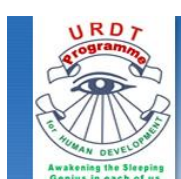




Kampala



Framework and catalogue of tools for

# Participatory monitoring

for

Farmer Family Learning Groups

and

Marketing Associations

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## Preface: about this catalogue

This catalogue of ideas has been developed in a joint effort by six organisations (Caritas Kampala, Uganda Rural Development (URDT), Sulma Foods, Africa2000Network (A2N), National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU), and Organic Denmark) in the project ECOSAF in Uganda. The focus of this project (2013-2015) was Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLG) as a method for developing long-term food security through social capital building. Furthermore, another project based on the FFLG approach but focusing on the formation of Marketing Associations (MAs) contributed to this booklet. This project was carried through in a joined effort between Sustainable Agricultural Trainers Network (SATNET), NOGAMU and OD. SATNET is an umbrella organization with 40 member organisations, and in the project, a number of MAs linked up to the organization as well.

This catalogue is a result of inputs from more than 40 external facilitators of FFLGs, four FFLG officers from the four organisations in ECOSAF, 21 Marketing Association officers, and staff members and volunteers from NOGAMU, SATNET and Organic Denmark. In the process we have worked together from each our context, and exchanged ideas on farmer group development, participation and monitoring.

Participatory monitoring in Farmer Family Learning Groups and Marketing Associations is for the people and the groups who have set goals for themselves and need to monitor themselves whether they are getting closer to the goals which they have set. These groups are the primary target group for this manual, and for the monitoring effort. If agreed upon between the FFLGs or the MAs and others – access to the findings and the monitoring results could be allowed for learning in a wider audience or organization. However, an organization or a funding body can look over the shoulders of a FFLG or MA, but not determine which and how the monitoring should take place. The FFLG or the MA will chose to monitor what is most relevant and meaningful to them and for their purpose.

Our conceptual framework for and main ideas of participatory monitoring of change is presented in the beginning of this catalogue. The tool is in fact a number of tools and ideas, which all address one or more aspect of change, and give suggestions how they can be monitored in a group. We suggest concrete indicators and methods of monitoring them in a participatory way. They can be adjusted to other contexts.

All FFLGs and MAs set goals and carry out activities to reach them. Many other groups of people and organisations set goals. It is relevant for all of them to monitor, and the meaningful focus and choice of methods must necessarily be defined and selected by the people who should use them. This catalogue offers a range of ideas which hopefully can inspire other groups.



## Contents

1.	Introduction: make it simple .....	5
2.	Principles of participatory monitoring.....	6
2.1	Monitoring for whom? .....	6
2.2	Based on the vision, goals and specific objectives of a group.....	6
2.3	A meaningful tool for planning forward.....	6
2.4	Following a monitoring plan, made by or agreed on by the involved partners .....	7
2.5	The results are shared, owned and used by the involved partners .....	7
2.6	The results are documented in a way, which allow us to revisit them in the future .....	7
2.7	Following change over a time period .....	7
3.	Recognizing and monitoring change .....	8
3.1	Co-reflect about what has changed .....	8
3.2	Monitoring is capturing change.....	9
3.3	About capturing change which was not planned for .....	9
4.	The process of setting goals and monitoring our way to reach them.....	10
4.1	Setting vision and goals .....	10
4.2	Making a monitoring plan .....	11
4.3	Identifying indicators based on the specific objectives.....	11
4.4	Means of verification.....	12
4.5	Time frame .....	12
4.6	Who is involved? And who is responsible? .....	12
5	Participatory monitoring in Farmer Family Learning Groups.....	13
5.1	The principles of FFLG: how does participatory monitoring fit in? .....	13
5.2	Examples of what can be relevant to monitor in a FFLG.....	13
5.2.1	Improved knowledge and skills (Human capital) .....	14
5.2.2	Social relationships, friendship, trust, networks and interactions in the FFLG (social capital).....	14
5.2.3	Involvement of youth in FFLG activities .....	14
5.2.4	Use of record keeping / planning tools .....	15
5.2.5	Improved agricultural practices.....	15
5.2.6	Increased farm outputs .....	16
5.2.7	Economic change and income generation .....	16
5.2.8	Use of saving and credit schemes .....	17
5.2.9	Collective marketing .....	17
5.2.10	Improved food security .....	17
5.2.11	Improved sanitation, hygiene and healthy environment.....	18

5.2.12	Improvement of the surrounding nature and environment (Natural capital) .....	18
5.2.13	Interactions with the local community.....	19
5.2.14	Success of advocacy effort .....	19
6	Participatory monitoring in a Marketing Association.....	21
6.1	The aim and structures of a Marketing Association (MA).....	21
6.2	What is relevant to monitor in a MA? .....	21
6.2.1	Members have acquired new skills .....	22
6.2.2	Social coherence in the MA .....	22
6.2.3	Development in membership numbers of the MA .....	22
6.2.4	Increased productivity .....	23
6.2.5	Increased production at MA level .....	23
6.2.6	Improved product quality .....	23
6.2.7	Diversification of production or products to market .....	24
6.2.8	Financial sustainability and resilience .....	25
APPENDICES:	Group exercise methods .....	26
	Mapping ‘what changes did we see?’ / ‘what changes would we like to see?’ .....	26
	Use pictures instead of words: .....	27
	Where did we come from? Where are we now? Where do we plan to go?.....	27
	The method of ‘Most significant change’ .....	28



## 1. Introduction: make it simple

This work is based on the idea that we all have visions and goals in life which we want to achieve. We can formulate our own personal visions and goals, but as soon as we are two persons or more who share a goal, we need to sit together and formulate this goal or these goals together. A family can set their goals. A group of families, like we have in the Farmer Family Learning Groups, can share goals and help each other to reach them. An organisation or an association can set goals, which have to be negotiated and articulated. So the first step is:

***Yourself as an individual or in a family or a group:***

***Where did we come from? Where are we now? And: where do we want to go?***

Visions are often broad and big and something which takes a lifetime to reach or maybe even go beyond. Based on our visions, we set goals which are reachable. The goals that we have set in front of us may be possible to fulfil in short term or over a longer period, maybe in more steps. We have to formulate our goals in a way so that they are precise and tangible and reachable. On the way to the goal, we work together, we learn together, we adjust to circumstances, maybe we struggle, and we shape ourselves and sometimes also the surroundings. On the way to the goal, we need to know whether we are on the right track. That is what monitoring is about. It is as simple as this:

***Monitoring is what we do to find out whether we are on the right track to our goals.***

***Monitoring is measuring changes towards our goals.***

***Monitoring is a tool to plan our activities on the way to our goals.***

If we should know whether we are on the right track or not, we need to be precise about the signs which can help us telling this. These signs are called indicators. We need to look carefully at our goals and – if necessary - break them down to more specific and reachable objectives. After having done that, we need to find out the measurable and precise signs which can tell us whether we are on the right way to where we want to be to reach exactly these goals and objectives.

***Indicators are the signs we use to find out whether we are on the right track.***

It is as simple as that. The last – and very important – point to make to understand the whole framework of this work and this way of thinking is the element of participation. As individuals and groups WE set our own goals based on our visions, and in each our context. It is our goals, and if monitoring towards these goals should be meaningful for us, then they have to connect closely to our own goals, and be useful and even valuable for ourselves, in helping us to plan the next steps on our way. Participation is not about ‘participating in giving information to somebody who is assigned to monitor either us or a certain development’. Participatory monitoring is about producing useful information together about where we are and help us guiding our own way forward.

***‘Participatory monitoring’ means that we – in a group – agree on a plan  
for monitoring whether we are on the right track.***

***It means that we in the group own, share and use the results of every monitoring action.***

## 2. Principles of participatory monitoring

In the development of these tools for participatory monitoring, we went through a process where we identified the characteristics below for participatory monitoring. We have used these principles for developing participatory monitoring on FFLG level, and on the level of Marketing Associations. Below, we unfold these principles.

*'Participatory monitoring' in this context is defined as monitoring:*

- *which is based on the visions, goals and specific objectives of a group*
- *which gives the involved partners a meaningful tool for planning*
- *which follows a monitoring plan, made or agreed on by the involved partners,*
- *where the monitoring results are shared, owned and used by the involved partners,*
- *where the results are documented in a way, so that it allows revisit in the future, e.g. to compare the results with previous results, and*
- *which follows change over a time period*

### 2.1 Monitoring for whom?

Participatory monitoring in Farmer Family Learning Groups and Marketing Associations is for the people and the groups who have set goals for themselves and need to monitor themselves and whether they are getting closer to the goals which they have set. This will give them a good basis for re-evaluating the situation and re-direct their efforts, and they are the primary target group of this manual. If agreed upon between the FFLGs or the MAs and any other organisation – access to the monitoring results could be allowed for learning in a wider audience or organization. However, others such as for example an organization or a funding body can look over the shoulders of a FFLG or MA, but not determine which and how the monitoring should take place. The FFLG or the MA will chose to monitor what is most relevant and meaningful to them and for their purpose.

### 2.2 Based on the vision, goals and specific objectives of a group

We set goals and as the process develops, we want to know whether we are on the right way to reach these goals, or not. Our monitoring effort must necessarily concentrate on the visions, goals and specific objectives which we have set for ourselves. Often, visions are so broad and big that they need to be formulated into goals or specific objectives which we realistically can achieve. The goals and objectives of a given group will be the guide to what we should monitor together, to know if we are on the way.

### 2.3 A meaningful tool for planning forward

The goals themselves do not tell which activities should be carried out to reach there. Monitoring and finding the signs whether we are on the right way, may not tell us exactly which activities we should

conduct to reach further. But – the main purpose of monitoring is to give us a tool to continue on the way towards our goals. A monitoring process tells us whether our activities or efforts done so far, have brought us closer to where we want to be. This means that monitoring is a good tool to measure whether we are using the right strategy, or we should adjust.

## **2.4 Following a monitoring plan, made by or agreed on by the involved partners**

Monitoring is a part of most projects. Many farmers have told us that they sometimes have been participating in development projects where everything regarding monitoring – and even the goals and objectives of the project - was determined beforehand. They were never involved in deciding on the plan for monitoring. This made them feel detached and de-motivated, and maybe they did not understand the purpose or the content of the monitoring. Even though they ‘participate’ for example by answering the questions asked by a project team or external persons, give access to their farms or do some exercises which brings up some monitoring results, the questions or exercises do not contribute to their own planning in the group, or as farmer families. Participatory monitoring is different, because it has to follow a plan which is made by or agreed on by everybody who participates and share the goals which form the basis of the monitoring effort.

## **2.5 The results are shared, owned and used by the involved partners**

If the monitoring should be used by the involved people, and monitor their way towards their goal, it is very obvious that they should own, share and use the results of the monitoring. This means that the results can offer a platform of insight which they can use for their future development. This does not exclude the usefulness of the monitoring results for other partners, or even for sharing with groups of people who are completely external to the project. The point is just that participatory monitoring produces results which are of direct usefulness for the people who are on the way, and not by a project team who moves into the village or the farm or family and do some monitoring and takes all results with them away only providing a bit of ‘feedback’.

## **2.6 The results are documented in a way, which allow us to revisit them in the future**

We need to know where we were and compare with the current state, to know if things have changed in the direction of where we want it to change. We cannot remember everything in our head, and especially: when we are together in a group, we need to share the results and form a common memory.

Documentation is necessary. We need it for ourselves, and if our efforts should be shared with other groups of people, or in a wider project context, we also need to have good documentation. The means of documentation can be many, as long as it allows us to revisit it and compare with previous and later developments. It can be all kind of written results in terms of tables, drawings, videos, photos and more.

## **2.7 Following change over a time period**

Monitoring has to take place with an interval which makes sense in relation to the goals. If a group sets up an ambitious goal which should be reached within 2 years, monitoring may be needed quite often, because every change in the wrong direction should be caught as quickly as possible, and action taken immediately to change direction. We give some guidelines in relation to the individual areas of monitoring and indicators.

In the development of this tool, some confusion sometimes arose among participants who said that ‘we all monitor all the time’. This is true: if a person has a cow, he or she may ‘monitor’ the cow every day and just

keep the results in mind – the person knows what normal behavior is for this cow, and reacts if the cow suddenly shows signs that something is not normal. This is not ‘participatory monitoring’! This is a part of everyday life and does not live up to the other criteria for participatory monitoring as well – the ‘normal condition’ is for example rarely documented.

### 3. Recognizing and monitoring change

#### 3.1 Co-reflect about what has changed

Change can be defined as a transformation. It can be from one state to another over a time span. It can be

*It is important to characterize the observed changes by discussing:*

- *What happened?*
- *How did it happen?*
- *Why did it happen?*
- *When did it happen?*
- *Who were involved?*
- *Who did it affect?*

changes in activities, attitudes or it can be changes in your surroundings which you may or may not respond to. You can also focus on the changes which you plan for. Those changes are the ones that you plan for, and they are the focus of the participatory monitoring.

Changes are interrelated. It is very important to be conscious about the interrelatedness of changes, so that they can be thought into the planning and the management of risks which potentially can come. Therefore we suggest that a group regularly – for example once every year – sit together and discuss the changes which they have experienced, and reflect together on what happened and in which order, like in

the figures below. These figures show that simple arrow diagrams can be used as tools to discuss WHICH changes happened, in which order, why, how and who were involved: include all the circumstances around the changes.

Figure 1. A ‘cloud diagram’ as discussed by one of the MAs, starting with the focus of their concern, namely decrease in honey production, which had decreased from 6 to 4 tonnes per year over the last 5 years. Going in depth with exploring the changes and using ‘why-when-what-who-questions’, they identified the story line for this, and the action they had taken. These actions are taken to move them towards a goal of increased honey production and still being able to keep animals and feed them properly.

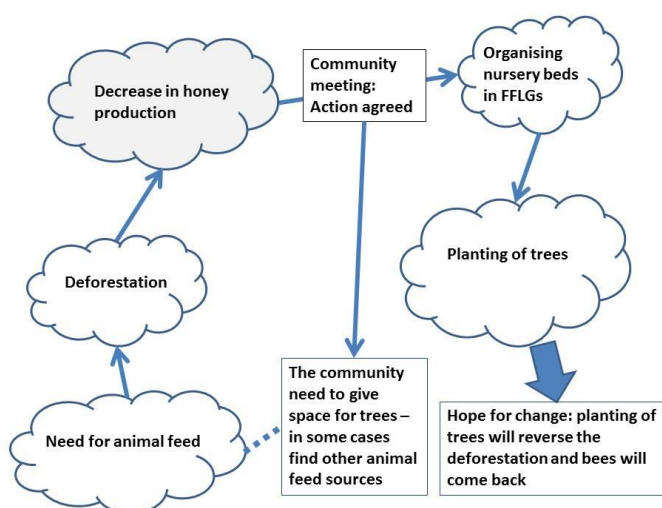
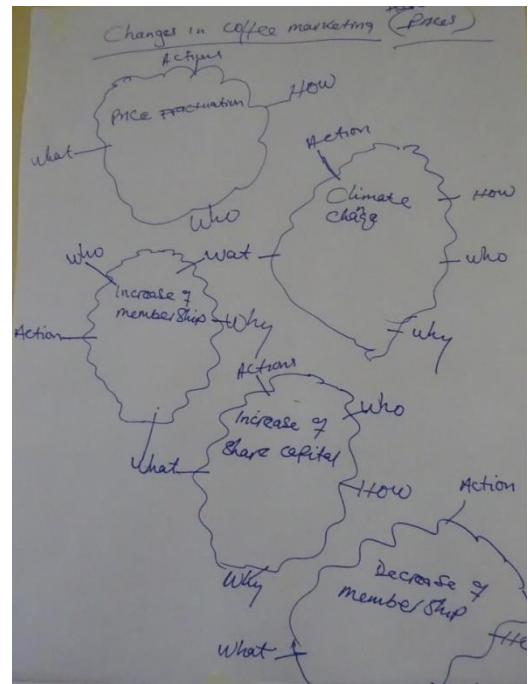


Figure 2. A photo from a workshop about participatory monitoring, where the group members identified widely different changes, which called for different actions (e.g. 'price fluctuation' and 'climate change' called for strategies to improve the resilience and buffer capacity of the group and the community, and 'decrease in membership' called for an analysis to find out why members had left the group, and what should be done to reverse this development. All these changes released discussions on 'why', 'what', 'when' and so on, in the group.



### 3.2 Monitoring is capturing change

Monitoring is a tool which you can use to know if things are on the right track. Monitoring is an important part of a development process. Monitoring gives you a direction on which changes are happening. It can be changes which you hope for, or it can be changes which are unexpected for you.

The monitoring, which we deal with in this little guide is participatory monitoring. This means that the people, who have set the goals and work to reach them, also take part in the monitoring, and use the results. They make plans, and they monitor the development towards the goal that they plan to reach. It is advisable to limit the amount of goals and thereby also the amount of points to monitor. This will make the people focus and make sure that the involved people are not overloaded with things to monitor.

### 3.3 About capturing change which was not planned for

We can plan to monitor the changes which happen in the areas and towards the goals which we plan for. But as very vividly shown in Figure 1 above, changes are interrelated and some changes may lead to others which can be less good or very good, or just surprising. For example, many FFLGs plan for improved gardens, and plan to monitor the changes in terms of increased harvest or improved product quality. But the collaboration in the group leads to more trust between families, exchange of goods, and many participants become resourceful persons in the village. These outcomes escapes the attention because they were not included in the planning – but they are important outcomes. How can they be made visible for the participants and articulated as the valuable outcomes which they actually are? Or – the opposite could be the case: it could be that improved agricultural production also led to cutting down too many trees in the village. If the participants can observe this, they should maybe re-consider their activities and make a new plan without unintended but potentially harmful side-effects. How can such side-effects be identified and brought into the discussion and dealt appropriately with?

One suggestion is using the 'cloud chart' or 'arrow diagram' as illustrated above. They have the potential to include changes which were planned for, as well as observed but unexpected changes, and bring all types of changes into the debate.

One method which broadly discusses changes over a time period – from a positive angle – is the method of 'most significant change'. It is described in the appendix. It is a method which ideally involves everybody: everybody brings their story, and the group elects the story which represents 'the most significant change'. It can be applied stepwise: first in FFLGs, then in groups of facilitators, and lastly maybe over a whole

project. The outcome is not only ‘the winning story’, but the process of sharing stories of widely different nature.

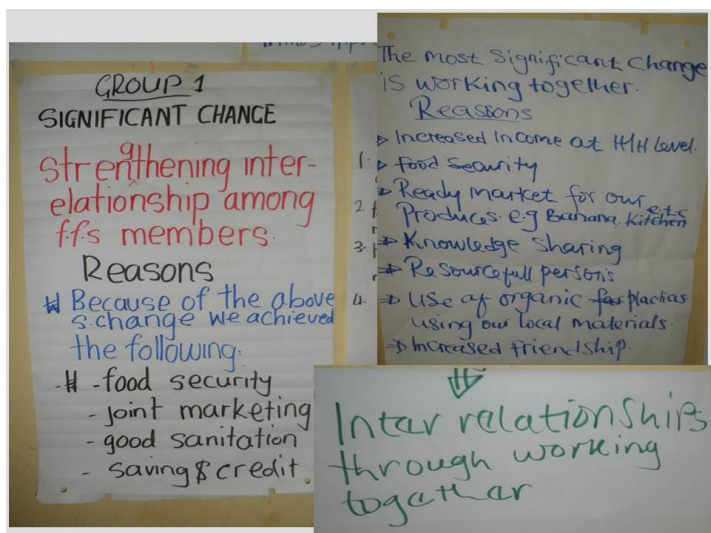


Figure 3: The elected ‘most significant change’ from most groups in the first project in the Rwenzori region in the period 2009-2011, was about social capital, network and trust. This showed how the most important impact of a project aiming at agricultural changes actually became the way in which people worked together, as described in the booklet ‘The Rwenzori Experience’.

## 4. The process of setting goals and monitoring our way to reach them

### 4.1 Setting vision and goals

**A goal or a specific objective must be:**

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Time bound</b>

A vision guides the direction in which a person, family or group want to go. A vision can be big and longterm and combined of several elements, and can for example be ‘To ensure a good livelihood and food security for all member families in the group, and contribute to strengthening the local community coherence’.

The art is to break the vision down into goals, which are reachable and realistic, and can be monitored. In Figure 4 below, examples are given of a wide spectrum of specific objectives and goals. Specific goals should be stepping stones towards the bigger vision, and always remember to make them SMART – see the box above to the left.

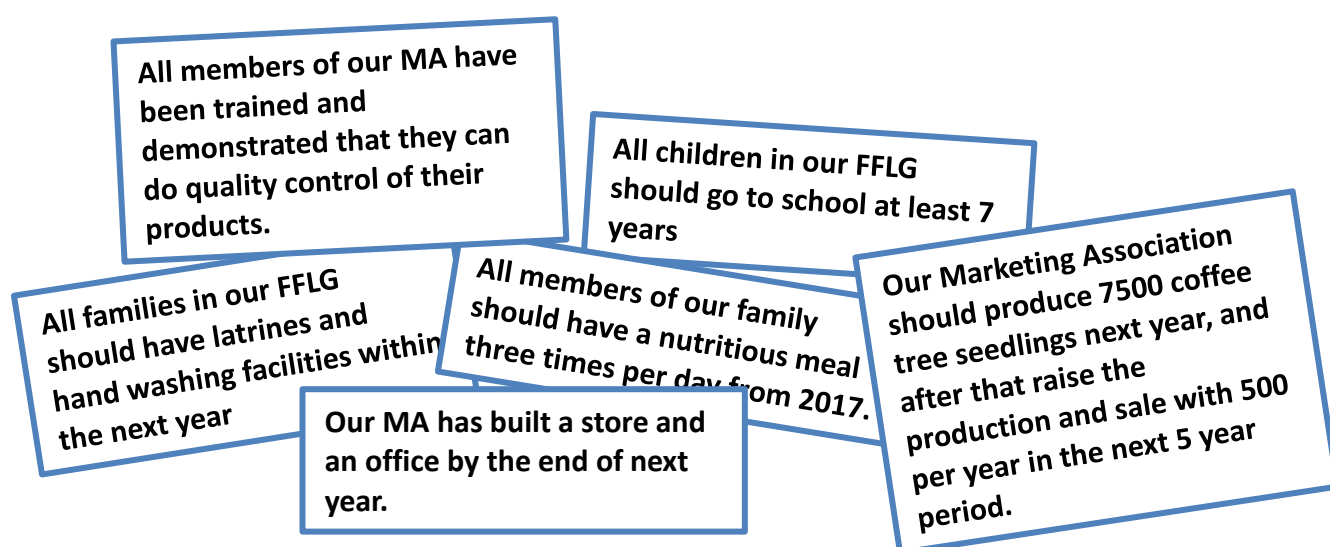


Figure 4. Examples of specific objectives or goals for families, Farmer Family Learning Groups and Marketing Associations.

## 4.2 Making a monitoring plan

When the specific objectives are identified, it is relevant to make a plan for monitoring. This should comprise the goal / specific objectives, as well as the indicators (can be one or more), the time frame for monitoring and the persons involved, including the responsible person.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
A stepping stone for a household or a group on the way to reach a bigger goal or move towards a vision.	The signs that they are on the way – or not. The baseline is where the group is at the start.	The sources of information and methods to verify their indicators.	The time intervals between monitoring events – more often for a short term goal and ambitious goals.	The persons who participate in the monitoring, and the person who is responsible for collecting and reporting, and 'to whom'.

Below, in sections 5.2 and 6.2, a lot of examples are given for potential indicators, means of verification, time frames for monitoring, and persons involved.

## 4.3 Identifying indicators based on the specific objectives

**C** *Clear*  
**R** *Realistic*  
**E** *Economically viable*  
**A** *Attainable*  
**M** *Measurable*

When it comes to identification of indicators, they need to clearly reflect the specific objectives, and they need to be 'CREAM' (see to the left). The specific objectives and the indicators work hand in hand. If the specific objective is not clear or measurable, then it is impossible to identify a clear, measurable and realistic indicator to monitor it.

#### 4.4 Means of verification

How and where do you find the information which enables you to judge and assess whether you are on the right track? It can be all kinds of information: concrete figures in terms of weight or volume of a certain type of produce, measures of e.g. soil quality, different types of books which are kept by families, farmers, companies or organisations, or it can be photos, videos, maps, results of participatory exercises or stories ('testimonies').

#### 4.5 Time frame

The time frame for measuring the indicators must be closely connected to the type and nature of the indicators. Does it have something to do with the production of increasing amounts of a produce, then it is relevant to monitor for example after every harvest or at a time when the harvest of this season can be measured. If it is about building social capital, it may be relevant to monitor this after e.g. every four or six months.

#### 4.6 Who is involved? And who is responsible?

In principle: all who are involved in the process towards reaching the goal, are also involved in monitoring. If the specific objective is about something 'physical' that can be measured by looking into book-keeping over a longer period, one or two persons can write down the results and present it to the group. If it is something that happens on 25 different farms during a season, then the 25 farmer families must be involved in the collection of data. People can carry out the monitoring on their own farm themselves, following an agreed scheme or procedure, or they can share the monitoring in a number of households as a group. Or an external monitor can come to a farm and do the monitoring together with the family. A 'monitoring team' can be elected and be a small group of FFLG members, or the facilitator, or it can be a third person. A product should definitely come out of the process in terms of a written report and maybe with relevant photos or written arrow-diagrams.

The results can be shared in the group and provide a good platform for discussion and future planning. It is a non-negotiable part of participatory monitoring that all, who participate in a monitoring process either as monitors or 'being monitored', own the result. In a participatory monitoring process, it should not be possible that a 'monitoring team' moves into an area, does some monitoring (even with high level of participation from all) and moves out again without having shared any results.



The group sets the goals, and the group uses the monitoring process to share their experiences and find out whether they are well on their way to the goal. This is the best foundation for new action.

## 5 Participatory monitoring in Farmer Family Learning Groups

### 5.1 The principles of FFLG: how does participatory monitoring fit in?

Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLGs) are groups of farmer families that go together, set common goals, learn together and develop together. The concept is described in a Farmer Family Learning Group manual (<http://orgprints.org/19341/>), and some experiences from the first development of the FFLGs in Sustainable Agricultural Trainers Network (SATNET) in the Rwenzori Region, is described in 'The Rwenzori Experience' (<http://www.twn.my/title/end/pdf/end15.pdf>), and in a chapter from the FAO report (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3294e/i3294e.pdf> page 162), in a learning tool paper from Lasse Englyst (<http://orgprints.org/25076/1/25076.pdf>), as well as in a discussion paper from the conference 'Food Sovereignty: a critical dialogue' in The Hague ([http://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Research\\_and\\_projects/Research\\_networks/ICAS/2014\\_Discussion\\_Notes\\_Mette\\_Vaarst.pdf](http://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Research_and_projects/Research_networks/ICAS/2014_Discussion_Notes_Mette_Vaarst.pdf)). It is an approach which is owned by everybody who uses it, and cannot be patented, and it is shaped by the members who participate to fit into exactly their context. The approach is built on some non-negotiable principles:

- 1) FFLGs involve whole families and whole households. All in the family needs to take part in decisions at home, and take responsibility for the future development of the family and the family farm.
- 2) FFLGs include all members' farms. Every farm is a learning site. Relevant learning takes place in the context in which it should be used.
- 3) A FFLG starts with the resources which are available, and is not dependent on donations per se. Through the process, the FFLG can generate income and raise funds, but they start from where they are at the moment of establishment as FFLG.
- 4) An external facilitator, who is trained in the concept, and is familiar with the ideas, is crucial for the initiation of the FFLG. Gradually, an internal facilitator, who is mentored by the external facilitator and elected among the FFLG members, can take over the daily facilitation in the group. A network of facilitators will often benefit all participating group members.

### 5.2 Examples of what can be relevant to monitor in a FFLG



The 14 areas below were identified by the facilitators in the ECOSAF project. We have picked up their suggestions – some of them were used in the groups, some of them were just suggestions at workshop sessions about participatory monitoring, and some of them were suggestions which were discussed by the project partners in different meetings. They are all examples – and all should be adjusted to the specific context in which they should be used. We hope that they can inspire to identify indicators suited for different contexts.

### 5.2.1 Improved knowledge and skills (Human capital)

This category comprises different groups of persons – e.g. children, women, men or different job positions, e.g. facilitators or members of FFLGs. Also, it can both be seen from the view of ‘teaching’ as well as ‘demonstrating learning by doing certain practices’. Many of the areas and specific objectives mentioned throughout this manual have to do with ‘improved knowledge’ because they are results of increased knowledge brought into practice. That is for example, keeping records and using improved agricultural practices, doing value adding activities, using new technologies or improve sanitation.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
All children 7-14 years in a FFLG go to school (e.g. within 2 years)	No. of children in school and paying school fee.	Counting children between 7-14 years in school / not in school; school fee receipts	Every 6 months / at the beginning of every school year.	1. All families involved; 2. Facilitator or FFLG board member can be responsible.
Men / women / all household members have been trained in XXX	No. of people being trained in XXX	Lists from courses / trainings	Every half year	1. All being trained. 2. A person from the organization conducting training in XXX

### 5.2.2 Social relationships, friendship, trust, networks and interactions in the FFLG (social capital)

It can be very difficult to capture changes in social capital over a time period, and most can be captured only through interviews. Attending meetings and activities from more family members per family can give a good indication of the priorities of families to go to the meetings, and contributing to the activities and the events where help is needed. The saving and credit schemes are in themselves an indicator of social capital.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
A good network of communication is developed in the FFLG when one or more of the members need it.	Events of collaboration and help between FFLG families in times of need.	Testimonies.	Annually / bi-annually.	1. FFLG members 2. Facilitator
All families feel ownership over the FFLG and its activities	Attendance to FFLG meetings. Participation in work on each others' farms.	Minutes from FFLG meetings (with list if attendants). Testimonies.	Annually / bi-annually.	1. FFLG members 2. Facilitator

### 5.2.3 Involvement of youth in FFLG activities

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
More young people involved on personal level in FFLG activities.	No. of youth (e.g. 10-20 years old) involved in FFLG activities per meeting.	Group records. Minutes from FFLG meetings. Member lists of FFLGs, indicating age.	Every half or full year.	1. All families. 2. The facilitator.
More young people taking responsibilities for farm practices.	No of youth having tasks in the farm practices.	Testimonies. Interviews about involvement in which practices	Every 4-6 month.	1. All families. 2. The facilitator.

### 5.2.4 Use of record keeping / planning tools

This can both be on family level, farm level or FFLG level. Obviously the indicator is the presence of updated records, but it could also be relevant to talk about how the families or the FFLGs use the records or the planning.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
The family keeps records of their farm produce	Presence of updated farm records	Records	Bi-annually / annually	1. Families 2. Facilitator
The family keeps cash-book of expenses and income	Presence of updated cash-book	Cash-book	Bi-annually / annually	1. Families 2. Facilitator
The FFLG keeps records of all meetings.	Presence of updated minutes book and visitor books	Minutes book, visitor books, other records	Bi-annually / annually	1. and 2. Facilitator
The farmer families make farm plans	Presence of an updated farm plan	Farm plan	Annually	1. Families 2. Facilitator / organization
The FFLG plans forward on joint activities or marketing	Presence of updated plans for the next period of e.g. 3 months	Minutes book or written plan	Every planning period (e.g. every 3 month, half year or annually)	1. FFLG members 2. Facilitator

### 5.2.5 Improved agricultural practices

The improvement of agricultural practices can happen as a result of improved knowledge and skills, which again can be a result of exchange of experience and knowledge in a group. It can be viewed from two perspectives: 1) starting to use certain practices as a goal in itself, or 2) setting goals of e.g. better soils which is a result of better soil management practices. It is important that the specific objective and the indicators are on the same line.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
Families start to use a new practice (mulching, compost, intercropping etc.) based on new knowledge within e.g. 2 years.	No. of families starting to use these new practices	Visiting families and looking at their practices. Testimonies. Farm records. Farm tools at the farm.	Every year or every 6 months.	1. All families. 2. The facilitator or a person from the organization.
The soil quality has improved due to better management.	Observations. Analysis of soil structures and content, e.g. humus, earthworms or compactness.	Soil samples. Visual inspection following a certain plan e.g. 20 spots per farm.	Every year.	1. Farmer families. 2. the facilitator, an organization person or somebody with professional knowledge about soils.

Some of the practices mentioned by the groups as relevant to monitor were: Crop rotation, mulching, using cover crops, digging trenches, pruning, intercropping, terracing, deep ploughing, planting nitrogen fixing plants, weed and pest controlling measures, using compost, and good management of animals.



(Photo left) A well planned nursery can be both viewed as a goal in itself, helping to get diversity and healthy fresh food to the family tables, and maybe also income generation. It can also be an indicator of good group work and social capital.

### 5.2.6 Increased farm outputs

This is about the results of the farm and what is harvested, either in terms of more different crops (both cash crops and food crops, fruits, vegetables, feed, and animal products), or in terms of more kgs of focus crops, either per acre or in total.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
More farmer families start to cultivate new food / cash crops to be cultivated (diversity)	More different species and varieties of food/cash crops on the farms.	Observation. Farm records.	Every growing season. Annually / bi-annually	1. All farmer families. 2. The facilitator / organization.
Increased yield / productivity of a certain crop	Yield per season in terms of kgs or liters per acre.	Records of outputs.	Bi-annually / annually.	1. Farmer families. 2. Facilitator/ organization/ company

(Photo right) Improved health and survival among the farm animals, as result of better practices around feeding and health care, can be a goal of a farm with integrated crop-animal production.



### 5.2.7 Economic change and income generation

The income generating activities can be a wide range, from 'growing mushrooms' to 'make handcraft', grow any crop to sell, sell surplus of family food crops, or do value adding activities to the crops grown on the farm, e.g. processing milk products or making juice or jam.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
Income generating activities (to be specific) are made by all families in the FFLG within the next 2 year period.	No. of FFLG members making income generating activities.	Record books. Interviews with families.	Annually / bi-annually.	1. Families 2. Facilitator / organisation

### 5.2.8 Use of saving and credit schemes

Saving and credit s have proved to be an essential part of FFLGs, hugely improving farmer families' livelihood and room to maneuver in times of crisis. Many different structures of S&C schemes emerged: some only comprising the members in one FFLG, some a much larger group, e.g. from 5 FFLGs or more, and with different sets of rules, amounts and practices.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
Improve on culture of saving and credits so that the membership goes up to XXX over a 2 year period.	No. of members / women/men/ young. Amount of saved money Loans given. Interest accumulated. Number of loan beneficiaries.	Records Passbooks; ledger books; saving portfolio. Minutes of meetings. Visitors book.	Every 3 months.	All members. A committee is often elected – the book keeper or secretary can lead the monitoring and results can be shared among all.

### 5.2.9 Collective marketing

A FFLG can start marketing together, and some FFLGs did, at a quite early stage. We include it here as a specific objective and give a few suggestion to indicators and means of verification. However, if a group wants to go into more serious marketing, we encourage you to look in section 6.2, where some indicators for marketing associations (MAs) may be relevant.



Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
The group bulk and market a certain amount of a common crop together from next harvest season.	'The chosen crop' present at farms. Record keeping ok. Sale strategy in place.	Record books.	Annually	1. All farmers and farmer families 2. Facilitator / group chair person / organization.

### 5.2.10 Improved food security



Food security is an important goal of any person and family, and many different aspects can be addressed, such as variations over the year, the combination of growing food and having an income, the freshness and nutritious aspects of food, and that food is distributed well among family members including children and elders.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
FFLG families have a variety of food available through all seasons.	Variety of food crops available at the time visiting.	Observation. Testimonies. Interviews.	Monthly.	1. All families. 2. Facilitator / organization

<b>Specific objective (continued ... )</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>Time frame: how often?</b>	<b>1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?</b>
All families have the possibility to store food safely for less productive seasons.	Presence of drying and storage facilities.	Observations.	Annually	1. All families 2. Facilitator / organization.
All family members eat a nutritious meal three times per day, (or more).	Number and content of meals ('food basket') per day.	Food basket survey. Gender and age group disaggregated interviews.	Monthly / every third month/ bi-annually	1. Families 2. Facilitator / external from organization.
The family has money to buy the food that they do not produce	Margin of savings at all times.	Cash book	Annually / bi-annually.	1. Families 2. Facilitator / organisation

### 5.2.11 Improved sanitation, hygiene and healthy environment

<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>Time frame: how often?</b>	<b>Who are involved? Who is responsible?</b>
All families should have pit latrines on their compound with hand washing facilities (tippy taps).	Pit latrines and tippy taps present at the compound.	Observation.	Bi-annually / Annually.	1. Families 2. Facilitator / organization.
All families practice waste separation	Presence of pit for non-degradable waste and for degradable waste.	Observation.		
All families have drying racks	Drying racks present.	Observation.		
All families have bathrooms	Bathroom present	Observation.		
All families keep their compounds clean and tidy.	Compound tidy at all visits. Practices of cleaning.	Observation. Interview.		
All families have hanging lines for drying clothes	Hanging lines present.	Observation.		
There are wood saving stoves in all kitchens	Wood saving stoves present.	Observation.		
All family members can drink clean water every day	Facilities present for boiling / storing drinking water.	Observation. Interviews.		

### 5.2.12 Improvement of the surrounding nature and environment (Natural capital)



Monitoring the farms and their surroundings to make sure that there are good living conditions for pollinators, is actually an important part of farming – a lot of our food is dependent on bees and other pollinators.

<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>Time frame: how often?</b>	<b>1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?</b>
There should be more bees present in the area / fields of FFLG member farms.	Bees observed in a certain crop / on a certain spot.	Observation. Testimonies.	Bi-annually	1. All members of FFLGs. 2. Organisation
More beneficial trees in the area / along roads and between fields over the coming 5 years.	No. of present / newly planted beneficial trees. No. of different species of (beneficial) trees present / planted.	Observation.	Bi-annually / annually.	1. Farmers 2. Facilitator / organization.
To protect local water sources	No run-off close to streams or water points.	Observation.	Bi-annually / annually.	1. Farmers / members 2. Facilitator / organization.

### 5.2.13 Interactions with the local community

This can be complex and maybe the specific objective should be split down into even more specific objectives, because it is planned stepwise. In the table below, one example is given for a case with interaction with the local school; the lower-level-objectives are not mentioned, but the indicators show a sequence of actions and different steps. With regard to time frame, then it might be either an intense process like e.g. constructing a school garden which may take a year and therefore require monitoring every second or third month, or an ongoing process, like e.g. establishing and running a kitchen garden for party food production, which only needs monitoring every half year.

<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>Time frame: how often?</b>	<b>1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?</b>
Involvement of local school in the FFLG garden to teach young students about organic gardening practices at PS2 and PS4 levels.	1. Contact and agreement with school in place. 2. Schedule and plan for school activities with FFLG members laid 3. School garden planned and organised.	Documents Minutes from meetings School garden plans Observation Interviews	Every second month	1. FFLG members; an elected school garden committee; school teachers; pupils 2. School garden committee / facilitator

### 5.2.14 Success of advocacy effort

This is a very complex area, and even the specific objective necessarily must be split down into even more specific objectives, each of which is an objective for a step in the process and each of which has one or more indicators. In the table below, some examples of indicators are given. However, when the strategy for an advocacy effort is laid, then all the specific objectives and their indicators must be identified and the time frame decided.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	1. Who are involved? 2. Who is responsible?
Having achieved a specific goal <sup>*)</sup> through advocacy in the local political system	1. Roles distributed and agreed on. 2. Strategy agreed on. 3. Steps in strategy followed and taken 4. Dialogue entered 5. Meeting/document / confirmation received 6. The specific goal achieved and visible	Documents, Minutes of meetings. Minutes	Every third month.	1. Elected committee among FFLG members, maybe more than one FFLG. 2. Committee chair person / facilitator / organization.

<sup>\*)</sup> For example a new road / bridge / access to community ground /



Sharing experiences ...  
Talking about the present ...  
Learning together ...  
Planning for the future ...



## 6 Participatory monitoring in a Marketing Association

### 6.1 The aim and structures of a Marketing Association (MA)

A Marketing Association is a group of producers who go together, set rules and regulations for their collaboration, production and collected marketing efforts, and work together for sharing the risks and benefits of collective marketing.

Marketing Associations can be very different of size and focus. It can be a great advantage to have a certain volume as marketing association if it is about bulking a product which is strongly competitive on international markets, such as e.g. coffee and cocoa. It can be a great advantage to be strongly locally connected with a strong network and roots in the local community, if the marketing is about collecting e.g. diverse ranges of vegetables together and e.g. make basket systems, or food for weddings and funerals together. Both focus areas can be relevant for creating a Marketing Association.

### 6.2 What is relevant to monitor in a MA?

Many of the developments which Farmer Family Learning Groups aim at are actually equally relevant goals and therefore relevant to monitor in a Marketing Association. A Marketing Association can set goals on household level, regarding e.g. hygiene, new investments, livelihood improvements, incomes on household level etc. Many Marketing Associations have visions and missions about exactly that, formulated for example 'to improve the family food security in the producers' households'.

When a MA set goals on household level, look through the ideas in the sections above, because they can be the same for MA as it is for FFLGs.

It is important to monitor at the level where an activity exists. If a Credit & Saving Scheme is established in an organization or at FFLG level, then it is on those levels where it should be monitored, and not on the level of a Marketing Association. However, if the MA is the structural framework around a S&C scheme, then it is of course relevant to monitor within the framework of the MA. S&C schemes are described in section 5.2.8 above.

MAAs can also set goals for advocacy efforts or for improving the surrounding nature in terms of biodiversity or improved ecosystem services, or for example promote the planting of trees. Those things are also described above, so suggestions for indicators can be found there.

It is relevant for any MA to set objectives about fairness and ethical behavior, e.g. equity, so that young, elders, men and women have equal possibilities to participate in the bulking activities, and have equally strong voices in taking decisions in the MA. It can also be about how non-members are treated, if a MA buys produce from non-members: sometimes the middle men are claimed not to treat producers fairly, and it is a noble goal of a MA to not act towards fellow farmers as greedy and exploiting middle men. If membership is equally open for all who fulfill the criteria for membership, it is ok that members have certain advantages of being members, but a MA for marketing organic produce (certified or non-certified) should keep remembering that 'fairness' is a carrying principle for organic production.

In the below sections, we present what the teams from different MAs in SATNET came up with in their suggestions, and we link it where we find it relevant, to the sections above, and discuss aspects which are particularly relevant for MAs in each case, as highlighted by members from MAs.

### 6.2.1 Members have acquired new skills

This is targeted in section 5.2.1 above, and can be adjusted to the specific objectives of MAs. It could be skills that are particularly relevant in the produce of this MA, such as how to ferment and dry cocoa, or how to process a certain type of produce to add value. Below is given a couple of example of MA-relevant trainings and skills: diversified vegetable production for the local market and cocoa production, both of which are relevant for MAs in terms of marketing together and do value adding of their produce.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
To train MA members in kitchen gardens during the next two years, especially egg plants, tomatoes and cabbages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Number of training sessions</li><li>- Number of people trained</li><li>- Number of established kitchen gardens with the three produce</li><li>- Number of household members involved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Records from trainings</li><li>- Photos</li><li>- Farm records</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Every three month in a 2 year period</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Involved trainer</li><li>- Board of the MA</li><li>- Responsible: appointed board member</li></ul>
To train MA members in fermenting and drying cocoa to a satisfactory quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No. of training sessions</li><li>- Results of quality of fermented and dried cocoa</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Attendant lists from training sessions</li><li>- Moisture measures from collection days</li><li>- Photos of practices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Monthly until achieved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Board</li><li>- Responsible: appointed board member who selects experienced farmers to train inexperienced.</li></ul>

### 6.2.2 Social coherence in the MA

In section 5.2.2 above, social capital and shared feeling of ownership and responsibility are described as goals and focus of monitoring for FFLGs. Similar goals can be set for MAs. In the case of MA, it can be relevant to focus on e.g. that all members are loyal to the price setting and policies of the MA, and that they all agree to bulk in the MA.

### 6.2.3 Development in membership numbers of the MA

Many MAs have an aim of increasing in numbers. The definition of 'member' can influence the means of verification. For example, some MAs state in their rules that a member should be 'active' meaning that they deliver a certain amount of produce every collection day or every harvest. Others involve their children as 'members' for example from an age of 15 years, and in some cases it can mean that these children get responsibility for a certain delivery – however, often it is more to involve them in the family business – and in such cases it can be a mean of verification and member register to record both number of persons and number of households involved.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
Increase the number of members in the MA from 30 to 120 over a 3 year period	- Number of members	- Member registration book - Stock register - Member ledger	- Bi-annual monitoring (about 15 members increase per half year)	- MA board executive members - Treasurer or other person appointed by board to keep records

#### 6.2.4 Increased productivity

This relates to the section above 5.2.6 about increased farm outcome. It is very important to be clear about what one wants exactly to measure: is it increased productivity in terms of produced food from a certain amount of land – that is, more output per acre? Is it focused on a certain crop, or a diverse range of crops? Or is it actually increased production from a farm that maybe buys or acquires more land and in this way sells more from the farm? Is it on household level or MA level – the latter also including more members? It is very important to be clear about the goals, and next step is then to start thinking about action on how to reach the goals, and let that be reflected in the indicators.

#### 6.2.5 Increased production at MA level

A specific objective of a MA aiming at producing more of the common crops in the MA could potentially be reached through increased number of members, more land per member, and higher production per land unit (=higher productivity). Above, in section 6.2.3, we give an example of increased membership number, and in sections 5.2.6 and 6.2.4, we addressed productivity per land unit. Below, we monitor ‘more total production’ in general (no matter of how the production is increased), and ‘more land per member’.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
Increase MA's production by XXX kg during the next 3 years	Kg of produce delivered to the collection center  Kg of produce sold by the MA.	- Recordings from collection days - Sales books	- Bi-annually	- Treasurer of the MA - Board members
More land per member for the crop(s) which are bulked / marketed in the MA over the coming 3 year period	Area per farm of MA members for the specific crops	- Farm maps - Tenure contracts	- Bi-annually	- Every household - MA executives

#### 6.2.6 Improved product quality

The quality of the product can be improved in many different ways, depending on which product it is: it can be in the growing process e.g protecting it better against pests and diseases, it can be in the process of harvesting or post-harvest handling treating it with care – like for example tomatoes which should be picked and stored very carefully, or it can be in the value addition process, e.g. correct fermentation and drying of cocoa. Some efforts can be done even on the transport level, e.g. careful transport of fruit and

vegetables, which can be the responsibility of the MA. This is a very complex area, and MANY examples can be given on efforts done on MA level to improve the quality of their products. Much can be done through training of the producers, and then it can be monitored both in terms of the training effort, or in terms of the improved knowledge and skills, and in terms of the result: better products. It can also be a question not only of training of the farmer families, but also organization and communication about it. Other things can be done through good storage facilities on MA level. See example below.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
During the coming year, improve the quality of delivered vegetables to the restaurants in the nearby town by better storage and transport under the responsibility of the MA.	Fewer complaints from the restaurants.  Amount of produce sold at full price.	Cash books of the MA.	Every second month during the season of harvesting and selling vegetables.	Storage managers.  Board of MA.  Treasurer or other person appointed to keep information about quality measures.

## 6.2.7 Diversification of production or products to market



A goal for an MA on diversification can be with different targets: it can be that the MA decides that they want to diversify their produce for sale, to be able to be more robust and less vulnerable to price fluctuations. Examples of this are seen in practice e.g. when cocoa farmers also start to market coffee – both crops on international markets. A MA can also decide to market some crops on national or international markets, e.g. vanilla, and then at the same time grow and

market onions, kale, carrots and tomatoes on the local market. It could also be that the MA decides to promote diversification for the sake of home food security. Improved farm outputs in terms of diversified production, is partly covered also in section 5.2.6 above. Like with the issues above, diversification also involves new learning, and in the MA, any diversification of marketed produce requires new knowledge and searching, linking up to new markets.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
The range of marketed products in the MA increases to XXX over the coming 5 year period.	Number of farmers growing new products.  Amount of produce sold of different types of produce.	Records in MA on delivery days.  Cash books.	Every half year.	Board of MA.  Every family.  Team that weighs, measures and make records in MA.

### 6.2.8 Financial sustainability and resilience

A main rationale for very many farmers and farmer groups for getting together in a MA, is to have more bargaining power, and to be stronger and take their own situation more in their own hands. This includes different elements:

- Being able to store produce until the prices become better. This requires good quality products, storage facilities, and it requires that the MA has a certain margin and resources enough to wait, and not sell immediately for immediate money but also for a lower price.
- Being able to give loans and help members / producers out if they are in a critical situation or in urgent need for money.

Specific objective	Indicators	Means of verification	Time frame: how often?	Who are involved? Who is responsible?
Bulk and store maize for a better price from 7 to 10 tonnes in two years from now.	1.5 tonnes more stored in 2016  1.5 tonnes stored in 2017.  Prices obtained.	Stock cards, goods received on delivery days, payment vouchers, produce ledger cards	Yearly.	Farmers.  Store keepers.  MA production committee manager.
Increase the MA capital basis from 30 to 40 mill Ush in a three year period	Loan portfolio increase.	Cash books. Loan register books. Audit reports.	Quarterly.	Treasurer. MA board.
Increasing number of collection center from 1 to 5 in the coming 2 year period	Plans for collection centers. Collection centers being in place.	Planning meeting minutes. Financing plans and records. Physical structures.	Quarterly. (2 new collection centers per year planned, built and in action)	MA board. MA executive.

## APPENDICES: Group exercise methods

### Mapping 'what changes did we see?' / 'what changes would we like to see?'

This exercise is very simple, and yet it motivates the group members to think and reflect on what they have been seeing and experiencing over the past period. How long back and how far ahead will have to be determined by the group, but it could for example be looking one year back and discussing: what changes have we seen?

- 1) First, make a simple brainstorm in the group, where everybody should come up with at least one point. A list of changes, experienced by the group members, will come out of this step.
- 2) Look at the list and group them so that overlapping changes are captured under one headline. Write a headline for all experienced changes which are 'standing alone' too.
- 3) Write each headline into a 'cloud' on a piece of paper – look for example at Figure 1 and 2 above.
- 4) Take time to explore the changes and how they are inter-connected. Some group members may have noticed a decline of trees, others have maybe noticed more dry soil or decline of bees. All these three things may be interconnected. When the topic is exhausted, all group member share an understanding of the changes that they have observed in their environment, and all have a broader view. This gives a good background for the next exercise:

#### WHAT CHANGES WOULD WE LIKE TO SEE?

Do a similar exercise: first, brainstorm, then group the brainstorm points, and then discuss them in a forward directed way:

- Which and what changes would we like to see? Why?
- Who can be involved?
- How can this be done to the benefit of everybody?
- How fast can we make these changes?

This gives a good background for the process explained above through numerous examples: set goals, and plan a way of monitoring whether you are on the right track.

## Use pictures instead of words:

### Where did we come from? Where are we now? Where do we plan to go?

There are many different ways of doing mapping together, and the diagram below is just one of the methods which have been introduced in Uganda. It is good to use drawings, symbols and pictures, if not everybody in a group can write, or if people talk different languages in a group.

You can choose to do this in various ways, like the exercise above also indicates. The important point is that it is necessary for a group to have these discussions asking the three questions above and create a common understanding of changes that they meet, and changes that they want to plan for.

This process is a part of any initiation of new activities in a group, to identify the way forward. It can also be an important supplement to a monitoring tool like all the examples, because it may make the un-planned changes visible and in this way bring important insight to the group members, either about 'changes happening around them and influencing them', or even 'changes which seem to happen as a side-effect (good or bad) to their planned interventions'.



A GALS diagram developed by Moses from the organization UMOJA, where they used this method as a tool in some FFLGs, using symbols which all group members agree on, showing the three key questions: 'where were we before?', 'where are we now?' and 'where do we go to?'.

## The method of 'Most significant change'

This method is viewed as an alternative to many other monitoring and evaluation methods, because it focuses on the positive changes in a group, and is very much focused on the stories that come out from an intervention of any kind, and not on pre-determined indicators. It can be a way of monitoring or evaluating a larger project, and in that case, the collection and choice of stories can be more formalized and set up so that the processes are made visible for other groups of people, than the organization itself. In our case, we describe it as a method for a smaller group with the same goal, e.g. an organization with a common goal of improving livelihood and food security through Farmer Family Learning Groups, or a Marketing Association focusing on improving product quality and record keeping among their members. In such cases, the following method can be used:

- 1) Conduct meetings in smaller groups, and share your stories. This can be for example in 15 FFLGs that are connected to an organization, or it can be in 3 FFLGs that are forming a MA. Ask each member of the group to think of 'the most significant change he or she has seen and experienced personally as a consequence of this intervention'. Share the stories in the group.
- 2) Now each group must choose which story best represents what they perceive as 'the most significant change'. This can be a long discussion and negotiation. The process of electing should not be left to the facilitator, for example, but it should be a negotiation, because it stimulates everybody's thoughts and reflections. It is very important to articulate WHY this story was finally elected by the group to represent the most significant change.
- 3) After each group has elected their 'most significant change', an elected person from each group meet with the elected group representatives from the other groups. They will go through the same process: each will bring forward the story which came from their group. After this, the group elects the 'most significant change'. Again, it is very important to articulate WHY this story was finally elected by the group to represent the most significant change.
- 4) The elected person goes back to the group, convene them and tell the story which was elected by the 'higher level group' among all the stories, and tell why this story was elected. After that, it is discussed in the group. This is an important outcome of the exercise: the feed-back and the thoughts which came out of this exercise.
- 5) Apart from the sharing, the organization or MA can do various things with this story: they can tell it in a report, or draw + tell it on a poster to the office building or store room of the MA, or in a central place in the village, if they want to share this story with others.

The method is only described in a quite simple form here, and primarily for use in one organization or any other 'smaller audience'. If it should be applied as a part of the project evaluation, the method should be applied more in its full, which among others is described in more detail here:

<http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>