

# HOW DO WE SEE THE CHANGES WE HOLD DEAR?

The Change Soup

Our Living Space Map

The Double Mirror

The Time Sandbox

The Life Clock

The Change Soup

The Scale Dialogue

The Double Mirror

The Change Bus

The Life Clock

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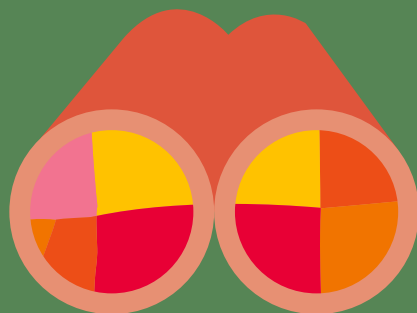
The Change Soup

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## PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION MINI-GUIDE



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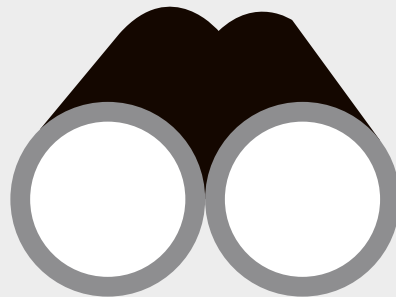
無窮世界  
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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **WHAT CHANGES DO WE CARE ABOUT, AND HOW CAN WE SEE THEM?**



### **ABOUT PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION**

In community engagement and empowerment work,  
we often find ourselves asking:

*“Has this really made a difference?”*

*“What has changed because of our efforts?”*

*“How would we know?”*

At the frontline, indicators and numbers help us capture overall outcomes and provide evidence for external communication. Yet, what often touches us most are the subtle shifts in participants’ lives — a small gesture, a fleeting moment of courage. These kinds of qualitative changes are difficult to capture in figures. That is why we also need participatory approaches that help us catch these lived experiences of growth.

This mini-guide is written for practitioners in global citizenship education, community communication, and grassroots empowerment. Through a collection of simple, flexible, and participatory methods, we hope to support you in better understanding the meaning of the changes taking place as you work to foster personal and social transformation.

“Participation” covers a wide spectrum. In the context of programme evaluation, it can range in depth. Some approaches, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), emphasize intensive involvement of community members, collective analysis, and co-creation of solutions. PRA can be deeply empowering, yet it also requires considerable time, staffing, and technical resources.

**The kind of participatory evaluation introduced in this book is not meant to be a highly systematised methodology. Instead, it offers light-touch ways of inviting people to reflect on and make sense of change together.** These practices can be small and adaptable: to do less when resources are scarce and to do more when capacity allows.

Examples in this book provide simple yet creative ways for practitioners to engage participants in jointly clarifying observations, co-constructing insights, and uncovering valuable signals from everyday practice. Together, we can reflect on next steps.

Here, evaluation is not just about collecting data, proving results, or writing reports. It is essentially a practice of relationship — walking alongside people and learning together. Its power lies in enabling workers and participants to see, think, and act together. Change not only happens, but is also recognised, recorded, and passed on.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **HOW DOES EVALUATION ACCOMPANY US TOWARD OUR VISION?**

## **BEGINNING WITH MEL**



In community empowerment or social communication work, we often carry big visions and work diligently, hoping that transformation will happen. However, change in people or communities is rarely linear. The effort we invest does not guarantee proportional results. The journey is full of unknowns and unexpected turns, requiring us to adjust strategies and pace along the way.

It is like climbing a mountain that no one has summited, with fog all around. We can sense the direction of the peak, but the path ahead — the storms, the scenery, the detours — remains uncertain. We can only prepare as best we can, and then keep walking, observing, learning, and adjusting.

In this kind of journey, evaluation is like our map and compass, helping us navigate uncertainty. In larger organisations such as Oxfam, this role is framed as MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. These practices help us make sense of shifting realities, recalibrate our actions, and harvest learning along the way.

M, E, and L are not separate tasks. They are continuous practices running alongside the project or programme cycle – from planning, to implementation, to adjustment and growth. At each stage, MEL helps us observe, understand, and learn.

- **MONITORING (M)**

Monitoring is like a map or GPS in that it involves systematic and regular data collection to track where we are and how far we've progressed. Monitoring shows whether we are moving toward the goal, while also alerting us to challenges and opportunities.

- **EVALUATION (E)**

Evaluation is like a resting point along the trail, allowing us to pause and look back at the journey. Evaluation clarifies what changes have taken place, how they came about, and what unexpected gains or difficulties emerged. It helps us build knowledge from experience.

- **LEARNING (L)**

Like recording the route after each climb, learning is the reflection on what worked and what didn't so that we can walk more steadily next time. Learning also builds a body of change knowledge for the organisation – lessons to pass on to future workers, and even to inspire other practitioners.

In this sense, MEL is wisdom for travelling through the fog. It is not about testing who is right or wrong, but about helping us see clearly, adjust continuously, and keep moving forward in the midst of uncertainty.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE VALUE OF EVALUATION FROM PRESSURE TO COMPANIONSHIP



## **FEELINGS ARE REAL – AND THEY DESERVE TO BE UNDERSTOOD.**

In our daily work, “evaluation” often comes with mixed emotions. Sometimes it feels like an extra burden, or just another task to report results to outsiders.

Sometimes it brings the pressure of being measured or judged.

These experiences are real. They also reflect long-standing constraints in our systems and organisational culture.

## **YET THROUGH PRACTICE, WE HAVE DISCOVERED THAT EVALUATION CAN BRING NEW POSSIBILITIES.**

It does not have to be only about ticking boxes or proving results. When it begins with people, with real questions, and with the frontline context, evaluation can also become a companion — helping us to make sense, learn, and move forward together.

### **IF EVALUATION IS NOT ONLY ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY, IT CAN ALSO BE:**

- A chance to organise our experience — clarifying how change happened, what worked, where we got stuck, and where to go next.
- A medium for team learning — capturing tacit knowledge and understandings, so that they can be documented, transformed, and passed on.
- A language of trust with others — enabling us to share not only achievements, but also the parts still in progress, where we are experimenting and adjusting.
- A reminder of our original intentions — helping us pause to ask: Why did we begin? What did we hope to achieve? Where are we now?

### **PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION HELPS US BETTER UNDERSTAND THE PATH WE WALK.**

When evaluation is done in a participatory way, these values are no longer abstract concepts. They emerge in each conversation, in every moment of reflection and documentation.

### **EVALUATION IS NOT ONLY ABOUT WHO IT IS FOR.**

It is also about *how we see the path we are on, and who walks it with us*. It enables us — with our teams and our communities — to travel with more steadiness, and to go further together.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **A GUIDE TO THIS BOOK**

### **TOOLS AND STORIES PREPARED FOR YOU**



If participatory evaluation is a journey, this little book hopes to be your backpack companion. In this book, you will find practical tools, along with voices and experiences from different fields. Together, they can light the way as we explore, reflect, and walk forward side by side.

Here are the companions you will meet in the chapters ahead:

**P.10 HOW DO PRACTITIONERS DO EVALUATION?**

**EVERYDAY SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD**

Learn from the experiences of frontline workers — how they carry out evaluation in their daily work, the challenges they face, and the reflections they share.

**P.16 FOLLOWING CHANGE: FIVE STORIES FROM PRACTICE**

In-depth stories from diverse contexts, showing how evaluation is lived out in practice and how it can support transformation.

**P.30 IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES: MAKING EVALUATION MORE PARTICIPATORY**

A collection of practical methods, suitable for both one-off activities (such as Global Citizenship Education workshops or social issues learning activities) and longer-term community projects. These are light, creative ideas designed for flexible use.

**P.53 GOING DEEPER WITH QUALITATIVE TOOLS:  
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC)**

For those looking for a more systematic approach, this section introduces the MSC technique and our experience of applying it.

**P.58 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION**

These are handy reminders and tested principles to make evaluation easier and more grounded in real-life practice.

**P.62 WHAT'S NEXT: PUTTING EVALUATION TO WORK**

Some simple ideas for busy practitioners with limited time.

**P.64 WANT TO LEARN MORE? FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES**

Additional materials to support your ongoing exploration of participatory evaluation.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **HOW DO PRACTITIONERS**

# **DO EVALUATION?**

## **EVERYDAY SNAPSHOTS**

## **FROM THE FIELD**



In early 2025, we invited over 50 practitioners from community empowerment, social communication, global citizenship education, and community development to share how they approach evaluation, the challenges they face, and the support they need.

This was not a formal research, but an exchange among peers. The voices gathered here highlight common challenges and hopes, and now serve as the starting point and nourishment for this toolkit.



# EVERYDAY SNAPSHOTS



## Diverse Practices in Action

Evaluation is not absent in the field — it takes many forms. Even with limited resources, practitioners find ways to observe and make sense of change. Common practices include:

### **QUESTIONNAIRES (PAPER OR ONLINE)**

The most widely used tool for gathering feedback on satisfaction, feelings, or future actions.

### **CASUAL CHATS OR INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS**

Capturing instant reactions, especially from those who are less comfortable speaking up in groups.

### **DIRECT OBSERVATION**

Observing body language, attentiveness, interactions, and non-verbal cues to assess engagement.

### **FORMAL INTERVIEWS**

Less common, but useful for in-depth stories beyond numbers.

### **FOCUS GROUPS**

Bringing diverse perspectives together to build shared understanding.

### **CASE STUDIES AND FOLLOW-UPS**

Tracing long-term change or deeper individual journeys.

### **REFLECTIONS AND PERSONAL STORIES**

Participants leave notes or provide oral accounts of change.

### **FEEDBACK THROUGH ONLINE PLATFORMS**

Some collect responses via email or social media.

The mix of methods depends on context, participants, and goals. Yet, many admitted: while plenty of data is gathered, the lack of follow-up and feedback often limits its use in team reflection or strategic planning. Participant feedback also tends to focus on feelings, which are harder to link directly to programme design or indicators.



# COMMON PAIN POINTS



## Where Do We Get Stuck Most Easily?

From our conversations with practitioners, several recurring challenges stood out. These are not meant to be criticisms, but as shared experiences that many of us face when performing evaluation. Identifying these challenges can help us recognise the difficulties more clearly – and start imagining ways forward.

### ● INSUFFICIENT TIME AND STAFFING

*“Work is already packed; there’s really no time to handle evaluation.”*

Evaluation often gets pushed to the end and is treated as optional. When manpower is tight and activities accumulate, it rarely becomes a priority.

### ● UNFAMILIAR METHODS AND NOT SURE WHERE TO START

*“There are tons of tools I can look up, but I honestly don’t know what they mean.”*

Many lack confidence in designing indicators, writing questions, or analysing data. Without lived examples, the questions “Which tool?” and “How do I use it?” become the first barrier.

- **ONLY THE LOUDEST VOICES ARE HEARD**

*“Many participants engage quietly—it doesn’t mean they don’t have feelings.”*

Vocal feedback is noticed more easily, while the experiences of quiet or marginalised participants often remain unseen.

- **DATA EXISTS BUT DOESN’T ENTER TEAM DISCUSSION**

*“Once the data’s on the cloud, it’s like the job is done—no one actually looks at it.”*

Questionnaires, sticky notes, and reflections may be collected but not synthesised. Even when summarised, teams struggle to translate them into actionable recommendations.

- **EVALUATION DOESN’T SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS’ AGENCY**

*“Some reports are just for filing, but we really want to know whether what we do actually helps people.”*

Evaluations often serve funders rather than frontline needs, making it hard to transform the information into meaningful support or reflection.



# IMAGINING IDEAL EVALUATION



## What Practitioners Hope For

Despite the pain points, many practitioners expressed hope for evaluation. They do not reject it — instead, they long for approaches that feel lighter, closer to daily work, and supportive of reflection and growth. From interviews and surveys, several common wishes emerged:

### ● LIGHT AND EASY TO CARRY OUT

*“If only there were ways to ‘evaluate while working’.”*

Evaluation should fit into daily routines — a quick chat, a drawing, or a short group reflection — rather than become an extra project.

### ● HELPING PRACTITIONERS MAKE SENSE OF THEIR WORK

*“Sometimes it’s not about proving anything — we just want to know if we’re on the right track.”*

Evaluation is not only for reporting results outward, but also for recognising and making sense of one’s own context and role.

### ● SPACE FOR DIFFERENT VOICES

*“Not everyone speaks up, but they all have something to express.”*

Beyond forms and numbers, evaluation should allow room for images, stories, silence, and unease. Tools should support multiple forms of expression.

## ● STIMULATING TEAM DISCUSSION

*“We don’t want statistics alone — we want everyone to talk and think together.”*

An ideal evaluation is not just a “report for funders,” but a chance for teams to rethink, discuss, and adjust collectively.

## ● MORE THAN A METHOD — A CULTURE

*“It’s not only staff interpreting results; communities should also take part in shaping change.”*

Evaluation is not one-way, but a shared process built on trust and co-creation, inviting participants to make sense of change together.

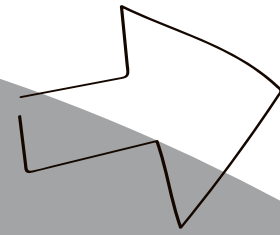
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**These wishes are the starting point of this book.** Our aim is not to offer a perfect model, but to respond to these aspirations with participatory ideas that are ready to pick up and easy to adapt. We hope that anyone who cares about understanding change can find a workable way to begin, right in their own context.

# CHAPTER 6

# LED BY CHANGE

## FIVE STORIES FROM PRACTICE



### DO YOU A FLAVOR



#### FROM PERFORMANCE TO RELATIONSHIP: REIMAGINING EVALUATION

Using participatory tools like the *Life Clock* and *Role Cards*, the team invited people experiencing homelessness to express themselves and build confidence, making evaluation a process of trust and understanding.

### CENTRE FOR APPLIED THEATRE, TAIWAN

#### TRUSTING STORIES TO EMERGE: EVALUATION AS A JOURNEY OF TRUST AND CHANGE

By observing subtle body cues and applying the *Most Significant Change (MSC)* method, the team traced how theatre left lasting imprints in everyday life.

In this survey, we stepped into five organisations and listened to their evaluation stories. Each journey began differently – with observation, with dialogue, with design, or with long-term tracking. Though resources varied, all shared the same search: **how to find ways of evaluation that truly support reflection, learning, and forward movement in real work.**

## **ONEBITE SOCIAL**

### **PLANTING EVALUATION INTO DAILY PRACTICE: THE ROLLING DESIGN OF “PROJECT HOUSE”**

Through spatial observation and data tracking, the team translated indicators into everyday language that reflected local needs, letting evaluation grow naturally

## **PLEY SCHOOL**

### **AFTER THE SCHOOL BELL, STORIES CONTINUE**

Children’s engagement and after-class interactions became clues to learning. Focus groups later helped capture changes that were still unfolding.

## **TEACH FOR TAIWAN**

### **SEEING CHANGE THROUGH CHILDREN’S EYES: MAKING EVALUATION NOURISHMENT FOR ACTION**

From classroom observation to alumni follow-up, TFT combined quantitative and narrative methods, helping teachers and students recognise their own transformations.

These five stories are more than records of action – they show how evaluation gradually takes root in practice. There is no single “correct” way; each approach grows from its own needs and context, finding a rhythm that fits. May these experiences bring inspiration and companionship, and invite you to ask: in your own work, what observations, feedback, or conversations might already be the seeds of evaluation?

# DO YOU A FLAVOR

## FROM PERFORMANCE TO RELATIONSHIP: REIMAGINING EVALUATION

Interviewees | Yu-Hsuan, Ying-Chieh, Ting-Yun, Jia-Ci Yi-Hsuan, Yu-Sheng,  
Ader, Shang-Chih, Yun-Ting, Yi-Chen  
Written by | Carmen Lee



Do You A Flavor (DYAF) works through direct service and advocacy to make streets brighter and more welcoming. Their aim is to build a safety net where people experiencing homelessness are cared for and can return to society — a change that requires shifts in attitudes as well as physical redesign.

For the **direct service team**, evaluation is experienced on the frontline, walking with “brothers and sisters” (their way of addressing homeless friends). They listened for what lay behind polite words — unspoken worries and needs — which led them to design playful tools for more open expression. The team

created simple participatory tools to help people express themselves. In a job-matching programme, programme participants were invited to draw a **“Life Clock”** to map their daily routines — showing when they woke, worked, or came to the centre — which helped staff understand the centre’s place in their lives and helped participants see it as part of their rhythm. Another activity, inspired by Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, invited members to design **“Role Cards”** that described their strengths, such as “Cleaning thoroughly” to be used “when everyone needs cleaning.” These playful tools revealed personal abilities, encouraged mutual appreciation, and offered a growing picture of change to guide planning.

Evaluation often **happened informally in conversations after activities**. Staff discussed with service users what truly helped and adjusted plans accordingly. Some even considered rotating them as observers in street events, sharing their reflections on group dynamics. For the team, evaluation was never just a measure of performance but **a way of building relationships**.

The **advocacy team**, working mainly with the public, had to capture impact in limited time. At a “Stone Soup” event, they used short questionnaires to gather feelings and possible actions — measuring outcomes while encouraging reflection. In schools, with the board game The Days of Wandering, they asked: “What made you curious? **What new discoveries did you have?**” — often drawing deeper insights than “What did you learn?” At exhibitions and talks, they set out simple question cards and invited partner groups to leave feedback.

Challenges remain: How to hear quieter voices? **How to receive honest negative feedback?** Do activities bring lasting change? These questions keep the team reflecting on what traces of change they hope to leave, and how to speak with participants in genuine dialogue.

From DYAF’s work, we see humility and persistence — a willingness to listen, question, and walk patiently with people. **Evaluation here is not an endpoint but an ongoing practice of understanding and walking alongside people.**

# CENTRE FOR APPLIED THEATRE, TAIWAN

## TRUSTING STORIES TO EMERGE: EVALUATION AS A JOURNEY OF TRUST AND CHANGE

Interviewees | Shu-Ya Lai (Founder), Ping-Hsuan Su (Senior Officer)  
Written by | Carmen Lee



The Centre for Applied Theatre, Taiwan (CATT) is a non-profit theatre group dedicated to applied theatre practices. Through community-based workshops and interactive performances — such as Forum Theatre and Theatre-in-Education — they walk alongside participants, opening up possibilities for dialogue and social engagement.

For Shu-Ya and Ping-Hsuan, theatre is more than just a performance; it is an invitation to start conversations, rediscover our ties with others, and ask: *If the world could change, where might we begin?*

They believe theatre’s transformations do not stay on stage but quietly flow into daily life. When working in community empowerment or social communication, what matters most is not attendance numbers or whether a course is “completed,” **but whether someone has opened up — started to ask questions, dared to speak, share, or even talk back.**

While CATT uses questionnaires and interviews, they more often rely on “seeing” and “chatting” to understand change. Instead of forms or scores, they look for details in eyes, tone, distance, or body language. They notice when participants relax, move closer, speak up, bring food to share, or stay behind to help. Such acts are signals of belonging and participation.

In one empowerment workshop for new immigrants, a mother’s child quietly did homework while listening to her speak. At the end, when invited to share, she said: *“I’ve never heard my mom talk about her life in Myanmar before. Today I learned so much.”* At that moment, theatre was not only happening to the mother — it was flowing into her family.

Despite their value, observation and casual chats have limits. Since late 2023, CATT has experimented with the ***Most Significant Change (MSC)*** method, conducting in-depth interviews with teachers in their training programmes. The openness of MSC revealed details often overlooked, such as the insecurities teachers without a performing arts background feel in physical practice. These insights pushed the team to ask: How can courses be redesigned to fit teachers’ real classrooms? And can teachers themselves form supportive networks?

**For CATT, evaluation is not about proving outcomes but about what matters: people, and the shifts from silence to speech, fear to willingness.** Asking an honest question, waiting through silence, or noticing a quiet smile — all can be signs of change.

*“What did your body feel? What did you notice? How was your reaction different from others’? After all this, what was the most significant change for you?”*

These seemingly simple questions embody their belief: everyone has a story, and stories emerge when they are trusted.

# PLEY SCHOOL

## AFTER THE SCHOOL BELL, STORIES CONTINUE

Interviewee | Jhe-Yu Lin (Co-founder, Pley School)

Written by | Carmen Lee



Pley School is a learning design team that builds game-based experiences. From sustainable consumption and migrant workers to cyberbullying, energy, and the environment, they turn complex issues into playable storylines full of choices and tension. This allows students to experience them rather than keep them at a distance.

In Pley School, the team often says: "We hope to nurture a kinder, more inclusive generation." The next question is: how do we evaluate that kind of change?

Most workshops are single, two-hour school visits. Teachers distribute questionnaires afterward, but returns are incomplete, and multiple-choice rarely captures quiet inner shifts.

Jhe-Yu says they rely more on what they observe on-site: “Sometimes we watch the **kids’ eyes**. The bell rings and **they still don’t want to leave; they stay to chat** — that’s a sign of being moved, serving as an evaluation signal.” Another student once **challenged the team** after class: “Why did you design this character like that? I don’t think you should.” These may not look like “evaluation methods,” but they are the feedback Pley School values most — ordinary moments that suggest something stayed.

To see whether the experience plants deeper seeds, Pley School began focus-group follow-ups in 2024, returning to schools to speak with students who joined earlier activities. “Students remembered roles and plots from half a year ago — even a line we said,” says Jhe-Yu. “Those details are a big encouragement.” They also host “homecoming” gatherings for familiar students to share.

Such follow-ups take effort, don’t scale, and **often miss those who felt little impact** — returnees are usually already engaged. They hope to capture a wider range of stories, **including voices still unsure or unmoved, because those voices deserve to be heard.**

Another question has emerged: if we truly want to see long-term change, who holds responsibility for evaluation — teachers, curriculum designers, or the wider teaching community?

For Pley School, evaluation is neither a box to tick nor proof to submit; it is a truthful look at whether each session made a difference. “Like talking with a friend,” Jhe-Yu says. “Not ticking ‘full marks’ on a form, but asking: What stayed with you? Or maybe nothing — and that’s worth saying.”

# ONEBITE SOCIAL

## PLANTING EVALUATION INTO DAILY LIFE: THE ROLLING PRACTICE OF “PROJECT HOUSE”

Interviewee | Sarah Mui (Co-founder, onebite Social)

Written by | Carmen Lee



In Sheung Wan, Hong Kong, a lively corner space called “Project House” has, since July 2023, hosted creative activities, health support, and community dialogues. Co-managed by onebite Social and Caritas Community Centre – Caine Road, it reflects onebite’s view of evaluation: **part of action, not an add-on.**

### **FROM NEIGHBOURS’ FOOTSTEPS TO SIGNALS OF CHANGE**

For onebite, evaluation means **understanding the field, adjusting direction, and accompanying change.** They began not with surveys but with observation

and conversations — noticing who came, who stayed, who left quietly, and why. **Such fragments, cross-checked with participation records**, led to their first guiding question: *How can we become a bridge for isolated neighbours?*

### **FROM STORIES TO LOCAL INDICATORS**

The next step was setting “reducing loneliness among elders” as a goal. **Drawing on international psychological scales DASS-21 but translated into everyday language**, they asked: *“How many friends have you made here in Project House?” “Do you ever ask friends you met here to come join an activity with you?” “Is there anyone from here you’d pick up the phone to call if you needed company or help?”* Indicators like these grew directly from field stories rather than desk work.

### **FINDING SHARED LANGUAGE**

Working with Caritas revealed different evaluation habits. A trial “record book” soon gave way to an online whiteboard, where flexible notes could later be discussed in meetings. This not only kept track of attempts but also built trust across teams.

Later, collaboration with the University of Hong Kong brought in more formal surveys and interviews. Though methods differed, dialogue helped blend perspectives. For Sarah, the value of evaluation lies not in results but in learning and adjustment: **“Falling short isn’t failure but a clue. If we missed something, why, and how can we adjust next time?”**

### **A DAILY HABIT**

In onebite’s practice, evaluation is not extra work but a habit of listening to stories, observing signals, checking data, and reflecting together. Even with limited resources, such routines can grow into context-based, living methods of evaluation.

# TEACH FOR TAIWAN

## SEEING CHANGE THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES: MAKING EVALUATION NOURISHMENT FOR ACTION

Interviewees | Dong-Mao Wu (Director / Operations),  
Shin-Yin Liu (Senior Project Manager / Research & Evaluation)

Written by | Carmen Lee



At Teach for Taiwan (TFT), evaluation is not about writing reports, but asking a deeper question: *Did what we do truly make a difference?*

For Dong-Mao and Shin-Yin, both with backgrounds outside education, evaluation is more than recording results. It is a tool that accompanies action, helping practitioners reflect and walk more steadily.

TFT's Fellowship places teachers in high-need schools for two years. From this setting, their evaluation grows in three directions:

## **FROM CHILDREN’S EYES**

TFT pays attention to students’ social and emotional growth — confidence, relationships, expression. A child asked, *“When the class got noisy, what did my teacher do?”* — such details reveal classroom relationships and complement survey data. Principals and staff also reflect on “before and after,” turning change into lived experience rather than figures.

## **SUPPORTING TEACHERS**

Teachers are not only change-makers but learners. TFT’s framework spans self-awareness, perseverance, trust, collaboration, execution, and strategy. Evaluation combines self-reflection with feedback from peers, supervisors, and partners. Through the *Be the Change programme*, fellows identify challenges, design and test responses with communities, and evaluation is woven through — making action and reflection part of their growth.

## **BEYOND CLASSROOMS**

Change does not stop with one teacher or school. TFT partners with researchers to invite communities and schools to reflect: what has a TFT teacher brought, and what remains? Each year, TFT also tracks alumni and, since 2025, has begun listening to former students now in their teens: *“What made that teacher different?” “What stayed with you?”* With drawings and cards, memories flow naturally.

TFT admits change is never easy to measure or attribute. However, each honest reflection is precious — not for numbers, but to ensure effort is remembered and change is seen. For them, evaluation is care for action, a pause to listen to themselves and others, and perhaps the very starting point of participatory evaluation.

# CLOSING NOTE

## LESS ABOUT PERFECTION, MORE ABOUT WHAT'S REAL

What makes evaluation daunting is often not the practice itself, but the assumptions we carry: that it must be standard, complete, and measurable to “count.” For busy practitioners, this picture feels far away, and rarely fits the realities of the field.

But our conversations revealed something different. Many of you are already evaluating in your own ways: noticing small shifts in behaviour, remembering a child’s comment, recording numbers, or gathering stories. These may seem scattered, yet all spring from the same question: Did what we did make a difference?

That is the spirit of this mini-guide. Participatory evaluation is not about perfect reports or higher benchmarks. It is about tools that sit close to daily work, simple enough to adapt, and able to turn reflection into part of the action itself.

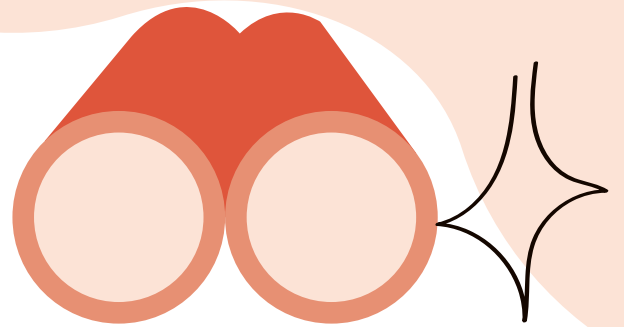
In the next chapter, we share a collection of ideas and one structured method. They are not blueprints but inspirations — experiments from the field that you can shape to your own pace and context.

Our hope is that these ideas invite you to pause in the midst of work: to take one more look, to ask one more question, to notice what is unfolding. May they help you see what has already changed, and imagine where the path ahead might lead.



# CHAPTER 7

# EVALUATION ACTIVITY IDEAS



## MAKING EVALUATION MORE PARTICIPATORY

In different settings of practice, sometimes what we really want to know is simple:

- Did this activity spark participants to think a little more about something?
- Did this period of accompaniment slowly build trust and understanding?
- What does this space mean to the people who come and go?

Yet, in the rush of daily work, few of us have extra time or resources to design elaborate evaluation frameworks or systems.


Meanwhile, traditional surveys and numbers may not be enough to capture the subtle, emerging changes that matter the most.

This chapter offers a collection of simple, participatory evaluation ideas. Some take only five minutes, some can be woven into daily routines, and some are designed for group reflection.

Each activity comes with a hashtag that signals its purpose — whether it is about learning, relationship shifts, or feedback on a space or service. These tags make it easier to find the right tool for what you most want to explore.

Of course, there are endless ways to evaluate. What we share here are just a handful of practices that we have found useful so far. We will keep adding more flexible, easy-to-use methods in our online folder, which you can access anytime through the QR code in these pages.

And if you also have some ideas or approaches, we warmly invite you to reach out to the editorial team. Together, we can make participatory evaluation more imaginative — and more rooted in everyday practice.



**THE CHANGE SOUP:  
WHO PREPARES,  
WHO COOKS?**

#Ingredients Of Change

**THE DOUBLE MIRROR:  
THROUGH YOU,  
I ALSO SEE MYSELF**

#From Surface To Depth

**THE SCALE DIALOGUE**

#Shifts In Relationships

**THE LIFE CLOCK**

#Shifting Views

**THE CHANGE BUS:  
OUR ROLES ON THE  
ROAD OF CHANGE**

#Our Journey Of Change

**OUR LIVING  
SPACE MAP**

#Mapping Our Days

**LEAVING A TAIL:  
EXTENDING THE IMPACT  
OF ONE-OFF EVENTS**

#What Happened After

**THE TIME SANDBOX**


#Stories Across Time

**15-MINUTE  
EVALUATION IDEAS**

#What Participants Took Away

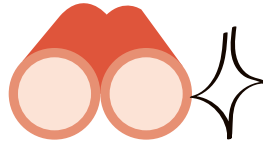
**EVALUATION IN  
THE LAST 5 MINUTES**

#Better Some Than Nothing



Evaluation activities' templates and more ideas are available in our shared folder:





**#INGREDIENTSOFCHANGE**

# **THE CHANGE SOUP**

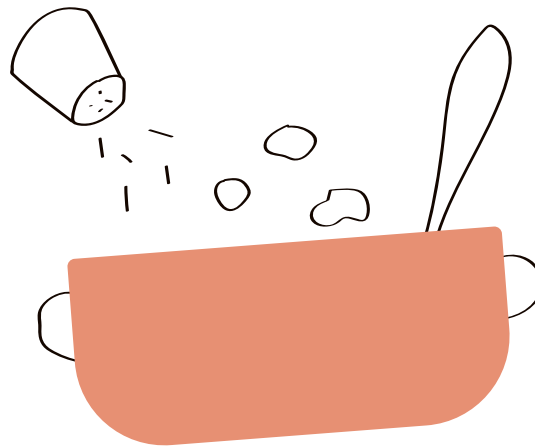
## **WHO PREPARES, WHO COOKS?**

To revisit what happened in the process of change: who contributed, what emotions or lessons emerged.

To make contributions visible, strengthen trust, and prepare the ground for future collaboration.

● Duration 60-90 min

● Group Size Up to 20  
(if more, divide into smaller groups)



### **WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES**

When a programme or action has just finished and the group needs to reflect together on roles, contributions, and changes.

After a public event to bring stakeholders (e.g. volunteers, partners, donors) together to recognise contributions and build shared understanding.

## HOW IT WORKS

### STEP 1

Show the group the soup pot poster. Invite them to imagine this project or action as making a pot of soup together, with each person adding “ingredients” through their actions, support, or ideas.

### STEP 2

Ask: “If this change was a soup, what kind of soup would it be? What difference did it bring?” Participants can share aloud, in pairs, or on sticky notes to add to the pot.

### STEP 3

Move to roles: “Who was part of making this soup?” Encourage people to think of visible and invisible roles — from those on the frontline, to those creating conditions or offering quiet support behind the scenes. Write each role on a sticky note and place it around the pot.

### STEP 4

Explore connections: “What worked well this time? What could be improved for the next soup (next project / action)?” Guiding questions can include: Whose voices were heard? Who joined later? Who was active but unseen? Who was key but overlooked?

### STEP 5

Wrap up by asking: “Name one insight or learning you have taken away from this experience?” Invite everyone to share briefly, and thank them for their reflections and contributions.

## VARIATIONS

### ● SHORTENED VERSION

Do only the “ingredients” step, and simplify the role discussion with a few guiding questions.

### ● EXTENDING INTO NEXT STEPS

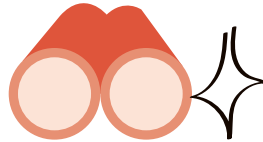
Add “How would you cook the next pot of soup?” and let small groups discuss possible future projects / actions.

### ● FOR PARTICIPANTS LESS COMFORTABLE WITH TEXT

Provide picture-based ingredient stickers or character cards as aids.

### ● RECORDING OPTIONS

Assign someone to capture reflections (sticky notes, photos, or recordings with consent).



#FROMSURFACETODEPTH

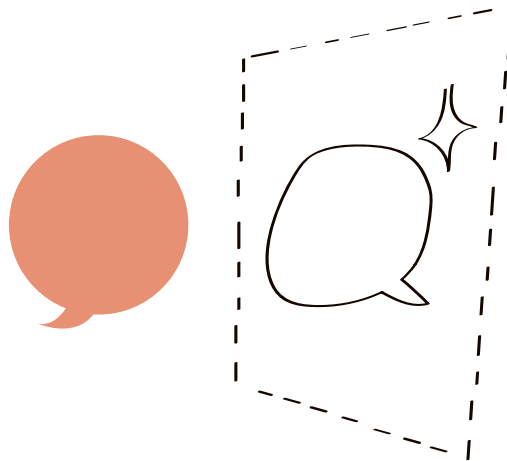
# THE DOUBLE MIRROR

## THROUGH YOU, I ALSO SEE MYSELF

To help participants review, organise, and express what they have learned or discovered – first by speaking to an imagined “other,” then by speaking to themselves.

● Duration 20 min

● Group Size 8 or more



### WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES

At the end of a workshop or camp, when participants need to consolidate learning and reflect on their experience.

In applied theatre, service learning, or other empowerment processes, especially during the reflection stage.

When you want participants to move quickly from outward sharing to inner reflection.

Best suited for activities that value dialogue and lived experience over data.

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1. PAIRING UP

Half the group forms an inner circle facing outward. The other half forms an outer circle, standing face-to-face with the inner circle.

Each pair consists of A (inside) and B (outside). If the total number of participants is odd, facilitators can join in.

### 2. SPEAKING TO AN OUTSIDER

Prompt: *“What have you experienced and learned these days? If you had to explain it to a friend who wasn’t here, what would you say?”*

- Round 1: A speaks as themselves for 3 minutes, B listens silently.
- Rotate the outer circle clockwise to form new pairs.
- Round 2: Switch roles.

### 3. SPEAKING TO YOUR PAST SELF

Prompt: *“What have you discovered? If you could talk to yourself three days ago, what would you say – and why?”*

- Same format: two rounds of 3 minutes each, rotate the outer circle and switch roles in between.

### 4. REFLECTION

Gather in a big circle. Invite volunteers to share one phrase or sentence that struck them most.

Optionally, participants can write their chosen phrase on sticky notes and post them on the wall.

## VARIATIONS

#### ● ADJUST ROLES DEPENDING ON THE DEPTH OF REFLECTION YOU SEEK:

- Talking to a friend = more outward, helps organise and review.
- Talking to your past self = more inward, prompts deeper reflection.

#### ● SHORTENED VERSION

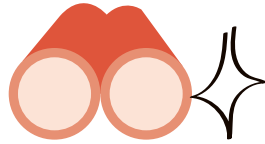
Skip rotation, just do one round of paired sharing.

#### ● ADAPT ROLE PROMPTS FOR CHILDREN/TEENS:

E.g., *“If you were telling your parents what happened today...”* or *“How would you explain your experience to a close friend?”*

#### ● WRITTEN OPTION

Ask participants to write short notes instead of speaking, e.g., *“What would I tell myself three days ago?”* or *“What message would I write to my future self as a reminder of today’s insight?”*

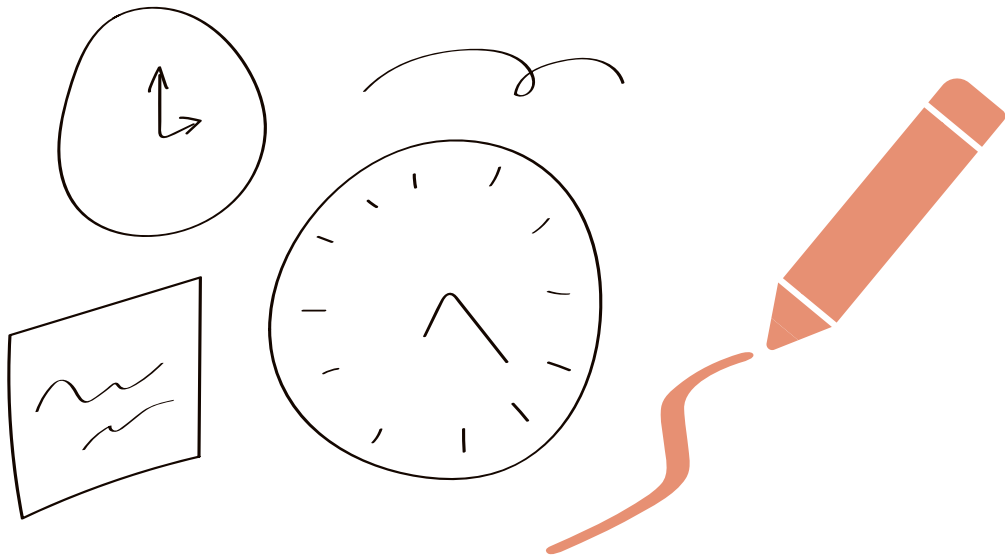


## #SHIFTINGVIEWS

# THE LIFE CLOCK

To see if the activity helps loosen participants' stereotypes about an issue.  
To assess whether an experience (e.g. a board game) helps participants connect the issue to their own lives and feel closer to those affected.

- Duration 10 min at the start 10 min at the end
- Group Size Up to 40



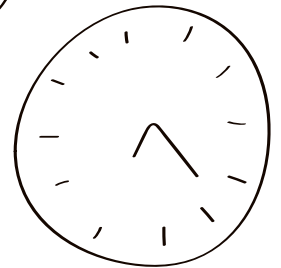
### WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES

For educational activities that challenge stereotypes and labels – for example, games or drama activities about homelessness, migrant workers, or other groups whose lives are often misunderstood.

## HOW IT WORKS

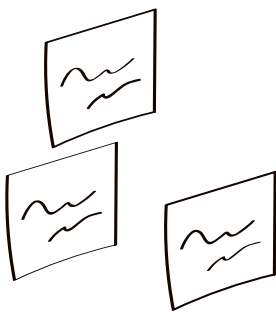
### BEFORE THE ACTIVITY (WARM-UP + BASELINE)

- 1. Warm-up:** Each participant draws their **own** daily “life clock” (what they usually do across 24 hours).
- 2. Baseline (pre):** Ask them to imagine someone from the focus group as a friend. **Before** the main activity, draw **that person’s** 24-hour life clock (activities, places, people, interactions).



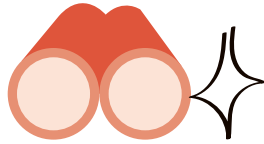
### AFTER THE ACTIVITY (POST-TEST):

1. Revisit the second clock: Using a different colour, add/adjust what they now think this friend’s day might look like. Mark surprises, corrections, or questions.
2. Small-group share: *“Compare ‘before vs. after’ on the second clock. What shifted? What remains unclear? What new questions do you have?”*



## VARIATIONS

- For children or elders less comfortable with writing, invite oral sharing or dictation while the facilitator sketches.
- Instead of a clock, if daily life is better shown through space, invite participants to draw a simple floor plan of the person’s room.
- If time is short, replace the clocks with single words: before the activity, write down the first word that comes to mind about the issue; afterward, ask: *“What has changed in your impression?”*

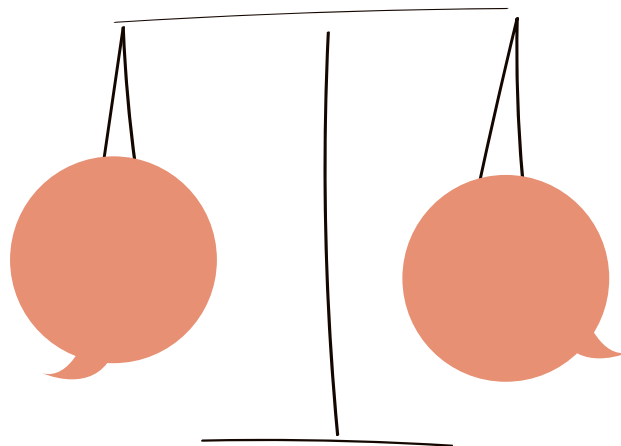


#SHIFTSINRELATIONSHIPS

# THE SCALE DIALOGUE

Through concrete dialogue and embodied expression, participants explore whether their relationships with the people served have shifted – moving from fixed roles toward more authentic encounters.

- Duration 60 - 75 min
- Group Size 12 - 16



## WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES

After volunteer projects or social-action programmes to explore shifts in how participants see their relationships with the people they connected.

After cross-identity activities (e.g. residents, students, volunteers) where interaction is central.

After informal, community-based actions (such as sharing food in public spaces) to reflect on what participants learned and how they related to others.

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1. RECALL A MOMENT OF DIALOGUE

Prompt: *“Each of us has, at some point, been defined, helped, or misunderstood. Today we are not here to judge, but to see if our relationships have shifted. Recall one interaction from today (a brief exchange or a deeper talk). What was said? How close or distant did you feel?”*

Give each person a sheet with two speech bubbles. Ask them to write:

- One sentence they said.
- One sentence the other person said (or their reaction, if silent).

### 2. SHOW THE SCALE WITH YOUR BODY

Prompt: *“If this interaction were a balance scale, what would it look like?”*

Participants use their arms to show:

- Arms level = equal relationship, mutual response.
- One arm higher = imbalance of power.
- Arms close but tilted = closeness with some inequality.
- Any other posture that expresses the felt balance.

### 3. SMALL-GROUP SHARING

In groups of 3–4, participants share their dialogue notes and scale gestures. Everyone listens first, without interruption, then discusses.

### 4. DISCUSSING CHANGE

Each group receives question cards:

- What role did you place yourself in at the start?
- Did the relationship shift during the interaction?
- What supported mutual understanding, and what kept you in fixed roles?

### 5. INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Give each person a pen and paper. Ask them to find a quiet spot and respond to the following questions:

- *“What was the biggest reminder this interaction gave me?”*
- *“What assumptions about roles might I still hold?”*
- *“What insights from today could guide my next action?”*

Remind the participants that they may write anonymously. Responses will be kept confidential and used only to inform future programme design. In long-term projects, these records can help track how relationships evolve.

## VARIATIONS

#### ● SHORTENED VERSION

Skip the written dialogue. Ask participants to show, with their arms, the balance they felt in the activity overall, then share one sentence of reflection.

#### ● FOR YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS

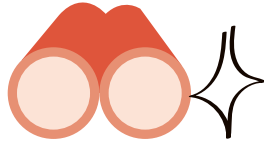
Use role cards or images to place themselves and the other person on either side of a visual scale.

#### ● MULTIPLE-SERVICE VERSION

In long-term programmes, ask participants to record one “most memorable” interaction and one “biggest change” interaction, and compare the two balance gestures.

#### ● STORY WALL

Collect dialogue cards and photos of balance gestures (with consent) to create a shared learning wall.



**#OURJOURNEYOFCHANGE**

# **THE CHANGE BUS**

## **OUR ROLES ON THE ROAD OF CHANGE**

Using the metaphor of a bus journey, participants reflect on their roles, contributions, challenges, and support during the collective process.

The activity helps identify team needs and potential, and encourages commitment for the next stage.

● Duration 60 - 90 min

● Group Size 12 - 20



### **WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES**

After a group challenge or collective action to review the journey and teamwork.

For projects that spanned days and required both preparation and improvisation.

To help participants see their roles and influence in the group.

When the group needs to reflect on cooperation, complementary roles, and future directions.

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1. CHOOSING YOUR ROLE

Provide role cards (e.g. driver, navigator, passenger, lookout, mechanic, cheerleader). Include neutral roles like “the lost one,” “the observer,” “the reminder,” “the absent-minded.” Blank cards allow new roles.

1. Participants pick a card that represents their role in the journey (or a role they shifted into).
2. Encourage them to add a line, gesture, or prop to embody it.
3. Each person shares: Why this role? What actions or experiences show this? What did you bring to the group?

Tip: Emphasise that all roles matter — avoid a “main vs. minor character” hierarchy.

### 2. POSITIONING ON THE BUS

Mark a “direction of travel” on the wall. Invite participants to place themselves in the bus space — driver’s seat, back row, window side, edge, etc.

- Observe the overall distribution; photos can be taken for records.
- Prompts: *Why this spot? What’s your relation to nearby roles? What challenges or support did you experience here?*
- Reflect as a group: *Which roles are missing? Which ones need more support or resources?*

### 3. REVISITING A MOMENT

Choose one challenging moment from the shared journey. Invite participants to recall it from their chosen role.

Example: *“Remember the midpoint of the project, when many couldn’t attend because of COVID and funding was suddenly cut in half? Who suggested pausing to re-think? What was each role doing then?”*

Through role re-enactment and discussion, unpack cooperation, tensions, and mutual support.

### 4. MOVING TO THE NEXT STOP

On the wall, post a sheet marked “Next Destination.” Invite participants to step out of their roles and consider: *If we set off again, what new role would I try?* Pick a new role card, take a new seat.

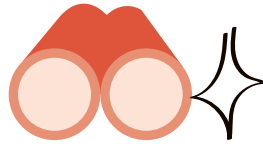
Fill in a “commitment card”:

- *My next challenge is...*
- *Where will I live out this role?*

Cards can be posted on the wall or kept for future check-ins.

## VARIATIONS

- During discussion, invite participants to add drawings, collage, or stickers around the bus to capture memorable moments — whether challenges faced or highlights celebrated.
- If space is limited, sketch a bus on large paper or a whiteboard, marking zones such as driver’s seat, passenger seats, and luggage area.
- For recording, draw a large “bus route map” with key milestones. As discussion unfolds, note responses on sticky notes and place them along the route to visualise the shared journey and make later review easier.



## #MAPPINGOURDAYS

# OUR LIVING SPACE MAP

Invite users to become “little observers” of the space. With strings, pins, stickers, and memories, participants co-create a map of daily movements and feelings. This makes visible how the space is really used, and generates ideas for improvement.

● Duration 60 min

● Group Size Up to 20.  
(if more, divide into smaller groups)



### WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES

When a hub or community space has been running for a while and you want to understand how people actually use it.

At mid-point or end of a project to see how the space has supported diverse users (children, parents, shop owners, etc.).

Before redesigning or upgrading a space, to take stock of usage patterns and emotional connections.

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1. DRAW THE SPACE

On a large board or sheet, sketch the floor plan of the hub with areas labeled.

Ask participants *why they come and what they do in each zone*. Mark each activity with a pin on the map.

### 2. TRACE MOVEMENT AND EMOTIONS

Give each person a piece of string scaled to 24 hours.

Ask them to wrap it around the activity pins in sequence, looping more times where they spend longer.

Next, invite them to add stickers or colour cards beside each area to show feelings (joy, calm, unease, frustration, etc.).

### 3. REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Together, observe the overlapping and under-used areas. In small groups, discuss:

- *Which zones are crowded, which are quiet?*
- *What's inconvenient? What functions could be added?*
- *Does this space meet your reasons for coming?*

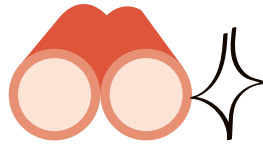
Provide simple "suggestion cards" for participants to note needs and ideas.

### 4. BEFORE/AFTER TRACKING

Keep maps (or photos) to compare over time and see shifts in patterns.

## VARIATIONS

- If string is hard to use, dot stickers can represent time spent.
- Invite participants to sketch their "ideal space" and what would make it possible.
- If participants are less comfortable writing, staff can use three colours of sticky notes to quickly record: (1) how the space was used, (2) feelings, (3) needs/suggestions – and place these back on the map.
- Try role-based mapping: children, parents, shop owners each map separately, then compare.
- Extend to other contexts, e.g.:
  - Shared offices: how do different teams use the space?
  - Public areas: how do women and men experience them differently?
  - Schools: how do students use and feel about different spaces?
  - Community facilities: how do age or class affect patterns of use?



**#STORIESACROSSTIME**

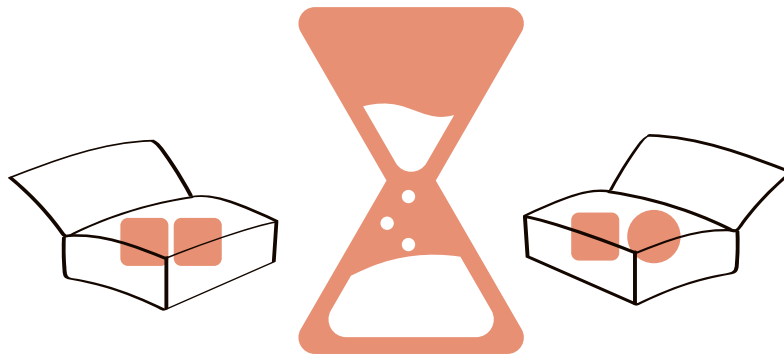
# THE TIME SANDBOX

To capture concrete changes: how the programme influenced participants' growth, values, or actions.

To understand how change unfolded, using objects and stories to prompt reflection.

● Duration 60-90 min

● Group Size Up to 20.



## WHEN TO USE - SOME EXAMPLES

To explore how people who once joined a centre or programme look back on their experience, and what impact it has had on their lives since.

To reflect with a group who once shared a common space (e.g. classmates, colleagues, partners) on how that environment shaped them.

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1. REBUILDING MEMORIES

Provide blocks (or tiles/mahjong pieces) and two clear boxes: Box A = “the centre as remembered,” Box B = “who I am now.”

Play familiar sounds (music, ambient noise) to spark memory. Invite participants to reconstruct Box A with blocks, showing the old space, people, and activities.

In small groups, encourage participants to narrate and fill in one another’s memories, making the past tangible.

### 2. TRANSFORMING IMPRESSIONS

Ask each person to choose 1–3 blocks from Box A that had the deepest impact, and move them into Box B. Share in turn:

- *What did this block represent back then?*
- *What story or feeling was tied to it?*
- *How did this experience shape who you are today? What ability, value, or attitude “grew” from it?*
- Participants may decorate blocks with stickers, drawings, or labels to enrich the symbolism.

### 3. RETURNING INFLUENCE

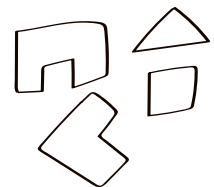
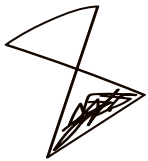
Invite participants to pick one block from Box B and place it back into Box A.

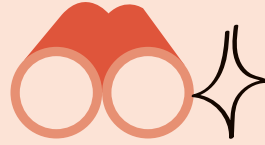
This act symbolises how what they gained — a strength, value, or insight — has been carried forward into life and community.

Each person explains the meaning and gives a concrete example of how they put it into action or shared it with others.

## VARIATIONS

- Focus questions on a theme (e.g. confidence, friendship, dreams).
- Add photos, objects, music, or scents from the old setting to trigger memories and ease recall.
- Recording option: Use sticky notes during sharing. Note three things per person: 1) the memory or story; 2) the present meaning; 3) how it influences current action. Helpers can assist with note-taking if needed.





**#TRACESTHATREMAIN**

# **AFTER THE MOMENT**

## **SIMPLE IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION**

Compared with long-term engagement, the impact of one-off events is often harder to observe or prove. Yet, some experiences—perhaps just once—can stay unforgettable, planting seeds of change at a turning point. It might be a powerful theatre piece, a moving learning journey, a Human Library or an exhibition that shifts perspectives.

Evaluating such impact is never easy: participants may be hard to reach afterwards, and changes usually result from many factors rather than a single event. **Even so, we believe that if we intentionally leave a trace at the end of an event, we may catch a glimpse of continuing ripples later.** These traces not only help us understand change, but also invite us to ask: *for participants, what stayed from that day, and what did not?* **Some responses surface only much later, in unexpected moments.**

Here are some simple, low-resource methods to capture those “afterwards moments,” especially useful for practitioners in global citizenship education, social communication, and cultural participation.

## **1. A LETTER TO MY EARLIER SELF**

At the closing, invite participants to write a letter to “themselves before the event.” It may include insights, reminders, or hopes for the future. Collect the letters with contact details (email, messenger, or stamped envelope). Send the letters back to them three weeks later, together with a note like: *“As you read this now, what feels different? If you’d like, we’d love to hear your reply.”*

Include your contact so that they know how to write back.

## **2. TRACKING A “SMALL ACTION SIGN”**

At the end of the activity, ask each participant to choose one small sign of action they want to carry forward—perhaps paying attention to something, talking with someone, or an attitude reminder. Ask them to write it on a card and keep it. Collect their contacts, then check in two to three weeks later: *“How has this sign showed up in your days? In what moments?”*

## **3. “FUTURE ME” ROLE CARDS**

This is useful for programmes with ongoing contact (schools, groups). Prepare cards like “the me who dares to speak,” “the me who cares about community,” or “the me who listens more.” At the end, each chooses a card and writes a note to this “future me.” A month later, ask: *“How close are you now to that version of yourself? What has happened?”*

## **4. MEMORY MAP / CHANGE TRACING MAP**

This works well for intensive programmes like training camps or volunteering trips. Six months after the event, gather participants to draw images to represent the learning journey after the activity—ripples, paths, rivers, curves—showing key shifts since the activity (in understanding, feelings, beliefs, or actions). Add words and discussion.

## 5. ONE PHOTO, ONE NOTE

This is great for programmes with continued contact or a storytelling focus. Half a month to a month after the event, invite participants to send one photo that reminds them of the event, plus a short note or voice message on why. This visual way is friendly for those less comfortable with writing.

## 6. AUDIO MAILBOX

Set up a voice-feedback channel (through messenger, a free audio platform, or a simple voicemail line) so participants can leave a quick message anytime: *"This event made me start to think/do..."* Writing is not required, lowering barriers.

## 7. STORY HARVEST: WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS?

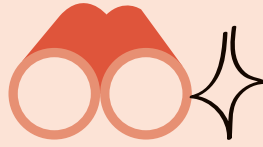
Two to three months after the event, invite willing participants to anonymously share: *"Has anything recently reminded you of that event?"* Collect through cards, voice messages, or social media. Schools can use this in revisit interviews, or projects in looser contact with communities can use it to catch "echoes" and establish new links.

## 8. A SMALL ACTION MAP

One to two months after the event, ask participants to note: *"I did one small thing connected to that event."* Mark a place and a description to form an "impact map." Collecting these mini-actions helps analyse how design, learning, and change may be connected.

## TIPS

- You don't need to follow up every event—**choose those you especially want to understand in depth.**
- **Each story matters—even a single one.** It does not have to represent everyone.



## #TODAYTAKEAWAYS

# 15-MINUTE EVALUATION IDEAS

### INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

#### ● BEFORE & AFTER ENVELOPE

At the start, invite participants to write one question about today's theme and seal it in an envelope. At the end, ask them to open it and answer: *"How would I respond now?"* Collecting the envelopes can also help compare the "before" and "after."

#### ● SUITCASE/BACKPACK WORKSHEET

Give everyone a worksheet with a suitcase/backpack image and invite participants to ask: *"What do I want to pack and take home from today?"* Each person then draws and writes down their reflections.

#### ● FEELINGS WORD CARDS

Provide a card with a list of feeling words. Ask everyone to circle up to three that best describe today and add one short note. This helps capture emotional impact.

#### ● "AFTER TODAY, I MIGHT..."

Each participant writes on a card one thing they might do in the future.

#### ● ANSWERING THE KEY QUESTION

Prepare a key question or goal before the event. At the end, ask participants to respond on a card: *"After today, my view on this is..."*

#### ● "TO FUTURE PARTICIPANTS, I WOULD SAY..."

At the closing, each person writes a short message to those who will join in the future. These can both inform organisers and inspire new participants when shared next time.

#### ● THREE STICKY NOTES

Each person writes three notes: *"Today I learned..."* / *"Today I changed..."* / *"One suggestion I have..."* Post these notes on a wall, then, collect and group them afterwards.

#### ● I SAW / I LEARNED / I STILL WONDER

Use a worksheet with three boxes. Invite participants to write down their reflections. Tip: Clear structure makes it easy to analyse and quote.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

### ● THE MOMENT THAT STOOD OUT

Form groups of 4–6. Each person writes and shares one sentence: *“A moment today that made me... [surprised, thoughtful, moved...] was when...”* to encourage both reflection and sharing.

### ● FISHBONE DIAGRAM

Prepare an A3-size worksheet with a fishbone, with the main theme as the backbone. On the bones, there will be sections for *“Helpful factors”* / *“Sticking points”* / *“Still curious about...”* Each group discusses and puts their thoughts on sticky notes, then places them onto the worksheet. This allows for easier visualisation and sorting.

### ● OUR SHARED TAKEAWAY

In trios, talk for 3 minutes, then write one joint sentence: *“Our group feels the most important takeaway today is...”* Then, each group share their sentence with the big group.

### ● THREE-CIRCLE WHEEL

Each group draws three circles on a piece of poster paper: *What I learned* / *What blocked me* / *My suggestions*. Share within the group, then in plenary, each group reports one circle of their choice. Posters can be collected for deeper analysis later.

## BIG GROUP ACTIVITIES (UP TO 40 PEOPLE)

### ● CHANGE MAP

Draw a symbolic map (like a “journey of the heart” or “learning hill”). Participants mark their paths or stations and add one short note.

### ● ONE SENTENCE TO TAKE HOME

Everyone writes one sentence / reminder / idea they want to take away the most. Post them on a wall as a closing exhibit.

### ● CURIOSITY BOX

Prepare a “Curiosity Box” labelled *“I still wonder...”* Participants write down questions or things they want to know more about. This can be used for follow-up or future sessions.

### ● BODY MAP

Provide a large poster with a human outline. Participants draw where today’s learning or feelings “live” (e.g., head, heart, hands) with small notes.

### ● EMOJI WALL

On a large poster, each person draws an emoji to represent how they feel about the activity. Then count them together and discuss what’s behind the patterns.

#BETTERSOMETHANNONE

# AFTER THE MOMENT



## WHAT QUICK EVALUATIONS CAN WE DO?

The activity is going so well, but suddenly you look up—only five minutes left! No time for surveys, not enough time for a full discussion. Does that mean leaving with nothing? Not necessarily. Even if it's not ideal, you can still do something. The following ultra-simple methods take just a few minutes and can still capture participants' feelings, reflections, and small shifts. They are especially useful in workshops, experiential activities, or school classes where time often runs out.

### ● CAPTURE ONE-LINERS (SIMPLE AND DIRECT)

When there's only time for a sentence:

- **Written:** use slips of paper, a sticky-note wall, or a big poster. Prompts might include:

*"What do you remember the most—words, images, or feelings?"*

*"What, even if just a little, has changed for you today?"*

*"Which moment today made you think a bit more?"*

*"After today's activity, what's one thing that you'd like to share with someone else?"*

- **Oral** (if the group is small): go round once—*"Say one sentence about how you feel right now."*

### ● VOTE & MOVE (INTERACTIVE OPTIONS)

- **Sticker voting:** Post 3–5 statements about key parts of the activity (plus an "Other" option). Participants place dot stickers or marks the part that impacted you the most. If many choose "Other," quickly ask why.
- **Two-sticker voting:** Each person uses two stickers—one for what worked best, one for what could have been improved.
- **Body voting:** Read out statements (e.g. *"Today's activity was helpful for me"*). Participants move to different corners to show their agreement level.

## ● CHOOSE VISUALS & OBJECTS (FUN AND EYE-CATCHING)

- Place stickers or marks on a large image (e.g. feeling map, emotion spectrum, learning hill).
- Use a pre-drawn “route map” and invite people to place dot stickers or mark with a pen for their “map of change.”
- Offer metaphor images (magnifying glass, flame, question mark, gear). Participants choose one to represent their experience today.
- Use sticky notes as “mirrors”: ask “*What did today’s activity reflect back to you?*” Post them near the exit.

## ● WRITE & SHARE QUICKLY (GOOD FOR CLOSING)

- **Message to the next participant:** Write one sentence to future participants.
- **Shared notebooks:** Circulate notebooks for one-minute reflections. These can be reused, building a shared record over time.
- **Mini survey sheets:** Provide a worksheet with 4–6 quick questions. Ask each person to answer just one, such as:

*“What struck you most today? Why?”*

*“After today, I might...”*

*“What is one important change this activity gave you?”*

*“What did you enjoy most?”*

*“What could be improved?”*

## ● GATHER SUGGESTIONS

- **Two sticky notes in different colours:** “*I liked...*” / “*I wish...*” Post them on separate areas of a wall.
- **One magic question:** “*If we run this again, what would you add or remove?*”
- **Quick-answer wall:** Post three questions. Each person chooses one to answer:

*“What was your takeaway today?”*

*“What felt stuck for you?”*

*“If you could change one thing, what would it be?”*

## ● IF TIME’S ALMOST UP (LAST RESORT)

- **Oral round:** Each person says one short line (e.g. “*A word for today’s activity*”). The facilitator can jot them down or record on a phone. Quick and done.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **A STEP**

### **DEEPER INTO**

## **QUALITATIVE TOOLS**

### **MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC)**



## A SYSTEMATIC WAY TO CAPTURE QUALITATIVE CHANGE THROUGH STORIES

When feedback forms feel too shallow to capture the essence of change, when you want to understand more deeply what meaningful shifts a project has brought to participants, or simply when you want to listen to your audiences' voices... you might try *Most Significant Change* (MSC).

MSC is a participatory, story-based qualitative evaluation method. It invites participants to share "the most significant change" for them, how it happened, and why it mattered. These stories may arise from a powerful experience, an inner shift, or a moment of being seen. MSC provides a clear process to collect, organise, and discuss these change stories, helping us deepen our understanding of transformation.

This method is especially suited to complex, diverse, and hard-to-quantify changes—particularly in areas like community empowerment or shifts in values. MSC can be used both for **Evaluation (E)** and as an ongoing **Monitoring (M)** tool.

The core spirit of MSC is:

- **Bottom-up:** understanding and interpretation from the ground up.
- **Emergent:** making visible unexpected changes.
- **Dialogue-based:** generating learning and conversation through stories.

MSC does not use fixed questionnaires, nor does it try to quantify feelings. Instead, it relies on attentive listening and dialogue to help us see what truly counts as meaningful change.

## HOW MSC WORKS: TEN STEPS IN BRIEF

MSC is a step-by-step process—from clarifying purpose to collective discussion and feedback. Each step helps us understand change more deeply.

(Steps 4–6 are the core; the others can be adapted as needed.)

- 1. Preparation:** Clarify why you are using MSC. What is the purpose? What is the evaluation focus? Who will be involved? These early reflections shape the overall direction.
- 2. Define “Domains of Change”:** Decide which aspects of change to focus on—beliefs, skills, daily life, relationships, health, or others.
- 3. Define the Reporting Period:** Which time-frame should participants reflect on? A quarter, half a year, an entire project, or the period after a specific activity?
- 4. Collect Change Stories:** Through interviews, group discussions, or self-written notes, invite participants to share:
  - ① *Looking back (over a certain period/ experience), what do you see as your most significant change?*
  - ② *How and why did this change happen?*
  - ③ *Why was this change important to you?*
- 5. Story Selection:** A small group (e.g. staff, participants, partners) reviews stories. Discuss: *Which story feels most significant, and why?* Record reasons and, if needed, differing views.
- 6. Feedback:** Share the selected stories and group reflections with participants, so they know their stories were valued and their contribution mattered.
- 7. Verification:** Where needed, follow up to understand more of the background and context of certain stories, to confirm authenticity and gain a fuller picture of change.
- 8. Quantification:** If useful, extract data from the stories—such as types of change, recurring themes, or frequency of mentions—to support the analysis of emerging trends.
- 9. Further Story Analysis:** Compare stories for patterns or key factors that shaped change. This can deepen learning and guide future planning.
- 10. Refining the MSC System:** Review and adjust the MSC process to make it smoother and more relevant next time.

The process can be long or short, simplified or expanded. What matters most is giving participants the microphone, so they tell their experiences in their own words. **Every story matters. Read them together, as they not only guide learning and adjustment but also build a shared ‘knowledge of change’ for the team or organisation.**

## MORE THAN STORIES: THE POWER OF MSC

Every step of MSC reminds us:

change is not only about numbers, but about what happens between people.

The focus of MSC is not on choosing the best story, but on asking:

- Who do we invite to share their stories?
- How do we listen to and make sense of them?
- How can these stories guide our reflection and shape our next steps?

MSC is not a one-way collection, but a process of *co-constructing the meaning of change*.

This journey helps us not only review results, but move forward more steadily and in closer touch with people and reality. Each story may give a different answer, yet together they point towards what we care about most.

## SOME TIPS FOR STARTING MSC

Curious to try MSC? Here are a few small reminders from experience:

### 1. Start small

You don't need to begin with the full cycle. Try collecting 4–5 participants' stories and pairing them with team reading and discussion.

### 2. Don't rush to compare stories

Story selection is not a competition. It is about asking "*Why did this story move us?*"—which opens up understanding and value clarification.

### 3. Use interviewers who know the context

Participants are more willing to speak, and the stories are often more authentic.

### 4. Bring in a facilitator familiar with the team yet neutral

If the team is not used to open discussion, a trusted but neutral facilitator can be a big help in the story selection stage.

### 5. Co-design the process with your team

MSC takes trust and time. Don't rush, and don't carry it alone. Co-creating the process with your team keeps it grounded and sustainable.

### 6. Don't forget to "close the loop"

Step 6—feedback—is crucial. Letting participants know their stories were seen and truly influenced the team is often the most moving part of MSC.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MSC

### Q: Can we just collect stories without selecting them?

Choosing one story among many valuable ones can feel difficult. Yet, it is precisely this choice that prompts people to reflect more deeply: *Why does this story matter most to me?* The selection process sparks core conversations and helps stakeholders clarify perspectives and values.

**Tip:** If your team is not used to open discussion or joint decision-making, start small with a familiar group, or invite a neutral facilitator. This reduces power imbalances and makes discussion safer and smoother.

### Q: When is MSC not suitable? Some reminders:

- When large amounts of quantitative data are required.
- When you need to prove causal links between actions and change.  
(MSC can reveal conditions that support change, but not causation.)
- When operating in highly pressurised, accountability-driven contexts.

MSC is not a magic solution but a flexible way to capture qualitative change. If your existing quantitative methods struggle to reflect the transformations in a community, MSC is worth trying as a complementary approach.

### Q: Can MSC stories be used for publicity?

It's tempting to use powerful stories for fundraising or communication, **but MSC stories are meant for learning, not promotion.** They may touch on vulnerable experiences or include critique. If participants expect public use, they may hold back and only say what "sounds good."

MSC is a trust-building process. If stories are suddenly repurposed for publicity, it risks undermining honesty and safety.

**If you need stories for external use, arrange separate interviews,** explain the purpose clearly, and obtain consent. After completing an MSC cycle, you may also re-contact participants, seek permission, and even do a follow-up interview to enrich the story.

**Whatever the purpose, the key is to respect informed consent and ensure participants feel safe to share openly.**

# CHAPTER 9

## GENTLE REMINDERS

## FOR YOUR

## EVALUATION

## JOURNEY



**We spend time making sense together because we believe the people and efforts before us deserve to be seen.**

**In evaluation, we are not standing aside to observe others, but learning to notice: we are part of the change, and part of what makes change possible for each other.**

If you've read this far, congratulations! You've already completed a journey of exploration into participatory evaluation. From designing more thoughtful questions, to learning the warmth of good interviewing, to collecting Most Significant Change (MSC) stories—each page has been an invitation to step closer to real understanding, and to the people in front of us.

Along the way, we have crossed many milestones: discovering that open-ended questions bring richer responses than closed ones; learning that silence in an interview is a precious gift; exploring creative tools that make evaluation playful and open rather than rigid; and with MSC, realising that stories are not just data but bridges of connection. Through these practices, teams gain the chance to ask: *What is truly the most important change?*

We've seen that evaluation is not only about proving results—it is also about deepening understanding. Like a journey outward, it can open new perspectives and unexpected discoveries.

If you are ready to start your own journey but are not sure how, here are some invitations and reminders:

## 1. YOU'VE ALREADY STARTED

- **Evaluation can take many forms:** It doesn't have to be a formal survey or report. A quick note, a casual chat with a participant, even a doodle on a feedback sheet—all of these can be the beginning of participatory evaluation.
- **Notice everyday signals:** *"Everyone smiled after this session."* *"That quiet member spoke up today."* These observations are valuable data. Recording small details often reflects real change more than numbers.
- **Use existing moments:** Team meetings, debriefs, even mealtime chats can all be opportunities for feedback. Evaluation can live in everyday interaction, not only in extra sessions.
- **Trust your intuition:** As someone deeply engaged, your sense of "something is shifting" is valuable—it may be the first sign of change worth exploring.

## 2. EVERY STEP COUNTS: START SMALL

- **A short three-person chat after an activity:** Spend 15 minutes asking, *“What stood out for you today?”* and record the feedback.
- **A weekly “observation map”:** In staff meetings, invite each person to jot one observation. Collect them on a big sheet.
- **A “most meaningful moment” round:** At the end of a month or project, ask your teammates or key project participants to share one moment that mattered most to them.
- **A mini-MSD:** Collect just 3–5 stories, read them together, and notice what perspectives emerge.

Remember: evaluation does not have to be “all at once” or “perfect.” Each small attempt is valuable learning, and respect the rhythm and energy of your work.

## 3. EVALUATION IS NOT YOUR ENEMY: A SHIFT IN MINDSET

- From *“I must prove results”* to *“I want to understand what happened.”* Seeing evaluation as exploration helps ease the pressure.
- From *“collecting data”* to *“keeping something we can look back on.”* Evaluation is for our future selves too.
- From *“record everything”* to *“note what touched me most.”* Sometimes quality matters more than quantity.
- From *“I might use this data later”* to *“this data is already nourishing me.”* Even without a report, the voices you collect are shaping your understanding.

## 4. CARING FOR YOURSELF WHEN IT FEELS TOUGH

- **When you feel overwhelmed:** Adjust the scope or pace, or share the load with others on your team. Evaluation should support, not drain you.
- **When facing negative feedback:** Treat it as a learning gift, not personal failure. Criticism often points to key opportunities for growth.
- **When results fall short:** Explore *why* rather than blaming yourself. “Disappointing” results often reveal the real complexity of change.
- **When feeling alone:** Seek allies or join a community of practice. Sharing struggles often reveals others have walked the same path—and solidarity sparks new possibilities.

## 5. A SMALL COMPASS: QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

Each time you evaluate, ask yourself three things:

- **What is worth keeping?** Among all the information gathered, which parts truly move you and reflect the essence of what you are doing?
- **Whose voices are missing?** Have some groups or perspectives been left out?
- **What would I want my future self to remember?** Looking back one day, what message would help you most?

Participatory evaluation builds on trust: the belief that everyone has insights, that real understanding comes from many perspectives, and that even small moments of listening can spark deep change.

In this challenging work, may we hold steady and gentle hearts—seeing each other’s efforts, and the small yet important shifts along the way. After all, what matters is never just numbers, but the unique stories and growth in every life.

## **CHAPTER 10**

**WHAT'S NEXT:**

**PUTTING**

**EVALUATION**

**TO WORK**



Evaluation is not a full stop, but a stepping stone. Here are some simple ideas for busy practitioners with limited time. Choose what fits—no need to do it all at once. Build gradually.

### **KEEP INSIGHTS**

- Create a ‘Findings’ folder, organised by theme, audience, or date.
- After each activity, jot down one striking phrase or surprise—small notes add up.
- Every quarter, pick three observations you want to remember the most, and discuss with a colleague why they matter.

### **MAKE SENSE TOGETHER**

- Host a “findings reading circle” with colleagues or participants—each shares highlights and reflections.
- Draw a before/after map or action pathway so the team can see the shifts.
- Ask: “Would anyone disagree with our analysis? Where might our blind spots be? How would we know?”

### **SEE THE PATTERNS**

- Line up feedback from several activities—notice repeated feelings, challenges, or highlights.
- Compare responses from different groups—what designs seem especially effective?
- Write down “the three things we keep hearing lately”—they may highlight your next focus.

### **ENGAGE OTHERS**

- In funding proposals, quote participants directly, letting funders hear the voices of people and communities.
- When reporting, share not only “what we did,” but also “what we discovered.”
- With donors, show not just touching moments but also the context behind change, so they see your thinking and effort.

This *Mini-guide* may end here, but your participatory evaluation journey is only beginning.

Wherever you choose to start—whether with a small tool or a bigger experiment—we hope these ideas can be your companions along the way.

And remember: you are not alone. In many corners of the world, others like you are working to make evaluation more meaningful and more real.

Thank you for reading—and even more, thank you for taking that first step. May it open the door to many more.

# REFERENCE AND FURTHER RESOURCES

## **The Evaluator's Cookbook :**

### **Exercises for Participatory Evaluation with Children and Young People**

(Angus McCabe & Katrice Horsley, 2008)

Practical exercises for participatory evaluation with children and youth.

<https://eypagnet.eu/toolkit/evaluating/how-to-evaluate>

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Resilience: A Companion Guide**

(Oxfam Great Britain, 2018)

User-friendly MEL guidance for resilience and vulnerable communities.

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-for-resilience-a-companion-guide-620498/>

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: A Toolkit for Small NGOs**

(Anne Garbutt & INTRAC, 2022)

Step-by-step MEL toolkit tailored for small NGOs.

<https://www.intrac.org/resources/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-a-toolkit-for-small-ngos>

### **The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique : A Guide to its Use**

(Rick Davies & Jess Dart, 2005)

Classic handbook on MSC principles and the 10-step process.

<https://www.mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/MSCGuide.pdf>

### **Participatory Evaluation Toolkit**

(Gillian Kranias, Health Nexus, 2018)

Seven participatory techniques with a focus on co-design and shared learning

<https://resources.beststart.org/product/j24e-participatory-evaluation-toolkit-manual>

### **Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities**

(Robert Chambers, 2002)

Accessible sourcebook of participatory methods for workshops and evaluation.

### **BetterEvaluation.org**

Global platform with 300+ evaluation methods, frameworks, and cases.

<https://www.betterevaluation.org>

### **INTRAC (The International NGO Training and Research Centre)**

Training, tools, and MEL publications for small and medium NGOs.

<https://www.intrac.org>

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- Teach For Taiwan (為台灣而教)
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## ABOUT OXFAM HONG KONG

Oxfam is a global organisation committed to creating a world without poverty through its advocacy, development and humanitarian work.

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The background is a solid green color. It is filled with various abstract, organic shapes in shades of red, orange, pink, and white. A large, light-colored speech bubble is positioned in the center, containing the text. Below the speech bubble, there is a small icon of a pair of red binoculars.

**WHAT WE HOLD DEAR IS OFTEN QUIET**

**UNTIL WE NAME IT, TOGETHER.**

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