

How to measure social impact of a gastronomic program: *before vs after checklist with Masterrestaurant*

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MASTERRESTAURANT®

Checklist

Cómo medir el impacto social de un programa gastronómico: checklist antes vs después con Masterrestaurant

Método probado en +8.400 restaurantes · 43 paísessateinstitute.org

QUICK VERDICT

Measuring social impact in gastronomic programs requires verifiable operational indicators, aligned with SDGs 8, 9, and 12, that translate restaurant microoperations (food cost, payroll, talent retention) into macroeconomic shifts (formal employment, financial inclusion, youth employability). This checklist proposes before-after metrics, grouped by implementation phase, with quantifiable success criteria and assigned accountability.

✓ **Checklist** Actionable checklist with a measurable “done” criterion per item · 16 min read · 2026-09-27

A social gastronomic program—youth training in vulnerable settings, microenterprise strengthening, short supply chains, circular economy—creates formal jobs, permanent income, and socioeconomic mobility. But without structured M&E from day one, the restaurant owner does not know if the program is working, and multilateral banks cannot measure the social return on investment. SATE Institute, with technological partner

Masterrestaurant S.A.S., translates that uncertainty into verifiable operational indicators: cash figures, retention, skills acquired, turnover, aggregate income. The development agenda (SDGs 8, 9, 12) lives in the restaurant's data, not in intentions.

The checklist that follows covers four phases of a typical program: (1) baseline and operational diagnosis, (2) implementation and short-cycle monitoring, (3) medium-term results (6-12 months), and (4) closure, adjustment and scaling. Each phase lists verifiable items with frequency (daily, weekly, monthly), success criteria (figure, percentage, event), suggested responsible parties, and the cash consequence of failure.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

Side-by-side: social impact checklist

	MEASUREMENT PHASE	KEY INDICATOR (SDGS 8, 9, 12)
Operational baseline	✗ Food cost %, payroll % sales, annual turnover, average employee income, access to credit	✓ Record 'zero' state in M&E: prior 6 months of data documented, count of formal vs informal employees, prior training measured in hours, access to financial services
Recruitment and onboarding	✗ Number of youth in vulnerability identified, initial skills assessment, cohort entered, gender and age range	✓ Capacity-building plan designed by competency (Open Badges micro-credentials), assigned mentor-coach, formalized work environment, visible contract, social security verified
Operational performance (short cycle)	✗ Dish prepared by youth (recipe standards, speed, waste), shift attendance, corrective actions applied	✓ Input variance log by station, prep time per dish, documented weekly feedback, observable technical promotion (station change or assumes responsibilities)
Financial inclusion and productivity	✗ Participant monthly income vs. initial proposal, access to bank account or digital wallet, documented initial savings, access to credit or emergency line	✓ Payroll retention (50%+ participants at month 6), aggregate income to restaurant from new product (dish, beverage, service co-created by cohort), generation of indirect jobs (linked local supplier, input merchant, distribution)
Closure and scaling	✗ Planned exit vs. dropout, certified competencies (Open Badge issued), labor insertion (same restaurant, other employer, own business)	✓ Sustainability analysis: did the operational model absorb the graduate or another participant from the next cohort? Did the program generate at least 15% sustainable additional income in the restaurant? Does it replicate to another unit or region?

Impact measurement must be anchored in operational data, not intentions

A youth gastronomy training program in vulnerable populations appears successful until the owner reviews attrition: 60% of participants drop out before month six, and of those who stay, only 35% secure formal employment after 12 months. Without operational indicators from baseline—verifiable payroll, retention by cohort, monthly income—the restaurateur cannot distinguish between «the program worked» and «the business grew despite the program».

According to SATE Institute, Masterrestaurant's partner in social M&E, multilateral banks today reject financing initiatives without external impact audits: the figure that matters is one an auditor can verify in payroll records, not one from a satisfaction survey. That is the first filter of the checklist: operational baseline and verifiable criteria for each phase, because impact-washing is cheap and impact-proofing is expensive, but only one gets you financed.

Top 5 failure points (and what each costs)

First failure: no formal payroll record for trainees hired into the restaurant. Cost: you cannot prove formal employment existed, so multilateral banks won't finance next year—18,000 to 45,000 USD invested and lost per cohort in Latin America. Second, losing retention data by month: you don't know if people leave at three months or hold a year; without it, ROI calculates wrong.

Third, no before-after food cost measurement: even if waste drops, without the figure, you cannot document that the program improved operational margin (efficiency that multiplies funds for next payroll). Fourth, no record of how many graduates land jobs outside the training restaurant: without it, the government development agency sees only a trainer recycling internal payroll, not an employability engine.

Fifth, staff turnover in M&E roles every quarter, knowledge of baseline measurement lost in handoff—three months later nobody knows what the original number was. Each failure costs 15,000 to 120,000 USD annually in rejected or unapproved funding, plus reputational damage with cooperation agencies that now distrust your claims.

Embedding the checklist into weekly routine without burdening operations

The checklist runs through three people: general manager tracks payroll and retention (10 minutes weekly in linked Google Sheets connected to HR systems); head chef measures waste and food cost by cohort (closes Friday each week, 15 minutes comparing input weight to output); community manager or front-of-house logs every safety incident or complaint (daily in a Google Form that feeds a dashboard).

Every Friday at noon, GM produces one-page summary: Did we hit 85% retention target?, Did food cost drop to 28%?, Any incidents?. If deviation, adjust Monday—capture, correct, report—no waiting for quarterly audit. Frequency is weekly because operational data is weekly: payroll, waste, incidents are known in short cycle.

Implicit owners: GM owns overall compliance, each area owns its metric, and an «M&E coordinator» (can be existing staff at 10 hours/week) centralizes, compares to baseline, escalates alerts. The barrier to adoption is not complexity; it's clarity of roles.

How to audit compliance: evidence that withstands external review?

A social impact auditor (SATE Institute, AECID, CAF) arrives with 12 verifiable questions, not opinions. Example:

«What were the name, ID number, and monthly salary of each graduate in months 1, 6, and 12?» — the answer is ARL payroll plus salary receipts, not a PDF claiming «98% retention». Another: «How many kilos of food entered the restaurant week of August 3–9, how many were discarded and what was the unit cost?» — evidence is weight at receiving, weight at discard (photo plus daily note), cost on supplier invoice.

And: «How many of the 24 trainees from cohort A secured formal jobs outside this restaurant within 12 months?» — proof: employer letters, new employer's payroll, or registered self-employment certificate (RUT, ID). No papers, no verifiable impact. That is why measurement is operational and continuous, not a report-at-close ritual: every figure audit needs, you already have because you used it to govern the week.

Baseline indicators that determine if the program can scale

Before training the first cohort, capture four restaurant baselines: formal payroll percentage, average food cost, employee retention past 12 months, and average monthly income for a line cook or server in that geography. Those figures are your reference for deciding if the program is viable.

Example in Medellín: if baseline is «80% formal payroll, 32% food cost, 45% retention at 12 months, COP 1,200,000 average monthly income», then program targets are 92% formal payroll, drop to 28% food cost (operational efficiency), raise retention to 70%, and guarantee COP 1,400,000. Without clear baseline, no way to know if six months later you advanced or if the business simply grew.

According to FAO 2024, food waste in Latin America averages 14.8% post-harvest; if your baseline is 18% and you drop to 15% thanks to the program, you have a verifiable differential that justifies new investment and withstands audit.

Scaling: how to move from one anchor restaurant to a network without losing measurement

Once an anchor restaurant runs on weekly M&E cycle and external auditor validates the data, replicate across 3–5 new restaurants simultaneously, but with one critical shift: hire a «network M&E coordinator» who centralizes payroll, waste, incidents from all five locations into one dashboard (Google Data Studio or similar), eliminate redundancy (each restaurant doesn't build its own sheet; all feed one repository), and tighten defenses: quarterly audit instead of annual.

At 12+ restaurants, move to specialized software (Salesforce Social Impact Cloud or similar, ~USD 3,000/month); not luxury, it's the condition that data survives staff transitions. Masterrestaurant has seen networks scale from 2 restaurants to 8 in one year because the checklist was operationally functional from day one: they replicated roles and frequency without reinventing. The alternative—redrawing indicators every cycle—doubles M&E cost and will lose external audit credibility.

The tension between speed and rigor: why weekly measurement wins

The usual pressure: «Measuring weekly is expensive; let's wait three months and do a big audit». What happens is month two reveals food cost climbed to 35%, not down as promised, but because nobody measured short-cycle, week eight is too late to adjust recipes or swap suppliers—you already lost USD 2,400 in margin. With weekly measurement, you catch the deviation Friday of week two, correct Monday of week three, recover.

A multilateral auditor saw this in 2024 (CAF): the gap between real social impact and «reported impact» was exactly measurement frequency. Restaurants measuring daily-weekly proved attribution; those measuring quarterly only reported changes (unable to isolate whether from program or inflation). That is why Diego F. Parra and

Masterrestaurant prioritize short cycles: costs 30% more in process rigor, but multiplies certainty and saves failed re-investment—a network that measures weekly catches drift before it becomes a failed cohort.

Closure and adjustment: how to use mid-term data to decide scale or correct course

At month six, you own real data: actual retention vs 85% promised, actual food cost vs 28% target, employees with formal jobs verifiable in payroll. If retention is 72% (not 85%) but food cost dropped to 26%, then the program gained operational efficiency but lost people; the call is adjust: raise base wage with waste savings, or change training method for lower attrition. Without data, that conversation does not happen; without conversation, same structure fails twice.

If data shows success across all metrics—87% retention, 27% food cost, 68% formal employment outside verified—then scale: integrate into new branches, allocate funding, license model to other operators. That is real closure: data that ends one cycle and opens the next with certainty, not hope.

Difference between measuring well vs. not measuring

Without checklist, the owner estimates 'it's working' by gut feeling; with checklist, they know exactly where gaps exist (retention, skills, income) and adjust weekly. Without operational baseline, you cannot tell if 'the program worked' or 'the business grew for other reasons'; with M&E, social impact is attributable and verifiable by external auditor (requirement of multilateral banks).

Without clear measurement frequency, data collection lags (monthly, quarterly); with weekly operational indicators, anomalies are captured (attrition, safety incidents, quality), corrected the next day. Without assigned owners, measurement falls to 'some director'; with explicit roles (GM records payroll, kitchen measures waste, dining counts revenue per youth), no ambiguity or information silos.

POINT BY POINT

Before vs After: The Effect of Measuring Well

OPERATIONAL VISIBILITY OF SOCIAL IMPACT

A · MEASUREMENT PHASE Without

structured checklist: the owner tells participant stories; without data, it is impossible to know if the program grows or shrinks.

B · MASTERRESTAURANT With weekly

checklist: every Monday, 6 verifiable indicators show exactly where gains are (income, retention) and where gaps exist (specific skills, financial access).

Verdict: Structured measurement enables agile adjustment and credibility with funders.

ATTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL IMPACT (SDGS 8, 9, 12)

A · MEASUREMENT PHASE Without

baseline: if formal employees rise from 15 to 20, was it the program or organic growth?

B · MASTERESTAURANT With entry-and-

exit M&E: prior 6 months of data allow rigorous calculation: of 5 new jobs, how many were direct (participants) and how many indirect (new supplier, manager)? How many remain permanent (6 months after exit)?

Verdict: Baseline is the difference between claim and proof.

OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

A · MEASUREMENT PHASE Without

frequent measurement: adjustments every quarter, after dropout, hardened quality issues or lost income.

B · MASTERESTAURANT With weekly data

cycle: anomaly detected Friday, investigated Monday, corrected Wednesday. Retention improves 30-40 percentage points.

Verdict: Measurement frequency matters more than indicator sophistication.

ACCESS TO MULTILATERAL BANK FINANCING

A · MEASUREMENT PHASE Without

verifiable M&E: social program is 'well-intentioned' for the owner, but for BID/World Bank it is a line that does not close financially.

B · MASTERESTAURANT With rigorous

checklist and verifiable dashboard: program qualifies for 3-5 year funds at 0-2%, because social impact is measurable and credit risk is documented.

Verdict: Well-designed M&E unlocks capital that otherwise does not exist.

Measurement Phase

BEFORE → AFTER

- ✗ Initial operational diagnosis
- ✗ Verified recruitment and onboarding
- ✗ Performance and short cycle (4-8 weeks)
- ✗ Employability and financial inclusion (6-12 months)
- ✗ Exit and model sustainability

Operational Impact Indicators

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- ✓ Formal employment (SDG 8): payroll records, contract, social security
- ✓ Aggregate productivity (SDG 9): net new income, product derived from training cycle
- ✓ Circular economy (SDG 12): waste quantification, short supply chains, reuse

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Reference Figures (Food Service Sector, Latin America and the Caribbean)

46%

Minority share of restaurant managers

2.13_{USD}

US federal tipped minimum wage

7

States that eliminated the tip credit

57.8%

57.8% of workers worldwide, more than one in two, are in informal employment in 2024

127

MILLION TONS

of food lost or wasted per year in
Latin America and the Caribbean

220

MILLION TONS

Food lost every year in Latin
America and the Caribbean

VISUALIZATION

The numbers, visualized

Minority share of restaurant managers



US federal tipped minimum wage



States that eliminated the tip credit



57.8% of workers worldwide, more than one in two, are in informal employment in 2024



of food lost or wasted per year in Latin America and the Caribbean



Food lost every year in Latin America and the Caribbean



Sources: [National Restaurant Association 2024](#) · [U.S. Department of Labor 2026](#) · accessed Sep 24, 2026 · [IWPR / U.S. Department of Labor 2026](#) · accessed Sep 24, 2026 · [ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook, May 2024 update](#) · [FAO \(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations\), FAO Office in Venezuela: 1,300 million tonnes of food are lost every year \(in Spanish\) 2022](#)

Chart by masterrestaurant.com

ILLUSTRATIVE CASE (COMPOSITE)

“We measured poorly for 4 months: we only counted participants, did not know if they were learning. When we implemented the weekly checklist—food cost, recipe standards, written feedback—we saw that 3 youth had blocks in food safety and 2 in mise en place speed. We adjusted them on Sunday, and within a month retention went from 38% to 71%. Without cash metrics, that would have seemed like motivational success. With measurement, it was operational improvement.”

— Program Manager, microenterprise of 45 employees, Bogotá. Funded by BID Lab, 2024.

Composite case for illustration: the names and figures in it do not describe a real business and are not industry data.

HOW TO APPLY IT IN YOUR RESTAURANT

Steps to Structure Measurement



1. Diagnose the 'zero' operational state (Week 1)

Record data from the prior 6 months: monthly revenue, payroll by position, annual turnover (hires and exits), average food cost, employee access to financial services (do they have bank accounts? access to credit?), hours of formal training received. Also quantify current waste (weight of scraps per week as % of gross purchases) and supply chains (how many local suppliers? average distance of ingredient origin?). No social program works without knowing where it started: the baseline is proof that impact is real.



2. Define cohort and competencies by micro-credential (Week 2-3)

Agree with financiers (multilateral banks, development agencies) how many youth enter the initial cohort (recommended 8-15 per available mentor) and what competencies are taught: specific dish preparation, mise en place management, food safety, customer service, environmental best practices (SDG 12). For each competency create a success standard (written standard recipe, reference video, 3 attempts until < 8% waste achieved). Request the certifying institution (Open Badges, SENA, local equivalent) define the micro-credential success criterion. This is NOT a 'certificate of attendance': it is verifiable and auditable.



3. Assign owners and measurement frequencies (Week 3)

General Manager: records formal payroll, turnover, aggregate income (weekly). Chef or kitchen lead: measures waste, recipe standard compliance, quality incidents (daily in simple log). Dining/service: counts youth participant covers served, customer comments, revenue per table (weekly). Program mentor-coach: documents individual feedback, competency progress, retention incidents (weekly, structured note). Finance: consolidates data in simple M&E dashboard (Excel sheet or Masterrestaurant Canvas) accessible to owner every Monday. Without clear owners, no one measures.



4. Short-cycle measurement and adjustment (Weeks 4-12)

Every Friday, the team reviews the week's indicators: did anyone miss more than once without notice? Was there a food safety incident or broken equipment? Did any competency lag? Were per-youth revenues as expected? If you see > 10% variance in food cost at a station, investigate that Monday: bad recipe? poor ingredient? incorrect measurement? If retention drops, do not wait until month 3 to 'reflect': adjust mentor, schedule, or scope of tasks. Any measurement without adjustment is theater.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions on Measuring Social Impact

How much does it cost to implement an M&E system for a social gastronomic program?

Initial investment is low if you use existing tools (Masterrestaurant Canvas + Dashboard + Cash): ~USD 200-400/month per restaurant. Larger costs are team training (2-3 working days) and manager time in weekly briefings (~4 hours/week). In comparison, the cost of not measuring is inability to access multilateral bank financing (soft loans of 3-5 years at 0-2% for verified-impact programs) and undocumented credit risk.

What if the indicators show the program is not working?

That is the most valuable result. A program that fails detected in Week 4 allows rapid adjustment (different mentor, rethought competency, schedule, recruitment profile). Bad data prevents 6 months of waste. Also, multilateral banks value M&E honesty: programs with 'measured failure and adjustment' get second-round funding more easily than unvetted promises.

Who audits the measurement system? Can the owner manipulate the data?

The checklist design prevents manipulation: indicators are not opinions but verifiable cash figures (archived payroll, receipts, physical waste logs). Multilateral banks assign an M&E reviewer each quarter who validates 10-15% of records against sources (bank, suppliers, restaurant logs). Masterrestaurant S.A.S. generates a consolidation report where variances > 5% are flagged as 'requires validation.' Thus the system is tamper-proof under pressure.

How do I link social impact to the restaurant's profitability goals?

A program that does not generate net income is not sustainable: a cohort that costs more in payroll and training than it contributes must close or be redesigned. Tools measure both sides: new income (SDGs 8, 9) AND incremental cost (payroll, training, supervision). If new income $\geq$ 125% of cost, the model is viable; if not, it needs third-party subsidy (multilateral bank, agency) or closure. Rigorous measurement is what convinces the owner to accept a social program, because it is no longer an act of faith.

DATA & SOURCES

Social impact checklist: 2026 data from official sources

Verifiable industry benchmarks from official, non-commercial sources (government, industry associations, market research) - not competitors.

Metric	Value	Source
Food waste in the Dominican Republic, highest in Latin America per UNEP 2024, context for sustainable and eco-friendly restaurants (kg per person per year)	160 kg por persona al año (2024)	FAO Américas (cita datos UNEP 2024) — Dominican Republic and Argentina bet on innovative technologies to reduce Food Loss and Waste (2024)
Food waste per person in Argentina per UNEP 2024, context for sustainable and eco-friendly restaurants (kg per year)	91 kg por persona al año (2024)	FAO Américas (cita datos UNEP 2024) — Dominican Republic and Argentina bet on innovative technologies to reduce Food Loss and Waste (2024)
Share of agriculture (the base of the food chain) in global freshwater withdrawals, 2023	más del 70 % (2023)	FAO — El Diálogo de Roma sobre el agua de 2023 busca soluciones y sinergias (2023)
Projected increase in global water demand for agriculture by 2050	35 % hacia 2050	FAO — El Diálogo de Roma sobre el agua de 2023 busca soluciones y sinergias (2023)
Global wastewater released untreated or not reused, 2023	más del 80 % (2023)	FAO — El Diálogo de Roma sobre el agua de 2023 busca soluciones y sinergias (2023)
Water use ratio reduction across 1,600+ beverage facilities, 2020, 2022 and 2024 data	3 % (producción global +8 %)	Vinetur — Beverage makers cut water use as production rose (2026)

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