

Methodological guide for incorporating qualitative techniques in youth-oriented extension

Workbook No 4: Participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques





Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the workbook.....	4
2. Methodological foundations of participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques	4
3. Participatory monitoring and evaluation	5
3.1. Monitoring and evaluation in extension work	6
3.2. Characteristics of monitoring and evaluation in extension work	6
3.3. Key questions on monitoring and evaluation in extension work.....	7
3.4. Relationship between monitoring and evaluation and extension work.....	8
4. Techniques	9
4.1. Assessment matrix	10
4.2. Group evaluation.....	11
4.3. Achievement tree.....	13
4.4. After-project digital survey.....	14
4.5. Tree of lessons learned	15
4.6. Stories of significant change.....	17
4.7. Community traffic light	18
4.8. Comparative mapping (before - after).....	19
4.9. Participatory video featuring results	20
4.10. Community photo exhibition.....	22
4.11. Results board or mural.....	23
4.12. Peer and community evaluations	24
5. Closing: guidelines for continuing the training process	25
6. Bibliography	26





Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) 2026



Methodological guide for the incorporation of qualitative techniques for agricultural extension for young people. Workbook n.º 4: Participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques by IICA and WTO is published under license Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 4.0 IGO) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/igo/>)
Based on a work at www.iica.int

The Institute promotes the fair use of this document, as well as the treatment of personal data, in accordance with IICA's regulations in force. It is requested that it be appropriately cited when appropriate and that the right of all individuals to the protection of their personal data, in accordance with IICA's regulations, be guaranteed.

This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format from the Institute's web site: <http://repositorio.iica.int/>

Editorial coordination: Andrea Marcela Ávila Segura

Translation: IICA language unit

Layout and Cover Design: Fernanda Rojas Rodriguez

Rojas Poveda, Maritza

Methodological guide for the incorporation of qualitative techniques for agricultural extension for young people. Workbook n.º 4: Participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques/ San José, Costa Rica: IICA, 2026, 27 p.; 21 x 16 cm.

ISBN: 978-92-9273-228-8

Published also in Spanish

1. Rural youth 2. Extension 3. Agriculture
I. IICA II. Title

AGRIS
E50

DEWEY
323.352

San José, Costa Rica
2026



1. Purpose of the workbook

Workbook No. 4: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques is a practical tool aimed at strengthening the capacities of those who facilitate training processes, technical support, and project management, with a particular emphasis on the work of extension agents. It presents monitoring and evaluation not only as technical exercises for data collection, but also as pedagogical and relational processes through which extension agents promote critical reflection, generate useful evidence for decision-making, and foster, together with communities, a shared understanding of the changes required in territories.

It is grounded in ethical and pedagogical principles that promote respectful and participatory monitoring and evaluation practices. It proposes the application of meaningful techniques linked to the objectives of each process and the territorial context, through the integration of interculturality, inclusion, human rights, mutual care, and intergenerational dialogue approaches. It offers simple criteria for extension agents to select and adapt monitoring and evaluation tools according to the characteristics of the group, the project, and the territory, in order to ensure the effective participation of those who are often less heard in decision-making processes.

It explicitly recognizes the strategic role of rural youth in generating information and knowledge about their own reality. The proposed techniques help make their perspectives visible, capture their perceptions regarding achieved or pending changes, and foster more horizontal dialogue around local knowledge and technical frameworks for planning, monitoring, and evaluation. In this way, extension agents are equipped with concrete resources to document progress, challenges, and lessons learned, while also strengthening community organization and shared responsibility in development processes.

This is a flexible resource that can be adapted to the style of each extension agent and to the reality of each territory. Through the use of brief and simple techniques for continuous monitoring, periodic evaluation, and feedback of results, it contributes to a more participatory and transparent extension practice, aligned with respect for human dignity, the strengthening of the social fabric, and the care of the territory. Rather than presenting isolated lists of indicators, it proposes monitoring and evaluation processes that support collective learning, the improvement of interventions, and influence on rural public policies.

2. Methodological foundations of participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques

The participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques presented in this notebook are grounded in the tradition of popular education, participatory methodologies, and contemporary rural extension approaches with a territorial perspective. From this standpoint, the monitoring and evaluation of a training process or a project are not external or merely administrative exercises, but rather strategic pedagogical tools to generate critical reflection, recognize the knowledge of rural youth and other community actors, and collectively define criteria for what is considered progress, achievement, or meaningful change in each territory.

In addition, they were designed according to the principles of horizontality, dialogue of knowledge, meaningful learning, interculturality, a rights-based approach, and youth leadership as proposed by Latin American popular education and various streams of participatory evaluation. This implies that indicators, evaluation questions, and criteria for success are developed based on the real experiences of young people, their relationship with the territory, their living and working conditions, and their personal and community aspirations. In line with this, monitoring and evaluation serve a dual function: they generate rigorous and useful information for management while also strengthening critical thinking, organizational capacities, and leadership within communities.

Likewise, these techniques were selected and adapted considering the specific characteristics of rural youth in terms of territorial diversity, productive and care responsibilities, community identity, differentiated use of technologies, and conditions of inequality, as well as the needs of extension agents who require practical, flexible, and culturally relevant tools.

The dynamics proposed in this notebook draw on classic methods of group work and participatory evaluation (timelines of change, maps of achievements in the territory, assessment matrices, life and change stories, problem and solution trees, participatory traffic lights, and rapid community surveys, among others) that have proven effective in community development initiatives, organizational strengthening, and leadership training.

In the field of monitoring and evaluation, the role of the extension agent is to facilitate dialogue and mediate learning, rather than to collect data for reporting purposes. To this end, this compendium of techniques offers tools designed to support collective analysis, feedback on results, and the joint formulation of recommendations, in line with a rural extension approach that recognizes the dignity of young people and adults, values their contributions, and enhances their capacity to transform their territories. Consequently, participatory monitoring and evaluation are conceived not only as formal requirements for project implementation, but also as living spaces for encounter, reflection, and action.

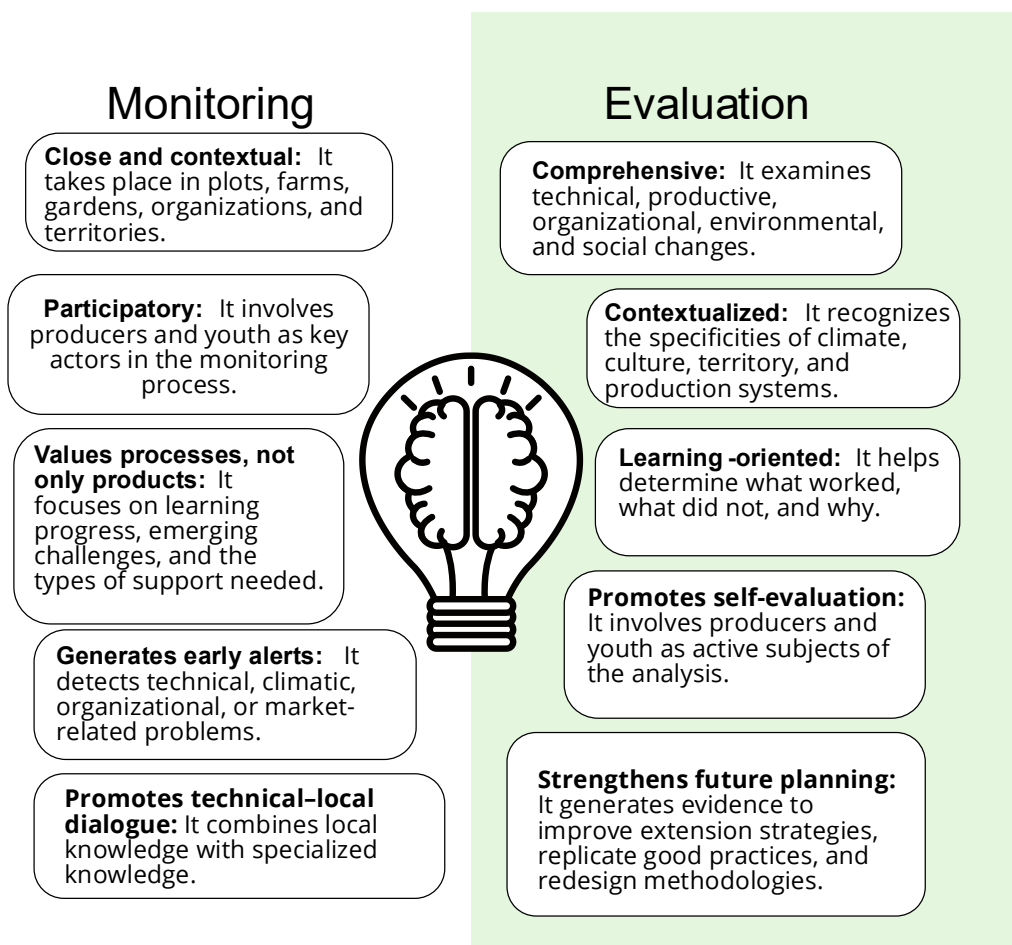
3. Participatory monitoring and evaluation

In extension work, monitoring and evaluation constitute a key process for understanding progress in technical, organizational, and training support actions in territories, as well as for assessing the changes these actions generate in individuals, families, and rural communities. This process not only measures results, but also strengthens collective learning, evidence-based decision-making, social participation, and the sustainability of rural development initiatives.

3.1. Monitoring and evaluation in extension work



3.2. Characteristics of monitoring and evaluation in extension work

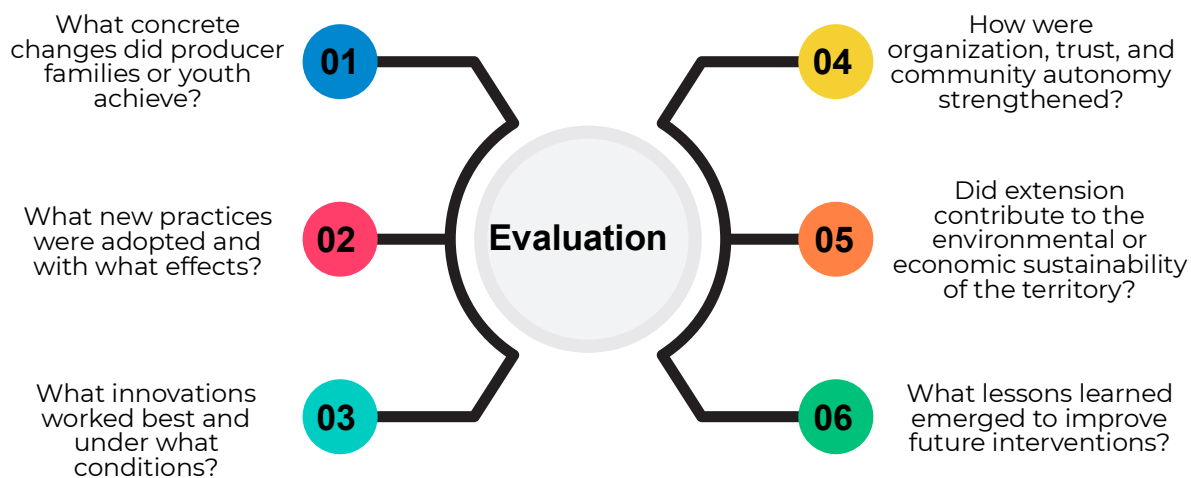


3.3. Key questions on monitoring and evaluation in extension work

3.3.1. Monitoring



3.3.2. Evaluation



3.4. Relationship between monitoring and evaluation and extension work

Monitoring and evaluation are the pillars of effective, inclusive, and people-centered extension work.

- Through monitoring, extension work is supported and continuous information is provided from the territory.
- Through evaluation, achieved changes are explained and guidance is obtained for strategic decision-making.
- Through their combined use, the quality of support is improved, local capacities are strengthened, and the relevance, sustainability, and cultural appropriateness of extension actions are ensured.

Benefits of monitoring and evaluation for rural extension work

1. **Greater relevance.** Technical assistance is adjusted to the changing realities of the territory.
2. **Greater participation.** Youth and farming families are included in decision-making.
3. **Better results.** Errors are corrected and successful practices are strengthened.
4. **Sustainability.** Key factors that sustain learning and innovation are identified.
5. **Accountability.** Progress achieved is demonstrated to communities, institutions, and partner organizations.
6. **Continuous innovation.** Useful knowledge is generated to improve extension models.

The following table presents the main techniques used in participatory monitoring and evaluation in rural extension work. These techniques are classified as traditional and non-traditional. Traditional techniques are those widely used in classical approaches to community monitoring and evaluation due to their standardization and broad application in social projects and territorial initiatives (e.g., assessment matrices, group evaluation, achievement trees, post-project digital surveys, and lessons learned trees), while non-traditional techniques are more recent, innovative, or creative methodologies that incorporate narrative, audiovisual, or visual resources or alternative dynamics to document changes and lessons learned (such as most significant change stories, community traffic lights, before–after comparative mapping, participatory results videos, community photo exhibitions, results boards or murals, and peer or inter-community evaluation). Their purpose is to expand the ways in which analysis, feedback, and evidence production are carried out in line with participants' experiences.

Together, these tools facilitate the collective assessment of progress achieved, the identification of persistent challenges, and the systematization of relevant lessons learned for the continuous improvement of interventions. From a participatory perspective, monitoring and evaluation are not limited to the technical verification of results or the collection of data for reporting: they constitute pedagogical and relational processes that promote critical reflection, transparency, and shared

decision-making. In addition, they make it possible to recognize the diversity of perspectives present in territories, to hear the voices of rural youth, and to create conditions for the evidence generated to be socially meaningful, contextualized, and useful in guiding extension actions.

Table 1. Participatory evaluation techniques.

Technique	Type	Example of application
Assessment matrix	Traditional	Evaluation of results based on collectively defined criteria.
Group evaluation	Traditional	Workshop for collective reflection on achievements and challenges.
Achievement tree	Traditional	Visual representation of results obtained and success factors.
After-project digital survey	Traditional	Collection of final feedback using collaborative digital tools.
Tree of lessons learned	Traditional	Symbolic representation of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned.
Stories of significant change	Non-traditional	Collection of narratives around personal or collective transformations.
Community traffic light	Non-traditional	Visual evaluation of project progress using colors (green, yellow, and red).
Comparative mapping (before – after)	Non-traditional	Participatory map used to compare initial and final conditions.
Participatory video featuring results	Non-traditional	Collective creation of a video summarizing the process and lessons learned.
Community photo exhibition	Non-traditional	Public display of photographs taken throughout the project.
Results board or mural	Non-traditional	Visual space to share progress, lessons learned, and future commitments.
Peer and community evaluation	Non-traditional	Exchange between groups to mutually assess their progress and challenges.

4. Techniques

The monitoring and evaluation techniques described below are practical resources designed to support work with rural youth in training, organizational, and extension processes. They are not simply instruments to be used, but strategies to foster dialogue about the changes pursued and achieved in territories, gather perceptions and lessons learned, and connect young people's experiences with the objectives of the project, program, or support process. Through brief, symbolic, and simple dynamics, they aim to open dialogue, identify progress and challenges, recognize previously acquired knowledge, highlight territorial diversity, and create an environment of trust, reflection, and care around the information being shared.

These techniques can be applied in both in-person and virtual activities. They are designed so that extension agents can adapt them to different rural contexts, group sizes, and topics, always with a perspective of inclusion, a rights-based approach, and recognition of youth as key actors in processes of change in their territories. In this way, monitoring and evaluation move beyond external exercises and become opportunities to strengthen community organization, accountability, and shared decision-making.

4.1. Assessment matrix

 Objective	To collectively evaluate the results of a process, practice, or project through the application of criteria defined by rural youth, in order to promote reflection, consensus, and learning.
 Time	1 session of 1-2 hours
 Materials	Flip chart or whiteboard, cards, markers, a simple table (criteria by rating levels), and stickers
 Procedure	Definition of the technique • Explain that a matrix will be used to evaluate the project based on criteria defined by the group members. • Clarify that the objective is to learn from the process, not to assess individuals. Collective development of criteria • Ask the group: ◦ What aspects of this project should be evaluated? ◦ In which areas could we have made some progress? • Write down the ideas on a flip chart. • Based on the responses, define 4 to 6 clear criteria (e.g., participation, organization, technical skills, community impact, teamwork, etc.). • Together with the group, agree on the final criteria to be included in the matrix. Design of the matrix • Draw a table on the flip chart with: ◦ Rows, where the agreed criteria will be listed, and ◦ Columns, indicating levels of achievement (low, medium, or high). • Place the matrix in a visible location for everyone. Collective definition of levels • For each criterion, ask: ◦ What does it mean for this criterion to be at a high level of achievement? ◦ What does a medium level imply? ◦ What would a low level mean? • Write examples in the matrix or on a sheet placed next to each level. Assessment in subgroups • Divide the group into subgroups of 3 to 5 people. • Provide each subgroup with stickers, markers, or sticky notes.

	• Ask each subgroup to discuss each criterion and determine the project's level. • Have each subgroup mark the corresponding level for each criterion on the matrix using a dot, a cross, or a sticker. Collective analysis of results • Together with the group, observe which criteria have more marks at high, medium, or low levels. • Ask the following questions: - o Why do you think a higher level was reached in this criterion? - o What was missing for us to make more progress in this other one? • Record the main explanations on another flip chart. Closing with recommendations • Ask the group, based on the analysis, to formulate recommendations or agreements for future projects. • Write on a sheet the title "Improvement Proposals."
 Example	In a youth agroecological garden project, young participants defined four criteria: participation, youth organization, management of agroecological techniques, and marketing at local fairs. After the discussion, they formed subgroups to complete the matrix. Under the "participation" criterion, they placed themselves at a high level, as attendance and engagement in activities had been consistent; for "youth organization," they placed themselves at a medium level, since agreements and some roles had been defined, but coordination depended on a few individuals. Under "technical management," they rated themselves at a high level, as most participants were applying organic fertilizers; and for "marketing," they positioned themselves at a medium level, since only a few participants were selling consistently. During the plenary, one young participant noted that they did not know how to set prices, which led to the agreement to request a workshop on smallholder marketing during the next project cycle.

4.2. Group evaluation

 Objective	To create a space for collective reflection where rural youth and other participants identify achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from a process, project, or activity, in order to strengthen joint decision-making.
 Time	1 session of 1-2 hours
 Materials	Flip charts, cards, markers, circles or guiding questions, and stickers or symbols to prioritize ideas
 Procedure	Introduction and creating a conducive environment • Arrange the chairs in a circle so that everyone can see each other. • Explain that the activity will consist of an honest dialogue to reflect on what was experienced during the project. • Emphasize that the goal is not to assign blame, but to learn from the experience.

Opening round

- Ask each young participant to say one word or a short phrase that summarizes what the project meant to them.
- Listen to all contributions without discussion during this first round.

Guiding questions for reflection

- Present the following questions and encourage dialogue:
 - o In your opinion, what were the main achievements of the project?
 - o What did not turn out as expected or proved difficult?
 - o What did we learn as rural youth during the process?
 - o What would we have liked to do differently?
- Record the responses on flip charts by topic (achievements, challenges, lessons learned, improvements, etc.).

Further exploration of key topics

- Identify the topics that are repeated or generate the most discussion.
- Invite the group to explore them further.
- o Note that several people mentioned communication—ask what exactly happened in that regard.
 - o Bring up the lack of family support and ask how they experienced it.

Collective development of conclusions

- Review the flip charts and read the content aloud.
- Ask the group:
 - o If you had to summarize the lessons learned from this project in three ideas, what would they be?
- Together with the group, develop a synthesis of:
 - o What was most valuable,
 - o What was most difficult,
 - o What should not be repeated, and
 - o What should be maintained.

Closing with commitments

- Ask each participant to mention one action or personal or collective commitment to strengthen future processes.
- Record these commitments and, if possible, take a photo of the flip chart to keep a record of them.

Example

Within a community-based rural tourism project, youth gather in the community hall and sit in a circle. During the opening round, many participants mention words such as “learning,” “challenge,” and “pride.” When discussing achievements, they agree that the creation of a guided trail is a major milestone: they define a short route within the community (e.g., to a viewpoint or a spring), identify points of interest, and design a tour with stations where local history, local production, and forest conservation will be explained. They also determine who will serve as guides and how they will welcome visitors to the community.

However, when addressing challenges, they realize that not all families provide the same level of support and that the guided tour is not sufficiently promoted. One young participant suggests organizing guide shifts, and another proposes creating a Facebook page to be managed by the group. The workshop concludes with the commitment of the youth to meet once a month to follow up on these agreements.

4.3. Achievement tree

 Objective	To visualize in a simple way the results achieved by a group of rural youth and the factors that contributed to them, in order to foster collective reflection and recognition of shared effort.
 Time	1 session of 1-1.5 hours
 Materials	A flip chart with a drawing of a tree (roots, trunk, and branches), colored cards or sticky notes, and markers
 Procedure	Tree drawing - On a flip chart, draw a large tree clearly showing: - The roots, - The trunk, and - The canopy. Definition of the parts of the tree - Explain the meaning of each part of the tree: - The roots represent the elements that made the process possible (support, motivation, favorable conditions, etc.), - The trunk represents the activities carried out throughout the project, and - The canopy symbolizes the results achieved. Station-based group work - Divide the group into three subgroups. - Assign one part of the tree to each subgroup: - Subgroup 1 writes in the roots what made the project possible (partners, previously acquired knowledge, community resources, youth motivations, etc.). - Subgroup 2 writes in the trunk the actions undertaken: workshops, meetings, practices, campaigns, fairs, etc. - Subgroup 3 records in the canopy the results: visible changes, new spaces created, and skills developed. Rotation of subgroups - Ask the subgroups to rotate from one station to another: - The subgroup at the roots moves to the trunk, - The subgroup at the trunk moves to the canopy, and - The subgroup at the canopy moves to the roots. - At each new station, the subgroup should: - Read what the previous subgroup wrote, - Add any information they consider necessary, and - Make corrections if they wish.

	Plenary • Ask one person from each station to explain what was written in their part of the tree. • Encourage the rest of the group to complement the explanation if needed. • Ensure that everyone understands the complete “story” the tree tells. Guided reflection • Ask some questions to deepen the discussion: - o Which achievements make us most proud and why? - o What was essential in the roots for the canopy to produce these results? - o If we were to carry out another similar project, which roots should we strengthen from the outset? • Record the key ideas as conclusions.
 Example	As part of a waste management and recycling project, the young participants draw a tree on the wall of the community hall. On the roots, they note sources of support such as “motivation from the teacher,” “partnership with the municipality,” and “concern about river pollution.” On the trunk, they write activities such as “awareness-raising campaigns,” “waste sorting at school,” and “workshops with families.” On the crown, they record these achievements: “reduction of waste in the river,” “creation of the Youth Ecoclub,” and “recycling stations at the school.” When the groups rotate, they add details that others had forgotten, such as the importance of social media in disseminating the campaigns. The final reflection leads to the recognition that the consistency and perseverance of young people were essential to the project’s success.

4.4. After-project digital survey

 Objective	Gather the final views of rural youth and other participants on a project or training process through digital tools that enable the evaluation of lessons learned, satisfaction, and opportunities for improvement.
 Time	1 session of 1-1.5 hours
 Materials	A flip chart with a drawing of a tree (roots, trunk, and branches), colored cards or sticky notes, and markers
 Procedure	Survey design • Explain to the group that a digital survey will be used to collect opinions in an anonymous and organized manner. • Together with some young people, define the topics to be addressed (satisfaction, lessons learned, challenges, suggestions, etc.). • Develop the questions in a digital form (e.g., Google Forms) and combine:

	- o Closed-ended questions (1 to 5 scale, multiple choice, etc.), and - o Open-ended questions (e.g., What did you find most useful? What would you improve about the project?) Survey validation • Ask 1 or 2 young people to review the survey. • Ask them whether the language is clear and if the questions are easy to understand. • Make adjustments based on their feedback. Survey implementation • Send the survey link via WhatsApp, email, or social media. • Explain that responses are confidential and will be used to improve a project or process. • Provide support to those facing technological difficulties (e.g., by facilitating access to a device or helping them complete the form). Data collection and organization • Review responses on the digital platform. • Look at the automatic statistics (graphs and percentages). • Carefully read the open-ended responses and identify recurring themes. Feedback to the group • Prepare a visual summary of the results (e.g., a flip chart with the main findings). • Present this summary to the group during a meeting session. • Ask group members whether they recognize their responses in the results and if they would like to add anything. Agreement-building • Based on the data and the discussion, invite the group to define suggestions, changes, or topics for further analysis. • Record the proposals and, if possible, prioritize them together with the participants.
 Example	As part of a rural youth entrepreneurship project, a digital survey is designed that includes questions on the usefulness of the workshops, the clarity of the content, and the practical application of what was learned. Many young people indicate that the modules focusing on production are very useful, but that they need more support in sales and social media. During the feedback meeting, one young participant explains that she has products ready but does not know how to negotiate with intermediaries, based on which the group agrees to request a new training cycle focused on smallholder marketing and negotiation with local businesses.

4.5. Tree of lessons learned

 Objective	To visually and symbolically represent the lessons learned, achievements, and challenges identified by rural youth at the end of a process, in order to promote reflection and clarity on what has been learned.
---	---

 Time	One session of 1-2 hours
 Materials	A flip chart or a board, cards, markers, a simple table (criteria × rating levels), and stickers or symbols
 Procedure	Drawing the tree - On a flip chart, draw a tree with: - o Roots, - o Trunk, - o Branches, and - o Fruits. Explanation of the meaning of each part of the tree - Agree with the group on what will be placed in each part of the tree: - o Roots: knowledge, prior experiences, and what motivated them to join the project. - o Trunk: challenges, difficulties, and efforts made during the process. - o Branches: lessons learned and new skills. - o Fruits: concrete changes in their lives, the community, or the way of doing things. Collective completion of the tree - Hand out small pieces of paper or sticky notes to participants. - Ask them to write: - o A piece of knowledge they had before joining the project (to place on the roots). - o A challenge they faced (to place on the trunk). - o An important lesson learned (to place on the branches). - o A concrete change they now observe (to place on the fruits). - Place each note on the corresponding part of the tree. Reading and organization - Read aloud what group members wrote in each part of the tree. - Group similar ideas (e.g., challenges related to lack of time, changes linked to greater self-confidence, etc.). - Support the group in discussing and expanding on the content as it is read. Final reflection - Ask: - o What stands out most to you about this tree? - o What kinds of fruits do you think we could harvest from future projects? - Together with all group members, develop a synthesis of the most relevant lessons learned.
 Example	Within a rural agro-processing project, a tree of lessons learned is developed, in which the youth place phrases in the roots such as “I already knew how to farm,” “My family has always worked the land,” and “I liked cooking.” On the trunk, challenges appear such as “fear of making mistakes with measurements” or “not having equipment at home.” On the branches, they write lessons such as “I know how to

use a solar dehydrator” and “I learned how to calculate costs.” Among the fruits, they highlight “I now sell jams at the local fair” and “I feel confident speaking with my customers.” When they observe the complete tree, they recognize that their family knowledge constitutes an important foundation and that the project provides the structure needed to transform that knowledge into economic initiatives.

4.6. Stories of significant change

 Objective	To make visible, through personal narratives, the changes that rural youth and excluded groups consider most important in a project, with an emphasis on the meaning of those changes and the lessons learned.
 Time	• 1 session to explain the technique and collect stories • 1 session to share, select, and analyze the most significant story
 Materials	An open-ended question guide, a cellphone or a recorder, a notebook, a pen, and a space for group dialogue
 Procedure	Presentation of the technique • Explain to the group that real stories of change will be collected, told by the youth themselves. • Clarify that the aim is not to produce a perfect narrative, but to share experiences that reflect meaningful transformations. Identification of significant changes • Ask each young person to think of a change they have experienced as a result of the project. • Encourage group members to focus on changes they consider significant, even if they may seem small to others. Guide for developing the stories • Ask a few guiding questions to help structure the story, for example: - o What was your situation before participating in the project? - o During your participation, what event influenced your life? - o What changed as a result? - o Why is this change important to you or your community? Work in pairs or small groups • Organize the youth into pairs or trios. • Ensure that while one person shares their story, the others listen and take notes. The story may be recorded, provided that the narrator gives consent and their anonymity is respected. Collection of stories • Ask each pair or trio to submit the story of change in written or audio form. • Ensure that participants give consent for their testimony to be used in the evaluation.

	Collective selection of significant stories • Read or share some stories in plenary. Respect confidentiality when necessary. • Ask the group which stories they consider most significant and why. • Analyze what these stories have in common: the nature of the change, the conditions that made it possible, the barriers overcome, etc. Summary and feedback • Identify elements that recur across several stories (e.g., improved self-esteem, creation of networks, economic improvement, etc.). • Present to the group a synthesis of these elements in the form of a map of changes.
 Example	In a rural youth leadership strengthening project, a young woman shares that she used to remain silent in meetings out of fear of making mistakes. During the workshops, she begins to participate in activities and express her views on community-related issues. By the end of the project, she joins the youth committee and facilitates an activity with younger participants. The group selects her story as one of the most significant, as it reflects a meaningful transformation in terms of self-confidence and participation. Based on her story, the group discusses the importance of continuing to create spaces where young people feel heard and respected.

4.7. Community traffic light

 Objective	To visually and simply assess the level of progress in technical, organizational, and participation-related practices or indicators so that rural youth can quickly identify achievements, challenges, and priorities for improvement.
 Time	• 1 session of 1–1.5 hours to design and apply the traffic light • Periodic monthly or quarterly reviews
 Materials	Poster boards or a mural, markers, and green, yellow, and red cards or stickers. In a virtual format, a table or a digital form.
 Procedure	Explanation of the activity • Present the traffic light as a visual tool for assessing progress. - o Green indicates that things are on the right track, - o Yellow reflects stagnation, and - o Red represents a setback. Definition of criteria • Ask participants which aspects of the project they would like to assess (youth participation, institutional support, application of what was learned, internal communication, etc.). • Write each criterion on a flip chart. Distribution of cards to each participant • Give each participant three cards: one green, one yellow, and one red.

	• Read out a criterion and ask each person to show the color that best represents their perception. • Record how many people show green, yellow, and red cards for each criterion. Discussion by criterion • For each criterion, ask the following questions: - o For those who showed a red card, what specific situations affected you? - o For those who showed a green card, what experiences did you have? • Allow different opinions to be expressed without dismissing anyone's perspective. Building improvement agreements • For criteria that obtained more red or yellow cards, ask: - o What could we do differently to turn the traffic light green? • Write down the group's proposals and prioritize some actions. Recording the results • Keep the sheet with the criteria and ratings visible as evidence of the analysis carried out. • If possible, take a photo of the results and the agreed conclusions.
 Example	Within a rural tourism project, the criteria evaluated include coordination among families, trail promotion, and the participation of young women. For the promotion criterion, most participants show a red card. During the discussion, the youth explain that they have little presence on social media and rely mainly on word-of-mouth communication. Proposals emerge such as creating an Instagram profile, designing posters, and coordinating with the school to organize guided visits. The traffic light makes it possible to quickly highlight the main weaknesses and generates concrete ideas to address them.

4.8. Comparative mapping (before - after)

 Objective	To visibilize the physical, environmental, and social changes in the territory by integrating local memory and critical analysis. This is achieved using maps drawn collectively from the perspective of rural youth.
 Time	1–2 sessions of 1.5–2 hours (one for the maps and another for the comparison)
 Materials	Large flip charts, colored markers, pencils, and tape, as well as photos, printed maps, and simple satellite images (optional)
 Procedure	Organization of teams • Divide the group into two teams: - o Before the Project team, and - o After the Project team. Development of the “before” map • Ask the team to recall what the community or youth group was like



	before the project. • Draw a simple map indicating: - o Where young people used to gather, - o Existing productive spaces, and - o Visible problems (waste, lack of opportunities, conflicts, etc.). • If desired, include symbols or drawings representing social relationships (e.g., isolated youth, few activities, etc.). Development of the “after” map • Ask the other team to represent the current situation after the project. • Create drawings that show the changes: - o New spaces created (gardens, fairs, trails, youth committees, etc.), - o Activities currently taking place, and - o New connections with institutions or community actors. Comparison of the maps • Place both maps on the wall. • Ask each team to explain its map. • Invite the group to identify the most important differences between the before and after. Identification of changes and pending issues • Use arrows or colored marks to highlight visible improvements. • Ask: - o Which aspects changed as a result of the project? - o What remains the same or has worsened? • Record the changes mentioned by the group and the areas that need improvement. Collective reflection • Discuss which project actions are most closely linked to the observed changes. • Identify key activities to maintain or replicate in other contexts.
 Example	In a youth farming project, the “before” map shows only a sports field and the school as meeting spaces, while in most plots only adults are working. The “after” map includes youth-managed plots, a school garden, a space for agricultural fairs, and a meeting point in the community hall. When comparing the maps, the young participants realize that they have greater visibility within the community. They also note that a space for technological training is still lacking, which becomes a concrete demand to present to local authorities.

4.9. Participatory video featuring results

 Objective	To document and communicate the results, lessons learned, and successful practices of a project through the collective creation of a video, aimed at strengthening the digital and advocacy capacities of rural youth.
 Time	• 1 session to explain the technique and organize the teams



	• 1–3 days (flexible) for recording • 1–2 sessions for collective editing and validation
 Materials	Cellphones or basic cameras, simple microphones (if available), a computer or mobile editing app, a simple script, a space to screen the video, and basic internet access if the video will be shared on social media.
 Procedure	Creation of the video team • Ask group members who are willing to take part in filming, interviews, appearing on camera, or editing. • Form a small team with the volunteers and assign the following roles: - o Coordination, - o Camera, - o Interviews, and - o Editing. Script development • Together with the group, decide what should be shown: - o What was the situation like before? - o What activities were carried out during the project? - o What was achieved and how do participants feel now? • Write a simple sequence of scenes or key moments: - o Introduction of the project, - o Footage of activities, - o Short testimonials, and - o A closing message. Recording the material • Visit the locations where the project took place (gardens, trails, community halls, etc.). • Record: - o Ongoing activities (if the project is still underway), - o Interviews with youth, adults, or community leaders, and - o Shots that show the changes achieved. Video editing • Select the most representative scenes. • Arrange them according to the agreed script. • Add short titles, subtitles, royalty-free music if desired, and end credits. • Aim to keep the video short and clear. Presentation and feedback • Screen the video during a meeting with the youth and, if possible, the broader community. • Ask: - o Do you think the video accurately represents the activities carried out? - o What would you add or change? • Record the feedback to be considered in future productions.

Example

As part of a rural tourism and environmental conservation project, the youth produced a participatory video. They recorded the river before and after the clean-up activities, as well as interviews with older adults who described how the place had changed, and scenes of youth groups guiding tourists along the trail. During the community screening, several older participants became emotional as they saw the full process captured on video. The video serves not only as an evaluation tool, but also as a means to share and promote the project in other communities.

4.10. Community photo exhibition

 Objective	To visibilize the processes, challenges, and achievements of a project through photographs taken by rural youth, combining visual memory, collective reflection, and community-based communication.
 Time	• 1–2 weeks to collect and select the photos • 1 session to prepare the exhibition • 1 day to set up and present the exhibition
 Materials	Cellphones or cameras, printed photos, poster boards or panels, markers to create captions, a community space for the exhibition (square, school, youth center, etc.), and a digital platform if it will be shared online
 Procedure	Selection of photographs • Ask the youth to review the photos taken during the project. • Invite each person to choose the photos that, in their view, best reflect key moments of the process. Definition of categories or themes • Together with the group, decide how to organize the photos: - o By stages of the project (beginning, development, and closing). - o By themes (collective work, lessons learned, achievements, challenges, etc.) • Group the photos according to the selected categories. Setting up the exhibition • Secure a community space: the community hall, a school, a corridor in the training center, etc. • Print the photos and arrange them on poster boards as a collage. • Write captions (descriptions) with the support of the youth, using guiding questions such as: - o What action is shown in the photo? - o Why was that moment important? - o What does the image reflect about your process? Inviting the community • Invite families, local leaders, teachers, authorities, and other youth to the exhibition.

	• At the beginning, explain that the exhibition is a way to evaluate and share the experiences lived. Guided tour • Ask several young participants to act as guides, explaining the stories behind selected photos. • Allow community members to ask questions and share comments. Record feedback • Place a large sheet at the end of the tour so attendees can write their opinions or messages to the youth group. • Read some of the comments and messages together with the group.
 Example	In a youth-led rural entrepreneurship project, the exhibition features photos of the first meetings, production workshops, hands covered in soil, the first sales at the local fair, and the joy of receiving payment. One photo draws many comments: it shows a group of young people presenting their products to a group of tourists. The community writes messages of pride and support, which strengthens the youth's self-esteem and their sense of belonging to the territory.

4.11. Results board or mural

 Objective	To make visible and collectively track progress, challenges, lessons learned, and commitments of a group through a physical or digital board, in order to facilitate transparency and participatory planning among youth.
 Time	• 1 initial session to create it and define categories • Periodic updates (monthly or bimonthly)
 Materials	A board, mural, or poster board, markers, and sticky notes, or a digital board (Google Sheets, Jamboard, or another shared platform)
 Procedure	Preparation of the mural • Place flip charts or poster boards on the wall, or sticky notes on the virtual tool, to create a large mural. • Divide it into sections with the following headings: - o Achievements, - o Challenges, - o Lessons learned, and - o Future commitments. Individual input • Give participants sticky notes or small pieces of paper. • Ask them to write: - o At least one achievement they consider important, - o A significant challenge, - o A lesson learned, and - o A proposal or commitment for the future. • Invite them to place each note in the corresponding section of the mural.

	Reading and organization • Read aloud the notes placed in each section. • Group similar comments (e.g., those related to challenges such as transportation or time constraints, or achievements related to organization, etc.). • Highlight the themes mentioned most frequently. Discussion of the content • Ask the group: - o What surprises us about what we see on the mural? - o On which aspects do we agree the most? • Explore in greater depth topics that generate debate or interest. Definition of commitments • In the future commitments section, review all proposals. • Ask which ones are feasible and realistic for the group to undertake. • Highlight the agreements reached so that responsibilities are clear. Preservation of the mural • Keep the mural in the room or document it through photos or screenshots. • Use it as a reference for future meetings or projects.
 Example	In a youth gardening and food security project, the mural quickly fills up with sticky notes. In the achievements section, many participants mention “producing our own vegetables” and “greater unity among young people.” In the challenges section, “lack of transportation to get to the fairs” and “limited time due to family responsibilities” appear repeatedly. Among the lessons learned, participants highlight “teamwork,” “time management,” and “biological pest control.” In the commitments section, several people volunteer to coordinate with the municipality to improve transportation on market days. The mural makes it very clear to visualize both the progress made and the issues that still need to be addressed.

4.12. Peer and community evaluations

 Objective	With youth as protagonists, to promote horizontal learning and project improvement through visits between groups or communities that observe, engage in dialogue, and exchange perspectives.
 Time	1 full day of exchange (4-6 h) and a time period to apply improvements
 Materials	A visit agenda, notebooks, a simple observation and question guide, and a camera or cellphone for documentation (optional)
 Procedure	Selection of participating groups • Identify two or more groups of rural youth that are developing similar or complementary projects. • Together with each group, agree that the evaluation will be mutual and aimed at learning, not competition. Definition of evaluation criteria • In a joint meeting (in person or virtual), propose criteria that both communities consider important, for example:

	- o Group organization, - o Participation of women and men, - o Relationship with the community, - o Innovation in activities, and - o Project sustainability. • Write down these criteria and keep them visible as a guide during the visits. Visits between communities • Organize a visit from one group to the other community. • Tour the spaces where the project takes place (gardens, workshops, fairs, trails, etc.). • Allow the host group to explain the process, as well as its achievements and challenges. Observation and documentation • Provide visiting participants with a simple guide to take notes on: - o Strengths they observe, - o Areas for improvement, and - o Ideas they could replicate in their own community. • Repeat the process when the other community becomes the host. Exchange of feedback • At the end of the visits, bring both groups together in a circle. • Ask each community to: - o Share what they admire about the other's project. - o Offer respectful suggestions for strengthening it. • Ensure that the tone remains constructive and supportive. Summary and agreements • Record the recommendations each group received. • Ask which ideas or good practices they would like to adopt in their own project. • Establish ways to maintain the connection between communities (e.g., messaging groups, periodic meetings, etc.).
 Example	A group of young people working in a community garden visits another group that runs a beekeeping project in a different rural community. During the visit, they observe forms of organization, the distribution of tasks, resource management, and relationships with adult members of the community. In the final exchange, the garden group highlights the beekeeping group's discipline in record-keeping, while the beekeeping group admires the garden group's ability to involve children of both sexes. From this dialogue, concrete ideas emerge, such as incorporating the cultivation of melliferous plants in the gardens to benefit the bees and strengthening production record-keeping within the garden group.

5. Closing: guidelines for continuing the training process

This workbook systematizes a set of participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques aimed at strengthening extension work in rural territories, with a particular emphasis on youth leadership

and the collective generation of evidence. It proposes that, beyond technical or administrative procedures associated with accountability, monitoring and evaluation constitute pedagogical, ethical, and relational processes that help build meaning around the changes promoted, document lessons learned, and guide decision-making for continuous improvement. From this perspective, the proposed techniques make it possible to assess progress and challenges based on territorial experience by incorporating a diversity of voices and ensuring that the information generated is socially meaningful and useful for community actors.

It also highlights that a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation strengthens key community capacities, such as critical reflection, shared responsibility, transparency, and ownership of development processes. Tools such as the assessment matrix, the achievements tree, most significant change stories, the community traffic light, and comparative mapping make it possible not only to measure results, but also to understand how and why certain changes occur, what conditions drive or constrain them, and what adjustments are needed in extension activities to respond to dynamic realities. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation become living spaces for dialogue and collective learning, aimed at strengthening the social fabric, recognizing local knowledge, and consolidating a culture of improvement based on inclusively produced evidence.

This is a flexible and adaptable tool that invites extension practitioners to select and adjust techniques according to the objectives of the support provided, the territorial context, available resources, and the characteristics of the group. Beyond the one-off application of tools, emphasis is placed on sustaining processes of feedback, analysis, and shared decision-making to ensure that evaluation is an exercise in care, recognition, and capacity strengthening. In line with this approach, participatory monitoring and evaluation are consolidated as a means to ensure the relevance, sustainability, and social impact of extension processes, enabling rural youth and communities to take part not only in actions, but also in interpreting results and in building new pathways for transforming their territories.

6. Bibliography

- CARE (Cooperativa de Asistencia y Socorro en Todas Partes, Malawi). 2013. The Community Score Card (CSC): a generic guide for implementing CARE's CSC process to improve quality of services: toolkit (online). 36 p. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE_Community_Score_Card_Toolkit.pdf.
- Chambers, R. 1994. The origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal (online). World Development 22(7):953-969. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at https://entwicklungspolitik.uni-hohenheim.de/uploads/media/Day_4_-_Reading_text_8.pdf.
- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. (2013). Community score cards: A toolkit for civil society organizations. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/PGX_H_Community%20Score%20Cards.pdf
- Cochrane, L; Corbett, J. 2020. Participatory mapping (online). In Servaes, J (ed.). Handbook of communication for development and social change. Singapore, Springer. p. 705-713. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-981-15-2014-3_6.

- Davies, R; Dart, J. 2005. The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) technique: a guide to its use (online). 104 p. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275409002_The_'Most_Significant_Change'_MSC_Technique_A_Guide_to_Its_Use.
- Estrella, M; Blauert, J; Campilan, D; Gaventa, J; Gonsalves, J; Guijt, I; Johnson, D; Ricafort, R (eds.). 2000. Learning from change: issues and experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation (online). Reino Unido, Practical Action Publishing. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://idrc-crdd.ca/en/books/learning-change-issues-and-experiences-participatory-monitoring-and-evaluation>.
- Estrella, M; Gaventa, J. 1998. Who counts reality? Participatory monitoring and evaluation: a literature review (online). United Kingdom, IDS. 70 p. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/Estrella-1998-Who.pdf>.
- Guijt, I; Arevalo, M; Saladores, K. 1998. Participatory monitoring and evaluation: tracking change together (online). In PLA notes 31: participatory monitoring and evaluation. London, United Kingdom, IIED. 28-36. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G01749.pdf>.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2020). Community mapping: A guide for community engagement. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/unhcr-aap-tool-toolkit-community-mapping-guide.pdf>
- Wang, C; Burris, MA. 1997. Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment (online). Health Education & Behavior 24(3):369-387. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/109019819702400309>.
- White, SA (ed.). 2003. Participatory video: images that transform and empower (online). Nueva Delhi, India, Sage Publications. 416 p. Consulted 06 November 2025. Available at <https://archive.org/details/participatoryvid0000unse/page/n3/mode/2up>.