T-Kit Nº 10

Educational Evaluation in Youth Work

Youth Partnership

Council of Europe & European Commission

T-Kit on

Educational Evaluation in Youth Work

"Tasting the soup"

Welcome to the T-Kit Series

Some of you may have wondered: what does T-Kit mean? We can offer at least two answers. The first is as simple as the full Version in English: “Training Kit”. The second has more to do with the sound of the word that may easily recall “Ticket”, one of the travelling documents we usually need to go on a journey. In our Imagination, this T-Kit is a tool that each of us can use in our work.

More specifically, we would like to address youth workers and trainers and offer them theoretical and practical tools to work with and use when training young people. The T-Kit series is the result of a collective effort involving people from different cultural, professional and organisational backgrounds. Youth trainers, youth leaders in NGOs and professional writers have worked together in order to create high quality publications, which would address the needs of the target group while recognising the diversity of approaches across Europe to each subject.

The T-Kits are a product of the Partnership in the field of Youth between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Besides the T-Kits, the Partnership has resulted in other areas of cooperation such as training courses, the magazine “Coyote”, research and youth policy activities and an Internet site hosting also the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

To find out more about developments in the Partnership (new publications, training course and seminar announcements, etc.) or to download the electronic version of the T-Kits, visit the Partnership website: **www.youth-partnership.net**

Council of Europe Publishing – F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-6023-2

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Acknowledgments

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Ian Redpath of the British Council for his organisational and administrative support.

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Foreword

Evaluation is not something that people get immediately excited about. Often it is associatwed with "writing long reports", "justifying your work to someone else", "measuring the immeasurable", "filling out forms and questionnaires", etc. Boring, tiring, difficult: not exciting at all.

In this T-Kit we want to show you that evaluation can be thrilling, electrifying, stimulating, fun, exciting… or at least attractive and inspiring enough to integrate it into your educational work. Evaluation becomes Educational Evaluation.

Evaluation is something natural

Evaluation is something that is natural for human beings. We do it all the time. We collect information, we process it, we give it a meaning and a value and we act or react according to it. We do it every day when we cross the street, when we buy something, when we talk, when we work, when we move, when we cook and we do it without reports and questionnaires.

So you might ask yourself why should I read a T-Kit on something I already do every day? The answer is to make it conscious, explicit, reflective and organised and to share it with others. Our "everyday evaluation" we do all by ourselves and in our own way. But, from the moment we work together with other people we have to agree on how, when and what we want to evaluate.

Evaluation is like cooking!

Let's get cooking!

Imagine you are having friends over for dinner. You want to prepare them a really nice meal, one that takes you through a nice evening. You decide on the menu you want to serve: four courses starting with a wonderful soup full of vegetables, then pasta with gorgonzola sauce followed by the main dish of chicken in curry sauce accompanied by rice and carrots. For desert you intend to surprise them with your wonderful home made Tiramisu. All this is accompanied by a nice red wine. You go the market in the morning and buy all the ingredients and when you get home you immediately start to prepare. In short: you have a wonderful evening, great discussions, there is a good atmosphere and your friends really liked the food.

Still, looking back there are a few things that could be improved. After the pasta most of your guests were already full and were a bit shocked when you served the chicken curry. And then there was still the Tiramisu waiting for them. Maybe both pasta and soup before the main course is a bit too much? One of your friends turned out to be vegetarian, so for her the main course ended up being only rice and carrots. When again inviting friends for dinner, you resolve to first ask them about any dietary or other special needs they might have. Finally, another friend does not drink alcohol and the only thing you could offer him was water. Next time, you resolve to buy some non-alcoholic drinks to offer to your guests along with wine.

You did your own evaluation and next time dinner will certainly be better. Probably other things will pop up and you will evaluate those too. You will take them into account for future dinners with friends. You did this ‘evaluation’ without having a meeting, without questionnaires and you did not write a report you just did it, naturally.

Try to imagine another situation: you like cooking a lot and so does one of your friends. The idea is to start a restaurant. Not immediately but, say, in two years. Until then you want to try things out. Together with your friend you decide to offer “dinner-evenings” for groups of between 6 and 12 people twice a week, on Wednesdays and Sundays.

By doing so you can practice cooking, experiment which with ideas for menus that could eventually be served in the restaurant, find out how the co-operation between the two of you works out, see if there is any way to earn enough for a reasonable living for two people, and so on. Your friend’s house has a room, which seems to be perfect for dining and her kitchen is quite good. So, off you go!

And what is one of the first things you do? You start planning the evaluation! That is because you want to “try things out” and to see what the results of your experiment are. You end up in long discussions with your friend about all kinds of things.

What do you want to evaluate?

- the quality of the food
- the satisfaction of the customers
- the variety of the food
- the price and cost of the services offered
- the assortment of drinks you offer
- the atmosphere during the evenings
- the co-operation between you and your friend
- ....

And how do we evaluate these things?

- How do we know the customers like the food? By the tip they leave? Do we give them a questionnaire? Do we count how many people come back?
- When is the atmosphere good? When people leave singing? When everybody is rolling about laughing?
- Do we count costs and benefits every night or should we go for a more long-term approach?

These reflections bring on other questions, like:

- What do we (the two of us) mean by quality food? What is our standard?
- What kind of atmosphere would we like to create?
- When it comes to questions of cost and profit, what would we consider a satisfactory or a good outcome?
- How do we know that people are honest when we ask them if they are satisfied?
- Which aspects of the evaluation results can be used when we go to the bank to ask for assistance in financing our plan to establish a restaurant?
- And many more ...

That is what this T-Kit is all about: planning evaluation, deciding about what you want to get achieve, exploring its educational value, when to do it, with whom, for what and for whom.

Introduction

Target group, objectives and structure of the T-Kit

This T-Kit is primarily addressed to youth workers closely involved in learning processes and educational activities with young people: trainers, facilitators, mentors, group leaders… Nevertheless this publication should be of interest to other actors involved in youth projects like organisers, administrators and decision makers.

The ultimate aim of this T-Kit is to support and contribute to the improvement of youth projects in Europe, by developing the competence of youth workers in the theory and practice of Educational Evaluation.

In the first chapter, “The Ingredients of Educational Evaluation” (the “theoretical” part of the T-Kit) we will explore the basic ideas and concepts around evaluation that are relevant for educational activities with young people. In the second chapter “Pots, pans and spices” (the “practical” part) we will map out, share and critically look at existing practices of evaluation (strategies, methods…). We will then invite you to define your own evaluation strategies, methods and criteria so that you can improve your projects (in terms of achievement of its objectives, products, structure and process).

In the foreword, we have introduced the metaphor of cooking. It is used in other parts of the T-Kit, (you can always identify them because they are sign-posted with our cooks)…

Nevertheless, this T-Kit is not a recipe book on evaluation methods that can be automatically transferred into your activities. Rather, it is an educational and methodological tool to help you to naturally develop, integrate and improve educational evaluation in your youth work. Concrete experiences and existing practices of evaluation as developed in practical youth work in Europe will serve us as reference material.

Foci of the T-Kit: educational activities and the scope of educational evaluation

Educational evaluation is a wide topic with a lot of implications. In this T-Kit, we will deal with a number of them, but we want to stay focused:

- The first focus is an educational one. This T-Kit is about *educational evaluation*. This means that we look at evaluation as an inherent part of educational processes in youth work and we think about how to put evaluation at the service of educational achievements.

There are other approaches to evaluation: as part of decision-making processes, from the point of view of project management, income-outcome oriented evaluations, etc. Our approach does not necessarily contradict any other approaches to evaluation. It is simply different. We refer to other approaches on several occasions. Nevertheless, the focus will remain on (non-formal) education.

With this particular focus, this T-Kit complements and in some cases completes the ideas on educational evaluation already present in the T-Kit series (for example in the T-Kits on Training Essentials, Project Management, Organisational Management and European Citizenship). In the same way, the CD-Rom on Evaluation produced by SALTO[16] is complementary to this T-Kit and has been used as a source in its production.

- The other focus refers to the scope of youth activities that we will consider in the "practical" part of the T-Kit. These are *educational field activities involving learning processes with / involving young people*, such as: youth exchanges, seminars, training activities, volunteering. Among these, we will concentrate on the specificity and practice of youth projects with a European dimension.

Again, this focus is not intended to be exclusive. As relevant, we have also made reference to non-field activities and other youth services such as information, publications or campaigns.

16 SALTO-YOUTH.net is a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. It provides youth work and training resources and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies within the frame of the European Commission's YOUTH programme and beyond. More information at **http://www.salto-youth.net** In 2004, SALTO produced a CD ROM on evaluating training in European Youth Work. Theory is combined with examples of proven methods from extensive experience of evaluating training activities. It includes documents to download and adapt and some suggestions for going further. More information at: **http://www.salto-youth.net/evaluation-intro/**

The European Youth Policy Context

For both the Council of Europe and the European Commission evaluation plays a very important role in verifying the effects of their policies and programmes related to young people and for planning further strategies and priorities.

In the past decade in the youth field, both institutions have put also significant emphasis on developing educational activities in which evaluation and its methodology is a primary tool for improving and refining the quality of youth work.

- Since adoption of *the White Paper: A new impetus for European Youth*[17], **the European Commission** promotes the elaboration of evidence-based youth policies in the member states and is committed to planning its policies through a consultative process involving several evaluation methods. It is called the open method of co-ordination. *The European Youth Pact*[18], which highlights youth issues in core areas of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, invites Member States to ensure effective implementation and follow-up by setting measurable objectives and developing a structured dialogue. Both Member States and the European Commission are invited to evaluate the framework for European co-operation in the youth field in 2009.

  The *Youth in Action programme* for the period 2007 – 2013 was developed on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation process: the results of a public consultation, the results of national and European level mid-term evaluations established to reflect on the YOUTH programme[19] 2000 – 2006 and leading to an interim evaluation report and an ex-ante evaluation of the future instrument. The interim evaluation of the YOUTH programme also included a number of recommendations based on the expectations and requests for simplification expressed by stakeholders and young people.

  In the European Commission's *YOUTH Programme* reflective evaluation is considered to be an essential criteria for implementing quality youth projects. The programme expects youth workers and project promoters to use evaluation techniques in order to make sure that the objectives they set are realistic, achievable and serve the needs of the young people involved, keeping in mind the community context in which the project takes place.

17 The White Paper on Youth was launched in November 2001, after a one and half year long consultation process involving young people, experts in the youth-field, national authorities and NGOs. It is a document containing proposals for Community action in the youth field. It presents a detailed and well-argued policy for discussion and for decision. The White Paper is available at: **http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/index_en.html**

18 The European Youth Pact was adopted by the Spring European Council in March 2005 as one of the instruments contributing to the achievements of the Lisbon objectives of growth and jobs. The Pact focuses on three areas: employment, integration and social advancement; education training and mobility; reconciliation of working life and family life. The European Youth Pact is available at PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS - Annex I: European Youth Pact at **http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/84335.pdf**

19 The Youth in Action programme is the EU's mobility and non-formal education programme targeting young people. The programme is open to youth in 31 European countries. The programme offers possibilities to young people in the form of group exchanges and individual voluntary work, as well as support activities. More information at **http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm**

In order to foster recognition and visibility of youth work activities, particularly in the framework of the YOUTH programme, the European Commission is going to establish a *YOUTH-PASS*, a tool for assessing non-formal learning progresses.

- **The Council of Europe** and its **Directorate of Youth and Sport** have been pioneers in initiating the discussion on evidence-based youth policies as well as the quality of youth work in Europe.

  The European Ministers responsible for Youth of the 46 Member States of the Council of Europe identified four key items as *priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector for 2006-2008*[20]: developing and promoting standards for youth policies, fostering the recognition of youth work and non-formal education competences, developing and sharing knowledge on the situation of young people and supporting the quality and sustainability of European youth work training and policy.

  Accordingly the Directorate of Youth and Sport is running a long-term project for the *evaluation of national youth policies* in a range of the Member States. On the basis of an extensive national evaluation report and study visits in the countries concerned, an expert team drafts an international evaluation report ("review"), which is presented to the Minister responsible for youth issues at a public hearing. The compilation of youth policy indicators provides Member States with a frame of reference and guidelines for undertaking a thorough evaluation of their youth policies, in terms of consistency, co-ordination between relevant domains and practical implementation.

  With regard to quality standards in education and training activities the Directorate for Youth and Sport has elaborated *reference criteria* for all those involved and concerned by these kind of activities of the organisation, including staff, trainers, consultants, participants and partner organisations. The criteria serve as a benchmark for the evaluation of education and training activities and are understood as minimum standards. A thorough and open process of evaluation is defined as one of the relevant quality criteria in order to secure, among others, stock-taking of the results, the evaluation of the quality of the learning process and the follow-up to be given.

  In the same framework the Council of Europe promotes the recognition of non-formal education and youth work by investing in the description of what constitutes quality youth work. The Directorate of Youth and Sport is now going to complete the long process of producing a new quality assessment tool: *the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers*[21], which after a public testing phase will be published in early 2007.

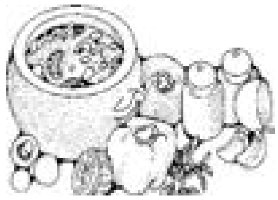
- Also in **the Partnership Programme in the Youth field between the Council of Europe and the European Commission**[22], evaluation plays a crucial role in all of its strands: training, research and Euro-Med. All activities are developed with the support of appropriate evaluation approaches. The Training strand of the Partnership itself was as well subject to an external evaluation assessing the relevance, the impact, the efficiency and effectiveness of activities. As one of the results the three separate pillars of the Partnership that existed earlier were merged to one single partnership agreement under a joint management.

20 See **http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/youth/2._Priorities/policy.asp**

21 The European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers can be accessed at **www.coe.int/youthportfolio**

22 More information on the Partnership Programme: **www.youth-partnership.net**

1. The ingredients of educational evaluation



1.1 What is Educational Evaluation? Definitions

Some possible definitions of educational evaluation are:

"Educational evaluation is the systematic investigation, observation and interpretation of information." [23]

"Educational evaluation is a method (procedure) and to prove if the expectations and aims of an educational process reflect reality (results of the process)." [24]

"Educational evaluation is the process of obtaining information and using it to come to some conclusions which will be used to take decisions."

Without wishing to present only one definition or to summarise all existing ones, we can conclude that different processes of educational evaluation have some common components. The following definition embraces them.

"Educational evaluation is a systematic and ongoing process which includes:

- Researching and collecting information, from different sources, about the learning process, the content, the methods, the context, the outcomes of an educational activity
- The organisation and analysis of that information
- The establishment of certain criteria (evaluation criteria)
- The discernment and judgement of the analysed information (according to the set evaluation criteria and at the light of the educational objectives).
- Drawing conclusions and recommendations which allow the re-orientation and eventual improvement of the educational activity"[25].

It is necessary to distinguish educational evaluation from the process of collecting and obtaining certain kinds of information. The collection of information is something punctual, and it is done in the evaluation process at certain moments. But educational evaluation is an ongoing process. It implies judgement (good, bad, acceptable, ok, advantageous, disadvantageous, of high quality, of low quality, etc.) Educational evaluation implies measurement. But, educational evaluation goes beyond the mere measurement: it provides explanations and conclusions.

23 Tenbrink, T. & Cooper, J. M. (2003). Educator's Guide. Page 64.

24 Nydia Elola, Lilia V. Toranzos 2000 Evaluación educativa: una aproximación conceptual. Page 2.

25 Giovanni Iafrancesco, 2001. Hacia el mejoramiento de los procesos evaluativos en relación con el aprendizaje. Page 6.

Educational evaluation should not be a justification of shortcomings. As a result of the evaluation we might find out why certain shortcomings appeared, but the actors involved should not conceive and initiate the evaluation process looking for "excuses" or with a defensive attitude.

Educational evaluation should not be a money making strategy. As we will see later, one operational objective of educational evaluation is to reflect whether the educational activity met the expectations of partners and funding institutions. Those institutions often use evaluation as an instrument of control and sometimes even as a criteria to decide which projects and organisations to support. This has financial implications for those concerned. But, the starting point, the nature and primary aim of educational evaluation, is not to make money. If we "financially" misuse evaluation and fall into a lack of honesty and transparency, we might in the best case gain some short-term financial benefit. Experience, however, shows us that apart from weakening the legitimacy of educational evaluation, financially motivated evaluation damages trust between funders and those they support.

Educational evaluation should not become an exercise in power politics. In educational evaluation, different actors with different levels and areas of responsibility are involved. Often and naturally their conclusions differ. This, together with the fact that conclusions can to changes that can affect different actors in more or less positive ways, might imply that educational evaluation degenerates into a kind of power game, with different actors trying to assert their power over others using the evaluation as an instrument of their objectives. There is no magic rule for resisting this. But, actors who hold positions of responsibility should be those most open to criticism and generous in assuming responsibility, even if the results of the evaluation are not to their liking. These attitudes are an important contribution to making sure that the aims and nature of the evaluation are properly respected.

Educational evaluation should not be a public relations exercise. Of course, the outcomes of educational evaluation and its achievements should be shared witwh concerned target groups, organisations and institutions. But, this should be an integral consequence of the process rather than an objective of the evaluation in itself. Conceiving and planning educational evaluation as a public relations exercise will damage the process and in long term becomes counter productive co-operation and partnership with others.

1.2 Why evaluate? The aims and nature of educational evaluation

To learn

The first and most basic aim of educational evaluation is to learn. The aim is the learning of all actors involved: their access to additional knowledge and to a new learning opportunity. The educational purpose is the inherent characteristic of what makes educational evaluation different from other kinds of evaluation.

While evaluating, the actors involved learn to understand, to give a value and to draw conclusions on their own learning experiences. Through educational evaluation we learn from experience. The changes and actions resulting from educational evaluation become critical action and reflective praxis[26].

All the actors involved in educational evaluation learn to express their knowledge: knowledge not of "topics" but of the relevance of their educational experience to their own lives. A certain educational activity might seem to be very good from a lot of points of view but in reality it might be disconnected with the life of participants, and vice versa. This relevance, and connection between youth work and the lives of young people, is probably the most important "knowledge" in youth work. Very often it is learned during the evaluation process.

Participants also learn while sharing and confronting their judgements with those of their colleagues. During the evaluation process, different interpretations, meanings and interrelations are raised and debated. Very often actors involved in educational evaluation ask themselves: What does it mean? How should I interpret this or that result? What are the implications? The doubt implied by the diversity of answers that one might get to these questions can be considered as a matter or competence. The different actors need to have a certain "tolerance of ambiguity", the ability to live with several different possible outcomes, not all of which fit easily together or with one's personal, professional or organisational values, to be able to accept that the outcomes of the evaluation may not be to their liking. Where this competence is present, educational evaluation can be a motor of curiosity, a source of learning and an impulse to continue learning. When evaluation and learning take place at the same time, the actors involved create, discern, imagine, analyse, contrast, elaborate answers, formulate questions, come up with doubts, search for other sources. In other words, they truly evaluate.

In our opinion, and without wishing to ignore other purposes or diminish their importance, educational evaluation should first and foremost be put at the service of learning.

26 Praxis: the translation of an idea into practice. Source Word Reference Dictionary **http://www.wordreference.com.**

To motivate

The evaluation process should lead to improvements and change. Change, improvement, evolution and further development are factors of motivation for all the actors involved in the educational process. That is the reason why a constructively carried out educational evaluation contributes to maintaining a challenge and to fostering motivation within a project.

An evaluation whose results or process de-motivates becomes limited and incomplete because it cannot maintain the participation of all actors. Some participants might have negative and discouraging perceptions of evaluation. This can be a result of the fact that at times in formal education, evaluation (or more precisely put student assessment) is used as a mechanism to "select" or "exclude".

However, achieving the objective of motivating while evaluating does not only depend on "recognising the achievements as well as shortcomings" of what is being evaluated. It also depends a lot on the attitude adopted by those involved, the atmosphere in which the evaluation takes place and on the imagination of the actors about what will happen after the evaluation results have been made public.

To participate

Educational evaluation is an opportunity both to promote the values of participation and to practice it. Obvious as it may seem, all the actors involved in the educational process should therefore also be involved in its evaluation. This participative dimension goes beyond the "democratic legitimacy" of changes to the educational process. It also has an educational dimension. It would not be coherent or consequent to aim for the promotion of participation in an educational activity but to evaluate the fulfilment of that aim in a non-participatory manner. This aim of promoting participation while evaluating has methodological consequences: in educational evaluation participatory methods are very important.

To change and improve

As we have seen in its definition, change and improvement are integral to the process of educational evaluation.

This idea of change is generally assumed in an "operational" way: change of tools, formats, methods, places, targets. Change as a consequence of the accelerated changes taking place in our societies and in the reality of young people.

In educational evaluation the changes also happen at the personal level: change of attitudes, of values, of ways of understanding. This "personal" dimension of change is often less visible than the "operational" one. But, both are equally important: educational evaluation requires openness to changing our ways of doing things as well as our way of thinking.

Resistance to evaluation is often rooted in resistance to "internal" and "external" changes that might be required of an individual or of a group as a result of the outcomes of the evaluation process.

1.3 What is evaluation for? The Operational Objectives of Educational Evaluation

It is possible to identify some “operational objectives” or uses of educational evaluation, in addition to the general aims of educational evaluation.

The following objectives are linked to the implementation and practice of educational evaluation and, to the uses of its outcomes at different moments of the process. The following list is certainly not exhaustive. Educational evaluation has a lot of potential and uses, but among others, the following:

To plan better

Educational evaluation can help to change things and to plan “different things”, but it can also help us to plan things better, in order to prevent negative consequences and to compensate for possible shortcomings.

To take stock of achievements

It is important to recognise, name and give value to the achievements of the educational process so that they do not get lost or not sufficiently used.

To consolidate results

Identified results can be consolidated by making them explicit at the end of the evaluation process. The description, sharing and further use of results are natural follow-up steps of educational evaluation.

To check if we met the interests of the funding institutions

When funding institutions support a certain educational project, they do it according to certain criteria: the nature of the project, its objectives, their priorities. Funding institutions usually ask to receive a descriptive and evaluative report at the end of the project. Even so, educational evaluation plans and criteria should not be limited to the expectations of the organisations that fund the project. But, it is important to consider and include them. Usually this is not a difficult exercise: in most cases the questions they would like to answer through evaluation would be part of our evaluation anyway.

To reinforce co-operation with partners

If partners are involved in the educational project, they will be involved in its evaluation. A constructive and participative evaluation will naturally reinforce co-operation.

But, even if your partners are not directly involved, the results of the evaluation can be of interest to them. You might share new ideas for common projects, other fields of common interest and ways of co-operating, new partners and networks with them.

1.4 What to evaluate? Fields and "models" of evaluation – a critical view and a proposal

Together with the question "Why evaluate?", "What to evaluate?" is another key to understanding the different options and approaches to educational evaluation available to us in our youth work.

In the following sections, we will briefly present some models, which propose a certain structure of "What to evaluate?". We will look at the models we present critically, not individually, but rather reflecting on some approaches to evaluation present in all of them. Based on this exploration, we will make a proposal: "Educational evaluation as a total experience".

Evaluation fields and "models"

In the T-Kit on "Training Essentials" (Page 77) we can find the description of four different models of educational evaluation. To those we can add one favoured by the USA Department of Education as mentioned in the T-Kit on European Citizenship (Page 57).

Each of these models focuses on different fields, when it comes to "What to evaluate?" The following table describes briefly all those models and their associated fields of evaluation.

The Kirkpatrick model:

Four fields:

- Reaction: personal reflection from participants, i.e. on satisfaction, effect and utility of the training programme
- Learning: Growth of knowledge, learning achievements
- Behaviour: Changes in behaviour, transfer of competencies into concrete actions/ situations
- Results: long term lasting transfer, also in organisational and institutional terms.

An example of educational evaluation carried out following this model is described in the Chapter of this T-Kit entitled "Evaluation Practices". See "Overall evaluation of a Pilot Long Term Training Course" (Pages 94-96) for more in-depth information.

CIPP model:

Four fields:

- Context evaluation – Are the chosen goals the right ones for this activity?
- Input evaluation – Is the programme well planned? Are there enough resources to implement the activity?
- Process evaluation – How was the flow of the activity? What feedback was received from the participants?
- Product (outcome) evaluation – Were the objectives reached?

The Brinkerhoff model:

Six fields:

- Goal setting – What are the needs? Are these needs real?
- Programme design – What is required to meet these needs? Is this design going to meet the needs?
- Programme implementation – How do we evaluate the programme in practice?
- Immediate outcomes – Did the participants learn? What did they learn?
- Intermediate or usage outcomes – Are the participants implementing their learning?
- Impacts and worth – Did it make a worthwhile difference to the participants' organisations and their personal development?

Systems approach (Bushnell):

Four fields:

- Input – What goes into the training effort? (Trainee qualifications, trainer competence, resources, etc).
- Process – How adequate are the planning, design, development and implementation of the activity?
- Output – What are the participants' reactions? Have they gained knowledge or skills?, did they reflect on their behaviour? Did their attitudes change?
- Outcomes – What are the effects on the participants' organisations?" [27]

United States Department of Education:

Three fields:

- Outcome – The immediate, direct consequences of an educational activity on its participants.
- Impact – Long-term outcomes of a programme as well as unanticipated effects.
- Process – Focuses on the procedures, methods and their implementation."[28]

27 "T-Kit No. 6 – Training Essentials". Council of Europe and European Commission (October 2002) Page 77. Original Sources J.J Jackson, Training and Evaluation and R.L. Simone and D.M. Harris, Human Resource Development.

28 "T-Kit No. 7 - Under construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe". Council of Europe and European Commission (May 2003) Page 57.

A critical view on evaluation fields and "models"

As we have seen, each of those models put the emphasis on different evaluation fields. Instead of analysing in detail, one by one, the potentialities and limitations of each model, we would like to critically reflect on the different main focuses that an evaluation can take horizontally: by objectives, by competencies, by achievements. This horizontal perspective will provide us with elements to critically understand the previously described models or others and (what is more important) will inspire our own approach to educational evaluation.

Evaluation by objectives

This is the first and the most natural orientation of an educational evaluation: to evaluate a project according to its objectives. The purpose of the objectives in a project is to guide the educational process and to give an orientation to its evaluation.

The objectives should be clear, relevant, be organised in a hierarchy of priorities, be adapted to the needs and profile of participants. They should also be organised in a time frame for their achievement. Evaluation by objectives is associated with "keeping track of those objectives" and re-orienting the evaluated educational process if it is not going in the right direction.

The advantages and disadvantages of this kind of evaluation are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• There is a clear direction in the evaluation process: looking at the fulfilment of the objectives • The objectives of an educational activity are the common reference for the different elements and actors. For this reason, evaluating by objectives facilitates the interaction between them	• An evaluation that focuses exclusively on the set objectives cannot alone guarantee the fulfilment of the desired learning objectives • There is the risk of paying little attention to the process and other aspects of the activity • Sticking only to an evaluation of the objectives limits the creativity and originality of the educational process and does not reflect the diversity or multidimensionality of relevant information that can come out of an educational activity

"Woolf (1999) states that evaluation can only be effective if SMART objectives are set for a project. SMART objectives are those that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and achievable within a Timescale. This approach can be very appealing for its neatness and simplicity, and indeed evaluation by SMART objectives does have its place and value. However, we feel that an evaluation process defined purely around measurable objectives cannot always do justice to the richness of out-comes, and the long-term impact of educational processes. ***Is SMART so smart, after all?"*** [29]

29 "T-Kit No. 7 – Under construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe". Council of Europe and European Commission (May 2003) Page 57.

Evaluation by competencies

This approach evaluates the competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities and values) gained, developed or achieved during the educational activity.

In non-formal education, competence is understood as "knowing how to do something in a certain context". Consequently, evaluation by competencies analyses the pertinence, relevance and value of the educational process within its social context. This kind of evaluation tries to answer the question: In the end, what is the value of this educational activity in our social context? For example: evaluation by competencies could look at the value of an activity in which participants develop their intercultural competencies in the context of our multicultural societies.

The advantages and disadvantages of this kind of evaluation are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Evaluation by competencies makes more explicit the link between non-formal education and its social context. And this relation / interaction can be a strong source of learning for participants • The combination of individualised qualitative and quantitative information that can be gathered in this kind of evaluation can be very useful for supporting the personal development of participants. For example, individual information can be the basis for designing personal development plans and tools for self-evaluation / assessment • The interpretations, arguments and propositions explored in this kind of evaluation can become a catalyst for the further development of participants' competencies	• It is not always straight-forward to evaluate competencies in non-formal education and to be able to relate their value to a wider context *For example: a certain participant develops in an educational activity the competence of "team work". Although "team work" is a very important competence in a wider social context, the extent to which (s)he be able to put it into practice outside of the educational activity is difficult to asses* • The concept of competence is associated with a large number of categories and indicators, which can complicate the organisation and implementation of the evaluation. *For example, the team work competence is associated with: communication, planning, management, negotiation, mediation among others.* • If the context (particularly the financial context) has too much influence in the identification and definition of the competencies to be developed in educational activities, there is a risk that non-formal education will become subordinated to the needs of the market. *In recent years, an important focus of evaluation in the field of non-formal education has been on the ways in which the "employability"[15] of participants can be improved through non-formal education.*

15 Employability can be defined as "the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment" Source: The Wiki Encyclopaedia. **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employability**

Evaluation by achievements

Achievement, as such, is an incomplete concept: Achievement of what? In educational evaluation the notion of achievement is related to the "achievement of objectives" or the "achievement of a certain level of competence". As such, one would be forgiven for thinking that evaluation by achievements is just another way of evaluating the fulfilment of the objectives or evaluating the competence developed through any given activity. But, evaluating by achievements does provide some new perspectives to reflect on.

Associated with the notion of achievement is the concept of an "indicator".

> *"An indicator is a signal, indication, characteristic, data of perceivable information that after being confronted and interpreted according to what was expected, can provide us with evidence of the level or evolution of a certain aspect of the educational process."*[30]

For example, if one of the objectives of an activity is to promote participation, an indicator of the achievement of that objective could be the number of people taking the floor in plenary to express their opinion. If another objective is to encourage team-work, an indicator for the achievement of this objective could be the number and composition of teams voluntarily set up by participants. If another objective is to promote co-operation among participants, an indicator could be the number and characteristics of common initiatives and projects.

The advantages and disadvantages of this kind of evaluation are:

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
• Achievements and indicators of achievement are more concrete compared with the ambiguity of evaluating the fulfilment of the objectives and the development of competence in a more general way • Evaluation by achievements and using indicators can generate further questions and debates. *If in the middle of an activity the trainer says "Come on, so far just one quarter of the participants have so far taken the floor to speak in plenary", then, participants might start to reflect why, or even to discuss if, taking the floor in plenary is an indicator of "participation".* • Some indicators could be common to different educational activities creating some comparability between evaluation results.	• There is little conceptual clarity around the notion of achievement. Achievement of what? For what? Under which circumstances? Achievements are always related to other aspects of evaluation • A narrow and limited use of indicators can be counter-productive and confusing. *If the only indicator to evaluate the achievement of participation is talking in plenary then the notion of participation might become exclusively equated with speaking in plenary (e.g. participation=talking in plenary).* • If the expected level of achievement and/or the indicators are set by an external person or institution, they can become instrumental objectives of the activity. *If trainers know that the funder, the organiser or the external evaluator will "take note of the number of people who talk in plenary", then "talking in plenary" (and not "participating") might become an instrumental and misleading objective of the activity.*

30 La Evaluación como Experiencia, Cerda, G. Hugo. Coop. Editorial Magisterio, Bogotá, 2000

Evaluation by performance

Performance is a concept that is commonly found in the private sector, and is often it related to the assessment of human resources and is often used as a criterion in staff selection.

Evaluation by performance focuses on the appreciation of how individuals behave "professionally", taking into account their potential for further development. For example, evaluation by performance of a youth leader would analyse how (s)he organises an activity, interacts with participants, facilitates a group discussion or develops an exercise.

In non-formal education, evaluation by performance is commonly found in the context of "training for trainers" or in long courses in which participants are expected to implement workshops or projects autonomously as part of the learning experience. Evaluation by performance is strongly linked to the further training and lifelong learning needs of experienced actors in non-formal education.

The advantages and disadvantages of this kind of evaluation are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• This kind of evaluation is good for assessing human potential and putting it at the service of a wider group (other participants, colleagues - trainers, youth leaders and youth workers). • This kind of evaluation can be very helpful to set up strategies for update and further training. • It can be used to promote the recognition of individual professionalism and of non-formal education, in general, in other contexts.	• This kind of evaluation is only relevant for a limited group of actors in non-formal education, those who already have a certain level of experience in non-formal education. • Evaluation by performance implies the management of a large number of variables: individuals performing in different circumstances, doing different things, in different contexts. This personalised evaluation requires time, specialised staff and a lot of resources in order to be consistent. • If the evaluation environment is not safe or professional enough it can imply lack of transparency and provoke mistrust between those engaged in the evaluation and those who performance is being evaluated. • In this kind of evaluation personal styles and preferences can play an important role. If it is not carried out with the necessary distance from social roles, there is the risk of the evaluation suffering from subjectivity.

A good illustration of these advantages, disadvantages, potentialities and limitations is one kind of evaluation, often used in training for trainers in non-formal education and youth work. This usually takes the form of participant-trainers[31] having to plan and implement a workshop in teams. After it the participant-trainers and the trainers' team evaluate the whole process. The evaluation includes a critical analysis of their performance as trainers in the preparation and running of their workshops. This evaluation by performance leads to a reflection on the competencies required for being a trainer and how to improve them.

31 Participant-trainer refers to the double role of participants in training for trainers. They are trainers and in the frame of the course, at the same time, participants.

Evaluation by outcomes

The concept of outcome refers to different "consequences" of the educational process. In terms of educational evaluation, "outcomes" are mostly associated with fulfilling the objectives, learning achievements, organisational implications and the impact of the activity for a wider social context.

Evaluation by outcomes gathers all these aspects. We have already described the advantages and disadvantages of focusing the evaluation on each of them and we shall not repeat those arguments now. In principle, considering all of them under the umbrella notion of "outcome" allows for a greater richness of evaluation results and for a wider perspective on the educational process evaluated.

But there are risks associated with educational evaluation that uses this, in principle, integrative perspective. Due to the influence of the commercial sector, there is a growing tendency to evaluate educational programmes (and not only their management) by comparing incomes and outcomes using the purist logic of production.

This perspective might be a valid one when it comes to the management of non-formal educational processes or to ensuring transparency in the use of public resources. But, its application without mediation to the educational processes that constitute non-formal education affects its most basic character. Using a simplistic income-outcome evaluation, non-formal education can be reduced to a "social technology" or an instrument for "social intervention" functioning like a machine: you put something in and you automatically get something predetermined out.

One of the clearest visualisations of this danger was shown in the video "The Wall"[32]. To the music of "Another brick in the wall"[33], anonymous pupils enter a factory, forming an enormous row on a conveyor belt. They fall into a grinder whose product is mincedmeat. This symbolises the homogenisation of individuals. The lyrics of the song are "We don't need no education, We don't need no thought control…"

This is, of course, a caricature of formal education, but the "machine logic" can also be found in non- formal education. The reductive misuse of "evaluation by outcomes" can contribute to the reinforcement of this logic.

"Perhaps due to the pressures upon project organisers to prove the value of their work to external bodies (particularly those from which they seek funding) there is a tendency for disproportionate attention to be afforded to outcome evaluation…

…Also, it is likely that unpredicted outcomes, and certainly unpredicted processes, will arise over the course of a project. The fact that some outcomes cannot easily be evaluated, and certainly cannot be quantified, should not diminish their importance. We consider it imperative that educational aims are not reduced to those that can be measured, for the sake of being able to prove what has been achieved. An evaluation based only on preconceived notions of outcomes, thus, is unlikely to do full justice to any project." [34]

32 Pink Floyd The Wall (1982) Directed by Alan Parker.

33 "Another brick in the wall". Rock opera/concept album "The Wall". Pink Floyd 1979.

34 "T-Kit No. 7 – Under construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe". Council of Europe and European Commission (May 2003) Pages 57-58

Evaluation by process

Historically, this approach emerged a critical alternative to evaluation by objectives and by achievements. Evaluation by process tries to overcome their limitations and it is based on qualitative evaluation[35].

In general terms, in evaluation by process, the starting point is the needs of the different actors. From those needs expected achievements are formulated. The objectives are fixed to "conduct" the educational process starting from the needs and moving towards the expected achievements. In this case, the "results" would be the sum of most of the elements of the educational process.

Evaluation by process is not just a matter of checking "how things are going". This is very common and at times intentioned simplification. Evaluation by process analyses the relationship between the needs of participants, the expected outcomes, the objectives and the results of a youth project. For example, evaluation by process would mean to analyse the relation, connection, coherence and correspondence between:

- the need of having leisure activities
- the expected outcome of creating a cultural association
- the objective of promoting co-operation and participation during leisure time
- the result of having sport competitions and a small cyber centre

The advantages and disadvantages of this kind of evaluation are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Evaluation by process has a particular educational value because it does not just look at the different stages of an educational activity: it goes through them. • Since this kind of evaluation takes has its starting point the needs of the different actors, it covers particularly well the functions of diagnosis, orientation and motivation. • It can help participants, trainers and organisers to clarify their own challenges and to get to know the most important obstacles in the educational process. Consequently, it helps to develop a more solid and consistent educational process.	• There is little agreement and conceptual clarity around the notion of "process". • It is difficult to "capture" the complexity and dynamism of the educational process. • In reality it is difficult to make compatible the "theory" and the "praxis" of this kind of evaluation due to its complexity • Being basically qualitative, there is a bigger risk of the evaluation becoming too partial

35 Qualitative evaluation looks at "qualities": characteristics of the educational experience. It also looks at their meaning for different actors. It raises questions like How? Why?, rather than how many or how much? Quantitative evaluation aims to measure and count. It focuses on the "quantity" of the educational experience raising the questions like How many? How much? How often?...

More complete definitions of qualitative and quantitative evaluation can be found in pages 33-34 in the section called "Typologies of evaluation".

The difficulty of evaluation by process is very obvious in training courses. The following questions commonly arise:

- How can the diverse needs of participants be related meaningfully with the objectives of the course and with the programme at the beginning of the course?
- How can the needs be checked in the middle of the course in light of the objectives and considering the development of the group?
- How can the needs be referred back to at the end of the course to see the level of their achievement?

On many occasions evaluation by process is unfortunately reduced to picking out some elements of the above here and there without embracing the full complexity of the different processes that participants experience during a course.

Our proposal: Educational Evaluation as a Total Experience

Given the complexity of the educational process the first and most spontaneous answer to the question "What to evaluate?" would be EVERYTHING. In this line, the editorial team of this T-Kit understands educational evaluation as a total experience. This is our proposal and our invitation.

Educational evaluation as a total experience:

- is characterised by its global vision, its integrity and by the articulation of different approaches, methods, theory and praxis
- combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation
- looks at the whole educational process (integrally and from different points of view)
- prioritises the most valuable information, without falling into "doing everything"

The methodological proposal of this approach to educational evaluation is the combination of diverse spaces, actors, times, methods, sources and techniques of evaluation.

By doing so, the "conceptual" (learning, motivating…) and the "instrumental" (judging, changing, deciding…) visions of evaluation become complementary rather than contradictory.

The ethical and educational foundations of this kind of evaluation are:

- Dialectic[36] unity

  Dialectic unity describes when an idea, a conclusion, an explanation or a thesis and its opposite are not exclusive: both are part of a whole. This happens very often. For example, for some participants a session was too long and for others too short. Educational evaluation as a total experience would not pretend to discern who is right or wrong about that, but to understand, value, put in a certain perspective an eventually challenge both conclusions.

- Unity in diversity

  The presence of **diversity** in educational activities is a fact. Very often it is one of the most important sources of learning for the group. For the purpose of analysing them, evaluation often puts the emphasis on separating and breaking down backgrounds, opinions, experiences, conclusions, contexts, contents, organisational frameworks and methods. However, and necessarily, this diversity should be respected and all of the aspects of the educational process have to be considered. This does not contradict the idea of considering all of them part of a whole or of a unity, the educational process itself.

36 Broadly defined, a dialectic is an exchange of propositions (theses) and counter-propositions (antitheses) resulting in a synthesis of the opposing assertions, or at least a qualitative transformation in the direction of the dialogue. Source: Wikipedia 2006. **http://en.wikipedia.org**

> Educational evaluation as a total experience aims not just to look at diversity and to cover the different dimensions of the educational process, it tries to analyse the connections, mutual influences, coherence and correspondence between them. It raises questions like: How does the organisational framework influence the contents? Does the profile of participants correspond to the activity format? Can any trends be observed in the different experiences participants went through?

This approach constitutes a significant challenge. In non-formal education, the approach is clearly still under development. It is difficult to translate this approach into practice because it requires effort to deal with complexity. And in practice, given limited time and resources, it is necessary to prioritise among all the possible evaluation fields, among different ways of collecting and processing information.

Our invitation to you is to discover and develop educational evaluation as a total experience. A total experience as it is integral to the non-formal educational process, which the evaluation should serve.

All the previous "models" of evaluation and any other you may use or know of evaluating have their place and their role. We believe it is good to know them, to look at them critically, and to create a basis for the development of our own evaluation approaches and strategies.

"We propose that evaluation, as an element of practice, should be a responsive process, implemented in a manner suited to the particular project, and according to the particular skill, taste and understanding of the actors involved.

Evaluation must also be founded in ethical practice and should reflect the aims being sought in its implementation. Perhaps even more important than the need for evaluation to address immediate and long-term outcomes, is the need for ongoing evaluation of processes and outcomes to inform responsive educational practice.

The fact that unanticipated results might be significant and that outcomes are complex and not always predictable or measurable, does not save us from the need to set goals and think about what we want to achieve from the earliest stages of planning. Equally, the fact that step by step processes cannot guarantee success does not remove the need to consider what approach you might adopt.

In particular it will be important to work out your values and ideas – the ethos or philosophy of your approach, if you like." [37]

Ingredients, recipes, previous experiences, tips… are, for a chef, just the basis for elaborating, time and again, a new and suitable menu. We believe the same can be said for effective educational evaluation.

37 "T-Kit No. 7 - Under construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe". Council of Europe and European Commission (May 2003) Page 58

1.5 Who and for whom? The actors of educational evaluation

Having reviewed the possible definitions, aims, operational objectives and fields, it is not difficult to identify the actors of educational evaluation. The questions “who?” and “for whom?” are deliberately formulated together because everybody involved in the educational process should participate in its evaluation and should be informed about its results, as follows:

- The **participants**: as learners and the target group of the activity
- The **facilitators**, leaders or team members: as responsible persons for animating the activity
- The **organisers** and partners: as promoters of the activity
- The **funders**: as supporters of the activity
- The **decision-makers**: as those “responsible” for considering the results of the evaluation in further decision making processes.

These different actors have different responsibilities and tasks in the evaluation. They should participate at different levels and in different phases of the evaluation. Nevertheless, it is important to involve everybody. The evaluation should be democratic, transparent and simultaneously accessible for all actors concerned.

Sometimes evaluation is conducted by an “external evaluator”. But, this does not play against the idea of involving all the actors. Moreover, one of the tasks of the external evaluator is to involve the different actors and facilitate their interaction during the evaluation process. A common assumption is that the external evaluator will be in a position to do that with more easer and with fewer compromises than so-called “insiders”.

1.6 When to evaluate? The timing of educational evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing and continuous process! However, "when" we evaluate is also an important decision to make in the planning of the evaluation process. It is important because it will give us an idea about how things are going at different and distinct points and will allow us to use the information collected to make necessary changes to improve during the educational process. Three main types of evaluation can be identified according to when they take place. These are initial, mid-term and final evaluation.

Imagine you are cooking! Before you start cooking, you place all the different things you need for cooking on the work surface and you check if you have everything you need, and more importantly, if you have all the right ingredients. It may not be a good idea to notice half way through cooking that you do not have the corn, or even worse, that you bought fish instead of chicken!!!

After you start cooking, you occasionally open the lid on the pot to check the colour and the aroma, to make sure things are going according to plan. Of course, you also occasionally taste the dish you are cooking to check if you have added the right amount of salt or if the pasta is cooked to perfection. And finally, when you have proudly served the meal you prepared to your friends or family, you naturally ask them if they like it.

You have probably got the idea already: The above is simply a sequence of initial, mid-term and final evaluations. Evaluating the process and outcomes at different stages gives you more control over the big picture, and ensures that you do not end up with under salted and under cooked chicken. Without even noticing it, you have used initial, mid-term and final evaluations all the way through.

Initial evaluation is the evaluation done at the very beginning. Before we start our project, whether it is a youth exchange or a training course, it is a good idea to take some time out to check our aims, objectives and methodologies. Some questions you might want to ask yourself at this stage could be:

- Are the objectives of our project in line with our overall aim?
- Do the methods chosen serve the fulfilment of this aim?
- Does the programme cover everything we want to address? Is it realistic?
- Does our team have the necessary expertise and capacity to run this programme or do we need to call in some support?

Your turn! Take five minutes to write down a few questions you may want to ask yourself during your initial evaluation and before you start the project.

Information about the participants is another important part of initial evaluation, and is commonly called “profile information”. It can be understood as “an initial snapshot of participants”. This information is vital for checking how much effect your programme will have on the lives of young people. In this information there are data, which do not change, for example the age of the participants. This type of information is useful for checking, who on our programme is most likely to benefit. Profile information is crucial for designing your programme in a way that fits the needs of participants.

The mid-term evaluation is our chance to check how things are going. As the name implies, it takes place during your project. It may be an “ongoing evaluation”, such as daily reviews at the end of each day, or a whole set of methods that take place at the mid-point of the programme.

Mid-term evaluation may prove to be extremely useful for project teams, as it gives them the possibility of identifying potential problems or shortcomings as the programme progresses. Team members may decide to make necessary changes in the programme, to tackle these challenges, or meet additional needs that the participants may raise.

Once we complete our programme, it is time for the **final evaluation**. Using a variety of methods, the participants and the team evaluate the whole project in light of the outcomes (i.e. fulfilment of objectives, learning achievements, organisational implications and impact in a wider social context) with a certain distance and perspective.

1.7 Typologies of Evaluation

We have seen in the previous section different types of evaluation according to their timing (initial, mid-term, and final). In this section, we will introduce other types of evaluation, this time categorised according to their actors (personal, interpersonal, group), to their functionality (formative, summative) and to their nature (quantitative, qualitative).

Personal/interpersonal/group

Personal evaluation is the kind of evaluation in which each individual or actor involved in the educational process makes their own judgements and draws their own conclusions about the experience they have had.

Interpersonal evaluation happens when more than one individual actor involved in the educational process shares and discusses their judgements and conclusions. Often this kind of evaluation takes place in a small group setting. While individual judgments may change as a result interpersonal evaluation, arriving to a consensus is not the aim. The purpose is simply to share and discuss those individual evaluations.

Group evaluation has an added dimension. It is not simply an interpersonal evaluation in which the number of actors involved is bigger. Since the group as such is part of the context and very often an important source of learning in non-formal education, group evaluation specifically at aspects and dimensions of the learning process that can be observed and judged from a group point of view, including for example the atmosphere, the co-operation among participants, the contribution of the group to the learning and the group process. It should be noted however that this is not its exclusive function.

Formative/summative

"When the cook tastes the soup while cooking, that's formative; when the guests taste the already finished soup, that's summative." [38]

Formative evaluation accompanies the learning process and can contribute to it. It consists of continuous appreciation, ongoing analysis and drawing conclusions.

Summative evaluation looks at to the overall and final outcomes (e.g. the fulfilment of the objectives, learning achievements, organisational implications and impact in a wider social context). In other words, it consists of the verification of the expected results and drawing conclusions at the end of the process.

38 Robert Stakes quoted in "Evaluation and Education: A Quarter Century". Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991: p. 169. Robert Stakes is professor of education and director of CIRCE at the University of Illinois.

Quantitative/qualitative

Quantitative evaluation focuses on the "quantity" of the experience. It aims to count or measure different phenomena (literally). The major questions that quantitative evaluation raises include "How many?", "How much?" and "How often?". For instance:

- How many young people participated in the youth exchange?
- How many countries were represented?
- How often did they stay in touch with each other after the exchange?

Qualitative evaluation, on the other hand, relates to the quality of the programme and of the experience. So, qualitative evaluation looks at the meaning of the experience for different actors. This can be on an individual level or on a group level. For example, the experiences of a given youth exchange for Arda from Turkey is considered along side the experience of a group of youth workers involved in a complex training in the city where Arda lives. The questions that qualitative evaluation usually raises are "How" and "Why". For instance:

- Why did the participants of the contact-making seminar not create any follow up projects?
- How were the methods of work presented in the training course used by the participants once they went home?

Before we get into further detail of quantitative and qualitative evaluation, it is important to note that solid and professional educational evaluation usually involves a combination of both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. These provide different types of information that enables you to have a larger and sharper image of the performance of your project.

Exercise: Quantitative or Qualitative?

Read the following questions and try to find out if they are quantitative or qualitative. Afterwards, discuss why.

1. How many young people have participated in the activity?
2. In 2005, how many volunteers participated in voluntary work camps organised by your organisation?
3. We had 200 volunteers from Istanbul in our project! Why do we have much fewer volunteers from the Eastern cities in Turkey?
4. We have had 200 volunteers in our project! How many of them went to Eastern European countries?
5. Why are students and especially university students more likely to apply to become volunteers?
6. How did our campaign on volunteering help to raise awareness?
7. Where is the best place to recruit volunteers?
8. How often do volunteers participate in voluntary work camps after their first experience?
9. Why do we work with volunteers exclusively?
10. Why do we have more female volunteers than male ones?

Answers: 1: Quantitative – 2: Quantitative – 3: Qualitative – 4: Quantitative – 5: Qualitative – 6: Both – 7: Both – 8: Quantitative – 9: Qualitative – 10: Qualitative.

The differences between quantitative and qualitative evaluation are not limited to the type of questions. There are also other major differences:

Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation: Basic differences:[39]

QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
1. Measurement	1. Explanation
2. Conclusions are based on the analysis of data	2. Conclusions from observations are dependent on interpretation
3. Replication of the process is possible	3. The process is difficult to replicate
4. Structured	4. Unstructured

The first difference is that quantitative evaluation measures phenomena that appear in our programme. Quantitative statements contain measurements such as "55% of participants were from Western European countries". Qualitative evaluation, on the other hand, seeks to explain why the majority of the participants were from Western European countries. One explanation might be that that participants from outside the European Union did not have enough time to take apply for and receive their visa.

The second difference arises from issues of transparency. In quantitative evaluation, how we reached the result on the number of participants that took part is quite clear – we counted the number of participants. However, when using qualitative methods, we move from observations to conclusions using interpretation something, which is considered more subjective than objective.

The third distinction relates to replication. Quantitative methods can be replicated exactly, so that each actor will have the same evaluation experience. On the other hand, qualitative data depends much more on the context. Even something as simple as the time of day the evaluation takes place can have an impact on the results.

Finally, the fourth distinction: Qualitative evaluation is said to be unstructured. The focus of the evaluation is on the importance of the different actors in the process having the opportunity to express their opinions on the activity. However, quantitative evaluation is far more dependent on a set structure, with set information sought from each respondent having been decided in advance by the evaluators.

Another level of difference between quantitative and qualitative evaluation is therefore the methods we use, although, as with the exercise we did identifying qualitative and quantitative evaluation questions, the line between the two can be blurred.

The following table shows different methods of qualitative and quantitative evaluations:

QUALITATIVE		QUANTITATIVE
UNSTRUCTURED	*SEMI STRUCTURED*	*STRUCTURED*
Observation of participants	Structured interviews	Surveys
Letter to oneself	Observation with guidelines	Questionnaires
Focus groups	Spot checks	Checklist observations
Diaries		
Film/Video		
In-depth interview		

39 Kneale, Dylan (2004), Un-published presentation on Evaluation, Youth Express Network seminar on Evaluation, Avanos: Turkey.

1.8 Educational evaluation in a broader framework

Yeast and a pizza in Italy!

If as a foreigner in Italy you would like to prepare a pizza, you might run into a few problems. As soon as you arrive in the "supermercato" to buy yeast to prepare the dough you could easily take the wrong one and end up with a pizza with a sweet cake-like base. That is because in Italy, there are several kinds of yeast. But, as a foreigner you probably would not know that. Anyway, baking a pizza could bring you into deep discussions about different perceptions of pizza with your Italian friends. That's because the question of pizza is not only about understanding what "yeast" is, it's about what should be on it, about when to eat it, about regional differences, about the history of the pizza, about what is good tomato-sauce, what is the right cheese, which herbs to use… it is about the whole framework.

At the time of writing, the term "evaluation" is frequently raised in discussions of non-formal education, together with terms such as "assessment", "validation", "accreditation", and "qualification". All this is part of the ongoing discussion about the recognition of non-formal education. There seems to be an agreement that people learn a lot in non-formal education. But what does learn a lot actually mean? What exactly do people learn? How can we measure that? Does it have any value on the labour market?

What can the average 17-year old girl do with her three years of experience of working as a volunteer in the local youth association? Would it not be useful if her experiences were noted on paper, so that when she has an interview for a job she could show her competencies? Of course, that would be great. But, what does it prove? Did she really learn from those experiences and how good is she at the things she claims she is able to do? How can non-formal education be more precise in describing what people learn and the extent to which they learn it?

One of the things that makes non-formal education different from formal education is that in non-formal education assessment of participants does not take place. In non-formal education we do not organise exams and we do not give marks or grades. We evaluate the programme, the process, the outcomes, but we do not assess the individual level of participants. We rather ask participants what they think they have learned.

Still, it could help the 17 year-old girl to gain recognition as a competent person for that job if she had a precise description of what she learned and on what level. This would also mean that her youth association is accredited as an organisation that meets certain standards, allowing it to give her the paper that describes her competencies and ensuring that the paper is recognised as having a certain value.

A large debate exists as to whether the role of non-formal education should also be to provide certification and diplomas for the learning that takes place during its educational processes. It is a controversial issue, as actors concerned disagree about whether this is the way non-formal education should evolve.

Supporters of "recognition" say that lots of young people would benefit from the certification of non-formal education. This would broaden their options in their transitions to the labour market and to an autonomous life.

Opponents, on the other hand say th at non-formal education would lose its specific nature and character if it would provide certification. The inherent role, social importance and civic mission of non-formal education could be threatened by the movement towards certification. It would completely change the relationships between youth leaders, youth workers and youth trainers and to their target groups. Their role as "facilitators" would be conditioned by a power logic, as they would have to assess participants in their programmes.

Discussions around assessment, certification and accreditation of non-formal education are provoking strong educational and ethical debates at very different levels. One of the key criticisms of the movement towards certification is that such approaches can be used as tools for selection and exclusion, risking the restriction of equal access to knowledge and having negative consequences for the nature, curriculum and practice of non-formal education.

If we understand non-formal education as a democratic process of access to processes of self- development, any selective misuse of certification would be more than questionable, would raise ethical issues of the most fundamental nature and would put into question the legitimacy of non-formal education and its actors.

One significant emerging "outcome" of those debates and an alternative to the so far "black and white" nature of the debate is the concept of self-assessment. The idea behind this form of assessment is to provide participants with adequate tools and support for assessing their own learning and for documenting its results. For example the portfolio: a kind of folder bringing together all materials that prove a person's efforts in non-formal education and their learning achievements.

In recent years some self-assessment tools for non-formal education have been developed on the European level. The Council of Europe has developed a self-evaluation matrix, which helps you to assess your language competencies[40]. In the youth sector of the Council of Europe, a group of experts has developed the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers[41].

40 This self-evaluation matrix is part of the "European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment". This framework is a tool for setting standards in an internationally comparable manner. It facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. It can be accessed at **http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference**

41 The European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers is a tool which has been designed to enable youth leaders and youth workers in Europe to assess and describe their competences, on the basis of a core set of European quality standards. It can be accessed at **http://www.coe.int/youthportfolio**

The words explained

"Evaluation: *In English, evaluation only means to make a reasoned judgement about or to give a plausible account of something. It does not imply any specific purpose (such as grading individual performance), nor does it imply any particular method of evaluation (such as a written test), and nor does its outcomes automatically suggest that something is of greater value or importance than something else (such as Council of Europe activities in comparison with SALTO activities).*

Assessment *takes place when evaluation has a comparative dimension that involves setting individuals, activities or institutions into a ranking order of performance or achievement. The ranking may be set in relation to criteria that are specific to the context, process or outcomes that are being assessed (such as: who swam the river fastest, or which EVS*[42] *agency has the highest success rate in attracting socially disadvantaged young people into the programme). Alternatively, relative performance may be assesses against an external standard (such as in the case of the PISA*[43] *attainment tests for 15-year-olds in different countries).*

Certification *refers to a standardised process of formally validating knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies acquired by an individual or represented through a learning/service provider.*

Certificates or diplomas *are the "pieces of paper" which record the outcome of the certification process. It most frequently has the status of an official document, but this is not an absolute prerequisite.*

Accreditation: *formally or socially recognised authorities or instances (university, department of education...) accredit courses, activities and their outcomes. This means they testify that organisations and individuals meet standards to which all have agreed to conform. They vouch for the credibility of the certificates and diplomas that are issued, and hence for the reliability and validity of the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the individuals and the organisations whose judgements are given the stamp of approval."* [44]

"Feedback: *giving feedback is to pass on to a person the effect of his/her behaviour for their use and learning. Feedback is supposed to be helpful to the person receiving it."*[45]

42 The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is a part of the Youth in Action programme of the European Union, that promotes the mobility and voluntary involvement of young people.
More information at **http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/index_en.htm#structure**

43 The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an internationally standardised assessment that was jointly developed by participating countries and administered to15-year-olds in schools. The survey was implemented in 43 countries in the first assessment in 2000, in 41 countries in the second assessment in 2003 and at least 58 countries will participate in the third assessment in 2006. More information at **http://www.pisa.oecd.org**

44 Taken from the "Terminology Cheat Sheet" (by Lynne Chisholm Pages 44-46), part of the report of 'Bridges for Recognition 2005'. This report is accessible at **http://www.salto-youth.net/bridgesReport/**

45 Definition adapted from the report of the Training Module II: Responding Effectively to Cultural Insensitivity of the Multicultural Leadership Institute, 2004.

1.9 Educational evaluation and quality in youth work

Why talk about quality?

Educational evaluation and quality are very closely related. Evaluation can be considered part of quality. And, vice versa: quality can be part of educational evaluation. What does this mean?

Educational evaluation as part of quality: Educational evaluation can be considered as a tool or mechanism for achieving quality. In this case quality would be the aim and evaluation the instrument.

Quality

Educational Evaluation

Quality as part of educational evaluation. Educational evaluation involves making a value judgement on what is evaluated. This "giving a value" would be equivalent to "attaching a certain quality" to what is evaluated. In this case quality would be a layer, a reference at the service of the evaluation process.

Educational Evaluation

Quality

As we can already see, the intimate relationship between educational evaluation and quality is dialectical and uneasy, if one tries not to conceive one of them as a mere instrument of the other.

In the debate on Educational Evaluation and Quality there are two poles:

- On the one hand, to reduce educational evaluation to a mere tool at the service of achieving quality would, we believe, imply not to respect the educational nature, aims and potentials of evaluation. Even if "improving" is one of its objectives, educational evaluation is much more than a tool for improvement;
- On the other hand, to consider "quality" as just another "element" of the educational evaluation process would, we believe, imply not facing the quality challenge. Indeed, nowadays, the social demand for quality is growing in a lot of fields (industrial products, social services, public services, etc) including non-formal education. Funding bodies, partners, organisers, trainers and participants work for and expect a growing level of quality in educational activities.

With these "poles" in mind we can affirm that in the relationship between quality and educational evaluation there is a plenty of potential for challenging pre-defined boundaries and, as a result, for mutual enrichment.

"Understandings" of quality

What is quality? There are many different conceptions of quality:

- One coming from the private sector would be: *"Quality is: if the client comes back to you"*, or *"quality is: satisfying the needs of the customer"*. Even if we do have a generous and flexible interpretation of this commercial understanding of quality (identifying customers as participants, providers as organisers…) we can conclude that this understanding is rather limited for the educational field. The educational phenomenon and the relations between its actors (participants, trainers, organisers…) go beyond this "commercial transaction logic".

  This approach certainly has its place when it comes to the management of programmes or to the use of public resources. But, reducing the educational fact, or experience to being evaluated, to a client-provider relationship is, in the best case, a simplification.

- The European Committee for Standardisation[46] agreed on the following definition in the non-governmental and business fields, published as a European standard EN ISO 9000[47]: *"Quality is a degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements. The term quality can be used with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent"*[48].

  In this definition quality is related to inherent characteristics, to requirements (set or expected from outside) and to a subjective value judgement expressed in terms of adjectives. This "triangulation" is very relevant to explore the notion of quality.

The quality of a coffee would be related at first to the fact of being coffee: to all the inherent characteristics of every coffee (taste, aroma…). Then it would be related with the expected requirements of coffee (strong, weak…). And finally, according to those and other "factors" (i.e. comparisons or other experiences) we would conclude using some adjectives: it is a coffee of good quality, of poor quality… The same as we have said for a coffee we could say, in our field, for an exchange or for a training activity or for a workshop…

46 CEN, the European Committee for Standardization, was founded in 1961 by the European national standards bodies. Now CEN is contributing to the objectives of the European Union with voluntary technical standards. More information at **http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/**

47 ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is the world's largest developer of standards useful to industrial and business organisations of all types, to governments, to suppliers and customers of products and services in both public and private sectors… More information at **http://www.iso.org**

48 DIN-Taschenbuch, 2001, Normen zum Qualitätsmanagement, Beuth-Verlag, Berlin Wien Zürich, Page 451

- Despite the large number of references and the growing body of literature about quality in education[49] (quality control, auditing, valorisation, policies and public funding provisions...), the concept of quality is still not very clearly articulated.

With this background, Harvey and Green (1993), have identified and analysed four different dimensions of quality, which are, in our opinion, a substantial contribution for the understanding of quality in non formal education.

The dimensions of quality identified by those authors are:

- Quality as “fidelity” to the aims.
- Quality as coherence - ethos.
- Quality as transformation (qualitative change).
- Quality related to something new.

They see quality in non-formal education as a mix of those four dimensions.

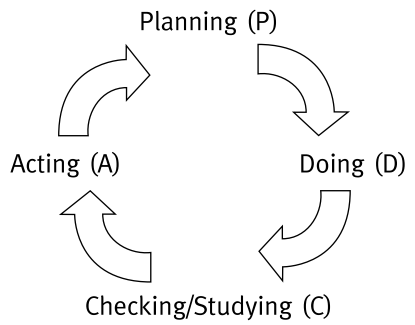
We do not consider this “definition” as the “right one”. But, from our point of view, these four dimensions in the understanding of quality are particularly pertinent, inspiring and challenging in our educational field.

The Quality Management Cycle and youth work

Dr. William Edwards Deming [50] (1900 – 1993), known as the father of quality management developed the so-called P-D-C-A-Cycle[51].

The quality management cycle

Every project is like a circle with four parts or phases:



Planning:	First we need an idea for the project. We think about aims and potentialities of it. Then we work out a concrete concept and work plan.
Doing:	We start to transfer our plan to reality. We follow our plan as closely as possible.
Checking/Studying:	While working we observe smaller or bigger gaps between our plan and the results. We figure out what is going fine and what needs to be changed.
Acting:	We take action on our critical review: changing, correcting, adapting...

There is a chronological order to the cycle. Each part builds upon the last. It is not possible to change the direction of the cycle or to turn the system around.

49 Two interesting books for further exploration are: “Total Quality Management in Education” Edward Sallis Publisher: Routledge Falmer 2002 , “Quality in Education: An Implementation Handbook” Jerome S. Arcaro, Jerry Arcaro Publisher: St. Lucie Press, 1995

50 American statistician and quality-control expert, b. Sioux City, Iowa. Deming used statistics to examine industrial production processes for flaws and believed that improving product quality depended on increased management-labour cooperation as well as improved design and production processes.

51 Source: **http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_demingcycle.html**. Value Based Management is a portal with specific information on value creation and managing for value and valuation.

The cycle theory in youth work

Demings' theory was a starting point for developing different models of quality management system for different fields (industry, public administration, the primary sector…)

In later adaptations, the circle developed into a spiral to underline the ongoing character of a project. As we know every project has its own dynamic and there is never a real beginning and never a complete end, because the concrete end is often already the first step into a "new" project.

Considering that, youth work is mainly structured in projects. Deming's theory has had an important impact on this field, too. This understanding of youth work as project cycles has led institutions and organisations in the field to try to improve the quality of the projects they support all through their different stages. In order to that they identify three key concepts for quality management[52]:

- **Quality criteria:** characteristics chosen to define quality in coherence with the objectives of the project. The assumption is that if a criterion is fulfilled, the quality is good and if it is not fulfilled not so good or bad. Quality criteria are relevant and valid.

  An example of quality criteria in youth work could be:

  Involvement of participants

  – "Involvement of participants" is a characteristic of an educational project
  – It is coherent with the objectives of the project. Youth projects in general have as objectives the promotion of active participation, engagement, co-responsibility and the use of active methodologies
  – The assumption is that if there is involvement of participants it is good and if there is no involvement it is bad
  – "Involvement of participants" is a relevant and valid criterion

- **Quality standards:** These are conditions set to criteria. Standards are often expressed as the highest or lowest value or allowed range. They define the expected amount, the intensity and the manner of the criteria

  An example of a quality standard in youth work for the quality criteria "Involvement of participants" could be:

  Participants self-manage and organise their projects and the free time

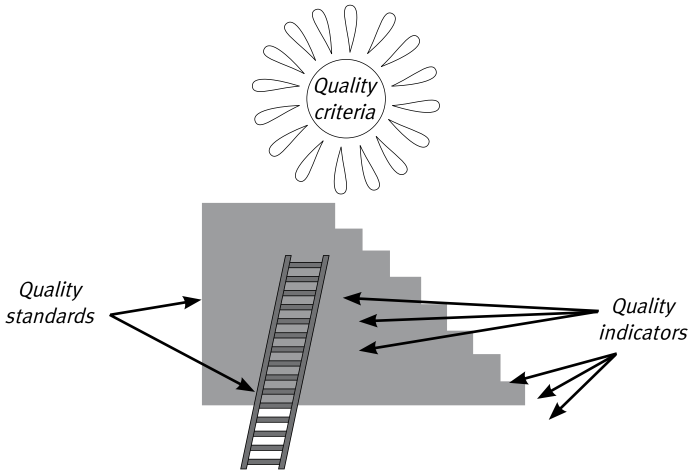
  – "The self management and organisation of their projects and free time" is a condition, an amount, a manner of looking at the criteria "involvement of participants"
  – There are other criteria to evaluate the involvement of participants but this standard (about their project and the free time) is what is expected.

- **Quality indicators:** Most of the time we are not able to directly observe a criterion. Therefore, if we wish to operationalise the criteria, we need indicators. Indicators are measures that indicate if expected quality described in the standard is achieved. Indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and should be reliable and measurable.

52 Sources: BMFSFJ: QS-Compendium, Brochure No. 24, p.75 ff, Bonn, 2001 and "A resource book for social managers" by Paul Nies and Philip C Berman 2004, European Management Association.

Following our example, some indicators (quantitative and qualitative) for the standard "Participants self-manage and organise their projects and the free time" could be:

- **Number and kind of projects**
- **Project team composition**
- **Number and kind of self-organised activities during the free time**
- **Social committee's way of working**
- **Sharing responsibilities**
- **...**



Example of quality criteria, standards and indicators

In addition to the example given while defining quality criteria, standards and indicators, let us imagine a youth exchange project with the objective of promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between participants…

- A quality **criterion** could be:

  Communication between the participants

- A quality **standard** could be:

  Communication in the project happens:

  – Between all participants of the project

  – All through the different phases of the project

  – In the different activities and moments of the day

- Some quality **indicators** could be:

  – Interaction between participants during the free and informal time

  – Direct communication/interaction of participants in the "working spaces"

  – Initiatives to overcome communication barriers (i.e. language, etc)

  – Level of understanding / misunderstanding in case of disagreement or conflict

  – The use of non verbal communication

  …

Here we have developed just one example. For each objective of our project it is necessary to develop specific quality criteria, standards and indicators. All those together constitute the “quality catalogue” of our project.

Every project is unique so we rather create our quality catalogue with the team, with the group and eventually maybe with the support of an external evaluator, for every new project.

This catalogue of criteria, standards and indicators is useful in two ways. First, it defines what quality is and means in our project and second it is a reference for our educational evaluation. A further example of such a process is the “Tool for developing your own evaluation plan - SALTO Check list” (Pages 105-112).

Ideas about quality management enrich strategies of educational evaluation bringing new perspectives to evaluation by achievements and by objectives. As we saw in the section called “What to evaluate?” (Pages 19-28), evaluation by achievements and evaluation by objectives are central in educational evaluation. But, without the complementary information provided by other approaches (and, especially without qualitative information about the process) they cannot embrace the complexity of an educational experience. The global approach to educational evaluation as a total experience, as we propose in this T-Kit, benefits from, but is not limited to, quality management.

Quality in youth work: steps and debates in the European institutions

Quality in youth work at European level

What do we consider “good” or “bad” in our work in educational youth projects? Establishing *evaluation criteria* is an essential and sensitive part of the evaluation process of an educational activity. When touching on this and other related questions we enter into the complex debate on the quality of non-formal education in Europe. Further, in setting up criteria for evaluating educational activities we inevitably enter the field of the quality of non-formal education and youth work.

The quality of non-formal education and youth work is an ongoing discussion among researchers, trainers and youth workers in Europe, which has been stimulated by the Council of Europe and by the European Commission. For both institutions, it is becoming a crucial question especially in the efforts of these institutions to develop the social and political validation and recognition of non-formal education, thus of youth work as well.

To better position non-formal education and learning in a wider socio, political and economic context, it is indispensable to introduce specific *quality criteria*. Such criteria apply to organisers, youth workers and trainers and their performance, locations chosen, dissemination of the learning offer made and success, preparation of participants, cost effectiveness, coherence, evaluation and the links to other experiences in education and learning with regard to personal development, social inclusion, public and civic life or the labour market.

Quality is also about relevance – with regard to life skills, cognitive learning and understanding, living in groups and communities. At European level it includes intercultural competencies such as communicating in foreign languages, respecting difference, discovering universal values, living diversity and developing tolerance of ambiguity. Quality is indeed about ensuring reliability and validity.

European level initiatives on quality in the youth field

Both, the European Commission and the Council of Europe put a strong emphasis on quality assurance and quality development in their policies and activities. The issue has been addressed in many training for trainers courses, for instance in the "Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe" with very valuable approaches and results. Important work on the topic has also been done within the frameworks of the Youth Programme of the European Commission, the network of National Agencies and the SALTO Resource Centres.

Especially the Partnership between the two institutions (European Commission and the Council of Europe) plays an important role in the field of quality development in youth work and non-formal education. It has organised several activities (expert meetings, seminars, trainings) to stimulate the widest possible consultation on this issue, amongst the establishment of an expert group on "Quality Standards, Evaluation and Validation".

While this debate has not yet been concluded it has produced several findings and questions for further debate. Clearly this issue is controversial; it opens up our very deep concerns about the values and impact of youth work, our role as youth workers and the mission in the profession. These issues are seen slightly differently in different countries, from different cultural perspectives, across regions and by a variety of individuals.

There is a growing body of working papers, reports and educational materials focusing on different aspects of quality, which can help us understand the nature, the importance and beauty of this subject. The following documents are particularly interesting because they deal with quality and the related topics of validation, recognition, self assessment, quality standards in the educational youth work.

- The long term training course Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe (ATTE) has been developed to meet the increasing need for qualified trainers in this field and to enlarge and further develop the European networks of trainers, who have the competence and the motivation to develop and implement European level training activities in the youth field. Through its new and innovative approach it was an important step towards ensuring the quality of training of youth workers and youth leaders at European level and towards the recognition and certification of training for trainers in the field of non-formal education.

  ATTE was seen as a pilot course, therefore an appropriate evaluation of its effectiveness with respect to individual learning, group learning and institutional investment was seen as necessary from the very beginning. The evaluation involved various partners, including a limited number of experts, the curriculum developers of the course, the European Youth Forum[53], the National Agencies for the YOUTH Programme as well as the Course Team and participant trainers. The Evaluation Report of the Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe[54] is therefore of remarkable relevance.

  "ATTE did not make great progress in establishing quality criteria, but it has succeeded in raising participants' awareness of the need for quality criteria and quality monitoring. Whether to assess the quality of learning outcomes and then how to do it, proved to be ATTE's thorniest challenge. Participants were prone to think that implicit assessment of their qualities as trainers was taking place continuously. At the outset, tutors generally held the view that assessment of any kind has no place in non-formal learning, but they modified their views as the course proceeded. Transparency is the key to resolving such problems, which are by no means exclusive to the non-formal youth training sector.

  ATTE ultimately decided to use self-assessment procedures, complemented and challenged by feedback from peers, the course team and external experts. Practice 2

53 The European Youth Forum is made up of more than 90 National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, which are federations of youth organisations in themselves. It brings together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe, organised in order to represent their common interests. More information at **http://www.youthforum.org**

54 Accessible at **http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/TCourses/olc_atte/atte_evaluation.html**

projects, a training quality product (TQP), a portfolio and participation in the ATTE seminars themselves would furnish the evidence. Half the participants met the core expectation to produce a TQP by the final seminar, and many who did not regretted that they had not done so, given the value of the feedback sessions." [55]

- With regard to quality standards in education and training activities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe the development of quality criteria[56] aims at contributing to the deepening and widening of transparency, accountability, reproducibility, sustainability, quality and innovation of activities so that the Council of Europe can remain a trend-setter and high quality non-formal education provider in the youth field.

  According to the key document on this subject quality of the education and training activities is assured by and verifiable through a range of criteria: a relevant needs assessment, clear, concrete and assessable objectives, the definition of competences addressed and learning outcomes for the participants, the relevance to the Council of Europe programme and youth policy objectives, an adequate and timely preparation process, a competent team of trainers, an integrated approach to intercultural learning, recruitment and selection of participants, a consistent practice of non-formal education principles and approaches, adequate, accessible and timely documentation, a thorough and open process of evaluation, structurally optimal working conditions and environment, adequate institutional support and an integrated follow-up within the DYS programme and its partner organisations, visibility, innovation and research.

- In February 2004 the Partnership has produced a working paper on "Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and learning in the youth field"[57] It summarizes the state of affairs and highlights a strong need for social and formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning in youth activities. The paper was a milestone in the discussion on non-formal learning and led a number of political initiatives.
- As a result of a research seminar on non-formal learning which was organised in the framework of the Partnership Programme in April 2004 a more precise picture of the impact of youth work and of the skills and competences of those active in the youth field was achieved[58].
- The Bridges for Recognition conference in January 2005 in Leuven, Belgium, was aimed at increasing the visibility of the value of youth work and discussed ways to a better recognition, thus laying the foundations for further action.
- As a follow-up the SALTO Resource Centre for Training in Germany got the mandate to develop a specific "YOUTH-PASS", a European level validation instrument specifically for activities in the framework of the YOUTH Programme.
- Based on a decision of the political bodies at the Council of Europe the organisation convened an expert group to produce the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers. The Portfolio has been completed and will be available – after a testing period – in early 2007. The test version is available at the following website: **www.coe.int/youthportfolio**. This tool includes methods of self-assessment enriched through external feedback, functional analysis, competency tables and levels of assessment, suggested ways to demonstrate evidence of experience and a glossary.
- The political debates in the European Union coordinated by the European Commission led to the Council Resolution on the Recognition of the value of non-formal and

55 Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe. Volume 2 - External evaluation. (2006) Authors: Lynne Chisholm with Bryony Hoskins, Marianne Søgaard Sorensen, Lejf Moos, Ib Jensen. Page 12.
Available at **http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/TCourses/olc_atte/atte_course_pub_vol2.html**

56 Quality standards in education and training activities of the Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe, March 2005, DJS/ET (2005)1

57 Accessible at **http://documents.youth-knowledge.net/documents/39.pdf**

58 Trading up – potential and performances in non-formal learning, edited by Lynne Chisholm, Bryony Hoskins with Christian Glahn, Council of Europe, August 2005

informal learning within the European youth field, adopted under the Austrian Presidency in May 2006.

- There are several other documents, which can help us in understanding the different dimensions of quality. For this we would like to recommend a visit to the website of the Partnership at **http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/EKC/Intro/index.html** where downloads of a wide range of information are available.

Conclusion:

Quality in European youth training and non-formal education has increasingly become a concern for the stakeholders and actors involved:

- for participants in training and non-formal education activities, who want a quality learning offer;
- for trainers, organisers and organisations, who want recognition of the quality of their work in the field of non-formal education and training;
- for sponsors and public authorities, who have an interest in an effective use of the funds and the support they provide in this field.

Linked to the interest in the quality of non-formal education and training there is the interest in recognition of the non-formal education sector as a whole and in particular of the offers in this field and of those who offer it – trainers, organisers, etc.

Therefore, sustaining and further developing quality in European youth training and non-formal education is one of the objectives of the Partnership Programme on European Youth Worker Training run by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Evaluation is an indispensable element of the process.

1.10 Develop your own evaluation!

Experienced evaluators agree that there are no “golden rules” for the development of a perfect educational evaluation. We believe that the definitions, models and questions explored in this “theoretical” part of the T-Kit (“Ingredients of Educational Evaluation”) can help a lot but they cannot guarantee an evaluation process free of resistance and mishaps. The most important is to remember that, if the educational evaluation is not to undermine the objectives of the project, then, it must actively support them.

Be creative and courageous! Just give it a try! In the next more “practical” part of the T-Kit (“Pots, Pans and Spices”) we will present you with some tools, methods and instruments that will support the development of your own educational evaluations and for integrating educational evaluation into your projects.

2. "Pots, pans and spices"

Practicing Educational Evaluation! – Educational Evaluation in Practice!

2.1 How educational evaluation is built into a project? …

While it might already be clear, starting to prepare the evaluation the night before the last day of your project is too late.

Evaluation needs to be planned before you start your project. In other words, planning the evaluation is an integral part of planning the project as a whole.

The main questions to ask ourselves when we begin are:

- Why evaluate? (what are the reasons for doing evaluation in our project?)
- What for? (what are the objectives of evaluation in our project?)
- What should be evaluated? (What are the evaluation fields and elements?)
- How and when should the evaluation be done? (What are the methods, sources for the evaluation?)
- Who will do it and for whom will it be done? (Who are the actors of the evaluation?)

As we have seen, the aims and objectives of your project are an important dimension of what to evaluate. That means that these aims and objectives should be formulated in such a way that they can be evaluated. There should be agreement about what is meant by an objective.

"Improving the intercultural competence of the participants" can be an objective. But what do we mean by that? Can we describe what kind of behaviour we see as improved intercultural competence? What are the indicators that demonstrate that participants are more competent in intercultural situations than they were before the project started?

To set up a proper evaluation, it is crucial to be clear about our aims and objectives. Still, there might be other elements of the project that we want to evaluate, which are not mentioned in the aims and objectives, for example the process. We planned the desired process into the programme of our activity, but how did it work out in reality? Or if we use our cookery metaphor: the meal turned out fine, but the struggle that took place in the kitchen to get to the result was awful and needs to be improved.

The way we work in our team will probably not be mentioned in the aims and objectives. But, since the team carries the educational responsibility, it is certainly important for all concerned to evaluate its work. The same could be said for the co-operation with other partners and stake-holders as well as for the way the different resources such as accommodation, environment, transport and materials were dealt with. The way in which they contributed to the outcomes of the project can be evaluated.

We need to be clear before starting the project about what we want to evaluate. When we have a common understanding about that, it is possible to decide how we will do the evaluation and when.

A lot of questions are implied by this: What kind of information do we need to be able to do our evaluation? If we return to the example of “improving intercultural competence”, this might mean that we should find out how inter-culturally competent the participants were at the moment they started to participate in the project. This means we have to start collecting information before the start of the project. And, this means we have to make up our minds about how to collect that information. Will we use questionnaires or interviews? Will we collect information from individuals or in small groups?

Another question is whether we want a moment during the project to check if we are on the right track and how the project is developing? What information do we need for that? How should we collect that information? Who will do that?

Have we achieved an adequate balance among the different kinds of methods we plan to use for the evaluation? Are the diverse preferences and needs of participants met by the methods we have planned?

What kind of reporting do we need to produce at the end of our project? For whom is this reporting intended? What are the implication of the target audience for the content, the style and the image of the report? Will it be a written report? Will we produce a CD-Rom?

So as you can see, even before the project begins, there are plenty of things to consider, especially when planning the evaluation.

2.2 … A project within a project

How can educational evaluation be built into our project? It helps us to understand how by thinking of evaluation as a project within the project. We will use the following sections to explore this idea.

The three "traditional" steps of a project were defined as: planning, implementing and evaluating[59]. However, this way of conceptualising youth projects can limit educational evaluation "mostly" to the final stages of a project.

If we limited it in this way, the potential of educational evaluation be can reduced and its nature can be subverted. This can even become counter-productive. An evaluation only at the end quite often implies a reduction of the educational value to the minimum and it can result in problematic conclusions.

The idea of educational evaluation presented in this T-Kit implies a continuous and ongoing process, a kind of responsive practice, maintaining flexibility and responding to individuals, to the context and to new situations as they arise.

When practice and evaluation go hand in hand, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between educational evaluation and educational practice. The ongoing reflection that accompanies the practice brings continual adjustment and modification. This responsive working practice becomes itself part of the evaluation process.

Educational evaluation should not be regarded as something to be tacked on to the end of the project. Educational evaluation should happen all through the different stages of a project, from the preparation, until the final implementation.

Consequently we should follow the stages (preparation, design and implementation) so that we can build an evaluation plan or strategy: our evaluation project within our project.

In the following diagram we can see a simplified description of the different stages of a project[60] and vertically, through all of them, ongoing educational evaluation. The different stages of educational evaluation will be disclosed, through guiding questions, in the following sections.

59 See Pages 43-44 T-Kit on Project Management accessible for download at **http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/T_Kits.html**

60 For more details on project planning and its stages see T-Kit on Training Essentials Pages 65-74 and T-Kit on Project Management Page 43. Accessible for downloads at **http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/T_Kits.html**

Educational evaluation within a project

The Poject ↔ **Educational Evaluation**

Preparing the Project:

- Needs analysis
- Personal motivations
- Aims of the organisation
- Defining the aims of the project

Designing the Project:

- Concrete objectives
- Profile of participants
- Resources
- Contents
- Methodology
- Learning outcomes
- Detailed programme
- Methods

Implementing the Project:

- Following the plans
- Adapting
- Taking care of the flow
- Involving participants
- Using the space, environment and resources
- Material, documentation, experts

Ongoing Educational Evaluation

- Preparing the evaluation
- Designing the evaluation
- Collecting and organising the information
- Interpreting the findings
- Drawing conclusions
- Reporting the outcomes
- Implementing the results

Educational evaluation in stages

Together with all the theoretical background already explored, the following questions and considerations can be of a great help for designing, integrating and implementing educational evaluation in our projects.

As a reflection of the approach proposed in this T-Kit, the following questions and reflections at different stages try to be a guide for "educational evaluation as a total experience" within a project. Based on our experiences, we propose to combine different evaluation approaches (by objectives, by achievements, by outcomes, etc) and to diversify spaces, actors, times, methods, sources and techniques of evaluation. At the same time we try to fix some priorities so that we do not fall into the unrealistic pretension of trying to deal with everything at once.

We encourage you to adapt and modify the following guide to the stages of educational evaluation to account for the specificities of your project.

Stages of educational evaluation

Preparing the evaluation

In this first stage we define the aims, nature and general approach of our evaluation

- Why evaluate and what for?
  - Defining the aims and concrete objectives of our evaluation.
  - Adapting and making concrete the general objectives of evaluation (to learn, to participate, to improv e, and to motivate).
- Who will evaluate?
  - Who should evaluate and who should be involved / participate? (Young people, trainers, organisers, stakeholders, partners)?
  - In principle we could think that all actors involved in the project but in which combination and at what different levels of the evaluation should they be involved?
  - Who is competent to conduct our evaluation in terms of the required skills and knowledge?
  - Who has the (political) mandate to conduct the evaluation?

Designing the evaluation plan

Articulate your evaluation plan with clear objectives, fields, timing and indicators.

- What to evaluate?
  - Which fields should be evaluated?
  - How will we group the different elements that are to be evaluated? Will we use existing models of evaluation or will be develop our own?
  - What should be prioritised?

Tip: It can be interesting to evaluate aspects such as context, learning process, content, methods and outcomes group process, technicalities, organisational frame, participants' profile, "products".

- Choosing indicators (qualitative, quantitative?)
  - Indicators: Signals, data, information, which help us to recognise the achievements (achievements of the objectives, learning achievements, etc.)
- When?
  - Educational evaluation is a continuous and ongoing process. At the same time, some moments are especially relevant for the evaluation (i.e. the end of the preparation, the first day of team work, the free day in the middle of an activity, etc). We can foresee and plan those moments when we will pay special attention to the evaluation.
  - In which time frame and sequence do you wish to organise the evaluation process?

Collecting and organising the information

Choose and combine evaluation methods which allow the collection and organisation of the necessary information.

- How to evaluate?

Pages 57-74

- Which evaluation methods will you use?
- In which sequence and combination will the methods be organised / used?
- Which different kinds of information? Quantitative or qualitative? Written, verbal, non verbal?
- From which sources will you collect the information?

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- How are you going to collect and organise the information obtained?
- Can you identify any clues for "understanding"?

Tip: It is recommended to use a variety of methods (quantitative and/ or qualitative) given the complementary nature, advantage and disadvantages of each of them for the collection and analysis of that information.

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Interpreting the findings – What do they mean?

Interpretation or "judgement" gives meaning to that which is evaluated according to the aim, considering the information collected and using the criteria and indicators previously identified.

- Remember the aim of each element evaluated – what is it for?
- Establish criteria.
  - The criteria are elements, which will allow us to compare reality with the objective or the expected outcome of the educational activity. This is a central part of every evaluation.
- Identify what happened: Was it a consequence or an accident? Is there any cause-effect relationship to be observed? Was it foreseeable or not?
- Take into account that not everything is measurable!
- Think about "Objectivity" and "Subjectivity".
  - Interpretation is always subjective. Be aware of that and make that fact explicit. To "limit" the degree of subjectivity, you can try to diversify sources, cross-check information collected, involve other people, check alternative interpretations and consider previous understandings of similar facts.

Drawing conclusions

This is the moment for "extracting lessons" from the evaluation. It is important to be honest.

- Recall the objectives of the evaluation.
- State the results achieved (facts), distinguish facts from opinions.
- Look for patterns, common characteristics or repeated mechanisms.
- What lies was behind these results? What do they imply?
- What can we conclude and learn from them?

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Reporting the outcomes

Share the information, findings and conclusions resulting from the evaluation with the different actors of the project and with other interested audiences.

- Which different target groups will your reporting address?
- Which emphasis will it have?
- What kind of evaluation report will you produce?

Implementing the results

The implementation of the results of the evaluation is the last step and can be the starting point of another project.

- What should be improved?
- What should be maintained?
- Which changes, measures, adaptations, future strategies are necessary or implied by the results?

Some advice at this point:

- Be constructive!
- Be realistic!
- Be aware of resistance to change!
- Foresee adequate time!
- Start to implement the results when the conclusions are fresh and in everyone's minds, when the energy is there and without waiting too long!

We have marked with a magnifying glass some important, and at times especially sensitive, stages of the educational evaluation process:

- How to evaluate? Evaluation methods
- Collecting and organising information
- Establishing criteria
- Reporting the outcomes

We will look at them in more detail in the following sections.

In the section introducing the T-Kit you refer to the cook symbol, partly in reference to how to use the T-Kit. I suggest that you add a reference to this symbol as well at the same point for the sake of coherence.

2.3 How to evaluate? Evaluation methods

In this part and when describing different methods, we have chosen to focus on methods that are used for evaluating with the participants of youth exchanges, training courses, EVS projects and other educational activities. This does not mean that these methods cannot be used in other circumstances. Many of the methods described can, with some adaptation, serve for evaluation purposes within teams or with other stakeholders of our project as well.

One way to classify evaluation methods is to distinguish between personal, interpersonal and group methods. We will explore the uses of several evaluation methods within each of these categories.

Personal methods

Personal methods are activities in which, the actors involved in the evaluation make their own judgements and draw their own conclusions concerning the progress of the activity, the learning process, the outcomes, their personal feelings and involvement, etc.

Some examples of personal evaluation methods are:

Surveys and Questionnaires

Put simply, surveys are a method for collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Comparable information is gathered by using standardised methods, such as questionnaires. Questionnaires are unfortunately the first thing that comes to mind when we speak about evaluation. Unfortunately, because in some projects the team simply distributes a questionnaire on the last day, and feels that they have done the job of evaluating. It is true that a well-designed and well administrated questionnaire can provide a lot of useful information. However, as we have argued before, questionnaires alone can only provide part of the overall picture.

You may administrate questionnaires in three basic ways:

- Self Administrated questionnaires may be completed by the respondents[61] themselves;
- In structured interviews interviewers may administer questionnaires in face to face encounters
- Reading the items to respondents and recording the answers; or interviewers may conduct telephone surveys.

61 When specifically applied to research, respondent means one who is inspired to participate in a focus group, interview or survey. Source Encyclopaedia Britannica Online **http://www.britannica.com/**

Question types

In a questionnaire, the questions may be classified in two categories: closed or open-ended. Closed-ended questions have a limited number of answers while open-ended questions have an infinite number of answers. By their very nature, the answers to closed-ended questions are much easier to analyse. This is, of course, an important consideration. However, an advantage of using open-ended questions is that you may learn new and unexpected things. The results of the evaluation can be very rich.

A closed-ended question offers respondents a number of response choices. The respondents are asked to mark their response using a tick, cross, or circle etc. Their response may be a simple *Yes/No, Male/Female;* or may involve a range of different choices.

Example:

Q. Which energiser(s) you have enjoyed most? (Please circle two)

1. Shark in the pool	*2. Kiss the bunny*
3. Chinese firecrackers	*4. Moje Sutra*
5. Camel wrestling	*6. Group juggling*

Closed-ended questions may have three different types of responses:

Nominal: The responses are categories that differ in name; *Gender (Male, Female), Position (Volunteer, trainer, youth worker)*

Ordinal: The responses are categories that can be ordered, *Agreement (Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree).*

Interval: The responses in which the distance between categories is meaningful, *Age (measured in years), Number of volunteers.*

Open-ended questions provide space to the respondent to answer in his/her own words and own logic. They can be extremely useful, as you usually cannot guess all the possible responses to a question.

Example:

Q. What do you think about the T Kit on Educational Evaluation?

A. I think it is a cool book. I always read it, especially before going to sleep…

Sometimes a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions is the best. You may list all possible responses and an additional category *(other)* so that if the list does not cover the respondents desired answer, they can add it themselves.

When you are designing a questionnaire, you should pay attention to three very important issues:

- *Content*
- *Question type*
- *Question structure*

Content is related to the overall purpose of the questionnaire. You should make sure that the subject can indeed be measured through a questionnaire. To see if the participants were satisfied with the logistical aspects of the organisation of the activity such as the food may be easy to measure through a questionnaire. However, if you want to measure the degree of intercultural learning achieved during the activity, due to its complexity ant to its group dimension, you may need other methods, in addition to a questionnaire.

When designing a questionnaire, you should also check if you need more than one question to evaluate the aspect that you are investigating. The respondents should be able to remember the context of each question and they should also have the necessary information to be able to reply. That is why it is a good idea to review the programme with the participants before distributing the questionnaire, if you wish to evaluate the programme on the last day of a project.

Regarding the **question type**, you have to be clear if what you need to measure is better measured using open-ended or closed-ended questions. If a question is closed-ended, you have to make sure that the responses you provide cover all possibilities. You should not overly limit the options of the respondent. For example, if evaluating the food, you can ask: *How satisfied are you with the food?* But, to provide the respondent with the options to answer only *I love it* or *I hate it* is too limiting. Maybe some people think it was good, but did not fall in love with it. Often when filling out questionnaires, participants tend to focus on scale or score questions, as they are easier to answer and take less thinking effort. Open-ended questions are often replied to without a lot of detail.

Question structure is another important dimension of designing a good questionnaire. Designing clear and well-written questionnaires is a real art. Unfortunately, there are no magic rules for how to do this. However, there are some simple things that can help you to improve your questionnaires.

When writing your questionnaire:

DO:	**DO NOT:**
Use clear and short questions	Use double negatives
Put your questions in a logical order	Use technical jargon and abbreviations
Try to be positive and motivate a reply	Use emotionally loaded words (i.e. frustrating, exciting, annoying, fantastic)
Give clear instructions (i.e. tick, circle a number, check the box, etc.)	Use leading questions (i.e. “Name the innovative elements of this course”)
Be consistent: clear, direct, precise.	Use long complex questions
Give the questionnaire a title (i.e. participant evaluation questionnaire of activity X?) Give a short introduction to the questionnaire explaining what you will use the information for (i.e.: the information collected will be used to compile the evaluation section of the final report to the funding institutions)	Use idioms or culture specific expressions (i.e.: “it’s a piece of cake”, “green light”, “fire brigade”, “cup of tea”; burning issues”)
Present it in a user-friendly manner and give it an attractive layout and appearance	Use biased questions (i.e. “How did the group process contribute to your learning?”)
Provide an adequate variety of options for answering closed-ended questions	Present two questions in one
Consider the language, literacy and written expression capacities of those who will answer the questionnaire	Put important questions at the end of the questionnaire

The Bad Questionnaire exercise [62]

Have a look at the *Bad Questionnaire* and try to identify the problems with it. Discuss them with your evaluation colleagues.

The problems are exaggerated on purpose but the logic underlying them is present in many questionnaires and other evaluation methods. Discuss how these problems can be avoided?

The Bad Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire – thanks!

How old are you?

1-20 years old ☐ 22-24 years old ☐ over 26 years old ☐

What is your ethnicity?

Yes No Not sure

Where did you hear about the programme and why did you decide to come on the programme?

- My Mum told me about it and told me to come on it
- In the newspaper and I decided it would be a good idea
- My teacher said it was something to do after I had finished school and I agreed
- Other:

What did you learn on the programme?

Everything ☐ Nothing ☐

Do you like to play football

Yes ○ No ○ Often ○

What are you doing now?

In employment ☐ In education or training

Both ☐

What is your current occupation? (for example: I am a farmer)

I am a ________________________________

Where do you live?

What is your name?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Will you tell *all* of your friends how good this programme is?

Yes ○ No ○ Not sure ○

Have you got a wife yet?

Yes ○ No ○ Not sure ○

How has your opinion about life and the universe altered now that you have most successfully terminated, completed and concluded our programme?

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONNAIRE!!!!!!!!!

62 Kneale, Dylan. "Evaluation seminar" Avanos, Turkey 4th -10th October 2004 Organised by Youth Express Network and supported by the European Youth Foundation of Council of Europe.

Without wishing to present a model (rather, an example!) we provide a possible structure for a “good” final evaluation questionnaire (Pages 97-101).

A letter to oneself (also known as “letter to yourself”)

The “letter to yourself” is one of the simplest and most commonly used personal evaluation methods. It is also one of the most efficient. The “letter to yourself” can achieve some very interesting and in depth results about the impact of a programme. As it is a personal method, it can also assist the participant to become aware of certain progress made as a result of his/her participation, which s/he would not realise otherwise.

If you are planning to use this method, you should keep in mind that the “letter to yourself” is a very personal method. The facilitator does not have any possibility to intervene, influence or interact in the process as s/he does not read the letter. After all, it is a letter to “yourself”, the participant may write in their own language and what they write is totally between the participant and, well, themselves.

You ask the participants to write themselves a letter. When you ask them to prepare the letter depends on the programme of your project. This may be on the very first day of the programme, in the middle or on the last day, before departure. The decision will be made in function of what you want to achieve with the letter. In all cases, it is important to provide enough time and space for writing this letter and its importance should be made quite clear to all participants.

If the participants are writing the letter on the first day of your activity, you may ask them to write about a large variety of issues, for example, their expectations, fears, why they have come to the activity (their motivations), their first impressions of the team, other participants or the country (if they have travelled abroad to the activity).

If the exercise is taking place on the last day, the letter may include similar issues, but focus on different aspects, for example, are they satisfied with the activity, what have they learned, what are they taking back home with them, which part of the programme have they enjoyed most/least, what is their plan of action for implementing the things they have learned once they get home?

Once they have finished writing the letter, they seal it in an envelope on which they write their full name and postal and address. The team sends the letters to the participants after a period of time after the project has ended, for example, 2 months after. This allows the participants to make a comparison of their initial perspectives and feelings with the ones they have 2 months after the project.

Diary

Another way of giving participants the opportunity to reflect on the process they are going through is to ask them to write a diary. The team provides the participants with a notebook (the diary), in which they can note down the experiences of each day during the activity.

This is, of course, very suitable to projects that last more than just a few days. This can be a good method in EVS-projects to help the volunteers to reflect on the large number of new impressions that they have to deal with while living and working in another country. In residential seminars, the experiences accumulated outside of the “official programme” are also very rich. A diary can be also useful for documenting and evaluating these activities.

Of course a diary is something personal and therefore is not to be read by youth leaders, mentors or facilitators! But, aspects of what the participants might note down in their diaries can be discussed in particular group settings such as for example “reflection groups”. We provide a description of reflection groups in a later section (see page 67).

One approach to this activity is to provide an empty notebook for participants to use at their discretion, but another and one which is often appreciated by participants as they receive some guidance, is to give some guiding questions.

For example:

- Describe what happened today in your own words
- Were there any remarkable moments?
- Are there things/questions still buzzing around in your head?
- Is there anything ‘new’ you learned today?
- Is there anything you want to pay further attention to?

Remember that participants may need to be motivated to use their diary on a daily basis. A diary that looks nice or that is presented in a creative way can motivate.

Interpersonal methods

In interpersonal evaluation methods more than one individual actor share and discusses their judgements and conclusions, often in a pair or small group. The value and purpose of those methods is to share, to confront opinions and to learn. This takes place because participants have the opportunity to evaluate from more than one point of view. Just two examples of interpersonal methods of evaluation are interviews and focus groups.

Interviews

There are two types of interviews, in depth interviews and structured interviews. The main difference between these types is the amount of flexibility allowed to the interviewer and to the respondent.

- **Structured interviews**
  In a structured interview both interviewer and respondent have very little flexibility because there is a questionnaire that has to be followed. The interviewer has a questionnaire and reads out each question to the respondent. The majority of the questions will be open-ended, for example: “How did you feel during the simulation exercise?” Even though the answer of each respondent will be different, the question remains the same.

- **In depth interviews**
  In an in-depth interview there is no pre-set questionnaire, just a list of important issues that the interviewer must cover with each respondent. The interviewer has much more autonomy and flexibility in the development of a conversation with the respondent.

However, in both types of interviews, what is important is that the interviewer acts in a neutral manner and tries not to direct or influence the responses of the person being interviewed. The participant should feel comfortable with and have trust in the interviewer.

Before starting an interview we should always be clear about what we want to evaluate. For example, if our aim is to evaluate the recruitment of participants, it is possible that we will want to collect information about where participants heard about the programme and what motivated them to get involved.

As we see, conducting interviews requires some experience, knowledge and competences. We should ask ourselves if we are the right person to conduct the interview or if it is appropriate for us to do so at all.

For an ideal interview, the participant should feel comfortable with and should trust the interviewer. As in other interpersonal situations, in an interview, the “race”, socio-economic background, gender and even accent of the interviewer can influence a respondent’s answers.

It is important to record the answers of the respondent during the interview. This is a practical issue. Trying to write everything down at the same time as conducting the interview is very complicated and may even be impossible. It is not appropriate to ask a respondent to slow down, as this would interrupt their thought flow.

It can be useful to record the interview with a hand held tape or digital recorder. It might also be relevant to take notes about the non-verbal communication that takes place during the interview. Recording the interview can liberate us to note down such behavioural observations on paper.

Interviews are very work intensive and time consuming. A lot of resources are required to do and analyse them. But, they have the advantage that they can give a better insight into why a participant thinks that, for example, the energisers should get 4 points out of 5.

Preparing and making in depth interviews

It is a good idea to prepare some questions or prompts before starting any interview. If we are conducting a structured interview, we have already prepared a questionnaire. But for an in-depth interview it is also very important to prepare in advance. Even if you do not formulate the questions, make sure to list the items you want to discuss with the respondents.

When preparing and making in depth interviews, it is important to take following points into consideration:

- Try to avoid closed or dichotomous (YES/NO) questions. Imagine asking: “Did you enjoy the programme?” The participant will say “Yes”, and that will be it.
- The questions should trigger the respondents to think. We are aiming to get as much information as possible. For example, you can ask: “In your opinion, which aspects of the programme were most useful?”, instead of “Did you enjoy the programme?”.
- Before asking a question, we should consider if the respondent will answer the question truthfully. We recommend not to get too personal and not to ask questions that would put the respondent in the position of lying out of politeness or for legal reasons. For instance, the trainer asking participants in an activity: “Do you think I am a good trainer?” is not very appropriate. Participants may feel under pressure to say even yes if they do not think the trainer is good.
- Interviewers should be neutral: their presence should not have any effect on the responses given to questions. In case the responses given to an open-ended question are unclear or not sufficient in the opinion of the interviewer, a probe (a neutral, non-directive question) can be used. Some examples of probes include, “Anything else?”, “What do you mean?”, “Can you explain in more detail?”, “In which ways?”

Focus Groups

In very simple terms, a focus group is "a group of people sharing similar characteristics who talk about a subject they have in common".[63] Focus groups are one of the most efficient qualitative and interpersonal evaluation methods. Their small size and relaxed atmosphere allow for deep and frank evaluation.

In a youth project, the young people themselves are the "group of people" that forms the focus group and their common subject are aspects of the project that need to be evaluated.

Even though it sounds quite similar, focus groups differ extensively from interviews. The main difference between focus groups and interviews is that an interview is a one on one activity that takes place between an interviewer and an interviewee. Focus groups, however, are a group activity, as the name implies.

A focus group is made up of a group of young people and a facilitator or moderator. In a focus group, interaction between the participants, leads them to think out loud and form opinions during and as a result of the process.

Focus groups have some important advantages and disadvantages. The first and most important advantage of using focus groups as a method for evaluation is that they allow you to explore the way in which young people form their opinions as well as finding out what their opinions are. In a focus group, the reason why a participant is thinking in a particular way is as evident as the opinion they hold. The participant reaches an opinion as a result of the discussions with other participants in the focus group.

Another major advantage of focus groups is that they encourage participants to speak in public. Many participants feel more secure expressing themselves in a small group of their peers than sitting alone in a corner with an interviewer. As a result they tend to express their opinions more openly and more bravely in a focus group situation. But, this does not hold true in all cases.

Group pressure may also negatively affect the sense of security of participants to honestly express themselves. Thus, extreme care should be paid to group dynamics and the amount of peer pressure that exists in any group when deciding how to approach the evaluation or when deciding whether to use focus groups.

But, forming focus groups also has certain difficulties. It is very difficult to make sure that all participants will participate with the same level of concentration and attention. If we are going to form a focus group during the programme of a given activity, we should help participants to stay focused and be ready to allocate enough time for them to express their opinions.

It should also be noted that during a focus group, it is very difficult to record the information and to keep track of what is being said at the same time. To overcome this is good to collect all together, at the end, the main conclusions or simply a mechanism of rotation for taking notes.

One final but nevertheless important disadvantage of the focus group can be the eventual generalisations that can take place in the discussion. We should check if the opinions raised are representative of all the participants in the group, as it is not rare to have one or two outspoken members who speak in the name of others in an activity.

For example, the first day, several participants who have already been in similar activities might express their "impatience". But, the silent majority of the group might have another opinion.

63 ibid.

Here we have collected some general recommendations for facilitating focus group:[64]

- Keep the group small (ideally 4 to 6 people)
- Take into consideration the language skills of the international participants as it affects the time they need to communicate their opinion
- Keep your questions neutral and avoid manipulating the discussion with biased questions. This can create a negative reaction from the participants
- Be very patient, as it takes time for the discussion to build up and for all members to feel invited and comfortable enough to join in. It is counter productive to interfere in the discussion too much and to constantly offer your own opinion. It can make the participants feel pushed
- Make clear at the beginning what you want to achieve by holding the focus group discussion. Tell participants what the aims and expectations are. If the facilitator is clear with the participants, it is very likely that the participants will be clear too
- Try through everything you want to discuss in just one session. Remain focused, and limit the number of topics and issues for discussion to the most important and relevant ones. Otherwise you risk that the participants lose interest and you may end up with very little information.

Group interactive methods

Group interactive methods of evaluation can be used to check what the feelings or views of the group are at a particular stage of the programme or to evaluate a certain session. Of course we can do that in an informal way by observing the group and the activities and by asking questions. These observations would be valuable but at the same time subjective to the team or the observers.

Personal or interpersonal evaluation methods like questionnaires or interviews with participants might be time-consuming, depending on the programme. Shorter interactive group methods, which include elements in addition to verbal and written expression, are a good option. These methods not only inform us about the views and feelings of the group, but also create the possibility for participants to reflect and to learn about how others experience the activity.

Group evaluation methods have an additional dimension. Since the group in non-formal education is source of learning, group evaluation methods can specifically deal with group dimensions of the learning process including for example, group life, the atmosphere in the group, the co-operation among participants…

Checking expectations

What are the expectations of participants towards the programme? What do they want to take home as a result of their participation? Are there things that they absolutely do not want to do? For different reasons it is good to ask participants to take some time to reflect on what their expectations are at the beginning of the activity. To formulate what you want helps you to remain focused on your needs during the programme.

For participants it is interesting to find out about the needs and wishes of the others. This is essential for the team. The team has every interest in understanding how participants view their purpose in participating in the activity. It helps the team to refocus the programme or clarify to the participants what they can and cannot achieve in the context of the activity.

64 ibid.

Clothes line

An effective method for collecting the expectations of participants is called the 'Clothes Line'. All participants receive papers on which items of clothing are drawn. Each item of clothing stands for a different kind of expectation: for example, Hopes, Fears or Offers to the programme that participants may wish to make. Time is given for participants to reflect on their expectations using the categories of clothing as a prompt. They write their different ideas related to each category on the clothing shapes and stick them on a clothes line made of string (hung in an appropriate space in the working room) or drawn on the wall. Everybody has a chance to look at the "laundry" of the others. It is important that the group has the time for it.

Clothes line

Three posters

A similar method involves placing three big blank posters on the wall. Each one is given a title, for example: 'What do I want to take home?', 'What do I want to avoid?' and 'What can I contribute?'. On sticky pieces of paper participants are asked to write down their answers to each of the questions/poster-titles and to stick them on the appropriate poster. Remember to give the group sufficient time to review individually the answers of all the participants. A team member or facilitator can also make a review and read out the most common answers given to provide the group with a global picture of the expectations in the group.

The legitimacy of these methods depends on the conscious use of the information collected by the team and by the group. The expectations should be carefully considered to discern which ones can be fulfilled in the activity and they should to the extent possible be integrated into the different programme elements.

At the end of the activity, one can return to the initial expectations of participants and to reflect on the extent to which participants have got what they wanted out of their participation. A very simple and visual method to do this is to invite participants to go to the "clothes line" or to the "posters" and to remove their fulfilled expectations. They should leave behind the ones which have not been fulfilled. Then participants should explain the reasons why some expectations were fulfilled and others not. Another way to return to the initial expectations is to group them and discuss their fulfilment or not in small discussion groups. Often unexpected outcomes arise at this point, something which is interesting for both participants and team to know about.

End of the day reviews

In a programme that lasts more than a few days, it can be advisable to make sure there is a regular moment to look back on the experience of the participants in the activity part of the programme. This regular moment for evaluating can take place everyday (end of the day review) or at regular intervals during the programme, and is often done in small groups of 5 to 7 persons. For the participants this can be a valuable moment to share experiences about the programme of the day or of several days, to express their feelings and to hear how others have experienced that same part of the programme. For the facilitators, it provides an effective means for staying in touch with the way the group develops and to take up any problems and challenges that may be communicated by the group. It is important to plan appropriate time for these reviews. This is not always easy at the end of the day. But, rushing through such a group evaluation just before dinner begins does not allow you or the group to reflect properly and runs the risk that participants feel they are not being taken seriously.

End of the day reviews with the whole group have the advantage that participants learn about the impressions of everyone in the group and can create a sense of common responsibility for the group life and the programme in the group as a whole. But, large groups can have the disadvantage that only some few participants take the floor. Therefore, if undertaking an end of day review in a large group, it is important to propose methods that make it possible for all the members of the group to express themselves. We propose below some of those methods: "The Three Word Review", "The Telegram" and "The Living Dartboard".

Reflection Groups

Reflection groups are small groups of between 4 and 6 people. They usually take place daily at the end of the programme and last between 30 minutes and one hour. Their composition is normally fixed for the whole duration of the activity. This allows the members of the reflection group to create their own atmosphere during the several sessions over the duration of the activity.

It is interesting to have in each group participants from different backgrounds, with different personalities and profiles, so that within each group there is wide range of points of view. This is particularly important for the evaluation. In addition, small groups offer a more secure space for expression in public than a large group. .

The Reflection Group gives the possibility participants:

- to exchange experiences with fellow participants
- to evaluate the day
- to let off steam
- to come up with suggestions and ideas to improve the programme

For facilitators, reflection groups are a way to "keep in touch" with what is going on in the group.

Other methods, as described below, can be used as 'warm-up' activities in reflection groups and as we said also to evaluate interactively with a large group. The group leader does not take an active leading role but stimulates the active participation of all group members.

The Three Word Review

A simple method at the end of the day, for the whole group, is the "Three word review" where participants are asked to write down for themselves three words that describe their feelings about the day. Then participants are invited to call out their words which are noted down on a flip-chart. After that, a discussion about the meaning and relevance of the words can be initiated. This commonly leads to a lively discussion.

The "Three word review" involves all the participants from the start which makes it often easier for those who are usually not the first to speak, to contribute to the discussion.

The Telegram

A variation on this is the "Telegram" in which participants give a general impression about a day or session. This activity is very appropriate after a tiring day or session when there is no energy left for a thorough evaluation. Participants are invited to think for a few minutes about the day or session and then to share their opinion with the group in three words: a positive word – a negative word – a concluding word.

For example: Intensive – Headache – Exhausted

Make sure to write down on a flipchart what participants say and it can be useful to make a short summary of what the general group feeling is at the end. When time is limited, the exercise may be concluded by asking participants to read each others' telegrams.

Another way of sharing outcomes is to invite participants to write the telegrams on sticky pieces of paper and to put them on the wall for everybody to read.

The Living Dartboard

An energetic way to evaluate the day is the "Living Dartboard", in which participants are invited to move around the room according to their position towards statements that are read out about the programme, or other aspects being evaluated.

You need an empty, rather large room for this activity. In the middle of the room is an object (e.g. chair, paper, flower, etc.). This object represents the centre of the dartboard (also known as the "bull's eye").

The facilitator reads out statements about the activity and participants choose a spot in the room according to their opinion about that statement. The more you agree with the statements that the facilitator reads out, the closer you move to the middle-point. The more you disagree, the farther away from that point you should move.

After everyone has chosen their position participants can be asked to explain their reasons for standing where they are.

Towards the end, participants may be invited to come up with their own statement/s about the activity. This way they have a chance to check how the rest of the group feels about it.

Some examples of statements are:

- The rhythm and timing of the programme was well planned
- The methods in this activity were monotonous
- Being in an international group helped me a lot to understand what Intercultural Learning is about
- I missed theoretical inputs
- The food was fabulous
- …

In these three methods it is important for the facilitator to make notes of what has been said so that the outcomes of the evaluation do not get lost and can be used by the group and the team.

Visual group evaluation methods

Visual group evaluation methods give a clear overview about how other participants value a certain part of the activity. They do so, not so much by using words, but by taking advantage of the potential that non-verbal communication can offer. Many people feel much more comfortable when they can express themselves without using words, especially if the activity is taking place in a foreign language. Many such methods exist.

The “River” is a method which stimulates participants to use their creativity when evaluating. It is a method that focuses on the process of an activity rather than on its contents or other aspects commonly evaluated. The metaphor of a river can help people to reflect on their experience during the activity.

Another more process-oriented method is called “Boats on the Sea”. This activity can help participants to take stock of what has been done and what still lies ahead of them in the activity. Participants are invited to use their creativity by evaluating through the use metaphoric symbols: the sea, boats, sea animals, islands, other ships, etc.

A useful metaphor for looking towards the future is that of the “Train with different wagons”. Each wagon represents a different element of the programme that participants should reflect on. Participants are asked to write down ideas related to each of these elements for follow-up to the activity in the appropriate wagon.

And of course you can develop and adapt all these methods using the idea of a trip or a journey to represent a process.

When using this kind of method, it is useful to create a nice and relaxing atmosphere. This can help to make people feel comfortable and to evaluate more effectively. This can be done using some background music.

Another visual way of helping participants to find out about how they feel at a given moment is called “Puppets in a Tree”. Images help participants to think about how they feel. Pictures of little figures or puppets are shown in different positions in a tree. Participants think about how they feel and decide which of the puppets in the tree best symbolises their mood or state of mind at that given moment.

The River

The river is a very versatile evaluation method. It can be used on the last day of the programme, for mid-term evaluation and for daily evaluation. It offers participants the possibility to express, in a creative way, how they see their development during the programme.

Participants are divided into small groups (5 to 7 participants). Each group is provided with the picture of a River drawn on a large piece of paper. The beginning and the end of the river should be marked on the paper. Each group receives paper (different colours), scissors, glue, pencils and markers. Participants are asked to work individually on giving creative expression, using the material provided, to their personal development during the programme and to place the results of their creative efforts onto whichever part of the river they consider appropriate.

When everybody has finished participants are asked to explain their creations.

Boats on the Sea

This exercise can be done in small groups as well as individually.

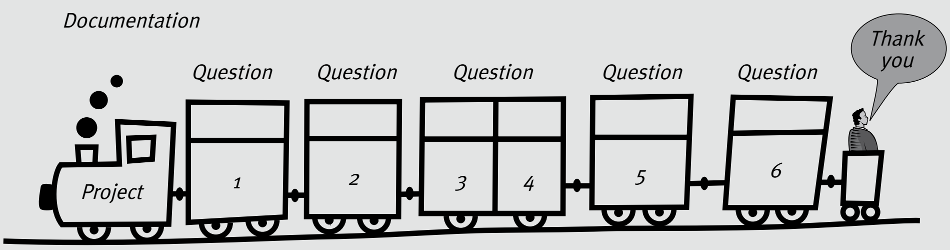
Prepare a large drawing of a sea with two harbours (one on the top and one on the bottom) in advance. The sea between the two harbours stands for the period of time between two moments of the programme. For example, this could be the beginning and the end of the project, but any other programme part could also be chosen.

Ask participants to design their own boats and to put these boats somewhere in between the two harbours. Within the sea, islands or rocks or other symbols can be drawn. Participants are free to add anything they feel helps them to clarify the position of their boat in this metaphor.

This method can be used in many different ways. You can give participants different kinds of boats representing different elements you want to evaluate (for example, the boat of "my learning" or of "the group process" or of "my participation in the programme", etc.).

Train to the Future

FUTURE TRAIN(ING)



COOPERATION .... in future? ....

This process oriented evaluation method is useful for looking towards the future and can be used in the evaluation to think about possible follow-up to a project. It is a group visual method that can be used in large groups.

But, the starting point for working on it, can be personal (by including this drawing of the metaphor in a questionnaire) or in small groups (using a flipchart). The results can be then shared on a big poster so that the whole group can visualise and decide upon the future co-operation after a certain project.

The different wagons allow a certain grouping of the co-operation possibilities (i. e. communication, networking, follow-up activities, common projects, publications...). Within the metaphor of the train, other symbols (i.e. the machinist, the passengers, the power...) can be used to discuss and decide about the different roles and responsibilities in the future co-operation.

Puppets in a Tree

Puppets in a Tree

This method can be used for the end of day review as well as for a final review in smaller or bigger groups. The advantage of this method is that you can easily adapt it to different situations or needs.

All members of the group are invited to express their current feelings and / or their satisfaction with the programme or on other aspects such as their learning, the group dynamic and so on.

To do this participants are asked to choose one of the figures (or puppets) on the picture that they consider most representative of their present mood or state of mind in relation to the aspect being evaluated.

When everybody has chosen is their puppet, participants explain to each other the reasons of their choice.

In all these visual group methods of evaluation, it is important to take notes of the comments and discussions. The written notes are a necessary complement to the visual information: they help to explain, understand and conceptualise it. Altogether the visual information and the notes can be organised and used by the team and the whole group to draw conclusions and identify possible changes in the programme. On a practical note, they can be used in the evaluation report.

Snap-shots

Snapshots are useful when you do not have a lot of time left but you still want to get a picture of the general feeling in the group. There are some short visual methods that can be used for this. These methods give you an impression: a snap-shot. They are certainly not as thorough as other some of the methods already described, but they can be helpful for facilitators and participants to see how the others feel.

A simple method for checking the atmosphere in the group is to use the "Thermometer" for "taking the temperature" of the group. This metaphor allows you to how people are in the group. With a little creativity you can easily adapt it to create other metaphors to fulfil the same purpose, for example, a sunny beach, under the umbrella on a rainy day, freezing in the snow, etc.

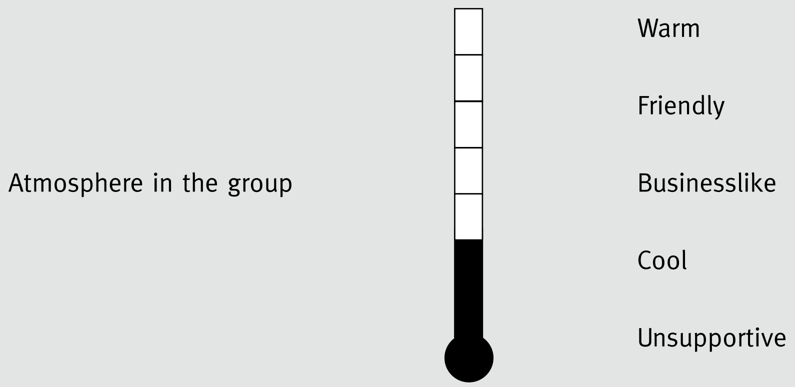
In the same logic, you can ask participants to evaluate how they feel about the pace of the programme by using the "Speedometer". Here you can also replace the speedometer with animals or means of transport going at different speed to diversify the metaphor.

A quick and easy way to test how people feel about different elements of the programme is to use "Applause". It can also be used as an energizer to warm people up to evaluating. And, again you can be creative and make your own version using other sounds instead of applause.

The combination of several of these methods can be used to carry out a lively mid-term evaluation half way through the programme.

The Thermometer

A simple method for "taking the temperature in the group" is the "Thermometer". The thermometer can be drawn on a flip chart and participants are invited to put a personalised mark (their name or initials) on the temperature they feel best represents how they view a particular part of the programme or how they feel the group is.



In this example, the atmosphere in the group is evaluated. But, other aspects can be evaluated with the thermometer, for example the informal moments, group life.

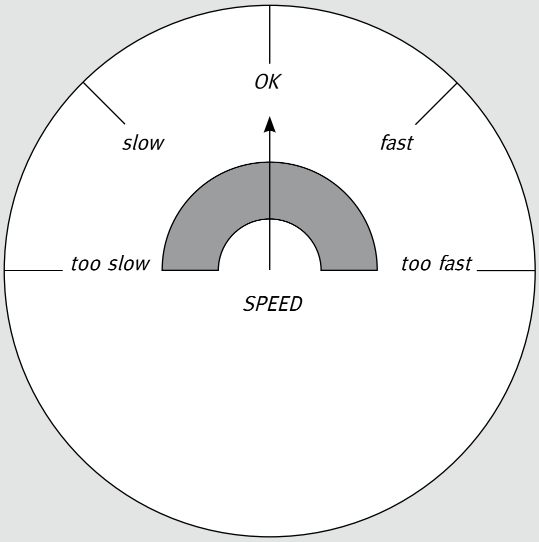
Participants can also be asked to share their evaluations and to discuss how things can be improved.

The flip chart depicting the group evaluation can be posted on the wall and at a later stage of the activity can be used again, to see how things have developed.

The Speedometer

How do participants feel about the pace of the programme? The "Speedometer" offers participants to express their feeling about the rhythm of the activity and can be used as an ongoing (daily) evaluation method.

Draw the speedometer on a flip chart and ask participants to put their personal mark according to their opinion about the pace of the programme.



Further instructions needed to understand how this can be used, for example, let all the participants take a look at the other participants' opinions and discuss as appropriate.

Remember to mention what the team will do with the information.

Applause

This is a very simple method to evaluate different elements of the activity at the end of or during the programme.

Ask participants to form a circle. The facilitator reads out different elements of the programme and according to their satisfaction with that element participants clap their hands.

The higher the level of satisfaction, the louder and longer the applause should be. As this activity is only intended to measure the satisfaction of participants with a particular programme element (in other words, whether they liked or disliked it), it can be used as a warm up activity before moving to the business of more serious evaluation activities.

Last round

The last round in an activity offers participants the possibility to express the things that they consider as the most important elements or those issues "which have not yet been mentioned" before the end and before everyone leaves. This is sometimes an emotional moment before the programme really ends.

Last round

This is as simple as giving every participant, one by one, the possibility to speak and to say anything they feel is appropriate. Just remember that this can easily end up in a long and tiring session. To avoid this and to help participants to focus on the most essential, you can limit each intervention, for example, to one sentence.

A very dynamic variation on the last round is known as "The Matchbox". Its dynamism comes from tension and speed. You need one or two boxes of matches (one match per person is enough) and a plate or a bucket. One by one, participants are asked to burn a single match and to speak only for the time that the match is burning. When it burns out you have to end your point immediately!

Another way to deal with the last round is to take an object, preferably one that somehow represents the project, and to send it around the circle of participants. The one who has the object in their hand speaks and when finished hands it over to another person in the group who is then invited to express themselves.

A variation on this is to use a ball of string. As participants express themselves and pass the ball from person to person, a spiders' web of links emerges between the members of the group.

The ideas expressed in the last round are, sometimes, not very well developed or may seem not to be very relevant. But, these feelings and impressions expressed are usually very revealing and can help us to understand the outcomes of other evaluation methods. For this reason, it is important to note down the main ideas expressed in the last round.

2.4 Feedback

Feedback can be part of interpersonal and group evaluation. In some of the methods outlined previously the evaluation process implies giving feedback to somebody.

Feedback is "the transmission of evaluative or corrective information to the original source about an action, event, or process."[65]

One very important element should be emphasised:

FEEDBACK SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE PERSON RECEIVING IT

To be helpful, feedback to somebody must be such that the person:

- understands the information
- is able to accept the information
- is able to do something with the information.

Feedback can be used in one to one situations as well in small groups/teams.

When using feedback in a group it is helpful to begin by reminding the group briefly of the meaning of feedback and to set a time frame so that everybody has the chance to both give and receive feedback.

Some things that we consider to be feedback serve only the needs of the person giving it and not the needs of the person receiving it. In other words, if you are fed up with somebody and finally come to the point telling them, you might be relieved in doing so, but this is does not constitute giving feedback. This serves only your need to tell them how you feel. It does not necessarily provide them with constructive information that they can act on for improved relations.

Feedback is somewhat more complicated than one might imagine. To avoid misunderstandings and problems in the group, it is important to be sensitive about the group dynamic when using feedback. When working in the context of human relations, feedback should be guided by the principle of mutual respect for each other as learning subjects. Take your time. Make sure you have enough space (in terms of the working room and time frame). Think about an adequate environment in which to do feedback. Think about the atmosphere in the group and the implications of undertaking feedback at any given moment. These simple things can provide participants with the security they need in order to undertake honest feedback and serious evaluation.

Below you will find some suggestions for how to give and receive feedback.

65 Source: Merrian Webster Online Dictionary. http://www.m-w.com

How to give and receive feedback?

Giving feedback

- Speak for yourself by using “I” instead of “You” or “We” when you give your feedback to the group. If speaking about your personal opinions and feelings, they should not be related as being those of others even if you feel they are representative
- Begin your feedback with a positive review rather than with negative statements
- When you give feedback to one particular person in the group address that person directly rather than to the group as a whole. This involves saying who the feedback is for
- Do not judge other people. Rather you should describe your personal perception of a situation or your feelings
- Give feedback in relation to the “here” and “now” situation rather than to past events
- If something conflictual arises, try to be constructive rather than destructive. Be supportive to those who propose ways to deal with difficulties and conflicts. It can help to remind oneself of the human potential for learning and for change
- It is alright to praise somebody! Express what you liked most in somebody’s behaviour, what made the most important impression on you or what you suggest for someone to do in future

Receiving feedback

- Think of the feedback you receive in terms of constructive criticism. You have a chance to receive information about how others view your performance and to understand what they think about you
- If you feel you are being criticised, try to avoid immediately taking a defensive attitude. You do not have to justify your behaviour or to explain why something is like it is
- Try not to interrupt the person who is giving you or the group feedback. If necessary and agreed in advance of the feedback session by all involved, responses can be given at the end

2.5 A critical look at evaluation methods

Sorbet for breakfast?: When to use what method?

Serving sorbet for breakfast or fish for dessert might not be the best idea in some countries. Of course, one must be careful with this kind of statements, especially in an intercultural environment! This example should alert us to the idea that spending some time thinking about 'what to serve when' makes a lot of sense, both in cooking and in evaluation.

When choosing an evaluation method, the first question we have to ask ourselves is: what do we want to get out of the evaluation? What do we want to find out? Do we want to know more about the learning process of participants? Do we need information about how people feel in the group? Are we curious about how people feel about the methodology used in the programme? Or do we want first of all to give participants the possibility to reflect on their learning and to share that with the others?

Methods like "Applause" or the "Living Dart-board" will not help you to find out more about the learning process of the individual participants. This kind of method can help you to get an impression of the atmosphere in the group, for example. It is useful not only for the content of the answers that the participants provide, but also for the information provided by the way the group deals with the questions. When during the "Living Dartboard" all participants demonstrate complete satisfaction with every item evaluated by running immedia tely to the middle point, one justifiable conclusion would be that "having an opinion which is different from that of the others" is not (yet) a shared culture in the group.

Questionnaires and interviews will provide you with information about the individual learning process of participants. But, reflection groups can serve this purpose as well. When a reflection group meets regularly it can provide a safe environment where people can share their feelings and the challenges they consider have arisen. This kind of exchange helps participants to give words to their experiences and to compare them to and learn from the experiences of the others.

Methods which rely on the use of creativity (drawing, non-verbal expression, theatre, for example) can help participants to give expression to issues arising as a result of the process they are part of in the activity and which may raise mixed emotions. By using objects as symbols, drawing or body language you offer participants other ways of expressing their concerns and ideas. Verbalising these ideas afterwards for the sake of clarity and mutual understanding can then be used in the second step.

People are different and so are participants in educational projects. One method will fit better with one participant than with another. Some people love to fill in questionnaires and will provide you with long answers to the questions. Others have problems in writing down their experiences and feelings, but are excellent in expressing themselves in more creative ways. It is important to offer a variety of methods that provide participants with different communication styles with equal opportunities to express their views.

Evaluation methods should also be thoroughly introduced. It is important to explain to participants before beginning the evaluation activity what its aim is, why you have chosen it, what the purpose is for those conducting the evaluation and especially what will be done with the results.

Outcomes

What do the outcomes of all these evaluation methods tell us? First of all, they can provide a rather positive impression of how participants value the activity. But even when participants have expressed satisfaction with an activity, it remains important to take critical look at the outcomes. Sometimes the level of satisfaction can be caused by the lack of challenging activities or a good group atmosphere. Whether they are positive or negative, the outcomes of the evaluation should be carefully considered.

The way in which the participants answer to the questions posed in different evaluation methods is influenced by many things including, for example, the specific moment at which the questions are asked, the atmosphere in the group and how others answer the questions.

Especially in visual methods like the "Thermometer" there is the risk that participants will adjust their opinion to what others have already noted down. Most people want to feel like they belong to the group and this can lead to not wanting to obviously differ in opinion from that of others. But, this kind of "group conformity" is also a matter of which stage of development the group is in. The important thing is to remain aware that the risk exists and to consider it when interpreting the outcomes of a given visual method of evaluation.

It is also good to take a critical approach to the outcomes of evaluation questionnaires. Questionnaires are filled in at a specific moment in the activity. The answers to the evaluation questionnaire on the last day are influenced by the fact that people are soon leaving the activity. Participants may have mixed or confused feelings on the last day. Often it is difficult for participants to answer questions about what they have learned on the last day of an activity. Participants might answer quite differently two weeks after they have gone home and had a chance to reflect with some distance.

This does not mean that such evaluation methods are worthless. It simply means that it is relevant to consider the variety of possible influences in the interpretation of their results.

Resistance to evaluation

Often when we undertake an evaluation we can count on the support and backing of a team or an organisation. But, sometimes people do not like the idea of evaluating. We should, therefore, be aware of the fact that there can be resistance to evaluation.

Why is that? Where might such resistance come from?

- Evaluation needs resources (time, human and financial resources) whether it is an external, internal or (self-) evaluation. If we invite external evaluators to conduct our evaluation, we will most definitely have to spend more money on it, but we will get an independent and professional evaluation conducted by an outsider, whose role it is to be independent. Some members of our organisation might not consider this worthy of significant financial investment or they might be worried that the resources they need for their work will be used to finance the evaluation. Therefore, it is important to work out with the team or the organisation backing the activity which amount of resources are we willing (and able) to use for the evaluation in advance.

- In the social and civic sectors, people with different roles and responsibilities (policy makers, educators and trainers) might feel threatened by evaluation because it may include judgements on the quality of their programmes and products. In other words, they might feel negatively towards the evaluation if the evaluation may be critical towards the quality of their work. For example, sometimes critical evaluation results can have the effect that the continuity of a programme is put into question. Maybe funding will not be repeated next year? Maybe the evaluation will recommend a review of the competence of those working on the programme? Some trainers might perceive evaluation as interference in the educational process or as waste of time and resources. Decision makers might feel their actual space for decision making is limited.

Transparency and professionalism are very important in overcoming such resistance to evaluation, as is remembering that educational evaluation should always be done "in service" of the project.

2.6 Collecting and organising the information

The information collected during an evaluation can be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Qualitative information is normally processed and summarised focusing on the most important and recurrent facts. Quantitative information can be analysed and presented in the form of statistics, charts and graphs.

Regarding quantitative data, we would like to encourage the use of statistics in the presentation of evaluation outcomes. It is considered "professional" when an evaluation report demonstrates that the evaluators were able to manage statistics and to calculate and interpret averages and standard deviations[66]. For this, software tools which can help us to analyse and process quantitative data (i.e. excel tables, access applications or any other specific statistical software) are useful and (self) trainings exist in which one can become proficient in basic statistical applications.

On the other hand, we would like to stress that quantitative data has limits. Quantitative information (without reference to some qualitative explanations) is far too limited to explain the educational process. If, for example, we have a quantitative data that says that 25% of participants found the contribution of the group to their learning excellent, 50% ok and 25 % bad. But, having only this data, we still do not know about the reasons for each score being given: was it because of too many strong personalities? Or because of sub-groups among participants? Or because it was their first international activity? Or was it because of an overly "professional" atmosphere without inter-personal exchange?

It is quite common that in evaluation questionnaires, both quantitative and qualitative information is asked of participants, but that in the reporting only the statistics are presented. This may be because statistical tables look attractive and they offer a veneer of objectivity or credibility. But, even from a purely statistical point of view the amount of data that we usually manage to collect in educational activities is far too small to be of a high statistical significance. For example, in a group of 30 participants a very bad mark given by just one participant can cause a significant decrease in the average score. But, this one very bad mark can be an "accident", caused by reasons which have nothing to do with the educational process. The "accidental marks" in a group of 300 or of 3000 have a much smaller influence on the average evaluation score and the statistical results are, therefore, much more reliable.

This collection and organisation of the information still takes place at an early stage of the evaluation process. It is not yet the moment of arriving to conclusions or of reporting the outcomes of the educational evaluation. Nevertheless, it is good to have in mind already at this stage that some quantitative and qualitative data might later be part of "reporting the outcomes" and, therefore, of the evaluation report. You can find some tips for the presentation of that information in "Reporting the outcomes" (Pages 82-84).

66 Standard deviation is a statistic used as a measure of the dispersion or variation in a distribution. It is equal to the square root of the arithmetic mean of the squares of the deviations from the arithmetic mean. Source: **www.answers.com/topic/standard-deviation**.

2.7 Establishing criteria

As we have seen before criteria are elements, which will allow us to compare reality with the objective or the expected outcomes of the educational activity.

Establishing criteria is one of the most difficult and often conflictual steps of the evaluation process. On the one hand, there is the risk of reducing the whole evaluation to a normative imperative (it should be so!). On the other hand, there is the risk of getting caught up in the definition of criteria, because it can be difficult to embrace the complexity of educational evaluation.

For example, if we want to evaluate the objective of a given project. The objective of the project is "to experience the diversity of youth work". There are several criteria that we could use to assess the fulfilment of this objective, as follows:

- the spaces provided in the programme for exchanging experience among participants
- the diversity within the group: in terms of nationality, cultural background, youth work experience
- the contribution of "externals" and other resource persons

A quantitative indicator for the criteria "diversity within the group" could be the number of different nationalities represented in the activity (i.e. the nationality distribution of participants). However, diversity cannot be reduced just to difference in nationality. There are other factors that make up diversity, including age, gender, living in a rural or an urban environment or coming from different regions within a country among others.

In order to be able to evaluate the objective (to experience the diversity of youth work), we should decide upon the most relevant criteria and indicators, even if those criteria and indicators cannot embrace the entire complexity of the objective being evaluated. But, the number of criteria and indicators cannot be unlimited. We need to select the most significant ones. If the project deals with environmental issues maybe the "living in the city / living in rural areas" indicator is as relevant as the nationality of participants for evaluating the objective of "experiencing the diversity of youth work".

2.8 Reporting the outcomes

Reporting the outcomes of the evaluation is very important. It is a tool for sharing information, findings and conclusions with the different actors and the first step to involving them in the follow-up and future projects. Reporting the outcomes does not only consist of summarising the findings and putting them in a report for the funding authorities. Reporting requires a certain amount of planning, structure, focus and adaptation according to the target groups that we want to reach.

Good use of the outcomes of our evaluation can be useful at a very practical level. For example, we can decide on the basis of our evaluation to continue to work with the same youth hostel for the next youth exchange we organise. The same is true for the educational level. For example, our evaluation could lead us to conclude that we should use a certain methodology again but the next time it should be adapted in this or that way. Therefore, it is essential to give the same amount of attention to the processing and reporting of the outcomes, so that they can be well used by us and others in the future, as we put into the evaluation process itself. This last stage of the evaluation process can be the cherry on top of the delicious cake, coming back to our cookery metaphor.

The evaluation report

The evaluation report is not the only way of reporting the outcomes: oral reports, articles, photos or other informal ways can also be excellent channels.

Nevertheless, the evaluation report is usually a key tool for reporting the outcomes of the evaluation. The evaluation report offers quite a comprehensive vision of the project, covering many different aspects, from different perspectives and with a certain distance. This makes it a very useful learning tool for participants and organisers, both present and future. It can be used to improve the quality of your next projects, by focusing on the strengths and by trying to tackle the weaknesses revealed by the evaluation. It can also help others who may want to undertake and implement similar projects.

Thinking about the evaluation report when planning educational evaluation may prove to be very useful. By doing so:

- We can decide which information we need to analyse
- We can decide which methods are likely to be most effective for getting that information
- We can foresee which stakeholders would we like to target
- We can think in advance what we would like to emphasise to whom

The emphasis of reporting shifts according to who it is intended for. If the report will be read by experts in Brussels, it will have to have a different emphasis and probably also style than if it is going to be read by the secretary of the Mayor of our town or by other youth workers. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we should tell different stories to different people. In the report, the order of presentation and the emphasis may shift, not the significance of the outcomes of the evaluation.

General considerations

- In principle there are three specific types of reader that will use our report: the participants of the activity, the stakeholders in the activity and outsiders who may potentially benefit from the findings presented in our evaluation.
- Another important potential audience to keep in mind when writing the evaluation report is those who may in the future benefit from a similar project. This is a wide group of stakeholders and can include actors ranging from the funding authorities to volunteers in the organisation. Therefore, the report should be clear and comprehensible.
- All aspects of the evaluation should be described in sufficient detail to permit an outsider to reach more or less the same conclusions as someone who attended the activity. This is especially true if we have used questionnaires or interviews. If we present an interpretation, we should make sure to support that interpretation with direct quotes from interviews or with relevant and comprehensible statistics.
- Transparency is a very important aspect of reporting evaluation. All participants of the project should receive a copy of the evaluation report once it is ready. Participants might not find their own words in the report, but they should feel that it is representative of their experience. The report should, of course, cover both the negative and positive aspects of the evaluation outcomes. By respecting transparency, we contribute to the sense of collective ownership of the project.
- If we use quantitative data and statistics in the report, we should present them in a very clear and comprehensible way for the readers. It is a good idea and reader-friendlier to use simple visual representations of statistical data such as pie charts and colour coded graphs, rather than just numbers, numbers and more numbers.
- Tables, charts, and figures, if any, should be integrated into the text of the report, appearing near that portion of the text discussing them. Sometimes people describe their analyses in the body of the report and place all the tables in an appendix at the end. This method can be quite problematic for the reader. As a general rule, it is best to (a) describe the purpose for presenting the table, (b) present it, and (c) review and interpret it.

Some key parts of the evaluation report

Every evaluation report is and should be different. We can, nevertheless, identify some common parts which should be covered by any well presented and structured evaluation report.

Introduction

We should give enough information to an outside reader about the process and what we are evaluating. The introduction should include:

- All the relevant background information about the project
- Who conducted the evaluation and with which competencies
- The criteria and the perspective of the evaluation
- The description of the design and execution of the evaluation

Presentation of findings

After this important introduction, we should present our findings. The presentation of findings (statistics from questionnaire, qualitative analysis of interviews), and our interpretations should be integrated into a logical whole. It can be very frustrating for the reader to go through a list of seemingly unrelated analyses and findings with a promise that all the loose ends will be tied together later in the report. Every step in the analysis should make sense to the reader. We should present our rationale for a particular analysis, present the data relevant to it, interpret the results, and then indicate where that result leads next. At times, the inclusion of some personal reflections (i.e. quotations of participants) can help to illustrate more clearly some ideas. However, we should always make the distinction between personal reflections and results clear at all times.

Summary

Having provided the general overview and the results, it is essential to summarise the most important points. We should avoid reviewing every specific point in the evaluation, but we should review all of the significant ones, pointing once more to their general significance.

The focus of each evaluation is different and, therefore, it is difficult to indicate what information would be the most significant in an evaluation report. The conclusions concerning the "format" of the project that may eventually lead to changes are very relevant (for example, change of target group, of duration, of educational approach). Suggestions for follow-up (i.e. further projects, support measures for participants, systematization of results in a publication…) are also important.

Conclusions

The report can conclude with a statement of:

- what we have discovered about the educational progress, the direction and degree of change of the participants in the evaluation
- the extent to which the objectives set in the beginning were met
- some ideas about where future projects might be directed

However, ending with the conclusion that "more projects are needed" is of little value unless we can offer some concrete suggestions about the nature of future projects and unless we can provide arguments for why they are needed. We should review the particular strengths and weaknesses of our own project as demonstrated by the evaluation outcomes and suggest ways in which those shortcomings might be avoided in future projects. Any comments and suggestions offered should be supported by findings. This section is not an appropriate space for making declarations.

Appendices

The outline of the full programme outline and the list of participants can be among the most common appendices to evaluation reports. In addition to these, it is relevant to include some photos or other materials which can transmit the "taste" of the activity to the readers. It is also a good idea to append any bibliographic references consulted in the preparation of the evaluation report. Some evaluation reports also include the raw data from the evaluation conducted in the appendices.

2.9 Evaluation practices

In this section we will present some "practices" of educational evaluation or projects in which evaluation played a relevant and specific role. Following the inviting and non-normative approach of this T-Kit we have tried to avoid calling this section "good" practices.

Instead of presenting "examples of good practise", the purpose of this section is to share experiences and reflections, successes and frustrations, potentialities and limitations coming from practices on educational evaluation. These do not correspond to a systematic mapping of youth work projects. There are certainly many others at least as interesting as those presented here and many aspects relevant to understanding educational evaluation will not be covered by them. Nevertheless, we have tried to cover different types of activities (from a youth exchange to an e-learning project), different approaches (from a systematic evaluation to permanent and ongoing adaptation), different target groups (from youngsters to experienced trainers) and different methods (from questionnaires to non verbal methods). We hope that these practices can contribute to inspire the development of your own.

"Take5" – 40 youngsters evaluating

The "Take5" project

Supported by the YOUTH programme and the 'European Year against Racism'[67] the Take5 project took place in 1997. The project involved 40 disadvantaged youngsters from five countries (Poland, Germany, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands). Take5 was a long term project that took up the challenging idea of combining youth work and theatre and worked with a stable group of participants over a period of 6 months in total.

The idea for the project came into being during an international training course youth workers. The five people involved decided to co-operate on setting up a music and theatre project centred on the theme of social inclusion. The basic idea of the project was to approach the participating youngsters from the perspective of their capacities not from the perspective of their problems. This does not mean that the youngsters did not originate from "problem situations" but these situations were not taken as a starting point.

67 1997 was the European Year against Racism. It was the first time that Member States of the European Union and the European Institutions came together to take joint action against Racism. A lot of projects, seminars and campaigns took place at national and at European level. More information at **http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/public/arcreyar_en.htm**

The starting point was formed by the youngsters' abilities and the challenges offered by an international theatre project. Subsequently, the young people continuously ended up in situations which were new to them and which demanded new solutions. In the course of the project they were constantly confronted with problems and challenges which could not be dealt with by means of their "traditional solutions". This forced them to look for other ways of solving things. In short one may say that 'broadening the options' was the essential objective for the project.

The participating organisations were: Verdandi Södertälje (Sweden), Kinder und Jugendzentrum Freiberg (Germany), Youth Club Europe (Poland), Legion Theatre (Finland), Tandem Nijmegen (the Netherlands) and Stichting Spectrum (the Netherlands).

The project took place in five phases:

a. In the first phase, groups worked within their local environment with their youth leaders on preparing the first international encounter which took place in Germany.

b. In Freiberg, Germany eight days were spent on working with the youngsters on intercultural communication and theatre skills. The first ideas for the final performance were shaped here. The starting point was to make a performance centred on the personal experiences of the young people with regard to social exclusion. In addition to the five original team members, the group was accompanied by five co-workers and a German theatre director.

c. After Freiberg, the participants returned to their own countries to work on enhancement of their theatre skills and they made up scenes of which some were incorporated in the performance. In this phase, the director visited all groups and spent two days working with each of them.

d. Five months later all participants met again in Zielona Gora in Poland. In this phase, all scenes developed in the various countries, were presented to the others. Subsequently, elements from the different scenes were used to put together a play. The group worked in the theatre under great tension and time pressure. Despite, but perhaps also thanks to the tension and time-pressure, a magnificent play by the name of "The Raft" was created and performed on the opening night, in which the youngsters tell their stories with great conviction.

e. In the last phase of the project the group toured the five participating countries performing a theatre show made out of their experiences and directed by a professional theatre director.

For most of the young people participating in this project, this was a challenging experience that brought them into many new demanding situations, often under a lot of pressure. That is the reason why evaluation played a very significant role. Since the project was extremely challenging appropriate time was needed for the youngsters to reflect, to look back and to digest on what happened.

The development of evaluation through the project

- In the international encounters, national groups came together every day to reflect *(reflection groups) from the very beginning*. The team recognised a need for participants to be able to reflect in their own language, since it was not easy for many of them to express themselves in English (the working language of the international parts of the project). Although, as the project went on the language capacities of the participants improved a lot, the national reflection groups went on meeting. These groups offered the possibility to participants to express some of their more personal concerns more openly and in a relaxed atmosphere.

- After a conflict in the group on the 4th day of the first international meeting in Germany, the youngsters proposed a *daily review with the whole group*. Although in the beginning the team was quite sceptical, it developed into one of the most important elements of the project. In the beginning the group just sat together in a circle and discussed the day, problems were taken up and plans for improvement were exchanged. Since it was their own idea to start this daily reflection, participants felt responsible for its success and acted accordingly. One of the team members was experienced in relaxation and meditation exercises. In the beginning most of the youngsters were not that enthusiastic about these methods, but that changed during the process and at a certain moment participants asked her to work with these exercises at the beginning of the daily review. It helped them to relax and to reflect on the day on a personal level before going into the group discussion.

- During the last three weeks of the project in Poland and throughout the theatre tour a *common diary* was introduced. The diary was always somewhere around and participants had the opportunity to write down their impressions. The diary was not used by all youngsters but a quite a few wrote in it regularly. All of them read the diary. It became a space for personal and interpersonal evaluation and for sharing experiences, impressions, frustrations, conclusions, learning achievements and complaints. The team followed it closely and used its outcomes for the planning and adaptation of the programme.

- After the first international meeting and at the end of the whole project participants were asked to fill in evaluation *questionnaires*. Participants answered the questions in their own language. This involved a lot of work for the team members, as the questionnaires had to be translated into English in order for the whole team to be able to be involved in the assessment of the forms.

A follow-up evaluation

Although on the last day of the project in Finland some of the youngsters expressed their need to meet again after some time to see "how everybody is doing", a follow-up evaluation was never planned. But then, when the team had their evaluation one month after the project, it was decided that it was worthwhile to put efforts into organising an evaluation meeting with all the participants to see what the impact of the project would be.

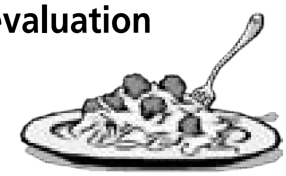
Participants met in the Netherlands for five days to evaluate approximately 6 months later. Although a lot of talks took place, both in groups as on individual level, the meeting lacked a planned evaluation and therefore missed quite some opportunities. It showed that an unplanned evaluation can be a wonderful event, but equally that it has limited value when it comes to the real evaluation of a project.

The brochure written about the project was finished as planned in the original project plan and published during that evaluation meeting with all participants present. A very nice happening, but the long term outcomes were not described.

Nevertheless, there was one very significant outcome of the evaluation meeting. It was very obvious that participants profited a lot from all the evaluation moments during the project. The majority of these youngsters were now quite capable to describe the meaning of the project for them, to reflect on changes they feel they experienced and to point out the impact of this project on their future plans. The capacity to reflect and to give words to their experiences and feelings turned out to be one of the main competences that the youngsters developed in the "Take5" project.

The evaluation was developed and adapted according to the challenges that arose in the project and to the needs of participants. This experience demonstrates that consistent planning and openness for adaptation and further development are both very important when working with evaluation within a project.

EVS[68] and Leonardo[69] - Multidimensional evaluation



EVS and Leonardo in Padova

XENA[70] is a non-profit, cultural association situated in Padova in Italy. Amongst many other things XENA hosts young people in the framework of the “European Voluntary Service” (EVS) and the “Leonardo da Vinci” programmes every year.

European Voluntary Service is part of the YOUTH programme of the European Union and offers young people the opportunity to stay for a longer period of time, up to one year, in another country working as volunteers. XENA has been involved in EVS since 1997 and hosts volunteers as well as sending them abroad.

Leonardo da Vinci is the European Union action programme for implementing the European Union’s vocational training policy. The aim is to use trans-national co-operation to enhance quality, promote innovation and support the European dimension of vocational training systems and practices. Within the Leonardo da Vinci programme, XENA works with the primary aim to promote the development of innovative employment sectors taking into account the impact employment creation can have on the environment and society. XENA’s key areas of work are environmental protection, social and cultural services, animation, alternative tourism, not for profit activities and unemployment.

Each year, six EVS volunteers are hosted in Padua for six months. Around 100 participants take part in Leonardo projects in Padua per year. They stay for three months. The EVS participants work within XENA, while the Leonardo participants are employed in different organisations and companies all over Padua. XENA has almost daily contact with the EVS volunteers. Both sets of participants are offered the opportunity to take part in an intensive Italian language course in the first month of their stay in Padua.

Multidimensional evaluation with participants

A long term mobility project can be a learning experience in many different ways. It includes language learning, professional experience, intercultural learning, autonomy and independence, social life, meeting new people and organisational aspects.

For those who organise a mobility project these aspects are clearly distinguished but for participants this is one big, often new and confusing experience. Often the personal situation of participants strongly affects the perception of other aspects of their experiences of the mobility project.

Evaluation meetings can be used to make distinctions, separate the different aspects and avoid overly general judgements. They are a way to reflect on how participants can change things or deciding together if and what the organisation can do to improve the situation.

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68 See footnote 28 – Page 37 for further information about EVS

69 Leonardo da Vinci was a vocational training programme of the European Commission. The programme promoted trans-national projects based on co-operation between the various players in vocational training (training bodies, vocational schools, universities, businesses, chambers of commerce, etc.) in an effort to increase mobility, to foster innovation and to improve the quality of training. The Leonardo da Vinci is a pillar of the Lifelong Learning programme of the European Commission. It aims at helping people improve their skills throughout their lives.
More information is available at **http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/leonardo_en.html**

70 XENA is a non-profit, cultural association which was set up in the autumn of 1994. Its name derives from ancient Greek and means *foreign things*. Its main objective is to increase and improve the level of contact and interaction amongst different cultures. It promotes projects mainly within the framework of European Programmes, such as “Leonardo da Vinci”, “Youth” (i.e. “Youth for Europe”, “European Voluntary Service”) and others. XENA works in co-operation with other bodies (European institutions, associations, municipalities, enterprises, schools, trade unions, informal groups, etc.) in Italy and abroad. XENA is an active member of the Eurodesk network, managing a local information centre. More information at **http://www.xena.it**

There is a lot to evaluate and many people have to be involved: the language course, the place the volunteers live, the working environment, the group life, the support offered by XENA, life in Italy.

The mechanisms for such a multidimensional evaluation with participants are:

- In the first month there is an *evaluation meeting* every week. The language course is of course an important topic. But, the conditions where people have been accommodated and the dimension of "getting to know Italian culture" also need to be discussed. The weekly evaluation meeting is a group evaluation. In the first meeting the "Clothes Line" (Page 66), is used to collect the expectations of the participants. Many different exercises including the "Dartboard", the "Puppets in the tree" (Pages 68, 71) and different forms of statement exercises[71] are done to evaluate the different elements.
- The Leonardo participants are regularly asked to fill in *evaluation questionnaires*. In the beginning most of the questions ask for quantitative information and scales for scoring are provided. At this point, the language capacities of the participants in Italian are still limited, so scoring is easier for them. Later more open-ended questions are added to the questionnaires. The questionnaires focus on the language course, the working place and the living conditions.
- The EVS'ers have their own questionnaires focussing on their specific situation. In those questionnaires the focus is on the hosting organisation, the mentor, their tasks, as compared to the job-description they received, and the living conditions.
- The EVS participants have a *mentor* with whom they have regular consultation meetings. Often these are not officially scheduled meetings because the participants meet their mentor almost daily and unplanned (evaluation) conversations take place.
- During their whole stay, participants have the possibility to put ideas or complaints into a *suggestion box* which is installed in a central spot. This is a possibility to express yourself outside the group and anonymously, if needed.

Evaluation as feedback for the organisation

For XENA evaluation is an important instrument for receiving feedback from participants and for improving the way projects are organised.

This feedback is often about a specific aspect of the experience of participants (accommodation, work placement) and can lead to the decision to make some changes in the organisation of the project, for example, not to use a certain accommodation provider any longer, to place trainees in that company again, or that placement is possible, but only if certain conditions are met. In other cases the feedback can be about the way the project is organised.

During the first period of working with long term mobility projects XENA realised that some participants felt they did not receive enough support from XENA, although a lot of time and energy was spent on organising the support already offered. Considering the result of evaluations, XENA became aware that an overly informal approach to this support can have negative effects. Some participants saw their mentor more as a friend than as a tutor and as a result, felt that the organisation was not offering much professional support. This feedback was taken seriously and, although maintaining an informal attitude, more "formal" evaluation meetings, written questionnaires and a clarification of the role of the mentor were foreseen in subsequent editions of the hosting project. These measures helped participants to feel more secure and to get more out of their time in Padua.

71 Described as "Where do you stand?" in "T-Kit No. 4 – Intercultural Learning", Council of Europe and European Commission (November 2000), Page 51.

XENA also realised that although many people are needed for the successful organisation of a long term mobility project, for participants it is confusing and problematic to have to communicate with several contact persons during the organisation of their time abroad and during their stay. Participants need to refer to one or two people whose tasks and responsibilities are clearly explained to them. Once again, the staff of XENA had to consider not only what they were doing but also how it was perceived: many people were working hard to guarantee a good result, but the effect was that the participants did not know to whom they had to refer in case of a problem. As a result, the decision was made that only a few people work directly with the participants.

XENA developed a system for evaluation:

- Long term plans concerning the general aims of the project are developed in co-operation with the whole staff (10-15 people)
- Each co-ordinator in charge of a department elaborates a plan on a yearly basis, periodically checked with the manager of the association and formally evaluated after 6 and 12 months
- The manager is constantly monitoring and coaching the staff, using an informal approach
- The staff meets at the beginning of each week. In this meeting the staff can share information, evaluate the team work and co-ordinate for the tasks of the following days. It is as well an occasion to learn from each other thanks to the reports of those involved in external training.
- Internal evaluations are organised within smaller groups of staff after the realisation of specific activities.

Many different aspects of the project are evaluated in the different analyses and phases: the impact on groups hosted, the impact on society, fulfilment of objectives, outcomes, contents developed, individual well being and satisfaction of the people collaborating, interpersonal dynamics, management, logistics, economical/financial issues/sustainability, follow-up.

As you can see, XENA takes evaluation seriously!

Madzinga – External evaluation

The Madzinga project

Madzinga was a Long Term Training Course[72] organised as a cooperative project by Outward Bound Belgium, Kitokie Projektai, Lithuania, Hitt Husid, Iceland and Outward Bound Slovakia in 2002 to 2003. In addition to resources provided by the organisers and fees paid by participants, the project was financially supported by the YOUTH Programme of the European Union, the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and the Soros Foundation.

72 A Long Term Training Course consists on several residential seminars with project or practice phases in between. Its total duration is between one and two years. This training course format was for the first time developed by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. For more information please consult the following website: **www.coe.int/youth**

Madzinga focused on the intercultural learning dimension through outdoor experiential learning and comprised three phases.

The first phase was a residential seminar in Lustin, Belgium, where experiential training methods were explored and the concepts linked to them were deepened. Twenty four participants from thirteen countries attended the seminar. In the second phase participants developed projects at home and stayed in contact through so called coaching groups. The third and last phase took place in Samukas, Lithuania, where participants developed activities for Lithuanian youngsters and further projects.

The people who developed this training course had worked together in previous years and wanted to develop a new training concept with this long term course. That was one of the reasons why they wanted to have an external evaluator / observer who followed the whole project, being present from the first preparation meeting, throughout the training and during all the team meetings.

External evaluation: somebody is watching you!

Imagine you are baking a cake and someone is in your kitchen watching you. This person is not only watching you, they are taking note of everything you do: How much sugar you put in, how many eggs you use, counting the minutes you are spending on mixing the cake mix. It might be quite disturbing. Later, that person makes a report, in which you can find a description of your activities in the kitchen along with some critical remarks about you as a bake.

As we already described, one specific approach to evaluation is to invite an external evaluator to conduct your evaluation. This is someone who is not involved in the project as such, but who follows the process as an observer, records what is happening and reports about it. Not being involved in the project as a team member or as a participant has the important advantage that the external evaluator can look at the project more objectively or at least from the perspective of an outsider. Another benefit is that the only task of the external evaluator is to observe and report on the activity, and therefore, can dedicate all their energy to the job. The external evaluator collects data and records it all so that they will have enough information to develop the report the outcomes of the project.

Being "an outsider", the external evaluator is more capable of asking the "right" critical questions about the project. Being involved in a project and in all the work that it implies, risks that we take things for granted and simply do not take (or have) the time to take a step back to look at what is happening. The "outsider" is in the position to question. Especially when it comes to difficult aspects of the evaluation, such as measuring the learning outcomes of a project for participants, the external evaluator can be much more precise in collecting data and describing developments in the project. *But, being the external evaluator is* a challenging and difficult job that requires specific competencies.

The result of the external evaluation in Madzinga: the report[73]

The result of the external evaluation in the Madzinga project is a 160 page publication that reads like a story. A story about non-formal learning, a story that tries to show what people learn in less formal learning situations such as this training course and makes an attempt at measuring those learning outcomes.

73 The Madzinga report can be downloaded at: **www.outwardbound.be/madzinga/MADZINGA.pdf**

The Madzinga report is descriptive, but it also strongly reflective. All activities are described. But, more even important are the descriptions of the way participants act and react in different situations. Team meetings are reported and essential issues and discussions are raised.

Apart from this reflective dimension, this report is interesting from the point of view of evaluation because attention is given to the role of the external evaluator and to the problems and challenges of the tasks involved. Spending time, a lot of time with a group of people deeply involved in a process and being in a position which is actually "outside" of that process is not very easy. It implies a lot of questions: How much can you get involved? How invisible should you be? To what extent do you take part? When should you speak? Should you speak at all? How should you deal with the personal and professional dimensions of the work? Imagine what happens to a team and to a group of participants when somebody is around them all the time taking notes. How does the person taking notes to deal with the way the group deals with them?

The report does not give an answer to all these questions, but it does make an effort to explore the challenges faced by an external evaluator in the field of non-formal education. This makes it a worthwhile read for people who plan to work with or work as external evaluators.

Evaluation in an E-learning pilot course

E-learning is booming at the moment. Lots of students learn while sitting behind their computers. In the field of non-formal education the first tentative steps are being taken to explore the opportunities that web-based learning can offer.

Especially in the context of long term projects, the educational possibilities of the internet are being explored and discovered. The combination of residential meetings and follow-up or "in between" virtual encounters offers interesting educational potential.

But, what about situations in which the participants do not know each other and will never have the opportunity to meet? That has an enormous impact on the educational process. And what does it mean for evaluation?

Human Rights Education: Compass Contact Point

The Polish organisation Association for Children and Young People "CHANCE" took up the challenge to start a pilot training project on 'Human Rights Education with Young People' by e-learning. "COMPASS – a manual on Human Rights Education with Young People"[74] published by the Council of Europe was the starting point for the training course. Twenty people participated in the course that took place from June until November 2005. The course was designed in a modular format. The modules took the participants through the different subjects of Human Rights Education. Material was provided on the website to study and practice. Several tasks were given to participants in the process of the course. On the website it was possible to communicate with other participants, by chat as well as by forum discussions.

The software used was Moodle[75], specially developed for educational purposes and free available on the internet.

74 Compass portal with downloadable versions at **http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/**

75 Moodle is a course management system (CMS), a free Open Source software package designed using sound pedagogical principles, to help educators create effective online learning communities. More information at **http://moodle.org/**

On-line evaluation

- Evaluation forms after the sessions

After every session an on-line form was filled in by the participants. Moodle offers evaluation forms which can be adapted to the needs of the users. The software processes the forms into statistics which can be visualised on the website. This way, participants are informed in a clear way about the opinions of their colleagues.

The topics evaluated were:

- the relevance of what was learned
- the way reflective thinking was stimulated
- the level of interactivity
- the support of the tutors and of peers
- if participants could make sense of the messages posted on the platform

The evaluation was largely conducted using multiple choice questions. Nevertheless, participants had the opportunity to mention any other comments they may have had to make.

- Ongoing evaluation

In the discussion forum, the opportunity for "ongoing evaluation" was provided. Participants were invited to comment on the course and to discuss opinions among themselves.

- Individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted using chat. The moderator scheduled meetings with each of the participants to discuss their learning process and problems and challenges they met.

- Final evaluation questionnaire

At the end of the course, the participants were asked to fill in a more "traditional" evaluation questionnaire designed by the moderator. It contained many more open-ended questions.

Changes as a result of the evaluation

As a result of the evaluation changes were made in the programme of the course.

One major problem encountered, as is the case of many educational platforms, was the level of "interactivity". In the regular evaluation forms after every session almost all topics scored positively. The exception was the level of interactivity of the learning process. The evaluation of the discussion forum showed that participants had problems to communicate with each other. As a result, the moderators decided to stimulate communication between participants by giving them tasks in which they had to work together in small groups. This was successful. The communication increased, not only on the website, but also by email and telephone.

Another problem that came up was the pace of the course. For many participants things just went to fast. In the beginning, topics were taken off the website after the subject was closed. But, not all participants followed the rhythm proposed by the moderators. The moderators realised that they did not take enough into account that participants had their own schedules defined by working and family life. So, the speed of the course was reduced and all the material was left on the website even after the subject was closed.

Evaluation played a big role in this course because it was a pilot training and because of all the new challenges that e-learning presented to the moderators.

Overall Evaluation of a Pilot Long Term Training Course

The "Coaching[76] in international youth work" Course

In 2000 a Steering Group of representative from five institutions (two international youth organisations, an European educational centre, a working group of trainers and a "Fachhochschule" (University of Applied Sciences) started a further qualification course called "Coaching in international youth work". The course was organised by the International Youth Exchange and Visitor's Service of the Federal German Republic, also known as IJAB e.V. and transfer e.V. The participants had more than three years of work experience on either a voluntary or professional basis (as managers or multipliers) in the field of international youth work.

24 persons from five countries (Belgium, Russia, Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany) took part in the 5 module training course. The seminar was led by two field experienced facilitators. From module to module additional trainers were engaged for specific inputs and training elements.

The concept of the course was to provide a clear understanding about the following things:

- What is a coach?
- What should be the approach of a coach to international groups?
- Where are potential fields of work as a coach?

Evaluation strategy

The project was planned as a pilot supported by Federal funds. As a result, the Steering Group decided to make an evaluation of the entire training course. Therefore, a special evaluator worked with the whole group. During 2000 – 2002, all the actors of the course participated in the evaluation process.

The evaluation itself was based on the theory of Kirckpatrick. His evaluation model is based on four levels of learning and behaviour[77]:

- Reaction: Personal reflection by participants on the satisfaction of participants, the effect and utility of the training programme, for example
- Learning: Growth of knowledge, learning achievements
- Behaviour: Changes in behaviour, transfer of competencies into concrete actions/ situations
- Results: Long term transfer (also in organisational and institutional terms)

This model by Kirkpatrick worked out very well for this training course. All levels were implemented. Aspects, belonging to the level of reaction and learning, like the atmosphere, teamwork, contents, methods, etc. were already included in the training course. However, the long term results could not be known immediately. As a result, participants were contacted again after one year. Each participant was contacted by telephone for an interview.

76 Coaching is an ongoing professional support and orientation process. Through the process of coaching, coaches deepen their learning and improve their performance. Source The international coach federation **http:www.coachfederation.org**

77 Kirkpatrick, Donald L.: Evaluating Training Programs. The four levels. San Francisco 1998

The following table demonstrates the different stages of the evaluation and the timetable for its implementation. The evaluation with the whole group was completed one year after the project.

Elements of evaluation, Time frame	Issue/objectives of Evaluation	Instruments of observation
	Participants	
Mid-term evaluation and final evaluation *Every module*	Satisfaction Quality of modules Effectiveness of learning tools Level of knowledge Expectations for next modules Understanding of the concept Coach's role =› *reaction, learning*	Questionnaires Practice target Complaints box Group visual evaluation methods: i.e. "the tree of perception", "barometer of mood", "water level", "fever curve" Verbal evaluation methods: i.e. "brainstorm", "the reporter", "hanging-lamp-feedback"
Self assessment of participants *At the beginning, during and at the end of the seminar*	Personal competencies Possible transfer Understanding about a Coach's role =› *learning, sometimes behaviour, results*	Video interviews at beginning of seminar chain Profile of competencies Turn of feedback rounds Small talks with tutors
External Assessment by facilitators, participants, tutors, holders of project *During and after final seminar*	Personal competencies	Turn of feedback rounds Small talks with tutors Questionnaires to the project's stake-holders at the end of the project
Long term evaluation - Interview. *1 year after the qualification*	Overall satisfaction Quality of modules Effectiveness of learning tools Level of knowledge Coach's role Increased competence Changes in Behaviour Transfer =› *reaction, learning, behaviour, results*	Partially structured interviews
	Facilitators / Tutors	
Mid-term and final evaluation *Timing is dependent on the availability of the tutors*	personal view on professional competencies of participants	Feedback Individual consultations with tutors
	Participants' sending organisations	
Starting interview *Between the "Kick-Off" and the 2nd module*	Importance of trained competencies and knowledge, Agreement with total concept Possible transfer Working fields for Coaches	Questionnaires
Final interview *One year after the finish of training course*	Long term development of competence among participants Transfer of knowledge into the working field (including to institutions), etc. =› *learning, behaviour, results*	Questionnaires

Results: a second course and next steps

All parties were involved in the evaluation. This gave the organisers of the project very detailed information about what they would have to change in future if they wish to repeat the course.

Some of the main conclusions of this evaluation were

- Clarification of the definition of a coach[78] has to take place:
  In the next training course the team should agree on one common definition and stick to it during the whole course.
- Elements and themes of the training course
  Most participants agreed that there is a need for more detailed attention to be paid to learning about communication and coaching during any future course. The model of oriented coaching has to be given more space in any future course.
- Evaluation of the evaluation
  Participants gave feedback that the evaluation itself took too much time and space in the training course. That happened because participants were not always clear about why and what certain kind on evaluation was needed for. The next course team should avoid this.

The following year, a second training course was designed on the same subject, but following very closely the recommendations made after the first cycle.

The "good" final evaluation questionnaire

At the end of this evaluation practices section, we would like to present a possible structure for a final evaluation questionnaire. It is not the result of a concrete project, but rather of the accumulated practices of several experts in different projects concerning final evaluation questionnaires. This "good" final evaluation questionnaire is complementary to the explanations of working with questionnaires already outlined in this T-Kit (see pages 57-61). In this case, the adjective "good" has no normative meaning. It is used in opposition to the "bad evaluation questionnaire" exercise on page 60. We hope this final evaluation questionnaire will be a source of inspiration for developing your own.

This questionnaire is presented in two parts, each one corresponding to a column. On the left you can find an example of questions that can be asked in a questionnaire and on the right you find an exploration of "what lies behind". This is simply an example. But, we have tried to propose examples that can illustrate some important considerations for the construction of evaluation questions. We would like to encourage you to reflect on the options, the priorities, the advantages and disadvantages of each question. We hope that this reflection will help you to design your own questionnaire, making informed choices and formulations for the questions you ask.

We should not be afraid of "final evaluation questionnaires". At first glance, it may be intimidating to have to fill four empty pages up with evaluation questions. But, experience does demonstrate that participants of educational activities take filling in the evaluation questionnaire very seriously and often even enjoy it. In fact it is quite often one of the highest moments of reflection, learning and participation.

The final evaluation questionnaire is often just one part of the final evaluation. Even if it tries to review a lot of issues, it should be conceived one of several evaluation tools, including for example, group interactive methods or group discussions.

78 The person in charge of the coaching process is called a coach. Source The international coach federation http:www.coachfederation.org

Without pretending to cover every aspect, we have tried to reflect our approach to evaluation (evaluation as a total experience) in this evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire contains there is a combination of evaluation “by objectives”, “by process” and “by performance”. We recommend that you consider reflecting on this questionnaire while consulting the ideas outlined in the sections of this T-Kit entitled “why to evaluate” (Pages 15-16) and “what to evaluate” (Pages 19-28). We have tried to embrace the complexity of an educational activity.

This example has been designed for an educational activity in general. It can and it should be adapted to the kind of activity evaluated (an exchange, a training course, a workshop…) and to each particular context. It is just a tool of inspiration. The most important is to create something new out of it.

<table>
<tr><th>Final evaluation
questionnaire</th><th>Comments/ Logic /
What is behind the question?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Title of the Educational Activity
Place and Date
Evaluation questionnaire</td><td>Do not forget to clearly identify your questionnaire! Too many are not specific!</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name (optional):</td><td>On the one hand, it is necessary to respect the anonymity, if desired, of the participant. On the hand, knowing the identity of the participant will help to better understand and contextualise the individually filled out questionnaires.</td></tr>
<tr><td>General Impression
What is your general level of satisfaction with the activity?
<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>0% 50% 100%
Please explain the score you have given:
Other comments:</td><td>It is good to start by asking for a general impression of the activity, a kind of “taste”, combining qualitative and quantitative evaluations. It is a simple but very revealing starting point. It provides a kind of “overall general average level of satisfaction” for each participant.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Objectives
In your opinion, to which extent were the objectives of the activity reached?
<table><tr><td></td><td>++</td><td>+</td><td>0</td><td>--</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Objective 1: To…</td><td>Very good</td><td>Good</td><td>Ok</td><td>Bad</td><td>Very bad</td></tr><tr><td>Please explain your score?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><table><tr><td>Objective 2: To…</td><td>++</td><td>+</td><td>0</td><td>--</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Please explain your score?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></td><td>Evaluation by objectives (Page 21) is a relevant component of a global evaluation. It is appropriate to combine qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Remember to remind the participants of the objectives of the activity that you want them to evaluate.

This part provides more specific information than a general impression. Even if at times the answers will mix both these impressions, it is important to differentiate them.

This part will also help you to put into perspective the following more specific parts of the questionnaire that come later.

The quantitative scale (++, +, 0, -, --) should be explained at the beginning. Numeric scales are sometimes confusing: in some countries the scales are from 1-10, in others from 1-5, in some countries the 1 is the best, in others 5 is the best… That is the reason why this symbol scale is an interesting alternative.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>Final evaluation
questionnaire</th><th>Comments/ Logic /
What is behind the question?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Expectations

What were your initial implications?

Were your expectations fulfilled?

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>++</th><th>+</th><th>0</th><th>--</th><th>-</th></tr>
<tr><td>Professional</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Personal</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Which of your expectations have been fulfilled the most? Please explain your answers.

Which of your expectations have been fulfilled the least? Please explain your answers.</td>
<td>Evaluating the extent to which expectations have been fulfilled will allow you to see the extent to which the activity was relevant to the target group.

As we have already seen (Pages 26-27) dealing with the expectations (together with the objectives and the programme) is part of evaluating “by process”: seeing the process and the relationships.

Again, we use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evaluation. It is interesting to differentiate between professional and personal expectations because in international youth work they can differ a lot.

The two questions about the most and the least fulfilled expectations give us some additional information. The main reason for including them in the questionnaire is to “oblige” participants to compare their original expectations to what happened. Otherwise, at the end of the activity, they might be “lost”, “mixed with memories” or out of focus.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learning outcomes
What are the most important things you have learned in at this activity?</td><td>From “evaluation by outcomes” (Page 25) the most relevant for educational evaluation are the learning outcomes for participants. This question helps us to find out, in general terms, what participants learned during the activity.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Methodology
Please comment on the appropriateness of the methods used during the activity?</td><td>Asking in general about the methods will help us to evaluate the overall methodology of the activity (variety, combination, links between methods…) Experience tells us that if we include the word “methodology” in the formulation of the question it can cause some confusion, so it is often easier for participants to answer a question about the methods.

More specific comments about each method can be asked in the part of the questionnaire devoted to the programme elements</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>Final evaluation questionnaire</th><th>Comments/ Logic / What is behind the question?</th></tr>
<tr><td>

Programme elements

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Learning achievements</td><td colspan="3">How did you enjoy it?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Programme Element</td><td>++</td><td>+</td><td>o</td><td>-</td><td>- -</td><td>☺</td><td>😐</td><td>☹</td></tr>
<tr><td>Welcome session</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="9">Comments:</td></tr>
<tr><td>…</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="9"></td></tr>
<tr><td>…</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="9"></td></tr>
</table>

What do you think of the general flow of the programme?

</td><td>

This part deals with the detailed and analytical evaluation of each programme element. It is useful to order the programme elements chronologically as they have appeared in the programme and to use titles which help participants to easily remember them.

For each programme element there is a line for quantitative evaluation of the learning and the enjoyment. This distinction has advantages and disadvantages but the contrast between them can be interesting and noteworthy. A line for comments allows for qualitative evaluation of each programme element. Participants can qualify their quantitative evaluation and add other reflections they consider important.

Having evaluated the whole programme chronologically, participants have an overview of its flow. The links and connections between the different programme elements are very important for the learning process. This is the reason why the programme flow is an important and relevant aspect to evaluate.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

The “actors”

How do you evaluate the role of the group in your learning?

How do you evaluate the dynamic in the group?

How do you evaluate the work of the team?

How do you evaluate your own contribution to the activity?

</td><td>

The group and the team in non-formal education are not only a context but also a source of individual learning. For this reason it is very important to evaluate them in relation to the level of participation of members of the group.

By doing so, we provoke a “triangulation” of actors, exploring their roles, interaction and dynamics. Those are at times key factors of success or of failure; a bad relation between the participants and the team, for example, can provoke the failure of a, in principle good programme.

These aspects are closely linked to “evaluation by performance” (Page 24)

</td></tr>
</table>

Final evaluation questionnaire	Comments/ Logic / What is behind the question?
Follow-up How are you planning to use this experience in your future work with young people? At the individual level (personally / professionally)? In your organisation: With other partners: Please describe your plans for any future projects you may now have?	This part evaluates the “outcomes” of the activity beyond individual learning. See “Evaluation by outcomes” (Page 25). It might be interesting to distinguish among different levels of outcomes (individual, within the organisation, in co-operation with others) or to ask specifically about future projects if this was an expected outcome. For most participants, the real outcomes will only become clear after some time has passed. The answers to this question will, therefore, refer mostly to plans or intentions. But, even if from the “factual” point of view the answers will not always be valid, it is still important to include a question about this in the final evaluation questionnaire. Reflecting on this will help participants to start to transfer what they have learned to their home context. This is one of the clearest examples of the learning and motivating nature of educational evaluation.
Preparation In your opinion, was the preparation of this activity adequate? In terms of contents: In terms of technical information: In term of other practicalities:	At the end, you can come back to the beginning. In other questionnaires, we can find the evaluation of the preparation of the activity at the beg inning. We find it interesting to ask participants about it at the end. After going through all the steps of the process participants can imagine “How things would have been if the preparation would have been done differently?”. This is, for us, the key question.
Logistics and technicalities How do you assess the quality of the logistical organisation of the activity in terms of: Accommodation: Food: Working rooms: Facilities (internet access, free time possibilities…): Equipment: Technical information before arrival:	The evaluation of logistics and technicalities allows for the improvement of future activities. Those aspects also have a relevant influence in the learning process, because they influence the comfort, concentration, sense of security, etc.

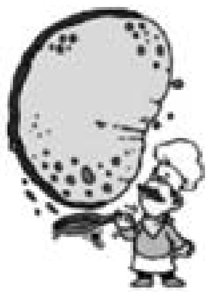
Final evaluation questionnaire	Comments/ Logic / What is behind the question?
Other Please share any other comment you would like to make? Do you have any suggestions to improve the quality of this activity you would like to share with the organisers of future activities?	Leave enough space for answers to this question and if you do not have enough space, invite to use any other extra space available. If it is clear that a similar activity will take place (i.e. next year) you can ask for suggestions.
Thank you for your co-operation!	Filling in an evaluation questionnaire is an intensive exercise. It is fair, not just polite to recognise it and thank participants for their attention and active participation.

2.10 We still have to cook our meal!

We have gone through the different stages of evaluation going, through most of them in some depth, and through different projects in which educational evaluation played an important role.

Educational evaluation is considered one of the most complex and challenging aspects of a project. It involves a lot of aspects and dimensions!

We would like to close this practical chapter of the T-Kit with an invitation: *Be ambitious but realistic!*



We can plan a wonderful evaluation, where all elements are covered and many different methods are used, but evaluation takes time and resources. Developing good questionnaires reading them and making conclusions out of them takes time. Doing interviews can be a very good method but is time-consuming. There are loads of excellent group exercises for evaluation, but they only make sense when you note down the outcomes and work with the results.

In other words, we should not overdo it. After considering the complexity of evaluation, we should remain realistic. We should reserve the appropriate time and human resources to do it paying attention to how the evaluation relates to the rest of the project.

Evaluation techniques and methods are not so difficult to learn. The difficulty comes in their application. A tool is as good as the person using it. Dealing with evaluation requires reflection, competence and experience.

The theoretical and practical ideas in this T-Kit offer a starting point. The most important is to remember that the educational evaluation, to be of a high quality, should be implemented with maximum respect to the nature of each project.

At this stage, we hope not to disappoint you but we still have to cook our meal!

3. Further exploration

Evaluation standards

During the 1990's a number of evaluation societies were founded in Europe. The German Evaluation Society (DeGEval)[79] and the Swiss Society of Evaluation (SEVAL)[80], have published 27 evaluation standards[81] organised in four categories:

- **Utility:**The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation is guided by both the clarified purposes of the evaluation and the information needs of its intended users.
  - Stakeholder identification
  - Clarification of the purposes of the evaluation
  - Evaluator credibility and competence
  - Information scope and selection
  - Transparency of values
  - Report comprehensiveness and clarity
  - Evaluation timeliness
  - Evaluation utilisation and use
- **Feasibility:** The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation is planned and conducted in a realistic, thoughtful, diplomatic, and cost-effective manner.
  - Appropriate procedures
  - Diplomatic conduct
  - Evaluation efficiency
- **Propriety:**The propriety standards are intended to ensure that in the course of the evaluation all stakeholders are treated with respect and fairness.
  - Formal agreement
  - Protection of individual rights
  - Complete and fair investigation
  - Unbiased conduct and reporting
  - Disclosure of findings
- **Accuracy:**The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation produces and discloses valid and useful information and findings pertaining to the evaluation questions.
  - Description of the evaluation
  - Context analysis
  - Described purposes and procedures
  - Disclosure of information sources
  - Valid and reliable information
  - Systematic data review
  - Analysis of qualitative and quantitative information
  - Justified conclusions
  - Meta-evaluation

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79 The German Evaluation Society (DeGEval e.V.) was created 1997. It is an association of persons and institutions, who are active in the field of evaluation. Its aims are to promote professional evaluation practices, the sharing of different perspectives on evaluation as well as the information and exchange about it. More information at **http://www.degeval.de.**

80 The Swiss Society of Evaluation (SEVAL) understands itself as forum for the exchange over evaluations between politics, administration, universities, NGO's and consultants. It is a multidiscipline organization. It promotes the quality and spreading of evaluation. More information at **http://www.seval.ch/de/index.cfm.**

81 Available at **http://www.degeval.de/index.php?class=Calimero_Webpage&id=9023**

Application of the standards

These standards can help the evaluation team ensure the utility, feasibility and ethical grounding of the evaluation being conducted. They can be used in the planning of the evaluation, as a check list, or during the evaluation process for adapting or readjusting it.

In the application of these evaluation standards we should consider that:

- The DeGEval standards are designed to uphold and raise the quality of evaluations. They formulate key points which evaluators should respect and goals they should pursue. They are intended to provide a frame of reference for conducting and assessing evaluations.
- How they are implemented is a deciding factor. It cannot take place schematically. These evaluation standards are not intended to devalue evaluations which do not meet a particular standard in a certain way.
- Some standards will not be applicable to certain evaluations. Brief grounds for not applying a standard should be provided in such a case.
- The evaluation will often need to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of various alternatives. It is not always possible to give all standards equal consideration.
- From time to time the standards might contradict each other. The evaluation team and all participants have the job of finding an appropriate solution which takes account of the purposes and context of the evaluation in hand.
- The standards apply to evaluations in general, but not to the evaluation of individuals, for example in performance judgement processes or employee assessment (staff evaluation is excluded).

Exercise on Evaluation Standards

You are planning a 5 day seminar with 20 youngsters from Russia, Hungary and Algeria. One of your chosen evaluation methods is a personal interview with each participant. You have planned 5 minutes per person for the interviews. You have one staff member responsible for conducting the evaluation interviews. The seminar programme allows you a maximum of 15 minutes per day every morning for evaluation.

Check this evaluation plan against the four categories of evaluation standards: Does it meet them all? How and why?

Based on this, think about which circumstances are necessary for a “good” evaluation?

Solution:

Utility: Yes, interviews give us the most personal contact with the participants and team.

Feasibility: With a group of 20 and 5 days, you would have to conduct interviews with 4 persons per day. Check the time frame: you have only 15 minutes per day, so you can conclude that individual interviews cannot be done properly. Another solution could be to do mini-group interviews. But, then you need very clear questions.

Propriety: You are only one person evaluating. You can not take notes and ask questions in the 15 minutes available. You can ask the interviewees if they agree to use a Dictaphone. Doing interviews means to take note of the statements of participants. You need this information to document interviews properly.

Accuracy: In your group, there are participants with very different social and religious backgrounds. Or the group is quite homogenous. Think about the questions you want to ask before going into the interviews. If you would like to find out something related to personal, ethical or religious aspects, please proceed with the necessary sensitivity and think about how the context of a mini-group interview changes the way participants may react to the questions.

A tool for developing your own evaluation plan – The SALTO checklist

This document is a map or framework on which you can base an evaluation of a project.

It will help you from the moment that you start thinking about aims and objectives until the presentation of your evaluation report. It is only a suggestion; please feel free to adapt it according to the nature of your project.

It has been split into 5 sections:

- Pre stages
- Development and Strategy
- Selection
- Activities
- Outcomes

Each section has basic questions to ask in this area, methods for collection of information and some hints on analysis. There is a box to tick when you have completed each one.

You can use Section 1 before you start planning your project to help you think through the processes needed. All other Sections should be followed during and after your activity. There is a timetable which you can refer to when to use which Section and its sub sections.

SECTION 1: Pre Stages

A set of questions that should be answered when you are creating your plan or activity.

SECTION 2: Development and Strategy

The areas to assess when you are evaluating the development and strategy of a project. This is the important ground work to a report and recommendations for future changes.

SECTION 3: Selection

The areas to evaluate in the selection procedure of those involved, i.e. participants and trainers. This makes transparent the process of involvement of people within the exercise.

SECTION 4: Activities

Explores key areas within the activities to evaluate.

SECTION 5: Outcomes

Explores evaluation of outcomes, demonstration of the impact of the project on the target group and the wider community.

SECTION 6: Time Frame for Evaluation

A map of when each part of the evaluation should take place.

TIME WHEN THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN	Which Evaluation Section to Complete Following the Numbers from the Guide
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT	☐ 1 Pre Stages Check list ☐ 1 Decision on evaluation programme, choice of methods and development of tools. ☐ 2.2 Expectations of different stakeholders
ACTIVITY START TIME	☐ 2.2 Expectations of participants ☐ 5.2 Learning needs of participants
DURING ACTIVITY	☐ 3.1 Are participants your target group?
END OF ACTIVITY	☐ 2.2 Expectations of participants met ☐ 4.2 Infrastructure and support by participants ☐ 4.3 Content and methods by participants ☐ 5.2 Learning outcomes of participants
TEAM EVALUATION AFTER ACTIVITY	☐ 2.2 Expectations of team met ☐ 2.3 Co-operation and communication by team ☐ 4.2 Infrastructure and support by team ☐ 4.3 Content and methods by team ☐ 5.1 Evaluation of outcomes by team ☐ 5.2 Learning of participants by team
SHORTLY AFTER	☐ 2.3 Co-operation of partners ☐ 3.1 Selection of participant ☐ 3.2 Selection of team
By 6 MONTHS	☐ 2.1 Strategy Analysis ☐ 2.2 Expectations of stakeholders met ☐ 4.1 Preparation, delivery, evaluation and follow up ☐ 5.2 Collection of examples of good practice and new methods ☐ 5.3 Individual activity Evaluation Report complete ☐ 5.5 Participants follow up of activities
By 12 MONTHS	☐ 5.3 Evaluation of whole project complete. ☐ 5.5 Participants follow up of activities ☐ 5.6 Long term impact

Before starting:

- Read through this document to the end and consider all the points before you begin your whole project and the individual activities within it.
- Write a schedule of what evaluation will take place, when it will happen and who will do it.
- When you are completing your evaluation, follow all sections below very carefully.

1. Pre Stages

Answer these questions when you are constructing your project plan.
Tick the boxes on completing the questions.

☐ – What are the aims and objectives for your project and why?

☐ – What are all the stakeholders' expectations (funders, youth leaders, volunteers, young people etc.)

☐ – Who is/are your target group(s) and why?

☐ – How will you gain access to this/these target group(s)?

☐ – Who will run your activities and on what criteria have you selected them?

☐ – What methods and resources will you use to fulfil your aims and objectives and why?

☐ – What outcomes do you hope to achieve?

☐ – How will you assess these outcomes?

2. Development and Strategy

2.1. Strategy Analysis

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS
– What were the aims and objectives of the activity/project?
– Why were these aims and objectives chosen?
– Were the activities/strategies based on analysis of needs of young people?
– Were the activities/strategies based on the needs of youth workers?
– Were the activities/strategies based on the priorities of the funders (if any)?
– Were the activities/strategies based on the priorities of your organisation?
– What was the process of deciding on the strategy?
– Who was the target group and why was this group chosen?
– Was the activity/strategy manageable?

METHODS
– interview or questionnaire of decision makers
– reading of reports from relevant meetings
– reading of needs analysis research completed

ANALYSIS
– Develop an understanding of the process of construction of the aims and objectives!

2.2. Expectation of key people who have an interest in your activity

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Who were the key stakeholders (key players)?:

a) Funders e.g. European Commission/ National agencies/local authorities

b) Target group e.g. youth workers/ disadvantaged young people

c) Actors in the strategy e.g. trainers, volunteers, facilitators

d) Actors in the field e.g. Youth Organisations

– What was the relationship between the stakeholders?

– Were their expectations met?

NOTE:

– Each stakeholder needs to be involved in the evaluation to provide a balanced picture. All evaluations in every field of work are political and you must be aware of the context in which you complete your work.

METHODS

– Questionnaires, focus groups or interviews to all stakeholders before the activities take place.

– Documentation and minutes from meetings.

ANALYSIS

– Decide what the expectations of these differing sets of people towards your project are and towards each individual activity within it. Look at tensions or differences.

2.3. Co-operation with partners

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Which partners were you cooperating with on your project?

– What roles did the different partners play in the

a) development

b) process

c) evaluation of the different activities?

– Was there equal co-operation in the development of the activity between all partners?

– Was the communication between partners adequate?

– Was the communication between all actors (i.e. funders, partners, trainers, participants) involved adequate?

– Were there misunderstandings through different use of words (definitions) in the aims, objectives or setting the target groups? If yes explain what happened.

METHODS

– Interview, focus groups or questionnaires of the actors involved.

ANALYSIS

– Use the data to decide if there was a democratic process in the development of the project and to draw a picture of the involvement of the different partners in the activities.

3. Selection

3.1. Selection of participants

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Who were the intended participants for the activities?

– Was there a shared understanding of the target group?

– Who was the announcement of the activity sent to?

– Who applied?

– What were the selection criteria?

– Were the participants who turned up to the activity your specified target group?

METHODS

– Interview, focus groups or questionnaire of actors involved in selection

– Interview a number of participants and trainers to find out about the participants (this could be done by telephone)

ANALYSIS

– Use the data collected to decide if you reached your target group in your activities and if not where the problems arose!

3.2. Selection of actors to carry out the activities

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– How were actors (such as trainers, volunteers) selected and on what criteria were they selected?

– Did the actors implement the activity you suggested?

– Was there a gender balance?

– Was there a regional balance?

– Was there a balance in the areas of experience and expertise?

– Did the selected actors become a team?

– Was the team effective at organisation and time management?

– Were there conflicts and were they resolved?

– Would you recommend the same actors for future activities?

METHODS

– Interview, focus groups or questionnaire of actors involved in selection

– Questionnaires of participants after the training course

– Questionnaires to the team after the training course.

ANALYSIS

– Use the data to decide if appropriate actors were selected for the tasks and, if a team was created, whether it worked successfully together!

4. The activity

4.1. Preparation, delivery, evaluation and follow up

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Were adequate resources of time, energy and money given to the:
  a) preparation of each activity?
  b) delivery of each activity?
  c) evaluation of each activity?
  d) follow up of each activity?

METHODS

– Interview or questionnaire of actors involved

ANALYSIS

– Decide if enough commitment and total resources were spent on each element within the production of the activity!

4.2. Infrastructure and Support

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Did the location for the activity have enough or appropriate space?
– Was the appropriate equipment available?
– Was there adequate support staff for the activity?

METHODS

– Questionnaire after training course for participants
– Interview or questionnaires for actors who ran the event.

ANALYSIS

– Examine the data to decide if the infrastructure and support were satisfactory for the activity!

4.3. Contents and Methods

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– Which priorities was the activity orientated towards?
– Were the methods chosen participant centred? If yes, give an example.
– Were the contents of the activities based in the realities of the participants? If yes, give an example.
– Was there an effective group learning process?
– Were the participants actively involved in the activities?
– Did the activities use resources from the field?
– Did the content and theme of the/each activity fit the aims and objectives set?
– Did your project have an impact on more people than the participants involved?

METHODS

– Observations: have an observer sit and watch the process and make notes (external evaluator).
– Ask questions on the process in a post questionnaire or interview.
– Ask those people creating the activity to provide detailed documentation (daily reports by the participants, detailed programme, etc.).

ANALYSIS

– Use the data to decide if the appropriate contents and methods were used!

5. Outcomes

To explore outcomes each individual activity needs to be examined separately and then brought together in a synthesis.

5.1. Evaluation

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS
– What were your expected outcomes from the individual activity?
– Were your expectations of outcomes met?
– What evaluation was completed for the individual activity?
– What were the results of the evaluation?
– How do the results of the evaluation and outcomes fit into the field of youth work and the priorities of the project, your organisation, funders, etc.?

METHODS
– Interview or questionnaire for the coordinator of each activity.

5.2. Learning Outcomes

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS
– What skills and competencies have the participants gained, e.g. Self Awareness, Intercultural Learning, Communication Skills, Team Work, etc.?

METHODS
– Assessment of learning of the participants by: themselves (self assessment), their peers, the team or by external assessors. This assessment should be comparative between when the participants arrive and where they have reached by the end, i.e. a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire or another method of recording and analyzing the achievements of participants. New technology methods could be used providing evidence based portfolios of achievement on CD ROMs and videos.

5.3. Demonstrating Quality

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS
– How can quality be demonstrated?

METHODS
– The Evaluation Report is a tangible way of demonstrating the quality of your activities. The evaluation report will help you improve your activities next time.

Using this guide will be a start to producing an evaluation of individual activities and your overall project. Use the different title headings for each section of your report and then finish with a conclusion containing recommendations for the future. If you need help you can request the support of an external evaluator to carry out the task. External evaluators give your report more credibility because they are understood as being more impartial.

An evaluation meeting. This brings all the key stakeholders together to discuss the key questions that are in this guide. A report from the evaluation meeting should then be produced. This is not a quick fix for all the areas of evaluation and is not a substitute for the in-depth evaluation process given above.

5.4. Added Value to the youth field

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– How do you demonstrate added value?

METHODS

– A collection of examples of good practice such as videos, CD ROMs, websites from the different activities.

– The creation of new methods, tools and articles on the different themes of the activities.

5.5. Multiplying effect

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

– How do you demonstrate multiplication?

METHODS

– Look for an increase in the number of activities in the priority areas that you have stated in your aims and objectives.

– Look for an increase of trainers, support people and resources in priority areas.

– To find this information follow up participants 6 months or longer with questionnaires and/or interviews to find out what activities relating to themes have been carried out by participants.

5.6. Long Term Impact

☐ **complete**

QUESTIONS

The long term impact is quite difficult to measure and will be affected by many variables other than the youth activities that you are creating.

– What is the long term impact on the participants of an activity?

– What is the long term impact on the wider community?

METHODS

– Following up participants over 2 years or more can trace the long-term impact on their lives and the activities they have been involved in. This can be assessed by taking part in interviews or questionnaires every 6 months, recording their life story.

– Look for indicators of impact on young people.

– Create specific indicators for the aims and objectives/priorities of your project, e.g.

a) Reduction of reports of racism by young people towards their peers

b) Increased participation of young disabled people in youth activities.

c) Increased participation of young people in youth organisations.

NOTE

– It is difficult to prove the link between your activities and results!

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Web-ography

In addition to the web – sites references of the text:

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  www.coe.int/youth
- YOUTH programme of the European Commission
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html
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  www.youth-partnership.net
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T-Kit No 10

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In 1998, the Council of Europe and the European Commission decided to take common action in the field of European youth worker training. Both institutions therefore initiated a Partnership agreement, whose aim was "to promote active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension". This agreement has since been renewed several times and additional agreements were initiated in the fields of "youth research" and "Euro-med co-operation".

Since 2005, all Partnership activities have merged into one single framework Partnership agreement, which focuses on the following topics: European Citizenship; human rights education and intercultural dialogue; quality and recognition of youth work and training; better understanding and knowledge of youth; youth policy development. The Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth thus brings together the two institutions' experience in non-formal education, youth policy, youth research and youth work practice.

The co-operation between the two institutions covers a wide spectrum of activities and publications, including the Training Kits. T-Kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers and constitute easy-to-use handbooks for use in educational activities.

All Partnership activities and publications enhance the exchange of experience and good practice between the actors involved, are embedded in a structured dialogue and contribute to the implementation of the political objectives of both partners. Since 1998, more than 1.200 young people participated directly in these activities and many more were able to benefit from this experience through the Partnership publications.

*T-Kits are produced by the Partnership in English, French and German. Several of them are also available in other languages following national initiatives. Please consult the web-site **www.youth-partnership.net** for updated information on T-Kits and translations.*

€ 12 / US$ 18

ISBN: 978-92-871-6023-2

9 789287 160232

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