed to be adapted by extension agents to different rural contexts, group sizes, and thematic areas (such as production, environment, women, care, and participation), while consistently maintaining an approach grounded in inclusion, rights, and the recognition of rural youth as key actors in processes of change within their territories.

3.1. Design of data collection tools

The following table presents, in a systematic manner, the main techniques used in appraisals and baselines surveys, classified into traditional and non-traditional tools. Traditional tools are those widely used in classical participatory appraisal and baseline survey approaches (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, observations, problem trees, and community mapping), whose use is well established in community studies and rural extension. Non-traditional tools are more recent, innovative, or creative methodologies that incorporate expressive and technological resources or alternative participatory dynamics (including photovoice, digital cartography, forum theater, participatory video, and social innovation labs), with the aim of expanding the ways in which analysis, dialogue, and evidence generation are grounded in community experience. Together, these tools facilitate a collective understanding of territorial realities, as well as the initial characterization of the community's social, economic, environmental, and organizational conditions. Their purpose is to

provide a clear and coherent overview of the available instruments to promote participation, document local knowledge, and generate robust information that can serve as a reference for monitoring and evaluating community development processes.

Table 1. Data collection tools

Technique	Type	Example of Use
1. Stakeholder mapping	Traditional	Identification of organizations, community leadership, and territorial networks
2. Community mapping	Traditional	Collective development of social, environmental, or productive maps
3. Problem tree	Traditional	Participatory analysis of causes and consequences of low agricultural productivity
4. Participatory walk	Traditional	Community walk to observe natural resources and local issues
5. Timeline	Traditional	Reconstruction of key historical events in the territory
6. Structured survey	Traditional	Questionnaires to determine initial socioeconomic conditions
7. Semi-structured interviews	Traditional	Collection of perceptions on resources, access to services, or productive practices
8. Direct observation	Traditional	Recording of agricultural practices and environmental conditions
9. Photographic record	Traditional	Images of the initial state of crops, roads, or infrastructure
10. Comparative photography	Non-traditional	Visual record of environmental or productive conditions before and after an intervention
11. Photovoice	Non-traditional	Photographic documentation of realities and priorities by community members
12. Digital participatory mapping	Non-traditional	Use of online tools (Google Earth, QGIS, collaborative mapping) to locate resources
13. Forum theater or community theater	Non-traditional	Representation of local issues to promote dialogue and reflection
14. Participatory video	Non-traditional	Collective audiovisual production showcasing territorial challenges and potential
15. Social innovation lab	Non-traditional	Creative space to identify challenges and co-develop initial ideas
16. Talking map	Non-traditional	Hand-drawn map whose elements and meanings are explained orally
17. Empathy activity (design thinking)	Non-traditional	Playful activities to understand perspectives and needs of different groups
18. Participatory mobile applications	Non-traditional	Use of apps such as KoboToolbox or Survey123 to collect field data
19. Interactive online maps (community GIS)	Non-traditional	Georeferenced recording of plots, water sources, or risk areas
20. Community visual indicators	Non-traditional	Representation of progress through pictograms or icons

Technique	Type	Example of Use
21. Territorial well-being wheel	Non-traditional	Collective assessment of the territory in terms of cohesion, income, or sustainability
22. Map of dreams or desired futures	Non-traditional	Graphic representation of how the community envisions itself in five or ten years

3.2. Stakeholder mapping

 Objective	Identify, together with rural youth, the individuals and organizations that influence their territory, as well as their roles and levels of power.
 Time	60-90 minutes
 Materials	A large flipchart, markers, colored cards or sticky notes, and adhesive tape.
 Procedure	Identification of types of stakeholders • Explain to participants that stakeholders are individuals, groups, or institutions that influence the lives of rural youth (positively or negatively). • Ask them to mention various stakeholders in the territory: development associations, cooperatives, municipalities, educational centers, churches, agricultural companies, water committees, youth groups, etc. Classification and recording on cards • Write the name of each stakeholder on a card. • Use different colors for: - o Community stakeholders, - o Public institutions, - o Private companies, and - o Youth organizations. Placement on the stakeholder map • Draw a circle at the center representing rural youth in the territory. • Ask the group to place the cards closer to or farther from the circle, depending on: - o Their proximity to youth, and - o Their level of power or influence over their lives. Analysis of relationships and gaps • Ask the following questions: - o Who truly supports rural youth? - o Who, despite having decision-making power over them, maintains minimal engagement with these youth? - o Which important stakeholders are missing in the territory? • Draw arrows to represent key relationships (support, conflict, dependency, etc.). Prioritization of key stakeholders

	• Select 3 to 5 priority stakeholders in the process (based on their potential support or the barriers they present). • For these stakeholders, record ideas to foster engagement, dialogue, or advocacy.
 Example	In a rural district with high youth migration, a group of rural young people conducts a stakeholder mapping exercise. They identify the municipality, a dairy cooperative, a technical high school, a non-governmental organization working with rural women, local banks, churches, and an informal youth association. The group places the school and the organization close to the center, as they receive support from both, while positioning the municipality and banks farther away, since—although they hold significant power—they have limited direct engagement with youth. The analysis reveals that the dairy cooperative rarely takes rural youth into account in its decision-making, despite the fact that many young families supply milk. The extension team uses this map to plan advocacy actions, such as organizing a meeting between the youth association and the cooperative to explore training opportunities and youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives.

3.3. Community mapping

 Objective	Collectively represent the rural territory (resources, challenges, services, and dynamics) from the perspective of rural youth and their communities.
 Time	60-90 minutes
 Materials	Flipcharts, markers, adhesive tape, and stickers
 Procedure	Presentation of the purpose • Explain to the group that they will create a hand-drawn map of the community or rural territory. • Emphasize that, beyond accuracy, the goal is to represent what is important to young people. Drawing the base of the territory • Ask one participant to draw the main road, the river, and the town center. • Invite the group to add rural communities, farms, schools, health centers, and community halls. Incorporating problems and resources • Use one color to mark problems (damaged roads, risk areas, dumpsites, areas of violence, etc.). • Use another color to mark resources and opportunities (youth organizations, cultural spaces, demonstration plots, and productive projects, among others). Collective reading of the map • Ask the following questions: - o Where are services concentrated? - o Which rural communities are more isolated?

	- o Where do rural youth face the greatest number of challenges? Prioritization of intervention areas • Identify on the map the areas where it is most urgent to act (e.g., rural communities without access to services or with fewer opportunities for rural youth). • Record these priorities as input for planning.
 Example	In a district with several coffee-growing and livestock-producing communities, rural youth carry out a community mapping exercise. They draw the town center, four main rural communities, the school, the technical high school, the community hall, farms, and rivers. They mark in red the areas where roads become impassable during the rainy season and where it is most difficult to transport production. They mark in green youth initiatives: a football team, a community nursery, and a school garden. When analyzing the map, it becomes evident that one of the more remote rural communities has no access to any training activities for young people. Based on this finding, the extension team decides to hold the first workshop not only in the town center, but also in that community.

3.4. Problem tree

 Objective	Analyze a central problem affecting rural youth by identifying its causes and consequences, in order to better guide the actions to address it.
 Time	60-90 minutes
 Materials	A flipchart, cards or sticky notes, markers, and adhesive tape
 Procedure	Definition of the central problem • Ask the following question: - o What is the main problem we face as youth in this territory? • Select one (e.g., unemployment, school dropout, lack of access to land) and write it on a card to place at the center of the flipchart. Identification of causes (roots) • Ask the following questions: - o Why does this problem occur? - o What lies behind it? • Write each cause on a card and place them below the problem (roots). • Explore the causes more deeply by repeatedly asking “why?” to identify more structural causes. Identification of effects (branches) • Ask the following questions: - o What happens as a result of this problem?

	- o What are the consequences for rural youth, their families, and the community? • Write each effect on a card and place them above the problem (branches). Review of the tree • Read the full tree and check whether any important causes or consequences are missing. • Group similar effects and organize any repeated ones. • Reflect on the results. Prioritization • Ask the following questions: - o Which causes can be addressed through the project? - o Which causes require more significant institutional changes? • Mark with a symbol the causes where the community and rural youth can take action.
 Example	In a workshop with rural youth from several communities, the lack of employment opportunities for rural youth is identified as the central problem. Among the causes mentioned are the limited availability of technical training in the territory, the high cost and irregularity of transportation to a study center in the city, banks' lack of trust in youth-led projects, and limited access to land ownership for starting ventures. Among the consequences identified are the forced migration of young people to the city, school dropout, increased workload on the farms of aging parents, demotivation, and family conflicts. After reviewing the problem tree, rural youth conclude that they can take action by organizing a youth group to advocate for technical training opportunities in the community, as well as by promoting small collective enterprises. At the same time, they recognize that access to credit requires partnerships with financial institutions. In this way, the problem tree helps guide the definition of project priorities.

3.5. Participatory walk

 Objective	Walk through different areas of the territory with rural youth and other community members in order to observe and document problems, resources, and everyday dynamics.
 Time	1.5-3 hours (depending on the route)
 Materials	Notebooks, pens, a camera or mobile phone for taking photographs, an audio recorder (optional), water, and sunscreen
 Procedure	Definition of the route • Together with rural youth, select a representative route: a path to the school, access to the river, a farm, youth meeting spaces, risk areas, etc. • Establish stopping points where discussion and more detailed observation will take place. Explanation of the objective of the walk



	• Explain that the purpose of the walk is to view the community from a new perspective, identifying problems and resources. • Clarify that observations will be gathered to inform the appraisal or the baseline survey. Walk and observation • Walk as a group and observe homes, plots, roads, rivers, and services. • Ask young participants to point out important or critical sites such as: - o Damaged roads, - o Unstable slopes, and - o Places where youth gather. Discussion at key points • At each stop, ask the following questions: - o What is happening here? - o What problems or opportunities can be observed? - o How does this place affect rural youth? • Take notes and, if appropriate, photographs. Return to the room and systematization of findings • Back in the meeting space, ask participants to draw a simple map of the route and note key points and findings. • Identify 3 to 5 key themes that emerged during the walk and determine how they relate to the project.
 Example	In a dispersed rural community, the extension team organizes a participatory walk with rural youth. They follow the path from the village to the school, pass through an eroded hillside area, cross a small river, and end at the square where young people usually gather. Along the route, the young participants point out that during the rainy season the road becomes very slippery, causing them to arrive late to school or even miss classes. They also highlight a hillside where two landslides have occurred, blocking the transport of milk to the collection center. Upon returning to the meeting space, they draw the route and mark the critical points. This information, incorporated into the territorial diagnosis, is later used in a meeting with local authorities to highlight the areas where urgent road improvements and soil conservation actions are needed.

3.6. Timeline

 Objective	Reconstruct, together with rural youth and the community, the milestones and changes that have shaped the territory and youth life.
 Time	60-90 minutes
 Materials	A long flipchart, markers, cards, and adhesive tape
 Procedure	Definition of the time period to be analyzed



	• Ask the group the following question: - o From when would you like to begin the analysis? It may start 10, 15, or 20 years back, depending on the rural context. • Draw a horizontal line and mark some reference years. Identification of territorial milestones • Ask participants to mention important events for the rural community, such as: - o Agricultural projects, - o Construction or closure of schools, - o Major droughts or floods, and - o Changes in roads or services. • Write each milestone on a card and place it on the timeline. Incorporation of the rural youth perspective • Ask young participants to add events relevant to them, such as: - o The arrival of youth-focused programs, - o The creation of youth groups, and - o Moments of conflict or participation. Analysis of trends • Together with the group, observe whether there are periods of greater institutional support, climate-related crises, or youth migration. • Ask: - o When were there more opportunities for rural youth? - o At what moments did significant changes occur? Link to the current project • Based on these milestones, determine: - o What should be replicated, - o What should be avoided, and - o What should be improved.
 Example	In a rural territory with a coffee-growing tradition, rural youth take part in developing a timeline covering the past 20 years. Events identified include periods of declining coffee prices, a major flood, the construction of a technical high school, an irrigation project that benefited only part of the rural communities, and the establishment of a community association five years ago. When analyzing the timeline, rural youth realize that the periods with the greatest opportunities for them coincide with the opening of the technical high school and the implementation of projects that explicitly included young people. In advocacy spaces, this helps them demonstrate the importance of designing rural programs centered on youth and of involving young people in decision-making spaces to better address their needs.

3.7. Structured survey

 Objective	To obtain quantitative information on the conditions, opinions, or practices of rural youth and their families through a questionnaire with closed-ended questions.
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 Time	Design: 1–2 hours Implementation: depending on the sample size (e.g., 10–20 minutes per survey)
 Materials	Printed or digital questionnaires, pencils, mobile phones or tablets, and sheets for tracking the surveys
 Procedure	Definition of information objectives • Explain to the group that the questionnaire will be used to determine: - o Education level, - o Limitations in access to land, - o Degree of participation in organizations, - o Interest in remaining in the rural territory, etc. Questionnaire design • Write clear and concise questions, mainly closed-ended (yes/no, multiple choice, and scales). • Ensure inclusion of variables such as age, sex, education, employment, and rural community, among others relevant. Pilot testing • Administer the survey to a small group of rural youth to test the instrument. • Revise questions that caused confusion or are too long. Field implementation • Provide guidance on ethics, confidentiality, and purpose to those administering the survey. • Record the name of respondents and their community. • Avoid bias (survey individuals with diverse profiles; for example, do not survey only men or only women, or only people of the same age group). Systematization and analysis • Enter data into a spreadsheet or statistical software. • Calculate percentages and averages and cross variables (e.g., compare demographic variables with access to technical training to identify differences). • Use the results as a baseline for comparison at the end of the project.
 Example	In several rural communities within a district, a structured survey is conducted to understand the situation of rural youth in terms of education, employment, and life projects. Respondents are asked about their sex, whether they study or work, whether they have access to the internet, whether they wish to remain in the rural territory, and whether they participate in any organization. When the data are analyzed, it is found that more than 60% of young rural women neither study nor work, despite having completed secondary education. It is also observed that those living farther from population centers have less access to technical training. This information serves as a baseline to assess whether, by the end of a rural training and entrepreneurship program, the proportion of rural

youth who study, work, or engage in productive initiatives has increased.

3.8. Semi-structured interviews

 Objective	To explore in greater depth the experiences, perceptions, and proposals of rural youth and other key stakeholders through conversations guided by a flexible set of questions.
 Time	Guide design: 45–60 minutes Interviews: 30–60 minutes each
 Materials	A printed or digital interview guide, an audio recorder (to be used only with consent), or a notebook for taking notes
 Procedure	Selection of interviewees - Identify key profiles: - Rural youth from different communities, - Youth leaders, - Caregivers, and - Staff from rural institutions. Development of the interview guide - Formulate open-ended questions related to: - Life experiences in the rural territory, - Main challenges, - Opportunities, and - Proposals for improvement. - Include specific questions aligned with the project's objectives (e.g., access to services, participation, etc.). Interviews - Request consent to take notes and, if applicable, to record audio. - Create a trusting environment by avoiding judgment. - Listen carefully and ask follow-up questions when further detail is needed. Recording and organizing information - Transcribe or summarize the main points from each interview. - Identify recurring themes and relevant quotes from rural youth. Analysis and use of findings - Classify information by themes (education, employment, participation, sex, etc.). - Use these findings to complement quantitative baseline data and to better design project strategies.
 Example	As part of a study conducted with rural youth in an area with high migration rates, semi-structured interviews are carried out with young people who remain in the territory and others who have returned after working in the city. The interviews reveal that many young people leave due to the lack of decent employment opportunities in rural areas and the economic pressure this creates for their families. However, several express that, if they had access to technical training and financial support for

agroecological or rural tourism ventures, they would prefer to stay in their communities.

These qualitative testimonies are used to complement the results of a structured survey. Combined, these data show that improving formal education alone is not enough: creating real opportunities for rural employment and entrepreneurship is essential to prevent youth from being forced to migrate.

3.9. Direct observation

 Objective	Systematically record what occurs in the territory (practices, interactions, use of spaces, material conditions, etc.) without directly intervening in the observed situation.
 Time	Variable: from 30 minutes to several hours per session
 Materials	A field notebook, a pen, a camera or mobile phone (optional), and a watch
 Procedure	Definition of what will be observed - Determine together with the group whether to examine: - Dynamics in a youth meeting, - Use of a rural public space, - Productive practices, or - The functioning of a service. Establishing time and place - Together with the group, decide when and where to observe (e.g., during an agricultural fair, a community assembly, a regular day in the town square, etc.). Observation without intervention - Maintain a respectful and discreet presence. - Record: - Who participates (women, men, youth, and adults), - What they do, - How they use the space, and - Any tensions or collaborations observed. Taking field notes - Write detailed descriptions and avoid premature interpretations. - If possible, record direct quotes and significant moments. Analysis of observations - Review the notes and identify patterns: - Are rural youth actively participating or remaining on the margins? - What roles do they assume? - Who makes decisions? - Integrate these findings into the overall appraisal.
 Example	In a rural community where rural youth have limited participation in community assemblies, the extension team conducts direct observation during two meetings held in the community hall.

They observe how many young people attend, where they sit in the room, whether they speak, how adults react to their contributions, and which topics are prioritized.

The notes reveal that rural youth tend to sit at the back, rarely speak, and when they do, their contributions are often interrupted or minimized—contrasting with the general perception that young people lack interest.

These observations are used to design targeted facilitation strategies, create more youth-friendly dialogue spaces, and promote the inclusion of rural youth in community decision-making.

3.10. Photographic record

 Objective	To visually document the conditions of the rural territory—including infrastructure, practices, and processes—in order to obtain graphic evidence of its initial state and subsequent progress.
 Time	Variable: from 30 minutes to several hours per session
 Materials	Mobile phones or cameras, a notebook for recording descriptions, and a computer to store and organize the photographs
 Procedure	Definition of what to document • Determine together with the group whether to document the condition of: - o Rural roads, - o Housing, - o Productive infrastructure, - o Meeting spaces, - o Water sources, etc. Planning the photographic route • Together with rural youth, select the areas where photos will be taken. • Decide who will take the photographs and who will record the location and date. Taking photographs • At each location, take several photos that reflect the situation of the territory. • In a notebook, record the photo number, location, date, and a brief description of the image. Organization and classification • Download the photos, store them in a folder, and classify them by theme or area. • Prepare a list linking each photo to its corresponding description. Use of the photographic record • Use the photos in reports, presentations, and discussions with rural youth and communities. • Use some as baseline references to compare with photographs taken after the interventions have been completed.



Example

In a project to improve rural access roads and productive routes in several communities, the extension team and young producers carry out a photographic record of road conditions and critical points affecting the transport of production (eroded sections, river crossings, collapsed culverts, and flood-prone areas).

The images document time losses and additional costs, as well as safety risks and damage to production during transport.

This material is used in a meeting with municipal staff and local stakeholders to highlight the conditions affecting commercialization and household economies. Once improvements are made, the photographic record is repeated and the initial images are compared with the new ones to demonstrate the changes achieved.

3.11. Comparative photography

	Objective	To visually document changes in agro-productive practices through photographs taken at different points in time from the same observation points.
	Time	Two sessions of 30–45 minutes and a waiting period (weeks or months, depending on the rural cycle)
	Materials	Mobile phones or cameras, a notebook for recording locations, a computer, and a projector (optional), printed photos (if working on paper)
	Procedure	Definition of the objective of the observation • Determine together with rural youth what is to be compared, e.g.: - o The condition of plots before and after a practice (fertilization, irrigation, live barriers, etc.). - o Rural roads before and after maintenance. - o Riverbanks before and after the implementation of conservation actions. Selection of photo sites • Walk through the farms or rural communities together with the group. • Choose strategic points (such as a tree, a farm gate, a bend in the road, a large rock, or a post). • Write descriptions in a notebook and, if possible, photograph the shooting point as a reference. Taking the initial photographs • Place the camera at a similar height at each point (e.g., at eye level). • Take several photos from each angle and select the clearest ones. • Record the date and location of the photograph, as well as a brief description. Implementing the intervention or waiting for the production cycle • Implement the action (planting, irrigation, soil management, fertilization with green manures, live fences, etc.) or wait for the agreed time (rainfall, harvest, or dry season).



	Taking the second set of photographs • Return to the same points. • Reproduce the framing as closely as possible (position, direction, camera height, etc.). • Take the photographs and record them with the corresponding date and location. Comparison and collective analysis • Project or paste the “before” and “after” photos on paper. • Ask the group the following questions: - o What changes can be observed in the plot or the road? - o What improved and what did not? - o What do rural youth learn from this change? Systematization of results • Prepare sheets or posters with the compared photos and the group’s comments. • Use this evidence to inform rural families, associations, cooperatives, or institutions about the changes made.
 Example	In a rural community where drought affects maize and bean plots, a group of rural youth decides to implement soil conservation practices. Before starting, they take photographs of the eroded slopes, which show marked rills and little vegetation cover. Then, with the support of extension agents, they install live barriers along contour lines and apply mulching techniques using crop residues. Three months later, they return to the same points to take the photos again. During the analysis workshop, rural youth compare the images and observe reduced runoff, greater soil cover, and more vigorous plants. They note that, with this visual evidence, it is easier to explain to their families and other producers why it is worth investing time in these practices. These comparative photos are included in a report submitted to a public institution which, based on this evidence, subsequently approves the expansion of the project to other neighboring rural communities.

3.12. Photovoice¹

 Objective	To make visible, from the perspective of rural youth, the living conditions, challenges, and strengths of agricultural territories through photographs that serve as a basis for analysis and advocacy.
 Time	Between 2 and 4 sessions of 1 to 2 hours each.
 Materials	Mobile phones or cameras, paper, markers, a projector or printed photos, and adhesive tape.
 Procedure	Introduction of the technique and agreement on ethical principles • Explain to the group what photovoice is and how it is applied in the

¹ Participatory technique in which people use photographs to document their reality, collectively reflect on what these images show, and convey messages to decision-makers in order to promote change.



context of rural youth.

- Clarify the importance of asking for permission before photographing people, avoiding risky situations, and respecting community norms.

Definition of the guiding question

- Formulate, together with the group, a question linked to the rural context, e.g.:

- o What challenges do rural youth face in continuing their studies or ventures?
- o What aspect of life in the countryside makes them feel proud?

- Write the question in large letters and ensure it remains visible.

Training in the basic use of the camera or mobile phone

- Briefly explain the concepts of framing, lighting, and stability.
- Encourage the search for images that “tell a story” about rural life.

Capturing images

- Determine a capture period (e.g., one afternoon or one or several days).
- Ask rural youth to take photographs related to the guiding question on farms, roads, rivers, homes, and community spaces.

Selection of key photographs

- Each person should choose three photos that best convey their message.
- On the back of each photo, they should describe the image and explain why they consider it important.

Dialogue circle

Place the photos on a mural or project them.

Each young person should explain the story behind their image:

- o What does it show?
- o How do they feel when they see it?
- o What problem or opportunity in rural life does it reflect?

Development of collective messages and dissemination

- Identify frequently addressed themes: lack of transportation, limited support for rural ventures, pride in food production, forest conservation, etc.
- Formulate key messages and define how to disseminate them (through an exhibition in the community hall, a presentation to the municipality, a report to relevant institutions, etc.).

Example

In a territory of small coffee- and livestock-producing farms, a photovoice process is carried out with rural youth. Some images show long walks along dirt roads to reach school, while others capture early-morning milking tasks, as well as the hands of young people sorting coffee.

In the dialogue circle, a young woman explains a photograph in which she appears carrying sacks of coffee. She notes that many adolescents stop studying to support the harvest, which limits their future opportunities. Another young person presents an image of a sunset on the farm and expresses pride in continuing the farming tradition,

but points out the lack of opportunities to innovate. They later organize an exhibition of the photos and stories in the community hall and invite representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Education. As a result of this exercise, it is agreed to explore alternatives to adjust school schedules during the harvest season, and to propose the establishment of technical training activities within the rural community itself.

3.13. Digital participatory mapping

 Objective	To digitally represent resources, risks, infrastructure, and territorial relationships in a rural area by combining the knowledge of rural youth with the use of technological tools.
 Time	2-3 hours per workshop
 Materials	Computers or tablets, internet access (or maps downloaded from the web), a digital platform (Google Earth, QGIS, or uMap), and a projector (optional).
 Procedure	Preparation of the baseline map • Load satellite images of the canton, district, or a group of rural communities. • Define together with rural youth the area to be analyzed. Introductory workshop • Explain how digital mapping is used in farm planning, risk management, and the organization of services in rural areas. • Show the basic functions of the program: zooming in, zooming out, marking points, drawing routes, and delimiting plots, among others. Definition of what will be mapped • Together with rural youth, define categories such as: - o Crop plots, - o Water sources (springs, rivers, streams, etc.), - o Rural roads and access routes, - o Risk areas (landslides, floods, and fires), and - o Rural services (schools, Basic Comprehensive Health Care Teams [EBAIS], collection centers, cooperatives, etc.). Collective identification of elements • Invite young participants to identify their communities and plots on the satellite images. • Together with them, mark points, lines, or polygons on the digital map. Validation and adjustment of spatial information • Ask whether any elements are missing or incorrectly located. • Adjust names, locations, and descriptions based on group consensus. Creation and organization of thematic layers • Assign a different color to each element (water, production, risk, services, etc.). • Arrange the layers to facilitate map readability.

	Exporting, saving, and sharing the final maps • Save the map and share screenshots or printed versions with the group. • Use the map as an input for developing rural development plans and project proposals, and for coordination with institutions.
 Example	In a territory producing cocoa and staple grains, an extension team brings together rural youth from different communities for a digital mapping workshop. They project the map in QGIS and begin to locate plots, springs, rural roads, and areas where landslides have occurred due to heavy rainfall. Young participants point out that many of the most unstable slopes are found on plots belonging to families with limited resources to invest in conservation practices. The map reveals a concentration of risks precisely in the areas where the greatest crop losses also occur. With this information, the group develops a project proposal for soil conservation and riparian forest restoration, focused on plots managed by rural youth. The cooperation organization that receives the proposal values the participatory nature of the appraisal and approves the allocation of funds to implement conservation practices on these prioritized rural farms.

3.14. Forum theater or community theater

 Objective	To analyze rural conflicts and issues (water use, access to land, youth employment, and participation in organizations) through a dramatic performance by rural youth, aimed at fostering reflection and the search for solutions.
 Time	1–2 hours (plus prior time to prepare the play)
 Materials	A large space (a community hall or a covered court), chairs, and simple props (hats, scarves, and rural work tools).
 Procedure	Identification of a relevant rural issue • Ask rural youth which conflicts affect them the most: access to irrigation water, lack of land ownership, barriers to participation in cooperatives, forced migration, etc. • Select a problem that the group considers a priority. Collection of real experiences and development of the play • Ask young participants to share concrete situations from rural life related to the selected issue. • Identify key characters: a young producer, a young farmworker, the board of the water users' association, a representative of a cooperative, etc. • Develop, together with the group, a short story that presents the conflict without resolving it. Allocation of roles and rehearsal • Ask who would like to act and assign roles on a voluntary basis. • Conduct a rehearsal so participants feel more comfortable on stage.

	• Clarify that the performance does not need to be perfect and that the goal is to portray rural reality. Performance day • Arrange the space so that the community can watch the play. • Perform it up to the point of greatest tension (e.g., a dispute over water distribution or refusal to admit youth into an organization). • Stop the play without presenting any solution. Opening of the forum • Explain that at this point the audience can intervene, meaning they can propose changes, step into the scene, alter the characters' decisions, etc. • Allow rural youth in the audience to take on roles and rehearse scenes that explore new ways of resolving the conflict. Recording of contributions and final reflection • Write down the alternatives and commitments that emerge. • Close the activity by asking the following questions: - o From what we learned in this experience, what can we apply in our rural communities? - o What concrete steps can we take in this regard?
 Example	In a rural district where tensions exist over water use between large livestock farms and small plots managed by rural families, a forum theatre activity is organized. The play portrays a young producer who is unable to secure water turns to irrigate his small vegetable plot, while a large livestock farmer has multiple turns because he is part of the board of the rural water association. The play is presented in the community hall. During the forum, rural youth intervene and propose changes: including young people on the board of the organization in charge of water, reviewing the water distribution regulations, and reserving a percentage of water turns for small plots managed by rural families. The extension team gathers these proposals and provides support in revising the water association's regulations. As a result of the discussions generated through the forum theatre, it is agreed to incorporate at least two young representatives into the water governance structure in the area.

3.15. Participatory video

 Objective	To produce, together with rural youth, an audiovisual piece that conveys their experiences in rural areas, as well as their challenges and proposals, in order to use it as an input for diagnosis, visualization, and advocacy activities.
 Time	3–5 sessions (planning, recording, editing, and distribution)
 Materials	Mobile phones or cameras, a computer with basic editing software, a projector, and notebooks for scripting.
 Procedure	Definition of the purpose of the video • Ask rural youth what they want to show:



	- o Problems related to access to land or credit, - o Challenges in studying and working in rural areas, or - o Good agroecological practices led by young people. • Identify the target audience of the video (the community, institutions, donors, etc.). Design of a basic script • Develop, together with the group, an outline of scenes related to: - o Daily life on the farm, - o Routes to school or to the collection center, and - o Interviews with young people, rural leaders, and adults. • Organize the story: introduction, development, and final message. Assignment of roles and responsibilities • Distribute the following tasks among rural youth: - o Filming, - o Conducting interviews, - o Coordinating visits to farms or communities, and - o Supporting the editing process. Filming • Visit the locations, farms, or rural communities mentioned in the script. • Record scenes of daily life (tasks, meetings, journeys, etc.) and testimonies from young people. • Pay attention to basic details: ensure speech is clear, there is no loud background noise, and framing is stable. Editing the material • Together with the group, review the recordings and select the most representative ones. • Arrange the scenes according to the agreed script. • Add titles, credits, subtitles, and, if possible, royalty-free music with a rural identity. Validation with rural youth • Screen the video with the group before sharing it with others. • Ask group members whether the content accurately reflects their reality and whether they would like to make any changes. • Adjust it based on the feedback received. Presentation and dissemination • Organize a screening in the community hall or at a rural event (fair, festival, etc.). • Invite relevant institutions and community leaders to watch the video. • Facilitate a dialogue around the issues addressed in the audiovisual material and possible institutional or community responses.
 Example	In a region of small coffee-producing farms, rural youth create a participatory video to share their challenges as young people who want to continue making a living from farming. They film scenes of coffee harvesting and processing, transporting the harvest along poorly maintained gravel roads, the long distances they



must travel to reach school, and farm work combined with evening studies. They interview young people who dream of improving the quality of their product and accessing better markets, but who lack access to credit, connectivity, and technical assistance.

The video is presented at a rural development fair organized by several institutions. After the screening, rural youth express their need for technical training, marketing support, and rural credit programs for young people.

The institutions present decide to coordinate a pilot program to support youth-led rural enterprises. In this regard, they use the video as a reference to define criteria and actions, and it also serves as a living baseline document on the situation of rural youth in that region.

3.16. Social innovation lab

 Objective	To bring together rural youth and other territorial actors to co-create innovative solutions to complex problems through structured processes of ideation and prototyping.
 Time	A session of at least 3–4 hours (extendable to multiple meetings).
 Materials	Flip charts, markers, sticky notes, materials for prototypes (cardboard, modeling clay, paper, and tape), and a projector.
 Procedure	Definition of the challenge • Together with rural youth, formulate a clear challenge: - o How can we improve rural youth's access to decent work in the territory? - o How could we strengthen youth-led agroecological enterprises? Exploration of the problem • Conduct a brief diagnostic session that includes brainstorming, problem mapping, or the use of previously collected information. • Ensure that rural youth voices are at the center of the analysis. Ideation of solutions • Form small groups and ask them to generate as many ideas as possible, without judging them at first. • Then invite them to select one or two ideas they consider most viable and impactful. Development of prototypes • Ask the groups to represent their selected ideas through mock-ups, flowcharts, sketches, or simulations. • The prototypes should explain how the solution would work in practice. Validation with the group • Each group presents its prototype to the others. • Record comments, constructive feedback, and suggestions for improvement. Prioritization and planning of next steps • The group agrees on which prototypes to move forward with in

	order to launch concrete initiatives. • Record the steps, required resources, and key actors involved.
 Example	In a rural district where rural youth want to start an enterprise but cannot find support, a social innovation lab is organized. Young participants work on the following challenges: “how to sell rural products at better prices” and “how to use community spaces for youth to generate income.” Several ideas emerge, including a traveling fair for youth products, a small digital platform to sell “rural baskets,” and a community transport service to take products to the city. Prototypes are built using cardboard and presented to the group. After validation, they decide to launch the traveling fair and the “rural baskets” system. With the support of the extension team, they identify partners to support these initiatives created by rural youth.

3.17. Talking map

 Objective	Capture, through drawings and oral explanations, how rural youth perceive their territory: their important places, risk areas, productive resources, and opportunities.
 Time	45-60 minutes
 Materials	Flip charts, colored markers, adhesive tape, and a large table or wall.
 Procedure	Preparation of the space and presentation of the technique • Place one or several flip charts on a table or wall. • Explain to the group that they should draw their rural territory (communities, roads, farms, rivers, forests, etc.). • Clarify that the goal is not to draw well, but to represent what they consider meaningful. Drawing of the rural territory • Ask participants to first draw reference elements: the main road, the river, the village church, the school, the community hall, etc. • Then ask them to add: - o Farms, pastures, crops, and forests, - o Risk areas, such as landslides, floods, and conflict zones, and - o Gathering places for young people (squares, sports fields, and community halls). Spoken narrative • Once the map includes several elements, ask those who drew it to explain what each image represents. • Ask the following questions: - o What usually happens in this place? - o What problems are faced? - o What opportunities does it offer? Recording key information • On another flip chart, note the main problems and resources mentioned:

	- o Lack of transportation, poor road conditions, absence of youth spaces, etc. - o Presence of cooperatives, youth groups, and development associations, among others. Map adjustment and reflection • Based on the narratives, make corrections or add elements to the map. • Highlight the most critical areas and spaces of opportunity using colors. • Once the map is adjusted, ask the group: What does the map tell us about the lives of rural youth in this territory?
 Example	In a vegetable-producing area, a group of rural youth participates in a diagnostic workshop. They create a participatory map showing plots, greenhouses, the main river, an old bridge, the access road, the rural school, the football field, and the community hall. Group members mark in red the areas where the river overflows and floods access routes, and highlight in another color the only covered space where they gather to hold cultural activities. They explain that, during the rainy season, many young people are unable to attend school because the river rises and the bridge is in poor condition; in addition, access becomes impassable, making it difficult to transport produce to market points. The extension team systematizes this information and presents it to the municipality and a risk management program. The map and the narratives make it possible to prioritize improvements to the bridge and the main access road, as well as the creation of a youth activities program in the community hall, in response to the issues identified by rural youth in their own territory.

3.18. Empathy activity (design thinking)

 Objective	Understand, from the perspective of different youth profiles, their everyday experiences, emotions, obstacles, and needs, in order to design strategies and projects that are better aligned with their reality.
 Time	1.5-2 hours
 Materials	Sheets of paper, cards, markers, empathy map templates, and flip charts.
 Procedure	Definition of rural youth profiles • Together with the group, define typical profiles in the rural territory, e.g.: - o A young man who works on the family farm and wants to study. - o A young woman with caregiving responsibilities and agricultural support tasks. - o A young person who migrates temporarily to work during harvest seasons. - o A young person who wants to start a business in rural tourism or agroindustry.

Immersion activities

- Ask participants to describe a day in the life of each profile: what time they wake up, what they do, who they interact with, and what difficulties they face.
- Provide cards for participants to write down frustrations, fears, aspirations, and opportunities corresponding to each profile.

Development of empathy maps

- Draw an empathy map for each profile, with sections such as:
 - o What do they see?
 - o What do they hear?
 - o What do they think and feel?
 - o What do they say and do?
 - o What do they need?
- Ask the group to fill in the sections with the information generated.

Identification of key insights

- Ask the group:
 - o What are the main barriers faced by each rural youth profile?
 - o What types of support do they currently receive and what are they lacking?
- Highlight recurring aspects (e.g., lack of time, limited availability of technical training in rural areas, need for transportation, etc.).

Prioritization of actions

- Invite the group to propose actions that respond to the identified needs:
 - o Adjustments to training schedules,
 - o Targeted scholarships for rural youth, and
 - o Community-based caregiving spaces.
- Record the proposals as inputs for redesigning the project or program.

Example

In a workshop with rural youth from several coffee-producing communities, the profile “young woman who supports work on the farm and cares for her younger siblings” is analyzed.

The empathy map shows that this person wakes up before dawn to help prepare meals. She then supports coffee cultivation and takes care of her younger siblings, leaving her with little time to study or participate in youth meetings. It is noted that she feels guilty if she does not “help” enough at home and perceives that institutions do not take her caregiving responsibilities into account when designing courses.

Based on this exercise, the extension team and rural youth propose organizing training activities with more flexible schedules, combining in-person and virtual sessions, and arranging childcare support during some workshops. These decisions stem directly from what young participants expressed during the empathy dynamics.

 Objective	To enable rural youth to collect data in their communities through mobile applications, in order to generate georeferenced information on living conditions and production as input for diagnosis and baseline development.
 Time	1–2 hours of training and at least half a day to complete the fieldwork.
 Materials	Mobile phones or tablets with the application installed, intermittent internet connectivity to synchronize data, and chargers or external batteries.
 Procedure	Design of the digital form • Define the subject on which information will be collected in rural communities, e.g.: - o Access to drinking water, - o Condition of rural roads, - o Type of production by household, or - o Damage caused by climate events. • Formulate simple questions with clear answer options. Configuration and testing of the tool • Create the form in the selected application. • Conduct a test with a small group of rural youth to ensure they understand how to use it. Training of rural youth interviewers • Explain the purpose of data collection and the importance of confidentiality. • Demonstrate step by step how to open the form, answer questions, take photos, and save responses when there is no connection. • Allow them to practice these steps during the workshop. Data collection in rural communities • Organize teams of rural youth and assign them sectors or communities. • Advise them to always introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the survey to respondents. • Once the fieldwork is completed, verify that responses have been properly saved. Synchronization and review of data • When internet access is available, synchronize the information. • Check for errors, duplicate entries, or incomplete data, and explain to the group how to interpret them. Analysis and dissemination of results • Prepare graphs and, if georeferencing was conducted, maps of the rural communities. • Present the results to rural youth and local stakeholders (development boards, cooperatives, municipality, etc.). • Facilitate a dialogue on what the data confirm and the priorities they reveal.
 Example	In an agricultural canton where several rural communities face problems with access to drinking water and poor road conditions, rural youth are trained to use KoboToolbox.

A form is designed to record the type of water source used by each rural household, the frequency of service interruptions, the condition of access roads, and damage during the rainy season. Young participants travel through their communities, collect responses, and take photos of the most critical points. Once the data are synchronized, a map is produced showing which rural communities have the worst water and road conditions. Rural youth present these results during a meeting with staff from the Ministry of Agriculture. The evidence they generate themselves is used as a baseline to prioritize interventions in rural roads and improve water supply systems in the most affected communities.

3.20. Online interactive maps (community geographic information systems [GIS])

 Objective	Use online maps, developed and updated with the participation of rural youth, in order to incorporate georeferenced information on resources, risks, services, and opportunities in rural territories.
 Time	2-3 hours per session (In addition to several updating sessions)
 Materials	Computers or tablets, internet access, an online mapping platform (Google My Maps, ArcGIS Online, or uMap), and a projector
 Procedure	Selection of the platform and creation of the base map • Choose an accessible platform, depending on the rural context and available connectivity. • Create a base map of the territory where the rural communities are located. Definition of variables to be mapped • Together with rural youth, determine what will be mapped: - o Rural communities and their services, - o Rural educational centers, - o Basic Comprehensive Health Care Teams (EBAIS) or health posts, - o Youth-led productive projects, or - o Risk areas (floods, landslides, droughts, etc.). Training in the basic use of GIS • Show group members how to add points, lines, and polygons. • Teach them how to add descriptions to each point and, if possible, photographs. Collection and uploading of information • Based on local knowledge and visits to rural communities, gather data on the selected locations. • Add relevant points, routes, and areas to the map. Editing and cleaning of data • In a group session, review the map and correct errors or duplicates. • Organize the information into thematic layers (services, risks, opportunities for youth, etc.). Publication and use of the map • Define the level of access (public, private, or via link).

	• Share the map with organizations and other rural communities. • Use it as a territorial baseline reference and update it periodically.
 Example	In a set of dispersed rural communities, rural youth from several areas work together with an organization to create a community GIS using Google My Maps. They map each community, its access roads, the nearest educational center, the health post, the community hall, and the sites where landslides or floods have occurred. They also include locations where youth initiatives exist (rural enterprises, cultural groups, and agroecological projects). The map reveals that some rural communities are very far from basic services and that youth initiatives are concentrated in two or three towns. Based on this visual diagnosis, a plan is proposed to strengthen road connectivity in certain sections and to expand training and support for youth-led rural enterprises in communities that have so far lacked institutional presence. The interactive map remains online and is updated as a reference for future interventions and as a territorial baseline.

3.21. Community visual indicators

 Objective	To enable rural youth and communities to carry out simple and accessible monitoring, as well as track progress in the implementation of their projects, through the use of visual dashboards with icons and colors.
 Time	30–45 minutes to create the dashboard and 15–30 minutes per update session
 Materials	Poster boards or whiteboards, colored markers, stickers or cards with icons, and adhesive tape
 Procedure	Selection of community indicators • Define, together with rural youth, what will be monitored: - o The condition of household gardens, - o Youth participation in meetings or workshops, - o The functioning of a water committee, or - o The adoption of a greater number of agroecological practices. • Choose a small number of meaningful indicators. Design of icons or pictograms • Draw simple and easily recognizable symbols (e.g., a happy/sad plant, a water drop, a face, a house, etc.). • Use colors or positions to indicate levels (e.g., green = good, yellow = fair, red = poor). Construction of the visual dashboard • On a large poster board, draw a table with rows (indicators) and columns (weeks or months). • Leave space to place icons each time the information is updated. Establishment of an update routine • Together with the group, agree on how often the indicators will be

	reviewed (e.g., once a month). • In each session, analyze the real situation (how the gardens are doing, how many young people attended, etc.) and place the corresponding icon. Recording of agreements and changes • Complement the dashboard with a notebook to write brief notes on the reasons for changes: - o Why did the indicator improve? - o Why did it worsen? - o What decisions were made based on this information?
 Example	Within a household garden project implemented with rural youth across several communities, a visual dashboard is created and placed in the community hall. Three indicators are defined: 1. Adequate soil moisture in the gardens, 2. Presence of pests, and 3. Weekly harvest quantity. Rural youth meet monthly and review each indicator across the different plots. If most gardens show adequate moisture and few pests, they place positive icons (green plants and few bugs). If any indicator worsens, they mark it in red and discuss possible causes (lack of irrigation, inadequate pest control, etc.). After several months, they compare the initial conditions of the gardens (baseline) with how they have improved or worsened. This allows them to adjust practices and clearly demonstrate the project's progress to their families and to institutions supporting the initiative in the rural territory.

3.22. Territorial well-being wheel

 Objective	To explore how rural youth perceive different dimensions of well-being in their territory (employment, education, security, environment, participation, services, etc.) and to prioritize those that require greater attention.
 Time	45-60 minutes
 Materials	A flip chart, markers, stickers or adhesive dots, and a ruler or a compass (optional)
 Procedure	Definition of agroproductive rural well-being dimensions Ask rural youth to propose key dimensions for their plot or enterprise, e.g., productivity and farm management (soil, water, practices, yields, etc.). • Access to inputs and services (seeds/seedlings, fertilizers, technical assistance, and plant/animal health). • Productive infrastructure (irrigation, storage, tools/equipment, and energy). • Access to financing (credit, seed capital, savings, and insurance). • Marketing and markets (prices, intermediation, transport for production, and value chains).

- Diversification and innovation (new crops/products, value addition, and technology).
- Climate risk management (drought/flooding, early warnings, and adaptation measures).
- Applied technical training (practical training relevant to the production activity).

Development of the wheel

- Draw a large circle and divide it into sections, one for each dimension.
- On each axis, mark a scale (e.g., from 1 to 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good).

Assessment

- Explain to group members that the current condition of each dimension of the rural territory will be assessed based on rural youth's perceptions.
- Ask them, individually or in small groups, to place dots or stickers on the scale corresponding to each dimension.
- Connect the points to visualize a shape that shows the "agrop productive well-being profile."

Analysis of results

- Observe which dimensions have the lowest scores and ask why.
- Also ask which dimensions are strongest and what factors contribute to them.
- Identify differences in perception among groups (e.g., between young women and men or according to the production activity).

Prioritization of actions

- Ask the group to select two or three dimensions that require urgent attention (e.g., financing, market access, technical assistance, etc.).
- Record ideas for actions that could improve these dimensions as inputs for planning.

Example

In a group of rural communities, where many young people migrate due to a lack of opportunities, a workshop is held in which the territorial well-being wheel with an agrop productive focus is implemented.

Rural youth identify dimensions such as access to technical assistance, availability and cost of inputs (seed and fertilization), productive infrastructure (irrigation, storage, and fencing), access to financing, marketing and prices, climate risk management, and opportunities for diversification (maize, establishment of forage, and sheep production). When the wheel is plotted, the dimensions of access to financing, technical assistance, and marketing show the lowest scores, while willingness to innovate and family labor receive somewhat higher ratings.

During the discussion, young participants explain that they are interested in improving maize production and establishing forage banks to sustain sheep systems, but face limitations in accessing quality seed, practical training, and stable sales channels.

The extension team uses these results as a perception baseline and presents them at a dialogue roundtable with several institutions. As a result, it is agreed to promote a technical assistance plan with demonstration plots (maize and forage), establish a mechanism to facilitate youth access to inputs and financing, and develop a pilot marketing pathway for sheep products, in response to the priorities identified by rural youth.

3.23. Map of dreams or desired futures

 Objective	To creatively explore how rural youth envision the future of their communities and rural territories, and to translate those visions into concrete proposals for planning and advocacy.
 Time	1-1.5 hours
 Materials	Poster boards or flip charts, markers, magazines for cutting, scissors, glue, and stickers
 Procedure	Explanation of the purpose of the exercise • Explain to the group that they will create a “productive dreams map,” representing the reality they wish to see in their rural territory and production systems within a five- to ten-year period. • Clarify that the exercise involves imagining desirable changes that are still grounded in the reality of the territory. Preparation of materials and group organization • Distribute poster boards, markers, and magazines among participants so they can draw or select and cut out images. • Form subgroups (or work with the entire group if it is not too large). Drawing or creation of the dreams map Ask participants to represent the rural territory with the agroproductive changes they would like to see: • More productive and sustainable plots (improved soil and water management). • Productive infrastructure (irrigation, water harvesting, storage facilities, corrals, fencing, and collection centers). • Diversification of crops or systems (e.g., staple grains, vegetables, fruits, sheep, and forage). • Value addition and processing (processing, packaging, and local branding). • Access to markets and better prices (commercial partnerships, fairs, and local procurement). • Access to financing and inputs for rural youth (credit, seed capital, and insurance). • Climate adaptation (systems resilient to droughts or floods, live barriers, and agroecological practices). Advise participants they can combine drawings and magazine cutouts. Presentation of maps in plenary Each group presents its map and explains the changes they envision:

	• Productive limitations that would no longer exist (e.g., water scarcity, low productivity, post-harvest losses). • New opportunities for rural youth (e.g., stable income, enterprises, and market access). Identification of common elements and construction of a shared vision • Write on a flip chart the elements that are most frequently mentioned (irrigation, access to financing, technical assistance, value addition, markets, climate resilience, etc.). • Together with the group, formulate a brief “agrop productive vision of the future” for the rural territory. Transforming dreams into proposals Ask the following questions: • What first steps could we take to move toward achieving these productive dreams? • What can rural youth and farming families do in this regard? • What actions should institutions and markets take? Record the ideas as concrete inputs for the work plan or project.
 Example	In a rural region where many young people are considering migrating, a dreams mapping exercise is conducted with rural youth from different communities. The maps depict repaired roads, an agro-industrial training center in the town, community gardens managed by young people, a youth cooperative for marketing rural products, a cultural space featuring traditional rural music and dance, and a small innovation center to add value to local products. When presenting the maps, rural youth explain that they would like to remain in their communities if these opportunities existed and if their voices were taken into account in community decision-making. The extension team systematizes the common elements and presents them as input to a local planning roundtable. Based on this shared vision, a public university commits to delivering technical training modules in the rural area, while a cooperation organization offers funding for a small fund to support youth-led rural enterprises. The dreams map becomes a reference point to assess, in later years, how much progress has been made toward the future envisioned by rural youth.

4. Closing: guidelines for the continuity of the training process

Participatory appraisals and baseline surveys constitute a strategic starting point in any rural extension and territorial strengthening process, as they allow for a better understanding of the initial conditions from which change is expected. Beyond being technical exercises in data collection, these phases represent a pedagogical opportunity to build trust, promote dialogue between different forms of knowledge, and strengthen the agency of rural youth and communities in critically interpreting their own reality.

The traditional and non-traditional techniques presented in this workbook constitute a broad and flexible methodological compilation, adaptable to different territorial contexts, levels of community organization, and conditions of access to resources. Their value lies in the approach to their application: participatory, intercultural, inclusive, and ethical, ensuring the safety, dignity, and voice of all stakeholders.

Within this framework, the articulation between appraisal and baseline not only makes it possible to identify problems and gaps, but also to recognize capacities, community networks, aspirations, and opportunities that can be strengthened. The information produced becomes a living input to guide planning, prioritize actions, strengthen accountability, and sustain monitoring and evaluation processes aligned with territorial realities.

This workbook, a practical and reproducible resource aimed at extension agents and facilitation teams, promotes a more sensitive, participatory, and transformative approach to extension. Users are encouraged to combine, adapt, and recreate these techniques in order to achieve more just, inclusive, and sustainable territorial development processes, with rural youth as key actors.

Subsequently, *Workbook No. 3: technical support techniques with a participatory approach* explores the development of these techniques in greater depth, presenting them as strategies for co-learning and capacity strengthening for action. This workbook proposes the use of tools that promote collaborative learning through methodologies such as farmer field schools, peer-to-peer mentoring, demonstration plots, living labs, and participatory prototyping, recognizing the value of dialogue between local knowledge and technical expertise to foster innovation, sustainability, and community organization.

Finally, *Workbook No. 4: participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques* focuses on these approaches, where tracking and assessing results are conceived not only as technical data collection exercises, but also as a pedagogical and relational process that strengthens critical reflection, transparency, and shared decision-making. Through tools such as evaluation matrices, achievement trees, most significant change stories, community traffic lights, and comparative mapping, this workbook helps document learning, make changes visible, and generate useful evidence for the continuous improvement of extension interventions and their long-term sustainability.

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