

Youth Impact for Peace

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
in Six European Youth Organisations



Research report
December 2015

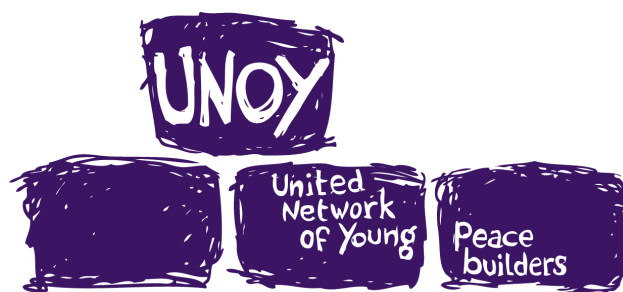


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Authors: Celina Del Felice, Andrei Trubceac, Fanni Fenyosi, Irene Capozzi, Lluç Martí, Sebastian Schweitzer and Imre Veeneman.

The research team welcomes comments and questions related to this report and the overall Youth Impact project.

For more information, contact:

Imre Veeneman, Program Coordinator at UNOY Peacebuilders
imre.veeneman@unoy.org

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Executive summary

The “**Youth Impact: Strengthening Organizational Capacities to Building Peace in Europe**” project is an organisational capacity development project to improve the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) capacities of youth peace organisations. It is implemented by the International Secretariat of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders – UNOY (the Netherlands) in partnership with five of its European members: Service Civil International - SCI (Belgium), Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania - PATRIR (Romania), International Center for Promotion of Education and Development - CEIPES (Italy), Fundació Catalunya Voluntaria - FCV (Spain) and European Intercultural Forum - EIF (Germany). The project has two phases, the first to research and analyse MEL practices (February- December 2015) followed by a phase to develop action plans and a practical tool and guidelines (January - July 2016).

This report presents the findings of the research and analysis phase as well as suggestions for improvement. It assesses the MEL practices and capacities in the six above-mentioned organisations. The research is descriptive and exploratory. It examines existing policies and practices and the perceptions of youth workers active in these organisations. It looks at how learning happens and how each organisation manages opportunities as well as pressures and constraints. **This report provides a basis for better understanding of current MEL practices in youth peace organisations in Europe and what needs to be done to improve them.**

This report is a useful resource for any person interested in the topic, regardless of their position or experience in organisations, as we believe MEL activities should not be limited solely to those in management positions or in special evaluation units. The very nature of youth organisations allows virtually everyone to take a relevant role in the MEL of projects and programmes as well as to participate in the general management processes of the organisation that they are involved in. Importantly, this report is of particular interest to youth and peace organisations as it addresses the specific characteristics of this type of organisation, namely, its dynamism and peace values orientation.

The research adopted a case-oriented comparative and participatory research design. It mostly drew from a set of qualitative methods, which was complemented by quantitative data collection tools. The participatory research design took the perceptions and experiences of youth workers as a point of departure. The study's methodological approach sought to create a safe space for reflection and peer-to-peer learning and, at the same time, a space to address inherent biases in the analysis through looking at MEL practices from various perspectives. To do so, the research was based on internal self-assessment exercises complemented with a peer-to-peer review mostly involving researchers and personnel from the six participating organisations, but also consulting with other youth workers. Additionally, a semi-external researcher was part of the team, a former staff member from one of the participating

organisations. Finally, the research included interviews with partners and donors of the research organisations. To allow this multiperspectivity, information was primarily gathered through four methods: a desk review of organisational documents self-assessment questionnaires and surveys, focus group discussions and interviews.

This report presents the findings in relation to seven dimensions of [monitoring](#), [evaluation](#) and [learning](#) (MEL) practices at both operational and organisational levels. MEL practices are defined as a range of activities that enable organisations to learn and reflect on their own work. More precisely organisations do this by assessing the intended and unintended effects of their activities against pre-agreed goals and in accordance with the shared values of peace. The analytical framework of the research also included aspects related to general organisational management identified by the research team to be related in a way or another to MEL practices.

Summary of key research findings

At operational level

1. Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

This refers to measures that assess progress of [projects](#) and [programmes](#) against pre-set goals and learning, their scope and methods - e.g. educational projects, peacebuilding and facilitation of dialogue, advocacy projects.

- Organisations find it easier to evaluate educational projects rather than advocacy projects.
- Many different evaluation methods are used by the organisations to gather information on project [outputs](#) and the level of participants' satisfaction.
- Organisations evaluate and assess their educational projects using participants' self-assessment tools and educators' observations.
- Organisations rarely conduct [baseline studies](#) and [ex-post evaluations](#) to assess the long-term effects or impact of their projects.
- While monitoring and evaluation is part of the usual project's procedures, generating learning from evaluation results remains a challenge. This is aspect is particularly important when it comes to the incorporation of evaluation results and lessons learned into policy and practice.

At organisational level

2. Organisational culture

This refers to the beliefs and values that guide organisational practices either in people's mind-sets or agreed as principles of the organisation.

- Organisations express that their work is guided and motivated by values based on a culture of peace and nonviolence. Nevertheless, there are contradictions between proclaimed values and actual practices.

- 3 out of 6 organisations have written commitments/[ethical guidelines](#) to values (e.g. [Code of Conduct](#)).
- Not all individuals involved in the organisation are aware of the existing ethical guidelines.

3. Policies, planning and decision-making

This dimension refers to general organisational processes to identify needs, conduct a context analysis, define goals, assess alternative courses of action and make collective strategic choices.

- [Strategic plans](#) include goals and are in most organisations resulting from participatory decision making exercises.
- The strategic planning processes are open to participation, but the level of participation varies per organisation.
- Most organisations have strategic plans containing goals and general objectives. The plans do not outline specific [indicators](#) and do not include a monitoring and evaluation plan (timeframe, measurement instruments). Also, the strategic plans do not include an explicit and/or well-defined [Theory of Change](#).

4. Knowledge management

This dimension refers to processes of acquiring, organising, developing and sharing [knowledge](#) and how these processes support and relate to MEL. Knowledge management should not be confused with information management. Information becomes knowledge when it is processed, reflected about and used.

- Organisations do information management instead of knowledge management. They use tools to collect and store information through formal documentation or informal ways (e.g. staff meetings).
- Organisations have limited capacities to translate and process the information they have into organisational knowledge.
- The organisations have not structured their acquisition, sharing and use of knowledge.
- More often than not the learning aims of MEL are not fully served. Organisations write reports with lessons identified based on the evaluations, but these reports are not used/reviewed in future planning or implementation.
- The research showed that receiving and even offering knowledge and [competences](#) through training (even on M&E) is significantly different from implementing it in one's own daily work.

5. Human resources management

This refers to finding, managing and supporting [personnel](#) working with and for the organisation.

- Even though all organisations agree that staff development is important, it is not a priority when it comes to practice.
- Personnel have general planning and reporting skills, yet specific and advanced MEL competences are lacking.
- Only half of the organisations have job descriptions, and even those do not all mention MEL responsibilities. MEL responsibilities are marginal compared to other responsibilities.
- Personnel appraisals are done, yet not as periodically as wished. MEL practices vary depending on the size and scope of the organisation.
- There are no sufficient human resources allocated to MEL.
- Personnel induction does not include/ focus on MEL practices.

6. Financial management

This refers to managing finances: how budgets and expenditures are monitored and the budget allocation to MEL activities.

- Organisations allocate limited resources to MEL activities.
- Resources are clearly assigned to financial management, but not specifically to MEL practices in financial management.
- Organisations do external audits and reporting according to legal and donor requirements, but these are not systematic/embedded practices.

7. External relations

This refers to how MEL activities relate to external stakeholders, like partners and donors e.g. joint evaluations, discussions about methods and results.

- Organisations often engage with their partners in a formal or informal dialogue about M&E methods and the expected results.
- It is rare that organisations create together with their partners a full MEL [plan](#).
- Evaluations with donors go rarely beyond the reporting obligations required by the donors.
- Other stakeholders are only occasionally involved in the MEL strategies and plans.
- Two organisation have previously participated in a joint evaluation at an impact level.
- Organisations have limited opportunity to develop their own MEL strategies that are appropriate to their organisational context and style of work. This is partly due to donors' requirements for M&E and reporting formats. Thus, the external accountability is often prioritised over the need to generate internal learning.

Introduction

The “Youth Impact: Strengthening Organisational Capacities to Build Peace in Europe” is an organisational development [project](#) of 18-months (February 2015- July 2016). The first phase of the project consisted of a [research](#) called ‘Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Youth Peace Organisations’. This report is the output from this first phase. It is implemented by the International Secretariat of United Network of Young Peacebuilders (in short UNOY) in partnerships with its members, Service Civil International - SCI (Belgium), Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania - PATRIR (Romania), International Center for Promotion of Education and Development - CEIPES (Italy), Fundació Catalunya Voluntària - FCV (Spain) and European Intercultural Forum - EIF (Germany). It is funded by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and the Dutch National Agency of the ERASMUS+ programme.

The point of departure of the project was that several organisations from the UNOY network identified a growing need and interest to improve organisational capacities in relation to [monitoring](#), [evaluation](#) and [learning](#) (MEL) experiences, especially taking into consideration the characteristics of youth organisations, their strengths and challenges. Research conducted within the network (e.g. UNOY Annual Impact Reviews, project “Youth organisations as learning organisations”) supported this initiative, demonstrating the need to enhance youth peace work interventions in more strategic ways that revolve around the strengths and limitations of youth and volunteer organisations. Such limitations include, for example, high turnover of staff and volunteers, a lack of operational grants and competition for limited project grants. This contributes to short and scattered organisational memory and leads to unsatisfactory knowledge management. Youth organisations generate uniquely valuable spaces of learning. Yet, they are generally occupied with daily activities and have limited capacities to work collectively on long term learning. Strategising based on the analysis of past experiences, [knowledge](#) produced and the assessment of the current situation within the organisations is crucial for their development. Limited learning capacities result in unharnessed opportunities and untapped potential for quality programming.

Based on these shortcomings, the project’s overall objective is strengthening organisational capacities in the areas of monitoring, evaluation and learning. The first research phase focused on understanding current processes and practices of MEL through a peer-review organisational assessment of the six participating organisations. This assessment was based on several research activities carried out by a group of 7 researchers (4 females, 3 males; one per organisation and an additional external researcher of UNOY). For details of the activities see [Annex 1](#).

Research activities included the development of an organisational assessment tool, the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by the organisation, a skills assessment [survey](#) among organisation’s personnel, analysis of organisational documentation, participation in [focus group](#) discussions, exercises during six on-site research visits to all partner organisations and email exchanges.

This report presents the findings of the six organisational assessments conducted in the period between February-December 2015. It addresses the following questions:

- How do youth peace organisations monitor and evaluate their work and learn from it?
- What suggestions for improvement emerge from analysing MEL practices?

This report is a useful resource for any person interested in the topic, regardless of their positions or experiences in organisations, as we believe MEL activities should not be limited solely to those in management positions or in special evaluation units. The very nature of youth organisations allows virtually everyone to take a relevant role in the MEL of projects, programmes as well as the general management processes of the organization. Importantly, this report is of particular interest to youth and peace organisations as it addressed the specific characteristics of this type of organisations, namely, its dynamism and peace values orientation.

Structure of the research report

This report starts by defining Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (Section 1) and explaining the dimensions and criteria used in the analysis (Section 2). Secondly, it presents the degree of awareness of the organisations regarding their MEL practices along the 7 dimensions and the perceived challenges associated with them (Section 3). This is followed by the main findings per each analysed dimension (Sections 4 -10). Thirdly, it summarises what is known from previous studies and the feedback to the main findings by other youth peace organisations not involved directly in this project, including both, members of UNOY and other organisations. Finally, the report offers conclusions and general suggestions for improvement (Sections 12-13). The report does not focus on practical tools, though it provides a few key resources at the end of Section 13. Additionally, the report offers a glossary (Section 14), details on the documentation analysed and literature consulted (Sections 15-16) and research activities (Annex 1).

Important note about this report

This report does not measure organisation's performance. This would require an explicit and agreed criteria. However, this report analyses MEL practices based on implicit criteria developed from our experiences as youth workers, educators and researchers. It builds on the literature on management of organisations and peace education evaluation. This report presents a description of the practices, the organisational perceptions of strengths and challenges, while also highlighting commonalities and differences. Based on our analysis, the report includes general suggestions for improvement that could be applicable to other youth peace organisations.

What's next?

Parallel to our research and as a result of our discussions, the research group started to develop a detailed assessment tool based on explicit and shared criteria of what constitutes a good MEL practice. We also aim to develop a set of practical guidelines to help youth peace organisations improve their MEL practices. These will include step-by-step exercises, tools and examples. By the end of July 2016 both the tool and the guidelines will be completed.

1

Defining Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring and Evaluation of Peacebuilding is “the systematic gathering and analysis of information on specific questions to provide useful feedback for a programme, organization or individual to serve the purpose of learning and accountability” (Church and Rogers, 2006 in Herrington, 2015).

In the field of social work and social change in general, evaluation is understood as an assessment of an activity’s quality and its intended and unintended effects on the direct participants of those activities and on their social reality. In a narrow sense, it is a comparison of the actual actions results against agreed [plans](#). Usually assessments are based on [efficiency](#), [effectiveness](#) and ethical criteria. Efficiency refers to the optimal use of resources to produce the planned activities and effectiveness refers to the extent to which those objectives were met. However, the aim of evaluation is not only to determine or prove that actions are efficient, effective and ethical, but also, perhaps most importantly, to learn and improve practice. This learning aim of evaluation is central for youth organisations working in the field of peacebuilding and explicitly sharing a peace pedagogy. It requires critical reflection and it departs from the idea that the emphasis should not only be on the activities or services organised, but on the

personal, team and organisational learning and change processes.



In the scope of the work of our organisations, intended effects are related to the achievement of [cultures of peace](#) and respect for human rights. This is why evaluation needs to look at effects in terms of changes at all levels of social reality,

including individual, group and societal levels. This is difficult to assess as many factors influence attitudes and behaviour. Many of these factors are beyond the direct control of our organisations, for example, the influence of macro conflicts or economic

challenges. Therefore one of the biggest challenges for evaluation is to attribute more or less clearly and directly the desired effects to the planned actions. Evaluation also comprises a number of activities and forms of evaluation which are summarised in Table 1. Evaluation starts with a good plan based on an analysis of the participants or communities needs. Second, actions are monitored and observed throughout the implementation in order to make necessary adjustments ([formative evaluation](#)). Third, once a [project](#) or phase is completed, there is an assessment or reflection on completed activities and their [outcomes](#), that is, effects on the social reality. This could range from effects on participants' attitudes to changes in social relations. Fourth, the effects of the project's interventions can be followed up and further assessed in a longer time frame. For example, [impact assessments](#) aim to identify how changed attitudes or relations continue to shape behaviour and social practices after the projects have been completed in the medium and long-term.

Table 1: Timetable of MEL activities

Project phases	Forms of MEL activities
Planning phase	Needs assessment Socio-political context analysis - Conflict analysis Identification of opportunities and risks Definition of a theory of change , objectives, progress indicators and a MEL activities plan to gather and analyse information
Implementation phase	Formative evaluation (e.g. monitoring, team meetings) Summative evaluation (e.g. participants evaluation forms, final report)
Follow-up phase	Impact and transfer (e.g. impact assessments, feedback from alumni) Re-visiting of theory of change
On-going	Elaboration and sharing of lessons learned Organisational reflection and strategic planning

2

Dimensions for analysis

The research team has identified and defined seven dimensions of analysis of MEL practices in organisations at both operational (project-based) and organisational levels:

Operational level

1. **Monitoring, evaluation and learning at the operational level.** This refers to measures that assess project progress against pre-set goals and learning, scope and methods - e.g. educational projects, peacebuilding and facilitation of dialogue.

Organisational level

2. **Organisational culture.** This refers to the beliefs and values that guide organisational practices either in people's mind-sets or agreed as principles of the organisation.
3. **Policies, planning and decision-making.** This refers to general policies and organisational processes to identify needs, conduct a context analysis, define goals, assess alternative courses of action and make collective strategic decisions.
4. **Knowledge management.** This refers to processes of acquiring, organising, developing and sharing knowledge and how these processes support MEL. It differs from information management, since knowledge comes from the information (collected data connected with organisational activities) that has been processed and prepared for further usage.
5. **Human resources management.** This refers to finding, managing and supporting personnel working with and for the organisation.
6. **Financial management.** This refers to managing finances: monitoring of budgets and expenditures are monitored and budget allocation to MEL activities.

7. **External relations.** This refers to how MEL activities relate to external stakeholders, like partners and donors e.g. joint evaluations, discussions about methods and results.

The reason for differentiating these two levels is that although most M&E activities may be related to projects, these projects are implemented as part of a specific [programme](#) or department of the organisation. A [project](#) is understood here as a set of activities which are planned to achieve a defined goal. However, projects are rarely isolated actions. They depend on more general decisions of the organisation and they are nurtured by organisational cultures and mechanisms. Evaluation and learning happen simultaneously within specific projects and in the context of organisational practices. For example, an organisation may train all its staff in a specific skill, which staff may use in a project or not. At the same time, we assume that what is learned through a project is to various degrees part of the overall organisational learning process. Furthermore, organisational learning shapes decision-making during and in the aftermath of the project cycle. In brief, we assume that MEL at the operational level and in relation to the general running of the organisation is enabled and constrained by organisational resources and practices.

3

Understandings and perceived challenges of MEL

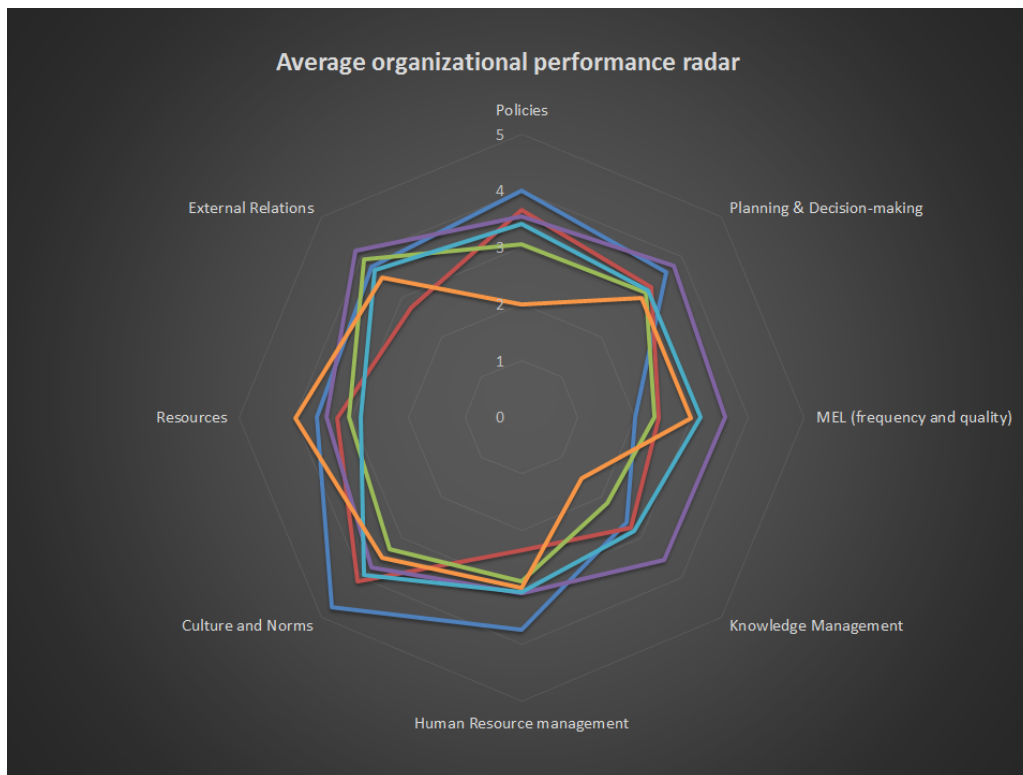
In general the overall perception in the six organisations is that despite the fact that they do MEL at the level of projects and programmes, they consider it insufficient for their needs in terms of scale and quality. The general impression is that the evaluations conducted in the field are focused on accounting for [outputs](#), and only rarely are looking at the outcomes and impact of their interventions. The organisations being rather small in size and scope of work have rarely conducted organisational assessments, although all have acknowledged the benefits of having one. The organisations understand that while most of their work is modelled as a separate activity /individual project, the organisations do not cumulate the resulting knowledge and experiences and apply it throughout the organisations.



Against this backdrop, some of the NGOs have specialised in different themes and domains of work and are interested in learning more and improving their MEL practices in specific areas like: peace advocacy, training programmes, volunteer management, community development, etc.

Participants of the on-site research visits were asked to individually assess (according to their own perception) how well their organisations were doing in terms of the different dimensions of MEL identified by giving a grade from 0 (weakest) to 5 (strongest). The definitions of the dimensions were standardised and were made available to the respondents. Each respondent rated each category individually, and then an average was developed on the spot to visualize the responses. The radar chart below displays the categories of MEL as whole and each line represents the average

grade per organisation. It visualises the concentration of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the respondents.



From this exercise we can conclude the following:

All six organisations perceive their practices as good, yet with room for improvement. On average no organisation received 0 or low scores (below 2) in any of the dimensions. This graph is a rather accurate depiction of the explanations during the interviews held with the respondents. MEL is done to certain degree in all organisations and basic supporting organisational practices are in place. All organisations ranked high on the dimension 'organisational culture'. Since these are value-driven organisations, composed largely by idealistic and motivated young people sharing similar concerns, it seems logical. The core activities of the organisations are related to peace education, so there is an awareness of values like mutual respect and dialogue underlying all aspects of their work. The lower scores are related to the management of human resources. The most dispersed scores are related to knowledge management and the frequency and quality of MEL activities.

4

Monitoring, Evaluating and Learning at the Project level

Organisations predominantly engage in three types of activities a) Educational and capacity building activities, including awareness-raising, volunteering and intercultural exchanges, b) Advocacy activities, c) Support to dialogue and peace processes.

MEL in educational and capacity building activities



MEL practices in relation to educational activities were found to be about: 1) measuring participants' and teams' satisfaction against their expectations 2) describing activity outputs and the ensuing learning process 3) assessing the desired effects and resulting outcomes from the completed activities, 4) using [ex-ante/baseline](#) and ex-post evaluations.

First, organisations regularly use evaluation forms at the end of trainings and other educational activities to assess how satisfied participants were with the event in relation to logistics, quality of the training content and meeting participants' expectations. These forms also gather information on what participants have learned and in some cases, about the plans of applying it in their work. Educational activities also often include group reflection sessions or group evaluation sessions in which participants share their experiences and opinions about the programme of activities and other aspects (i.e group dynamics). Team members process the gathered information in narrative seminar reports and discuss them in team meetings during and after the activity. There are only a few accounts of assessment of acquired [competences](#) as the result of both a self-assessment and an external review by an educator were found, yet these are exceptions rather than the norm (e.g. use of self-assessment personal development tool and a list of skills and attitudes used as part of an organisation's educational approach).

Second, organisations regularly report on a project's outputs which are described in narrative reports. Monitoring and reporting on planned outputs is an established practice. Some organisations use explicit competence frameworks to guide evaluation. It is worth mentioning that competence frameworks can be produced by external organisations or institutions, can be written by organisations themselves, and even be developed individually by each learner, as an individual competence framework.

Third, some organisations have reported on project's outcomes, that is, results expected after completion of activities and plans. Outcomes assessed are feelings of empowerment and multiplication intentions. One organisation has also reported an alumni survey after two years of the project's finalisation.

Fourth, baseline and assessment of participants starting points in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge and [ex-post assessments](#) are rare mostly due to short-term projects-based funding and perceptions these would be difficult to implement without external help or additional resources.

Some organisations are using pre-made competence frameworks, like the "[The Eight Key Competencies For Lifelong Learning](#)" and have developed a specific educational approach which empowers participants and staff to focus on developing specific competences identified as relevant. This identification can be based on the existing [research](#) made in the field, complemented by the organisational background and can be applied between the organisation and the participants themselves, as part of a non-formal learning process. This helps the participants to learn and to maintain their motivation, allowing them to set more demanding learning goals and increase the sense of ownership towards learning. Self-assessment techniques can be of help to understand the values of non-formal learning, like freedom, autonomy and active participation and responsibility towards your own learning.

MEL in advocacy activities (mostly found in two organisations)

Advocacy plans include goals and expected results. These are mostly related to outputs and general long term results. They include indications of milestones or targeted policy outcomes (e.g. United Nations Security Council Resolution). However, plans did not include detailed analysis of actor's positions and interests at the start of the interventions nor detailed theories of change, that is, assumptions on the factors, power structures and dynamics that would enable or constrain a change in policy or behaviour. Some organisations are taking active part in second level organisations (networks, platforms, federations, councils) at the local, regional or international levels. Youth organisations advocate for a more meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding. Some organisations' role as advocates is limited to the capacity of having their interests and opinions represented in this second level organisations.

MEL in support of dialogue and peace processes (mostly present in one organisation)

The planning of projects that support mediation, peace processes, violence prevention and post-war recovery includes intense and highly technical preparatory work in relation to context analysis, clarity of roles, clear mandate by partners or commissioning organisation. These facilitate monitoring and evaluation. Projects include ways of gathering partner and participant feedback and opinions. These are perceived as essential for the success of the peace engagement. Project reports are not always available due to confidentiality issues. Lessons learned are shared via informal discussions and trainings the organisation offer to other organisations, but not systematised for internal learning.

Suggestions for improvement in relation to project evaluation

- Improve context analysis and contextualised theories of change, and include a baseline study or indications of starting points at individual or/and social levels. This could be done via observation and fact finding, better use of application forms or pre-event communication in the case of educational projects. Other action that can be undertaken are identifying attitudes and positions of advocacy audiences through documentation analysis, surveys and interviews or if not possible, more informal, yet, documented consultations. This could take the form of videos, blog entries, infographics etc. which demonstrate learning experience and impact.
- Differentiate output indicators (e.g. completed activities) from outcome indicators (changed attitudes and behaviour, e.g. participants become active peacebuilders).
- In the case of educational and capacity building projects, evaluate against educational criteria and clear competences framework in a systematic way (e.g. what will participants be competent to do after the trainings? What will organisations be able to do after the capacity building project?)
- Sustain and deepen ex-post evaluations with partners and if possible conduct impact evaluations together with promoter and partner organisations, participants and other stakeholders.

5

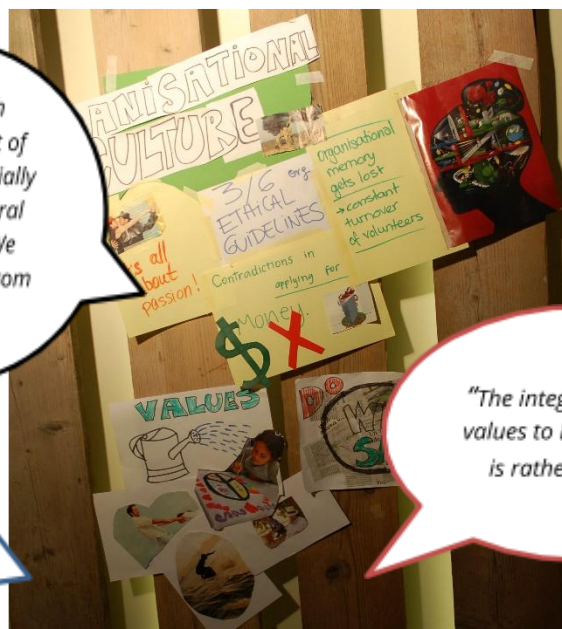
Organisational culture

We observed that all organisations explicitly promote peace values, notably dialogue, openness to learning, transparency and accountability. Only a few organisations have developed [ethical guidelines](#) (e.g. [Code of Conduct](#)), and some of these are thematic (e.g. Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines). Other organisations have not translated their values into formal policies and practices, rather it is done in informal ways. Within the scope of this research it was difficult to assess to what extent these values really determine the organisational culture and practices. However, we learned how organisations realised proclaimed values in organisational practices. Interns of one organisation described that there is a culture of feedback and horizontal management structures (roles based on functions and coordination) rather than hierarchical and rigid structures (roles based on predefined positions). Most opinions on this topic indicate that people feel free to express their opinions and this is a good basis for any activity related to evaluation and learning. At the same time, we also found examples which indicate that it is not always easy to actually bring proclaimed values into practice. One staff member expressed a feeling that sometimes there is a gap between what they stand for and what they do. Issues mentioned in this gap are management of internal conflicts, financial resources or competition among organisations.

"There is sometimes a gap between what we stand for and what we do"

"Dealing with conflicts is part of our work, especially with intercultural conflicts (...) We don't escape from problems"

"We always try to give the space to individuals to share, add their opinions, views and suggestions"



"The integration of our values to PMEL practice is rather informal"

Suggestions for improvement in relation to organisational culture

- Strengthen and develop institutional Codes of Conduct or documents which show awareness and commitment to peace values applied to internal practices. These documents should guide all aspects of the organisation and their projects (i.e. conflict transformation strategy/procedures within the organisation and in relation to partners and other stakeholders, environmental sustainability charter, gender balance provisions)
- Sustain and develop spaces for reflection on values and organisational practices, especially related to transformation of internal conflicts and intercultural communication based on active listening, assertiveness, respect, nonviolence and openness.

6

Policies, Planning and Decision-Making

Organisational forms vary. All six organisations are registered as non-profit organisations. Three organisations are network/ federations of organisations. Given these two types of organisations (NGO- network), decision-making varies with network organisations having additional international meetings and decision-making spaces (e.g. general assemblies of member organisations). Organisations reported having fairly democratic and collaborative spaces and mechanisms of planning and decision-making. Most commonly, drafts are circulated and commented by relevant stakeholders and final decisions take into consideration these inputs.

Three main types of policy documents which guide the planning, decision making and overall work of the organisation were found. a) Strategic plans, b) Theories of Change, c) Code of Conduct or Ethical Guidelines and d) Thematic Policy documents.

Four out of six organisations have strategic plans which include goals and specific objectives. However, a MEL plan was not attached to these plans to allow a systematic assessment of goals achievement.

Three out of six organisations have developed a theory of change (TOC), that is, an explanation of how reality works and how their assumptions of doing peace work are bringing about behavioral, relational, cultural and structural change. Since the research period, the other three organisations are now developing a TOC. In general, all organisations strive for a peaceful world, a culture of peace and enhanced peacebuilding capacities of communities and all relevant stakeholders. The assumed factors necessary to achieve a culture of peace are:



- a) Communities have a good understanding of the practical utility of peacebuilding (awareness raising, training, sharing of experiences)
- b) Communities have capacities to handle conflicts and differences constructively
- c) Communities have set up infrastructures for peace: laws, policies and both public and private institutions and support mechanisms for peace work and peacebuilding efforts.

Suggestions for improvement in relation to policies, strategic planning and decision-making

- Improve and complete strategic plans including related TOC, an evaluation strategy and measures of achievement per programmatic objective.
- Sustain and deepen internal meetings as spaces of strategic review, learning and planning.
- Develop participatory design and planning processes that are open to less represented groups self-identified as socially vulnerable, at risk of social exclusion and poverty, or affected by a violent conflict. Be mindful about the multitude of challenges related to their interests, availability and the means of being a part of these processes as well as sustaining their involvement throughout the whole project/programme cycle and ensuring they are not just labeled/treated as beneficiaries or target group, but as active agents for change.

7

Knowledge management

Organisations produce valuable information and manage it through a number of tools. One of them has built an intranet/information management system, while others do it more *ad hoc* using a variety of tools, most of which are online. This information is processed, reflected and used, thus, translated into knowledge in a number of ways. However, this process is informal, without a structured mechanism to manage, develop and share knowledge. Organisations have limited capacities (time, resources and/or skills) to engage in strategic knowledge creation and sharing. At the same time, organisations do share knowledge in several informal ways, mostly among partners and networks. For example, knowledge sharing happens through their trainings and meetings. Organisations also do call upon external resource persons when needed.

Suggestions for improvement in relation to knowledge management and learning

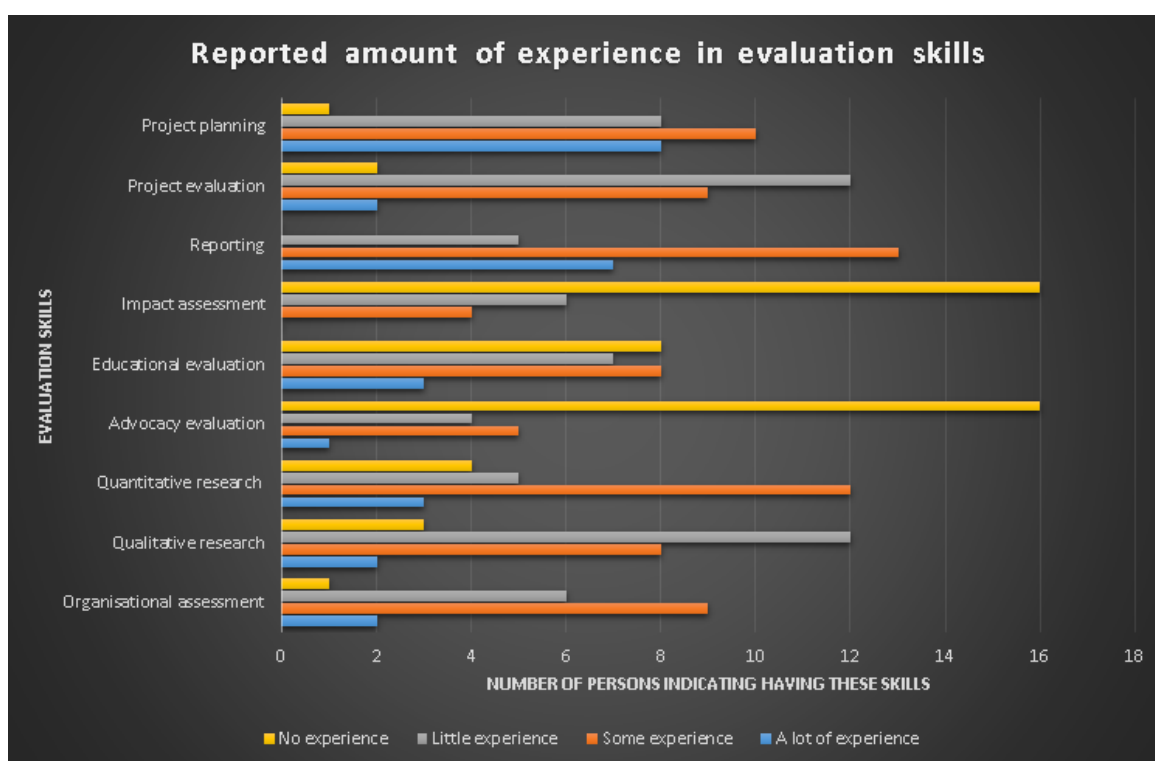
- Prioritise the reflection on information and knowledge management needs and develop suitable tools and spaces to address these needs.
- Improve internal documentation and filing to make information easily accessible to all relevant stakeholders (both on and offline).
- Systematise documents with lessons learned/identified and relate these lessons to existing assumptions and theories of change.

8

Human resources management

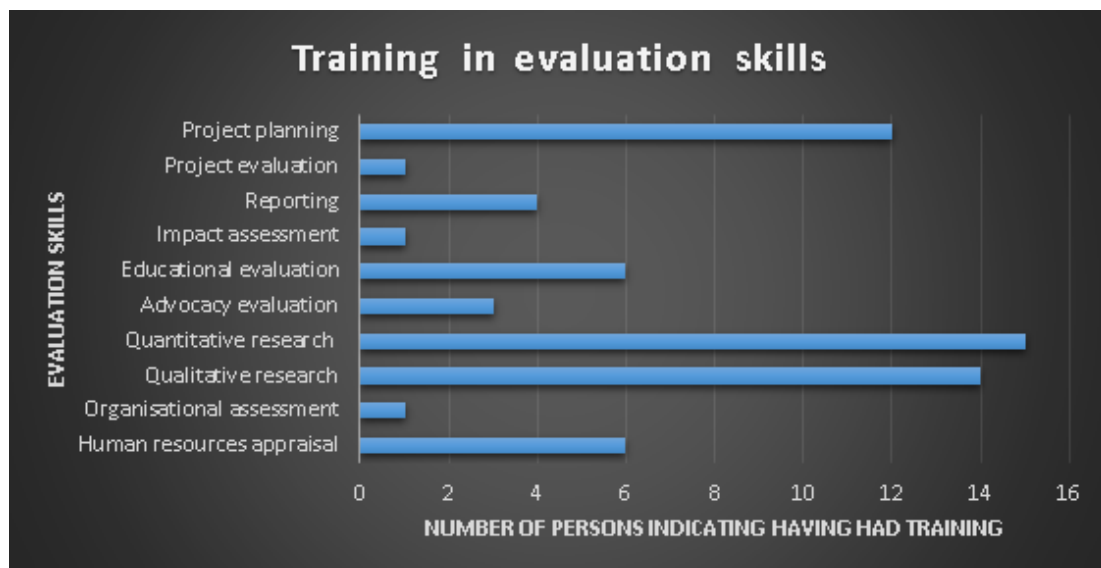
Human resources MEL skills

A skills self-assessment survey was completed by 27 participants of the six organisations, mainly representing management positions, but also project officers, board members and interns.



Respondents seem to have a good basis of relevant experience and training mostly in project planning and reporting, which tend to be standard skills in the NGO sector. Respondents formal research skills and methods were mostly acquired through university studies. Some have a lot of experience in using quantitative and qualitative research methods having received specific training through their postgraduate studies. General reporting and project evaluation skills were acquired through specific courses in previous jobs, external training opportunities and learning by doing. Two respondents had been a part of briefings on evaluation methods and reporting by their donors. Notably, little internal training in MEL skills was reported.

When considering specific and more advanced skills, there is a lot of differentiation between organisations. There is quite some experience in educational evaluation with 6 of 27 reporting having received specific training in this regard. Yet, there is less experience in human resources appraisal, and only 7 out of 27 respondents reported having been trained in this area. Finally, there seems to be much less experience and almost no training in impact assessment (one person only) and advocacy evaluation (four persons). This was to be expected as they are specific forms of evaluation.



Human resources appraisal and learning

Learning is an important component of staff and volunteers experience. Learning is intense and aided by external opportunities, learning by doing and by reflecting on the experience. However, though most organisations agree that staff learning is important, it is not always a priority when it comes to practice. Only one organisation reported that personnel induction included content related to MEL tasks.

Staff and volunteers have contracts which indicate tasks and some, professional and personal development objectives. Yet, only half of the organisations have job descriptions or Terms of References, and even those do not all mention specific MEL responsibilities.

Appraisal is done by project coordinators and Boards, yet not as periodically as wished. Practices vary per organisation. One organisation conducts 360 degree reviews, through which a person gets feedback from various colleagues that is gathered and communicated by one person who acts as a coach or supervisor.

Organisations estimate that they do not have enough human resources for MEL activities. They are in general over-stretched and MEL gets dropped in favour of other priorities.



Suggestions for improvement in relation to human resources appraisal and learning

- Internal MEL skills development should be periodic, starting from the induction period. This should be done as part of 1) the general introduction to the organisation 2) project management training; the organisations should strive to build training capacity to be provided internally first or least locally and also offer space and appropriate resources for self-learning using manuals or materials 3) during projects preparation.
- Complete job descriptions with explicit MEL responsibilities, even if limited. This can make the staff members, interns or volunteers to be aware of their contributions to gathering and analysis of information and thus, to translate it into personal and organisational learning.
- Sustain and develop peer-to-peer appraisal practices based on lifelong learning and continuous improvement.
- Include MEL activities in all projects and if possible, prioritise these activities and allocate specific resources for internal reflection and knowledge sharing.
- Introduce self assessment tools and techniques that address both personal and professional performance, to increase individual responsibility towards continuous improvement and to improve organisational capacity.
- Encourage participation of everyone in the organisation in regards with any MEL process related with human resources.

9

Financial management

Organisations have staff with specific tasks as financial managers or officers who are in charge of budgeting and financial monitoring. Budgets and plans are monitored periodically, but mostly by financial officers and lead coordinating staff. Financial information is published in the form of annual activities reports in all organisations. External audits and reporting are in place according to legal requirements in the different



European countries. Resources are clearly assigned to financial management. Importantly, organisations allocate limited financial resources to MEL activities. They are rather part of project's implementation than assumed practice of ensuring organisational performance.

Suggestions for improvement in relation to financial management

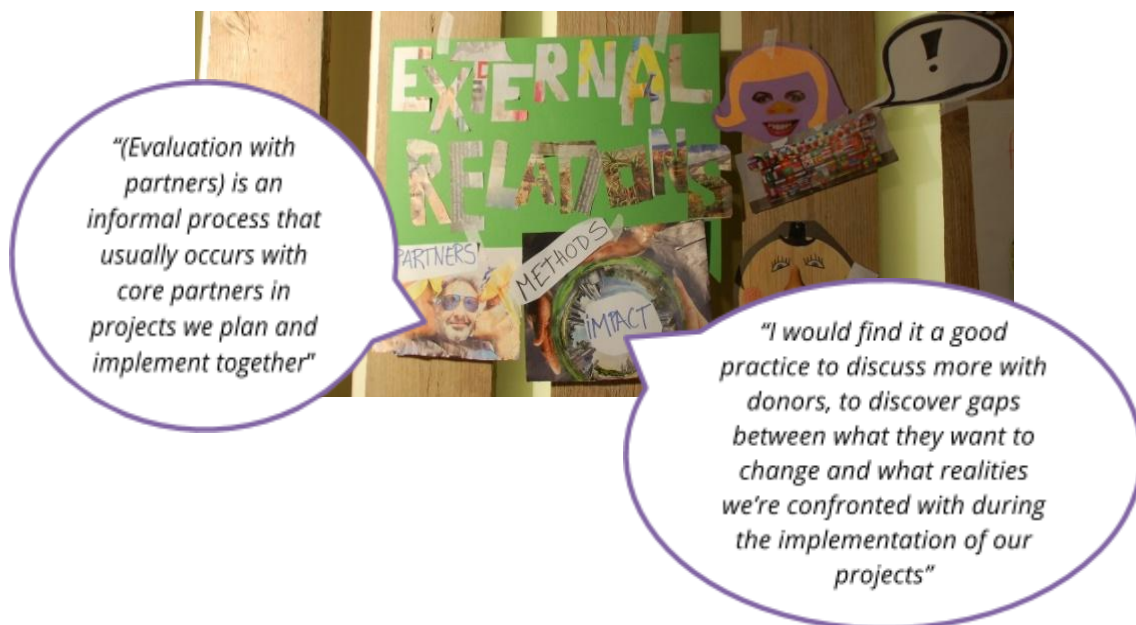
- Improve participatory budgeting and include review of financial decisions in MEL activities both related to efficiency and effectiveness.
- Improve allocation of financial resources to MEL activities.

10

External relations

Organisations often engage with their partners in a dialogue (both formally and informally) about monitoring and evaluation methods and expected results. However, these exchanges are rather informal and vary in depth and scope. It is rare that organisations create together with their partners a full MEL plan for a joint project or programme. Most of organisations work intensively with partners, so discussions are held on all aspects of projects. However in-depth discussions on evaluation criteria, methodology and analysis of results happened only on special occasions. Evaluations with donors rarely go beyond the reporting obligations. Other stakeholders, like communities, are rarely involved in the design of MEL strategies and plans.

One notable exception has been the “3M” evaluation that UNOY and PATRIR were involved in as part of the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (2015). It was a multi-agency, multi-country, multi-donor evaluation on children, youth participation in peacebuilding in Nepal, Colombia and DR Congo.



Suggestions for improvement in relation to external relations

- Continue to engage in evaluation projects in partnership, especially with community organisations and donors.
- Seek and use opportunities to engage in dialogue about criteria, methods and results with communities, participants, partners and donors.

11

MEL practices in youth (peace) organisations

This section summarises the main characteristics of MEL practices in youth organisations, mostly working for peace and related issues based on previous studies, a series of consultations with other young peacebuilders and an online survey.

MEL practices in youth peace organisations in previous studies

Though youth organisations engage in MEL activities, little is published about these practices. When searching on Google “evaluation in youth organisations” (both UK and American spelling) only three results appear which are all related to the study by Del Felice and Solheim (2011). When doing the search only with the keywords, there are more publications but they are:

- A. Evaluation reports of projects and programmes implemented by youth organisations;
- B. Toolkits or manuals on how to do evaluation written for young people (e.g. United Nations toolkit to evaluate youth policies, 2004); or
- C. Evaluation reports of activities for youth as a target group (e.g. Olberding and Olberding, 2010).

Within this last group, we found one interesting chapter on youth-led research, evaluation and planning (London et al, 2003). This chapter clearly presents the numerous benefits of engaging young people as researchers. The authors provide examples of how empowerment and participatory evaluation with young people can enhance the quality of the evaluation as a whole and youth programming. One of the highlighted benefits was that young people are knowledgeable about their own needs and their peers’ realities, thus, complete and enhance the process of knowledge production.

These studies are useful as they demonstrate that youth organisations are involved in evaluations. However, they do not focus on the general MEL practices *within* youth organisations. They focus on the descriptions of results of the programmes and, more

importantly, on how to engage youth in research and evaluation of social development activities.

We found three studies that look at evaluation and learning within youth organisations. They are summarised as follows:

Study 1. Searching for criteria of evaluation (Del Felice and Chludova, 2005a and 2005b). The first specific study we found was developed by our own network and in cooperation with a Master student and Professor at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. The aim of the study was to understand what criteria was used in evaluations (what was considered “good” youth peace work). It was not focused on the kinds or depths of evaluations but rather the perceptions of young peacebuilders of what was good youth peace practice. The study examined documentation, conducted a survey among members of the UNOY network and youth organisations (23 responses out of which 17 were from European respondents and 6 from African respondents), held in-depth interviews with young peacebuilders (10) and consulted resource persons (6) and donors (2) supporting youth organisations.

This study concluded that youth organisations do little structured evaluation often with unclear criteria. First, young peacebuilders reported not evaluating themselves systematically and opportunities for improvement were lost. The reasons mentioned were: lack of knowledge and skills in the non-formal education sector; and lack of time to plan and evaluate pressed by the urgency and need of actions. Among those who conducted evaluations, the most common format were evaluative questionnaires after an activity, team meetings during and after the activity, and report writing. The main purpose of these evaluations was to improve the format, logistics, content and methodology of an activity so as to avoid making the same mistakes again. However, they lacked a thorough analysis of what actually changed in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of participants. Changes were observed in a rather “organic” way. For example, one youth worker explained what success was for him: “When I am happy about the results, to see joy in others, objectives are met. A sensation of joy, well-being, that we are on the correct path.” Another peacebuilder expressed a similar idea: “E-mails saying thank you, that we are doing actions that we are learning, and motivating people, that people are satisfied.”

The need for improvement was acknowledged by most of the respondents but the need to professionalise youth peace work and introduce systematic evaluation methods did not seem to be a priority among most. Only a few had explicit commitments to professionalisation and expressed the external pressure from donors to demonstrate results. For most, good results meant that participants felt engaged and motivated. Most acted based on the belief that their actions would contribute to a better society, without the need to know exactly how.

Second, evaluation criteria was not explicit or clear in the projects examined. The most often mentioned idea for considering activities “good” was that they brought people together, produced good relationships and cooperation. The second most often cited responses included the quantity of participants, how well-attended the

event was, and how many people it reached and affected. The third most mentioned idea was that the activity was well-organized and well-financed.

The donor interviewed was asked about the criteria she used for considering a good youth peace project. She answered: "I keep on adjusting my criteria". "It is a very difficult process, they are eager to learn and enthusiastic but sometimes they lack professionalism." She found that working with young people is also easy. They are willing to take advice, when sometimes adults tend to believe that they have the right answer. Besides written criteria for evaluation, she also trusts her feelings and intuition about the project, showing other forms of "knowing" are at play.

Study 2. Youth organisations as learning organisations (Del Felice and Solheim, 2011)

This study looked at perceptions of youth workers and how the youth organisations that they work in are learning organisations. These perceptions were gathered via an online survey (92 respondents from 36 countries) and through research done by UNOY on its internal learning since 2006. The main findings indicate that youth organisations are unique spaces for learning, especially when it comes to knowledge, skills and attitudes for active citizenship/civic education. Youth learn how to relate to others, how to plan activities, how to communicate and develop self-confidence.

Youth organisations were described as emergent learning spaces where peer-to-peer learning and experiential methods were central. The study showed that youth organisations adapt and borrow existing management and evaluation tool-boxes and at the same time, develop their own tools and knowledge that are more relevant to their needs. These special tools were based on collaborative tools, horizontal –network relations and more functional and flexible management structures.

Study 3. How do we know we are building peace? A reflection on what is good youth peace monitoring and evaluation (Villanueva, et al, 2015)

The chapter aimed at describing how youth peace organisations evaluated their work, so it was the closest in approach to the Youth Impact project. It was based on the internal reflections of UNOY Peacebuilders and a survey among youth peace workers (34 respondents from 22 countries in the five continents) conducted during 2013. The main point made by the authors was that evaluation was a big challenge for youth organisations, especially evaluation understood as assessing impact due to lack of long-term financial resources, human resources and skills. They explain "Most youth peace education projects tend to be sporadic, and too short-term to be

extensively monitored and evaluated. It is this nature of youth peace projects that makes monitoring and evaluating a challenging process.”

They argue that most organisations are activity-oriented without observing the linkages between their projects. Youth organisations need to pay more attention to strategic planning and reflecting on the lessons learned. At the same time, they note that evaluation is perceived as important and explain how it plays a key role in the projects run by youth organisations. For example, many report using new media, videos and photography as both means of expression and as the main reporting method. Authors highlighted the importance of creative and less standardised ways of approaching evaluation developed by youth organisations. They are more youth-friendly data collection methods and, therefore, the quality of the information is improved. The methods are more focused on the process than on fixed results. The authors conclude that there is no blueprint for monitoring and evaluation in youth peace organisations. Their key recommendation is to develop a flexible monitoring and evaluation strategy that supports and enables the organisation to reach its overall goals and objectives instead of a technical and static document that does not reflect their actual work.

Main trends and added-value of the present project

Our research largely reinforces the findings in these studies. MEL is a challenge for youth organisation, especially when it comes to more advanced forms of evaluation related to impact assessment and long-term monitoring. These studies identified the main challenges and good practices. Various MEL practices are already quite established practices. The types of MEL practices described in these studies coincide largely with the ones in our study. These practices are shaped by the characteristics and needs of youth. All studies coincide on the fact that peer-to-peer learning, experiential learning and horizontal relations enable intense learning processes.



However, in contrast to the findings of these studies, we observe that the six youth organisations studied in this project are starting to become more aware of the crucial need of learning and reflection for improvement. For example, we observed in some organisations

exercises like the development of theories of change, strategic plans with clear indicators, development of competences frameworks to make these more explicit, clear and usable in the educational practices and research conducted in cooperation

with other organisations (e.g. 3M evaluation, research proposals). These types of activities show a greater commitment to learning and knowledge development in which youth organisations take the lead, rather than being the objects of study, as in most literature referred to above. Youth-led learning and knowledge development is key to quality and relevance of youth peace work if it aims to improve the lives of young people and their communities.

The extra added value of the present project, is its methodology. It is an 18 months peer-to-peer review project, based on a participatory approach and a triangulation of methods to allow for more objective analysis.

MEL practices in other youth peace organisations: feedback to our findings

During the research phase there were three moments where the findings of the research were shared and to some extent verified, including several consultations in order to learn about the experiences and practices of other youth peace organisations. These moments took place during 1) Training of Trainers on Conflict Transformation (organised by the International Secretariat of UNOY and FCV) including representatives of 10 different organisations 2) the Young Peacebuilders Forum 2015 (organised by the International Secretariat of UNOY with the input of the 37 youth peace organisations present 3) Online survey (15 respondents). In total, we collected feedback from 55 young peacebuilders apart from those directly involved in the research process. Overall the organisations had similar experiences with MEL as the 6 organisations included in this research. Notable findings:

Many young peacebuilders consulted seemed to be aware and familiar with the evaluation of projects, while their understanding and practical experience of MEL practices within youth peacebuilding are limited, especially at the organisational level.

During the forum it became clear that other youth peace organisations had created topic specific guidelines based on their respective norms and their organisational culture, such as Ethical Fundraising guidelines and Environmental Guidelines. It is also interesting that only half of the organisations included in this research have written commitments/ethical guidelines to values, while more than a third of the survey respondents indicated that their organisations do have such written commitments or ethical guidelines.

Though the majority of the youth peace organisations included in the survey (13 out of 15) indicate that they have a Strategic Plan, we found that (based on the sessions during the forum and the answers to the survey) not all staff members and volunteers of these organisations are aware about the existence of these plans. Though most organisations set general goals and objectives, knowledge and the use of specific MEL plans as well as theories of change are rare within most organisations.

Knowledge Management seems to be a relatively unknown aspect of the MEL practices of organisations. Even though all organisations mention the ways in which collect, store and share data, they rarely translate the collected data into knowledge. In

addition, organisations also indicate that they struggle to share learnings internally (e.g. between teams) and to use lessons learned.

It is remarkable how much emphasis is given to learning processes of staff and volunteers of the youth organisations. Organisations value internal learning processes, which are based on peer-to-peer learning. The organisations use many diverse ways of learning (internal, external, online etc.) and also value the personal interest and development of personnel involved in their organisation. The consultation session during the forum clearly illustrated that the induction processes of new personnel could be improved.

Although the consulted organisations have clearly assigned resources to their financial management, it depends on the size of the organisation to what extent these resources have been specifically assigned to MEL practices.

Concerning the external relations of the consulted organisations, it was found that open discussions about results and evaluation is rather taking place informally and is based on projects but does not take place in the context of long term organisational partnerships.

Conclusions

Our research confirms that monitoring, evaluation and learning is increasingly important for youth peace organisations. The first indication was the motivation to start this project. Our observations and discussions show that although MEL activities are still considered a challenge, they are perceived as fundamental for strategic growth and improvement.

A clear commonality among the organisations is that their MEL activities are more intense and developed at the operational level compared to the organisational level. This was also confirmed in our consultations with other youth organisations outside those directly involved in the project. We found there is a lot of learning and sharing enabled by horizontal, peer-to-peer and international networks. This is an asset of youth organisations and what makes their MEL practices unique and inspirational for other organisations. We observed youth tend to be more open to learning and to sharing, and less defensive when it comes to mistakes and risks. Yet, this learning is not harnessed to its maximum potential due to limited capacities for strategic knowledge development.

Organisations focus on their day-to-day activities and delve deeply into projects, with limited time and capacities to learn from their activities and to share that knowledge. This challenge is often accompanied by overstretched teams, teams working in different physical locations and personnel turnover. In view of these dynamics, the need to improve knowledge management mechanisms came out very clearly and strongly. Organisations need to learn practical ways to familiarise themselves with tools to gather information, process it and transform it into valuable knowledge and lessons learned. This knowledge can then be transferred beyond individuals and across project teams, generations and organisations. Lessons learned and in-depth reflection on peace actions and their effects are crucial for improving new actions, and taking youth peace organisations to a new dimension of impactful social change actions.

We learned impact assessments are very challenging, although it is widely discussed among peacebuilding researchers and practitioners alike. Theories of change, outputs and outcomes are (becoming) the basis of monitoring and evaluation, the question whether an intervention can contribute to preventing conflicts and consolidating peace in the long run remains open and needs to be considered at all times: What positive and negative, primary and secondary, intended or unintended long-term effects did an intervention produce? How was the conflict and peacebuilding environment affected, i.e. did the intervention contribute to “peace writ large”?

After roughly 36 pages we have completed one cycle of learning about our own organisations, about the NGOs involved in the project and about other organisations in the field that are concerned about MEL.

At first, we started by collecting knowledge on the topic: reviewing relevant literature and consulting evaluation reports and methodologies of other NGOs from the field. We participated in evaluation processes switching hats of researchers and staff members. We used debriefing sessions as important learning moments and contributed to writing organisational evaluation reports. The second phase of our learning process as a team was about reflection and generalisation. We looked critically at what good organisational practices, and at positive changes of projects and programmes. We also looked at what did not work and why? Thirdly, we started applying what we learned. We have and are still adapting the projects or programmes we are involved in accordingly and/or are saving these insights for upcoming activities. Lastly, we are sharing what we did/are doing by bringing new thinking to our own organisations, our partners and peers.

Now a new cycle of learning begins about the practical application of various MEL tools, methods and approaches in youth peace work. During the next phase of the project, the six organisations involved will each develop a concrete action plan in order to improve their MEL practices. The research group plans to further develop a detailed assessment tool and a set of practical guidelines to help youth peace organisations improve their MEL practices. By the end of July 2016 both the tool and the guidelines will be completed and distributed online. The research team is excited to keep on learning about MEL practices and to share the final results with other youth peace organisations. To be continued!

Suggestions

Based on the analysed information we could summarise the main, general, suggestions for improvement as:

- **Evaluation as assessment for improvement.** Project, programme and strategic planning documents could be completed by including a carefully produced theory of change and indicators at output and outcome levels. This would allow a more accurate monitoring and evaluation of short-term and mid-term goals. Objectives should be phrased to include both the development of organisational capacities and individual competences development of participants (networking and capacity building-educational activities) and promoting the role of youth in peacebuilding (advocacy) as a field or sector.
- **Evaluation as learning.** Knowledge management and learning activities should be strengthened to ensure reflection and sharing of lessons learned to feed into new decisions and activities.
- **Evaluation as accountability.** Sustain and improve participatory approaches to MEL, including participants, partners, donors and the communities where organisations work.
- **Evaluation as assessment for social change.** Evaluation should show, from a community perspective, changes which are made in the community as a result of planned actions, giving answers to previously identified needs, creating new outputs, products or services, with a sustainable impact.

Suggested practical resources

- [Toolkit - Educational Evaluation in Youth Work](#)
Council of Europe
- [Online Training Modules for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation for Peacebuilding](#) | Search for Common Ground / dmeformpeace.org
- [Guidance for Designing, Monitoring and Evaluating Peacebuilding Projects: Using Theories of Change](#)
CARE International and International Alert

More concrete tips on MEL for youth peace organisations will be part of the **practical guidelines**, published by the research team by the end of July 2016.

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Annex 1

Glossary

Baseline information

It is information that results from a study done before an intervention or planned action. This information is crucially important for monitoring and evaluation as it allows comparison of the situation before and after the intervention.

Competence

It refers to the the ability to meet complex demands successfully or to carry out an activity or task'. This demand-oriented or functional definition is supplemented by an understanding of competencies as 'internal mental structures of abilities, capacities and dispositions embedded in the individual'. Therefore, each competency can be defined from this perspective and corresponds to "the combination of interrelated cognitive and practical skills, knowledge, motivation, values and ethics, attitudes, emotions, and other social and behavioral components that together can be mobilized for effective action in a particular context" (Rychen and A. Tiana, 2004: 21).

Code of conduct

It is a set of conventional principles and expectations outlining a range of social norms, rules and responsibilities that are considered binding by the individuals that are part of an organisation or a group.

Code of ethics or ethical guidelines

Is a set of principles developed by an organisation addressed to its staff to guide them in performing their activities according to its primary values and ethical standards.

Culture of Peace

As defined by the United Nations, the Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour, and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13).

Formative evaluation

It refers to evaluation activities taking place during the life of a project or organisation, with the intention of improving the strategy or way of functioning of the project or organisation (CHRF, 2004).

Evaluation

An evaluation is a systematic assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or programme. Evaluations should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation is different from monitoring, which is a continuing assessment based on systematic collection of data on specific indicators as well as other relevant information (Care International, 2012).

Effectiveness

It is about the success in producing the desired outcomes and reaching set objectives.

Efficiency

It is about producing desired outcomes/effects with a minimum of resources (i.e. financial, human).

Ex-ante evaluation

It is an evaluation completed after identifying the training needs and designing the programme, during which the assumptions and needs on which the programme is based should be evaluated and fine-tuned.

Ex-post evaluation

It is an evaluation completed a few months after the activity and focusing on the perceived personal development of the participants.

Focus group

It is a social sciences research method to gather information about a group of people's opinions and ideas about a topic. It differs from an interview because it allows interactions and discussions among group participants.

Impact

A longer-term result that is the consequence of the achievement of outcomes.

Impact assessment

It refers to a type of evaluation which is conducted at a later stage and can help determine whether or not, in the longer term, the project had an impact on the participants and to see if the outcomes of the project made the desired impact.

Indicator

These are tangible and measurable indications that visualise results and help to assess progress towards the achievement of results. An indicator is a means of measuring actual results against planned or expected results in terms of quality, quantity, and timeliness. There are two main types of indicators: quantitative measures (e.g. number of participants, percentage of young people with conflict resolution skills) and qualitative measures (presence of an attitude of dialogue, quality of interactions).

Inputs

The resources required (e.g. organisational, political, administrative, intellectual, human, physical, material and monetary) to produce a result. The inputs are required to carry out activities that will lead to results.

Knowledge

It is understanding that emerges from processed information, experience and individual interpretation.

Learning

In relation to monitoring and evaluation, it refers to the systematic incorporation of lessons, recommendations and observations into programme design, including the findings that emerge from accountability mechanisms (Save the Children, 2009).

Monitoring

It is the systematic collection and analysis of information as a project or programme progresses.

Outputs

The immediate, visible, and tangible consequences of programme/project activities. They are short-term results of completed activities.

Outcomes

These are the consequences of achieving a set of outputs. This is generally the level where the end-users take ownership of the project or programme.

Personnel

This refers to people employed in an organisation or engaged in an organised undertaking. This term includes paid staff, interns, volunteers and resource persons.

Project

It is a series of actions, that is carefully planned to achieve specific objectives within a defined time period and with a defined budget.

Programme

It is a set of related actions and projects to achieve a particular medium or long term aim.

Plan

It is a detailed proposal of actions to achieve an aim. It is often understood as a set of programmes in a 3, 5 or 10 years' time frame. It can be also be referred to as an action plan, which is usually short term and includes information on tasks, responsibilities and a time-frame.

Research

It is the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions about how reality (or parts of it) works.

Summative evaluation

It is evaluation that draws learnings from a completed project or an organisation that is no longer functioning (CHRF, 2004).

Survey

It is a social sciences research method which consists of a series of questions asked to persons to find out about facts they know, their ideas and opinions about an aspect of reality. It is usually a questionnaire distributed to many persons either face-to-face or via an online questionnaire.

Strategic plan

It is a broadly-defined plan aimed at creating a desired future for an organisation and its work.

Theory of Change

It is a "tool that explains and articulate the process of change, and can be used to design, monitor and evaluate social change initiatives, such as peacebuilding. A basic TOC explains how programme activities are connected with each other and how they contribute to achieving results at different levels: output, outcome and impact"(Care Nepal, 2012: 19).

Annex 2

Organisational Documentation Analysed

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Annex 3

Research activities and their locations

Activity	Description	Participants	Place	Dates
Preparatory activities	Research design, preparatory documentation	7 researchers + organisations personnel	The Hague, The Netherlands	30 March- 11 May 2015
1st transnational meeting	Introduction of research team, research design and tools	7 researchers	The Hague, The Netherlands	8-11 May 2015
Visit to SCI	Focus groups and interviews	3 researchers + 7 SCI staff, volunteers, board members	Antwerpen, Belgium	12-14 May 2015
Visit to FCV	Focus groups and interviews	3 researchers+ 8 staff and volunteers	Barcelona, Spain	2-4 June 2015
Visit to CEIPES	Focus groups, interviews and visit to project's partner	3 researchers+ 10 staff and volunteers	Palermo, Italy	7-10 July 2015
Visit to PATRIR	Focus group, interviews	3 researchers + 11 staff and volunteers	Cluj-Napoca, Romania	14-16 September 2015
Meeting with EIF	Interviews/ discussions	3 researches +2 staff and volunteers	Cluj-Napoca, Romania	17-19 September 2015
Visit to UNOY Peacebuilders-International Secretariat	Focus groups, interviews and visit to Cordaid (donor)	3 researchers +9 staff, interns, representative of ISG, board members + 1 donor	The Hague, The Netherlands	28-30 September 2015
Training of Trainers	Feedback from participants to assessment tool	3 researchers + 10 training participants	Vilanova I Geltru, Spain	11-18 October 2015

2nd transnational meeting	Analysis of research findings	7 researchers	The Hague, The Netherlands	8-11 November 2015
Young Peacebuilders Forum	Presentation of findings and gathering feedback	7 researchers and 50 forum participants (linked to 37 youth peace organisations)	The Hague, The Netherlands	12-15 November 2015
Reporting	Analysis, reporting and proofreading	7 researchers + proofreaders	Online	November-December 2015