



framework

YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation II Project

Outcome Evaluation
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Acronyms and abbreviations

CoE	Council of Europe
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EA	External Assessment
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ProFest	Programme Festival
PMT	Project Management Team
PWI	Peace Work Institute
RfR	Roots for Reconciliation
TGT	Tandem Grant Tool
ToR	Terms of Reference
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This report details the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the outcome evaluation of the second phase of YMCA Europe's Roots for Reconciliation project (RfR II), which runs from January 2012 to December 2015. The project focuses on training and inter-cultural, cross-border dialogue with the participation of young people, principally staff and volunteers of national and local YMCA organisations from 25 countries. The project's objective is to achieve 'stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe,' particularly with regard to the Caucasus and the Balkans.

2. Evaluation purpose and methodology

The evaluation's purpose is 'to measure the achievement, or progress towards the achievement of the project's planned objectives, and to assess the project's contribution to desired impact.' This was carried out according to the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

The design of the main evaluation tools and the collection of data against project outcomes involved a high degree of participation by project participants. This process was facilitated in a workshop on outcome evaluation with an 'assessment team' of 30 participants of RfR II's Peace Work Institute (PWI). The rationale behind the process was to provide continuity with the project's participatory approach, to maintain participants' sense of responsibility, or ownership, of the project results, and to provide a capacity-building process in keeping with the whole project's orientation towards practical learning.

The main sources of evaluation data and data collection methods were:

- A preliminary desk study of all relevant project documentation, including monitoring data;
- Evaluation questionnaire of project participants, designed by the assessment team;
- Participant-led interviews of PWI participants;
- Testimonials of personal change from participants of PWI Reunion, Budapest, Hungary;
- Interviews with project management staff, YMCA staff, and PWI external experts;
- Personal testimony and tandem grant evaluation presentations by PWI Reunion participants;
- Evaluation workshop results at PWI Reunion;
- Focus group discussion at PWI Reunion with YMCA national staff and board members ;
- A wide range of blog-posts, personal testimony, and video presentations taken from the RfR II website and Facebook page.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Relevance

The project has been highly relevant to the values, mission, and strategic priorities of YMCA Europe, as well as to the interests and concerns of its youth participants, particularly those coming from conflict-affected or post-conflict countries. It has provided a coherent framework for promoting peace-building and cross-border dialogue into the work of local and national YMCA organisations and across the YMCA Movement.

The project rationale, emerging from theories of 'individual change' and 'healthy relationships and connections' is consistent with the project's purpose to strengthen young people's capacities for leadership, peace-building, and inter-personal communication, and to stimulate inter-cultural

dialogue and cross-border communication. The PWI, with its associated Tandem Grant Tool projects, was an appropriate mechanism for putting the rationale into practice.

Owing to a lack of communication with civil society organisations outside the YMCA, the project has limited relevance to and potential impact on the wider socio-political context.

Formal project design, as articulated in the Logframe is weak. Objectives are over-ambitious and vaguely specified, and the linkages of cause and effect are not apparent. The project's intentions regarding immediate outcomes or desired impact are not clear.

The project has been inclusive in its approach to gender, religious and ethnic difference. However, there has been no discussion in the project's content and activities of gender as a factor in conflict and peace-building.

The project has adapted positively and in a timely manner to political changes in the external context which either threaten or otherwise affect participating organisations.

3.2 Efficiency

The key project strength has been its success in gaining participation from so many countries across Europe representing a wide diversity of cultural and socio-economic experience.

The project represents excellent value for money in terms of cost per output and cost per outcome. Value for money could have been increased if it had dedicated a greater proportion of its resources to the organising of a greater number or more frequent events.

The project has been managed highly efficiently. Decision making by the project management has been timely, appropriate, and clearly communicated. Responsiveness to the interests of participants and their sending organisations has been achieved by involving participants in the planning of events and by consulting regularly with participants between and during all events.

Financial management and accountability to YMCA Europe and donors have been very strong. Strategic management would have been enhanced if there had been a formal, voluntary project steering committee representing a fuller range of stakeholder interests.

Monitoring has concentrated on assessing the delivery of individual events and their immediate effect on project participants. The project has not been able to monitor the production of outcomes owing to poorly articulated project objectives, weakly specified indicators of change, and lack of relevant baseline studies.

3.3 Effectiveness

The project has had an **empowering effect upon its participants**, described by many as a life-changing experience. Personal outcomes include:

- A commitment to RfR's vision of peace and reconciliation
- Greater understanding of and belief in the mission and values of YMCA;
- A conviction in the collective power of young people to bring about change;
- Increased understanding of conflict and its causes;
- Increased understanding of peace-building, conflict analysis and conflict sensitive approaches;
- Increased tolerance, acceptance of difference, and understanding of other cultures;
- High levels of mutual trust within the group;

- New friendships across cultural and geographical distance, often with those whom they have been conditioned to view as ‘enemies;’
- Strengthened analytical capacities and ability to challenge cultural stereotypes and prejudices;
- Heightened communication and team-building abilities;
- Leadership skills developed, underpinned by practical experience of project planning and implementation.

The project has been highly successful in achieving **cross-border cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue** between individuals and the project’s participating organisations. In particular, strong relationships have been forged across lines of previous conflict and mistrust, such as those between Armenia-Turkey, Serbia-Kosovo, and Russia - Georgia. An important feature of this cooperation is that with the support of the project’s TGT, it has been extended beyond the safety of events managed directly by RfR II to include participant-led, field-based initiatives which have included organisation members previously not involved in the project.

A significant project outcome is the **strengthening of the YMCA Movement** in Europe. A wide range of institutional relationships between local and national YMCAs for the exchange of skills, knowledge, and information, as well as for the development of cross-border peace-building and dialogue projects has been established. An informal pan-European network of young leaders committed to YMCA’s mission and values and the promotion of the values of peace and reconciliation now exists. PWI participants are more actively engaged in the YMCA and are applying RfR learning in leadership, project development, and communication in their own local or national organisations.

The effectiveness of the project in spreading its messages of peace and reconciliation beyond the membership of participating organisations to the communities in which YMCAs are located has been very limited so far.

3.4 Impact

Strictly speaking it is still too early to assess project impact. The project was over-ambitious in expecting its outputs and outcomes to have a visible, positive impact on achieving ‘a culture of peace that allows the transformation of existing conflicts.’

There are indications that the project is raising interest in and demand for peace-building and cross-border dialogue within the wider membership of YMCA Europe. The RfR II provides a model of working practices and a possible institutional structure which might allow the integration of peace practices of all European YMCA organisations.

Participating organisations have significantly enhanced their capacity for undertaking peace work. YMCAs from the Caucasus and Balkans are more active in international projects and they have either strengthened or reoriented their strategies towards greater engagement in peace-building.

Project participants assert that the project has been a major contributory factor to various positive changes in their professional and personal lives.

3.5 Sustainability

The institutional relationships between YMCAs established in the project, ongoing planning for follow-on projects to the TGT projects, and the inclusion in the PWI of a large number of national secretaries will ensure that cross-border cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue will continue in the

short-term. How the national organisations can mobilise sufficient resources to fund further peace-building activities remains a challenge to longer-term sustainability.

4. Recommendations

4.1 YMCA Europe

- a. Continue to support the RfR and its approach as a means of further promoting YMCA's strategic priority of peace and democracy.
- b. Consider developing the RfR's management structure to establish a coordinating body or platform for the integration of all work undertaken within the YMCA Movement for peace and democracy.
- c. Facilitate further support to the new YMCAs in Albania and Cyprus. Promote greater contact with YMCA Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) for its further inclusion in the YMCA Movement.
- d. Establish a voluntary project steering committee for the RfR to provide strategic management and project oversight with the participation of senior representatives of participating organisations.

4.2 Roots for Reconciliation II project

- a. Develop a follow-on project to RfR II continuing the model of participatory, sequential, and action-oriented learning established in the PWI and the TGT projects.
- b. Establish clear, unambiguous, and achievable project objectives which express the direct change in participants and YMCA organisations the project can reasonably be expected to achieve.
- c. Base project planning on the development of a theory of change which articulates YMCA's vision of change for its strategic priority of peace and democracy and identifies the pathways of sequential pre-conditions, or specific changes in target groups and the context necessary to achieve the vision.
- d. Deepen the pan-European character of the project by including YMCAs from new countries, while continuing to identify and work on context specific peace issues.
- e. Maintain support to YMCA's whose countries are experiencing isolation as a result of conflict, such as Russia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Continue to develop relations with Ukraine.
- f. Broaden the concept of peace-building and build upon RfR II's success in inter-cultural dialogue to address conflicts and cultural tensions within countries of participating organisations.
- g. Develop relationships with other youth and peace-building CSOs and networks to raise the project's potential influence the wider socio-political context, to form partnerships, and for mutual learning. Encourage sending organisations to adopt the same approach in their own communities with the same purpose.

- h. Strengthen practical learning and participants' input to their sending organisation by introducing the principle that each PWI session is followed up by planned activities either in their organisation or in their local communities.
- i. Recruit a new cohort of PWI participants to multiply the opportunities for individual learning and increase the potential human resources for peace-building within each participating organisation.
- j. Strengthen the potential impact of the project on the YMCA Movement and its organisations by only selecting participants who are in a position to influence their own organisations.
- k. Include PWI graduates from RfR II in the new project as workshop leaders, advisers, and trainers to further build their capacities, maintain continuity with RfR II, and to base project learning on prior experience and the outcomes of RfR II.
- l. Continue to use the Do No Harm approach as the project's guiding principle, but include gender, as well as power relations and the politics of identity as key themes of training on conflict analysis and peace-building.
- m. Promote the greater uptake of 'digital activism' in the project as a means to facilitate regular cross-border dialogue and cultural exchange and to carry out peace campaigning by disseminating context-specific messages to specific audiences outside the YMCA.

4.3 Local and national YMCAs

- a. Continue to strengthen the institutional relationships developed in RfR II. Identify and plan joint projects. Engage more actively in cross-border dialogue using internet technologies, including the wider membership of the local YMCA.
- b. Understand PWI graduates from RfR II as important resources for pursuing YMCA's strategic priority of peace and democracy in their own community. Facilitate the transfer of PWI learning to staff and volunteers in the organisation.
- c. Develop relationships with other youth CSOs and civil society networks working on peace and reconciliation nationally or in the region in order to reach new audiences, exchange skills and learning, and develop joint projects and funding proposals.
- d. Apply RfR II learning to the identification and development of project proposals for actions in the local community. Integrate the Do No Harm principle into all YMCA activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the outcome evaluation of the second phase of YMCA Europe's Roots for Reconciliation project (RfR II). The evaluation took place over an extended period from 1 January 2015 to 30th June 2015, during which time project participants played an important role in the design of evaluation tools and the collection of data by which to assess the project outcomes. The evaluation is part of a wider evaluation exercise which includes a separate impact assessment of the initial Roots for Reconciliation project (RfR I, 2007-2010), exploring the contribution to cross-border cooperation and the self-sustainability of three YMCA Community Resource Centres established under RfR I in Armenia and Georgia.

1.1 Brief project description

Roots for Reconciliation II is a peace and reconciliation project focused on training and inter-cultural, cross-border dialogue with the participation of young people (aged 18-30 years old), principally staff and volunteers of national and local YMCA organisations. The project has a particular focus on the South Caucasus and Balkans regions, but is pan-European in including participants from a total of 25 countries from all corners of the continent.

The project runs from January 2012 to December 2015, with a closing project workshop to be held in Yerevan, Armenia, in October 2015, at which the findings of both this outcome evaluation and the impact assessment of RfR I will be presented. The project has an overall planned budget of Euro 520,000. The project's main donor, Bread for the World Germany has provided over two thirds, or Euro 360,000, of the project finances. The Council of Europe has contributed approximately Euro 100,000 for four sub-projects through the European Youth Foundation and European Youth Centre. The remainder of the budget has been supported by YMCA Europe own funds and small contributions from selected national YMCAs.

The project's stated objective is to achieve 'stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe,' particularly with regard to the Caucasus and the Balkans. The objective is intended to contribute ultimately to the development goal: a 'culture of peace is created that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region.'

RfR II is an extension and adaptation of a pilot project, Roots for Reconciliation I, 2007-2010, which brought young people in the South Caucasus together across socio-political divides to promote dialogue and peace-building activities through a regional YMCA camping programme and a series of training and dialogue seminars and conferences focused on integration, civil participation, and conflict resolution. RfR II has maintained continuity with the pilot through an approach to peace-building based in participatory individual learning and the development of trusting relationships among people from conflict-affected communities, according to the principles of Do No Harm and within the framework of the YMCA network.

The project's main activity has been its Peace Work Institute (PWI), a series of three residential training seminars for a group of 25 youth 'opinion leaders' from the project's participating organisations. Opinion leaders are considered to be organisation members, either volunteers or staff, who have the enthusiasm, drive and potential capacity to influence their own organisations and communities. The aim of the PWI was to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary for them to conduct and lead peace-building activities across borders and in their own localities. Between PWI seminars, which were conducted over the project's first two years (2012-2013), it was expected that PWI participants would initiate their own training initiatives and peace-building work in their own organisations and their own communities.

During 2014, the project 's Tandem Grant Tool (TGT) provided all PWI participants with financial resources and the administrative support necessary for them to plan and carry out cross-border dialogue and peace-building projects on the basis of the contacts and knowledge gained during the PWI seminars. A PWI 'Reunion,' held in Budapest in February 2015, provided an opportunity for PWI participants to evaluate their TGT initiatives and work with this evaluator in reflecting upon the whole RfR II project, and in designing a set of tools for the participatory collection of data to be used in this outcome evaluation.

In parallel, and continuing a practice established under RfR I, the project has organised three regional programme festivals, or ProFests (the third is due to be held in Georgia in July 2015). These are large week-long events, bringing together approximately 70 young YMCA members (ages 16-25), mainly from a particular region in Europe, with the aim of developing the participants' knowledge of peace-building, their leadership skills, and providing them and their YMCAs with opportunities to engage in peace dialogue and develop cross-border cooperation. A key feature of the ProFests is the application of peer education, led and facilitated by representatives of participating YMCAs with the assistance of RfR staff members.

An integral component of the project has been the promotion of what is termed 'digital activism,' or the use of internet technologies, in particular social media, as a means of both conducting cross-border communication within the project and of promoting the project's message of peace and reconciliation to a wider audience. In order to facilitate more effective and efficient communication between project management and participants across 25 countries, the project also established its own website and Facebook pages. Particular attention was paid to extending the project's use of digital activism in the three TGT projects that were successfully implemented.

1.2 Evaluation purpose and scope

The evaluation's purpose is 'to measure the achievement, or progress towards the achievement of the project's planned objectives, and to assess the project's contribution to desired impact.'

The Terms of Reference require the evaluation to assess the project according to the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability by means of answering 26 detailed evaluation questions.¹

A secondary purpose of the evaluation is to provide conclusions and recommendations which can be used in developing a third follow-on phase to the RfR.

The evaluation covers the period January 2012 to February 2015. It takes into consideration all project activities, outputs and outcomes delivered in this period, as well as project design and its theoretical grounding, project management, and the monitoring and evaluation system.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

1.4.1 Participatory evaluation design

The ToR specify that the outcome evaluation should be 'an externally facilitated participatory process, where the project beneficiaries themselves work on capturing the project achievements and defining necessary improvements.' The implicit rationale for this was to provide continuity with the project's participatory approach, to maintain participants' sense of responsibility, or ownership, of the project results, and to provide a capacity-building process in keeping with the whole project's orientation towards practical learning.

¹ See Annex 12 for full Terms of Reference and the evaluation questions

At the Budapest PWI Reunion in February 2015, the evaluator facilitated an evaluation workshop over two mornings with all of the 30 attending PWI graduates. The participants comprised an informal project ‘assessment team,’ with the dual role of 1) defining sets of specific questions to ask RfR participants in order to gather data on project outcomes, and 2) participating in the gathering of evaluation data from all RfR participants. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To identify and define RfR outcomes and potential impact;
- To design and test a tool, or set of tools, for the participatory evaluation of RfR outcomes and impact;
- To establish a system for managing the participatory evaluation process.

On the basis of five possible project outcomes identified in the workshop², the assessment team developed two evaluation tools to apply within the participatory part of the evaluation as a means to gather information against the outcomes and to ‘test’ their validity:

1. An online questionnaire aimed at all RfR participants comprising detailed questions regarding: participation levels, relevance of the project, attitude change of the participants, skills learning, participants’ use of their learning, communication within the project, and project management.³
2. A set of nine semi-structured interview questions intended to gather more detailed and descriptive, or ‘rich,’ data concerning outcomes from a more limited pool of RfR participants.⁴ It was agreed that each assessment team member would conduct at least one interview by Skype with another PWI graduate in another country over the period April – May 2015, with a view to conducting at least one further interview each with another RfR participant with whom they were acquainted. Project management would coordinate the administration and collation of data before sending it to the evaluator for inclusion in the analysis.

1.4.2 Sources of evaluation data and data collection methods

The evaluation proceeded in January 2015 with a review of all relevant project documentation, including the project proposal and Logframe, the external evaluation of RfR I, project narrative and financial reports, monitoring reports to donors, and all relevant online monitoring tools and their results.⁵

Primary data were collected principally from project participants and project management staff using a variety of methods over the period January – June 2015. These included:

- Evaluation questionnaire designed by PWI participants – 52 responses;
- Participant-led interviews with PWI participants – 18 sets of interview notes submitted;⁶
- Post-PWI Reunion testimonials of personal change attributed to involvement in RfR – 25 testimonials received;
- Evaluator-led interviews with project management staff, YMCA staff, and PWI external experts – 11 interviews with seven people;⁷

² See Annex 7 for the list of possible outcomes identified by PWI participants

³ See Annex 8 External Evaluation and Impact Assessment Questionnaire for summary results of questionnaire responses

⁴ See Annex 9 for questions for participant-led semi-structured interviews

⁵ See Annex 1 for a list of documents and internet resources referred to in the evaluation

⁶ See Annex 2 for a list of participants interviewed

- Personal testimony and tandem grant evaluation presentations by PWI Reunion participants;
- Evaluation workshop results at PWI Reunion;
- Focus group discussion at PWI Reunion with YMCA national staff and board members from six countries;
- Participant observation of the PWI Reunion;
- A wide range of blog-posts, personal testimony, and video presentations taken from the RfR II website and Facebook page.

Analysis of evaluation data was guided by the 26 specific evaluation questions contained in the ToR.

1.4.3 Limitations of the evaluation

The evaluation was constrained by limited access to project participants beyond those attending the PWI Reunion. The relatively low response to the evaluation questionnaire (approximately 17% of the 167 RfR participants not attending the PWI Reunion) and the lower-than-expected number of completed participant-led interviews means that the evaluation findings should be considered representative rather than statistically valid.

There was no opportunity to visit participating organisations, or to hold detailed discussions with representatives of participating organisations to discuss if and how the project has contributed to organisational change. Consequently, findings concerning project impact on organisational capacity and performance are tentative.

The relative inexperience of the PWI Reunion participants in leading semi-structured interviews means that interview notes are brief and the scope allowed by the open-ended interview questions to probe issues in depth was not fully exploited. It should be said, however, that the qualitative information provided from all interviews was highly relevant to the evaluation and was very well recorded, so that it had high 'usability.'

Insufficient time available at the PWI Reunion for the evaluation workshop meant that participants did not have the chance to test the evaluation tools and to have practice in carrying out semi-structured interviews.

2. EVALUATION FINDINGS

2.1 Relevance

2.1.1 To what extent is RfR and its objectives supportive of the mission and strategy of YMCA Europe?

RfR II's inclusive, participatory, and cooperative approach oriented towards the capacity development of young people, cross-border dialogue, and the promotion of cooperation among Europe movements is fully aligned with the guiding principles that underpin both YMCA Europe's Mission and its Strategic Plan 2011-2016.⁸ The project is firmly aligned with key objectives of YMCA Europe's Strategic Priority 1, Mission Awareness – Advocacy – Representation, particularly those under:

Strategic aim 2, Youth Participation:

⁷ See also Annex 2 for a list of those interviewed by the evaluator

⁸ See YMCA Europe (2011) YMCA Europe Strategic Plan 2011-2016, p.9

To encourage and support youth participation in YMCA Europe and its Movements on all levels and on all processes according to the principle of youth empowerment as an integral part of the mission of the YMCA, and;

Strategic aim 4, European and Global Co-operation:

To strengthen existing, and develop and implement, new practices of co-operation with the world-wide YMCA family by YMCA Europe and its Movements. There will be special emphasis on achieving a single voice and message through interactive sharing of best practices and information between European Movements and their internal and external partner organisations [...].

The experience of RfR I was influential within YMCA Europe at the time of strategic planning, influencing the selection and scoping of Peace and Democracy as one of three ‘signature’ social programmes designed to maintain YMCA’s wider relevance to European youth and to respond to changing societies and their changing needs:

Aim 1: Peace and Democracy

To empower young people to build the YMCA as strong and widely recognised Movement striving for peace and democracy as an integral part of its Christian Mission.

Objectives

- a. To expand the RfR programme concept, accompanying it with appropriate pan-European training events;
- b. To facilitate and organise networks to motivate and engage young people to become actively involved in the decision-making processes on all levels and within good governance principles;
- c. To encourage cross-border co-operation and European citizenship between National Movements, especially those which are on different sides of conflicts;
- d. To identify and implement social transformation initiatives according to the global reality in Europe and the specific needs in communities where YMCA is present, including migrants and refugees;
- e. To emphasise the concept of “social volunteering” by motivating, engaging and training youth to serve social, educational, community development and international projects with a focus on under-privileged sectors.

2.1.2 What model of reconciliation has been used to guide the project design? What were the consequences of this choice?

Reconciliation: A process that attempts to transform intense or lingering malevolence among parties previously engaged in a conflict or dispute into feelings of acceptance and even forgiveness of past animosities or detrimental acts.⁹

RfR II has maintained continuity with its first phase in focusing its peace-building efforts on building the capacities for reconciliation of project participants; that is ‘building those root capacities for reconciliation amongst growing generations.’¹⁰ As in its first phase, RfR II’s strategy is based on an unstated, implicit model of change that combines what have been described as the ‘Individual

⁹ RfR Project Continuation Proposal, p.4

¹⁰ Ibid, p.4

Change’ and ‘Healthy Relationships and Connections’ theories of peace-building.¹¹ The Individual change theory posits that ‘peace comes through transformative change of a critical mass of individuals, their consciousness, attitudes, behaviours, and skills. Methods [applied include] investment in individual change through training, personal transformation/ consciousness-raising workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups, and trauma healing.’

The healthy relationships and connections theory asserts that ‘peace emerges out of a process of breaking down isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/ among groups. Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for peace-building. Methods [include] processes of inter-group dialogue; networking; relationship-building processes; joint efforts and practical programmes on substantive problems.’

The choice of ‘individual change’ and ‘healthy relationships and connections’ theories establishes a rationale for the overall programme design, shaping of content, ways of working, and specific objectives of each programme component. This rationale is summarised below in Table 1.¹²

TABLE 1. The Rationale for Roots for Reconciliation II’s ‘model of change’

	PWI	Tandem Grant Tool	ProFests
Individual change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop tolerance of different perspectives, acceptance of the Other - Strengthen understanding of conflict and conflict analysis skills - Develop self-confidence and leadership skills; recognise own responsibility; - Build planning skills. This leads to increased capacity of national YMCA / sending organisations with benefits with regard to promoting peace in the wider communities in which they belong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide opportunities for further developing planning skills and for leading and organising cross-border activities (putting into practice PWI learning) - Provide opportunities for cultural exchange and direct exposure of young people to the culture and realities of Others. - Cooperation between formal and informal leaders of national YMCAs / sending organisations deepened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop self-confidence; recognise own responsibility - Develop tolerance of different perspectives, acceptance of the Other - Strengthen understanding of conflict
Healthy relationships and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide safe opportunities for young people from countries and regions in conflict to meet and build long-term relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide opportunities for young people from countries and regions in conflict to lead and participate in inter- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide safe opportunities for young people from countries and regions in conflict to meet and

¹¹ Church C. & Rogers, M (2006) *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*, Search for Common Ground

¹² The table, and the whole section is adapted from RfR I External Assessment (Britton, B, December 2009).

	- Opportunities for national YMCAs, through leaders to forge relationships that foster values of peace, reconciliation, and cooperation	cultural dialogue and cooperation - Cooperation based on action planning between YMCAs / sending organisations established.	build long-term relationships - Opportunities for national YMCAs, through leaders to forge relationships that foster values of peace, reconciliation, and cooperation
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2.1.3 To what extent has project design built upon the lessons learnt and good practices identified from RfR previous phase?

The External Assessment (EA) of RfR I concluded that RfR was a well-designed project, linking peace and reconciliation, young people’s leadership, and YMCA movement strengthening. In particular, the EA noted that the organisation of cross-border events had been a major factor in creating a ‘cross-border culture’ of cooperation. The project’s sensitive and measured individual-oriented approach to building capacities for peace and reconciliation, which brought together young people from countries in conflict, had enabled possible future leaders to establish mature relationships based on genuine friendships. In addition, leadership training and the development of peace programming had contributed to the strengthening of the YMCA movement by increasing capacity at individual, local and national levels.

RfR II’s overall design has sought to maintain continuity with and extend the best practices implicitly identified in the EA’s conclusions. RfR II has continued the practice of organising cross-border events as a means to provide a safe space within which to break down cultural barriers and develop trust between often initially apprehensive or mistrusting young people. The introduction of the PWI, a series of sequential training seminars, provides a means of strengthening the project’s focus on capacity building for leadership and peace-building, while also offering its participants greater opportunities to renew and develop cross-border relationships over time. The PWI, with its focus on planning peace-building actions and capacity building as a continuous process, is also a logical response to the recommendation of the EA to adopt a more programmatic approach to project activities; that is, to support the integration of peace and reconciliation and movement strengthening into regular programme activities within the local and national YMCAs. The Tandem Grants Tool, provides PWI graduates with the opportunity and resources to put learning into actual peace practice, whose implementation has inevitably influenced and involved the sending organisations.

A key recommendation of the EA, aimed at increasing the scope and potential influence of the RfR, as well as maintaining its relevance and ability to respond to wider changes in the political context, was that the project should extend its work to address other peace and reconciliation issues and geographical areas beyond the South Caucasus. RfR has done this by including a new focus on the Western Balkans (alongside the South Caucasus); continuing RfR’s work with YMCA Russia; including participants from Turkey and Cyprus; opening up opportunities for YMCA leaders from western European countries with experience of conflict transformation and peace-building approaches in their own countries, such as Ireland, England, and Spain, and eliciting participation from Ukraine from 2014 as the ongoing conflict there began to unfold.

The EA noted the importance of applying the principle of Do No Harm that underpinned RfR I to work upon any new cross-border relations explored in a successor project. RfR II has continued to prioritise the Do No Harm approach in all its activities as both an entry point for participants to understand peace-building and as a means to ensure conflict sensitivity when initiating cross-border and inter-cultural projects.

In response to a recommendation for RfR to develop an internet presence as a hub for communication with and between participants, RfR II established internet technologies as the principle means for both in-project communication and external publicity (project visibility) (including a project website, a project Facebook page, and use of Survey Monkey for post-event monitoring and evaluation), and introduced the concept of 'digital activism' for peace-building as a key component of the PWI curriculum.

Although the EA made a strong recommendation to RfR to build stronger relationships with other projects and organisations in the project region working with youth and with peace and reconciliation for the purposes of mutual learning and potential partnerships, no action was taken here (with the exception of identifying non-YMCA partners from Turkey and Cyprus to facilitate participation in the project from these countries), with the result that the RfR II has remained relatively isolated from wider local, national, and international civil society peace-building activity, limiting its potential influence and impact.

2.1.4 Is the project design coherent, positing a rational theory of cause and effect to produce expected results?

The project Logframe,¹³ a standard tool used for both the management of project implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of results, is the most common way of describing the relationships of cause and effect expected to underlie the production of projected results. A good Logframe provides a summary of the essential components of the project design articulated in greater detail in the project document. The Logframe makes clear how inputs (resources) and activities will lead to planned outputs, how outputs will be used to achieve the project's objectives (outcomes), and how outcomes will contribute, ultimately, to the achievement of the overall goal or desired impact. In addition, clear, specific and measurable indicators set against outputs and outcomes should render the framework a tool to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of project outputs and outcomes during implementation and on project completion.

All Logframes inevitably present a simplified and overly linear version of how change takes place within complex and unpredictable environments. A Logframe's utility, however, lies in its ability to reveal the essential logic and coherence of the thinking behind a project design and to propose a framework for evaluating the change a project seeks to achieve.

The RfR II Logframe does not offer clear and specific descriptions of the change at outcome and impact levels it seeks to achieve. The linkages of cause and effect between outputs and outcomes, and particularly between outcomes and impact are extended to a degree where plausibility of design is stretched. Indicators (set at the outcome level only) are vaguely worded and insufficient measures of change. Formally, therefore, evaluation of project effectiveness and impact is extremely challenging.

The overall goal is:

¹³ See Annex 3 for the project Logframe

‘A culture of peace that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region (South Caucasus and Balkans).’

The concept of a culture of peace is ambiguous and, because of its abstract nature, is not responsive to assessment without clearer definition or explanation. The goal is wildly ambitious in the context of RfR II as a discrete, but geographically wide-ranging initiative with a limited number of participants. The causal link, therefore, between the project objective and goal is very weak.

Project staff made it clear that the project goal had been set as a means of demonstrating RfR’s alignment with the strategic priorities of its main donor, Bread for the World.¹⁴ The evaluation ToR, however also identifies two other expected areas of project impact to be assessed:

‘To empower young people to build the YMCA as a strong and widely recognised Movement striving for peace and democracy as an integral part of its Christian Mission,’ and

‘Building Youth NGOs’ capacities to be better prepared to contribute in peace building, conflict transformation and inter-cultural dialogue.’

These correspond respectively to key strategic priorities of YMCA Europe and major donor of RfR II, the Council of Europe (CoE). The emphasis here is, firstly, on the development of YMCA as a movement with a mission to promote peace and democracy and secondly, on the strengthening of youth civil society capacities to undertake peace work. The evaluation questions contained in the ToR further specify how these impacts are understood and also show how the two are inter-related and overlap. Evaluation interviews with RfR and YMCA Europe staff suggest that these two impact areas equate more closely to RfR’s desired impact than the project’s stated goal.

In keeping with all project documentation, the Logframe has only one objective which describes both what change the project aims to achieve as a direct result of its activities and outputs, and how the project will address desired impact(s) in practical terms.

- ‘Stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe, especially the South Caucasus (and Balkans).’

The objective’s vague wording and lack of specificity means that it is unclear whether it can be measured effectively. It appears also that the objective envisages change of a higher order than that described as impact in the CoE’s strategic priority to build youth NGO *capacities* for peace-building (although its link with the stated overall goal is tenuous). In addition, the objective is understood differently within the project management team. The evaluator received the following two definitions of youth activism from conversations with the RfR staff:

1. YMCA Europe in the South Caucasus and the Balkans is functioning as a regional peace network.
2.
 - a. Young people (project participants) are engaged in cross-border dialogue at the grassroots level
 - b. Young opinion leaders are mobilised and are influencing their own organisations and their communities
 - c. An informal pool of young leaders exists who are maintaining the project’s peace-building activities
 - d. YMCAs in the region are strengthened (through individuals).

¹⁴ See Bread for the World / EED (2011) Regional Strategy Paper South Caucasus 2011-2015, p.15

Clarity to the objective's specification in the Logframe could be provided by a set of secondary outcomes that are conceived as comprising the project objective or by a set of clear, specific, indicators. In the original Logframe three 'use of outputs' are suggested which appear to represent secondary outcomes that together comprise and elaborate on the main outcome. These are complex formulations and are not entirely clear, but they would suggest that youth activism consists of the following:

1. Improved trust and understanding between young people (project participants);
2. Youth leaders in YMCAs or project partner CSOs continue to promote peace ('act for change') and act as multipliers of cross-border dialogue activities within both:
 - a. their organisations and
 - b. their communities; and
3. YMCAs in the region continue to promote youth peace-building activities in conflict-affected communities through ('maintain') active participation in regional or cross-border civil society peace dialogue platforms.

In the project proposal these 'use of outputs' are presented as indicators, but in the Logframe three indicators are specified, apparently set against each 'use of output' separately. These outcome indicators, while containing extremely detailed and exact target numbers regarding participants, are vaguely worded and collectively they do not represent logical evidence of either the objective's achievement or the three proposed outcomes or 'use of outputs.'

- Indicator 1. referring to changed attitudes of individuals when dealing with conflict, is not reasonable evidence of activism. It is also not strictly measurable as the attitude change is not specified.
- Measurement of indicators 2. and 3.¹⁵, which both refer to changed behaviour in terms of the engagement of RfR participants in peace practice and increased leadership of peace practice by PWI graduates, is similarly difficult owing to the ambiguity of the terms 'behaviour change', 'peace practice', and 'leadership'. In addition, as the indicators must refer to behaviours beyond RfR project activities and planned outputs, collecting data against them is highly challenging.

The confusion surrounding the project's overall intentions regarding both outcomes and impact and how and what is to be measured to monitor and evaluate the project means that the logical connection between the project's ascending levels of change, in particular between its stated outputs and outcomes, is not apparent. On the other hand, a total of seven key activities, including evaluation exercises, such as a baseline assessment (of participating YMCAs) and this evaluation, are presented as producing only three tangible results or outputs upon which the project's intended change, however defined, should rest.

In summary, project design, as articulated in the project Logframe, is weak and confused. To achieve clarity greater attention needs to be given to explaining the purpose of the project. This could be done by firstly defining key terms in the project plan, such as 'youth activism,' or 'culture of peace.' A more detailed description of the change envisaged for each target group, such as youth participants, national YMCAs, or the YMCA movement, should be given, which would lead to a

¹⁵ In the logframe indicator 3. is a lengthy descriptive formulation regarding the advancement of 3 targeted South Caucasian YMCA's, which does not qualify as an indicator. It appears to have been cut and pasted from RfR I's logframe so was irrelevant. In the contract signed with Bread for the World, this indicator was replaced by one relating to behaviour change in 25% of all RfR II participants.

number of specific project objectives. Clear and specific indicators of success should then be identified against each objective, and also against project outputs, in order to provide a framework for monitoring progress towards the project's purpose, as well as the implicit linkages of cause and effect between outputs and outcomes.¹⁶

2.1.5 To what extent do the project's activities and stated objectives meet the needs and context of the project target groups?

Project monitoring and evaluation data indicate that RfR II was highly relevant to its participants. Over 94% of participants responding to the evaluation questionnaire¹⁷ stated that the project and its activities were relevant to their interests and the community or country in which they live (with 50% saying 'a lot', and over 44% saying 'quite a bit'). All 18 of the PWI participants who were involved in the participatory evaluation interviews confirmed the project's relevance and elaborated on how the project related to their personal situation. For a majority (eleven participants), RfR II's relevance related directly to the conditions of conflict in which their countries or communities lived, their interest to bridge cultural and political divides and to gain understanding of, and establish communication with their own communities' antagonists. Others stressed how the RfR spoke to their desire to gain knowledge and information about other cultures with a view to improving communication more generally. Some, particularly those coming from countries not-affected by conflict, explained how the RfR offered them an opportunity to strengthen their individual (professional or voluntary) work with youth or YMCA members, while two affirmed that the RfR's relevance lay in its potential to assist them to develop their own organisations.

An interesting finding from the participant interviews is that a majority of PWI participants signed up or were selected for the course without any clear expectations from the project beyond a vague interest in meeting new people from other cultures and a desire to gain a deeper understanding of the YMCA as an international organisation and movement. These expectations appear to have been met to the full, but perhaps more importantly, the project's deeper relevance has emerged for all PWI participants as they have engaged in the course's trainings and practical activities.

In addition, interpretation of data relating to expectations and the applicability of new learning from pre and post-event surveys (reaction and learning evaluations) conducted for ProFests and PWI sessions, indicates that the specific content of individual events was judged by participants to be largely relevant to their personal interests and their activities within their own YMCAs.

¹⁶ See also Annex 4 on using Theory of Change thinking as a means to explore relationships of cause and effect in project design

¹⁷ See Annex 8 for a summary of responses to the evaluation questionnaire

2.1.6 To what extent does the project address issues of inclusivity?

a. How has the project addressed the needs of both women and men?

The evaluation questionnaire asked participants to respond to the statement: project activities took into account my specific needs as a man or a women. Over 97% of those responding (49) answered positively, with over 57% agreeing and 40% strongly agreeing. This suggests that the project delivery has been gender sensitive. This is despite the fact that project management staff stated that the project has not taken any active measures to take the specific gender interests and differences of participants into account.

Mention of gender in the project design and content is conspicuous by its absence. Of particular note is the lack of discussion of and reflection on gender in project trainings and processes concerning conflict analysis, Do No Harm, and Reflecting on Peace Practice in the PWI. Project management, however, did confirm that all content was checked to ensure it was of relevance to both men and women.

Conflict of all types impacts differentially on men and women who will very often play differing roles with regard to escalation, conciliation, or coping. In times of hot conflicts, in particular, women have often been the silent victims and subjects of violence, but in many fields they have also taken on special roles in peace-building, especially at the local level. While men continue in almost all societies, even in western Europe, to dominate the political arena in which the use of deadly force and violence, on the one hand, and formal peace-building processes, on the other, are decided upon, women have also been seen to play a significant role in the community and at the cultural level in fomenting conflicts over resources or identity.¹⁸ Any extension of RfR should consider introducing training content on gender and conflict, and gender analysis, as well as incorporating gender into standard peace-building tools, such as Do No Harm (gender as connector or divider), or Reflecting on Peace Practice (gender as forces for or against peace).

b. Has the project achieved gender balance in project participation?

Achieving balanced gender representation is listed in YMCA Europe's Strategic Plan 2011-2016 as a guiding principle towards the fulfilment of YMCA's mission. RfR has been highly successful in attaining a balance between men and women participating in its events. For the whole project, 55% of the 197 participants have been women and 45% participants have been men. In general this reflects the gender balance in individual RfR events over the period 2012-2014.¹⁹ The Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit (Tandem Grant Project) is the only RfR event in which male participation has been higher than female participation (12 male, 7 female).

Achieving gender balance has been a priority for the project management and this has been stressed in the guidelines issued to the project's sending organisations for selecting participants for RfR events.

The three-person project management team (PMT) is all male. A tentative observation would be that this reflects a more general gender imbalance in the management structures of YMCA Europe and the national YMCA offices. The members of the PMT, however, have been joined by two female participants from Kosovo and England in the PWI Planning Team. Although these two were selected

¹⁸ See CDA (2004) 'The Do No Harm' Framework for Analysing Impact of Assistance on Conflict for brief guidelines and examples of the different roles played by men and women in relation to conflict and peacebuilding.

¹⁹ See Annex 5 for details of participant numbers during RfR

primarily because of their capacities, maturity, and commitment to the project, an important secondary consideration was that they would contribute to greater gender balance in the team.

c. To what extent has the project ensured the inclusion of ethnic minorities and non-Christian communities in project activities?

YMCA Europe's mission is inclusive, both from the point of view of ecumenism in the Christian world, and also in embracing the reality and participation of other faith communities. YMCA Europe's Strategic Plan 2011-2016 notes the importance of the following guiding principles:

- Respect and support the multi-cultural nature of Europe and the European YMCAs, and
- Emphasise international thinking and solidarity within Europe and worldwide.

YMCA Europe Secretary General, Juan Simoes Iglesias²⁰ explained how the RfR II is understood as a means of spreading YMCA's message of peace and democracy to other faiths throughout Europe. He also underlined the point that he sees YMCA as a space to promote greater integration throughout Europe of seemingly divergent cultures, such as Muslim and Christian, and to counter the apparent trend towards social and religious radicalisation in the continent.

A key guideline for the delivery of RfR II has been to promote the participation of both individuals from non-Christian and minority communities. With participation primarily drawn from national YMCAs, participants have inevitably been drawn from the Christian community. However, the inclusion of the non-faith-based Yücel Cultural Foundation from Turkey as a sending organisation has ensured the participation of 15 young Turkish Muslims in RfR events (amounting to 7.6% of all project participants). Small numbers of participants from the Islamic and Bahá'í faiths, including those from ethnic minorities have also been sent from Kosovo and England YMCAs. It is not known whether other project YMCAs have members drawn from ethnic or religious minorities whose participation could have been proposed.

2.1.7 How has the project maintained its validity over its duration? Has the project changed and adapted in response to the results of monitoring and relevant changes occurring in the external context?

Over the project period there have been three developments in the external context which have been of direct relevance to project management and the continued involvement of the participating partners. Aggravation of the Armenia – Azerbaijan conflict during 2013 (leading in 2014 to the highest number of deaths in fighting on the Nagorno-Karabakh border since the war ended in 1994) could have threatened the involvement of YMCA Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). With Turkey's historic support to Azerbaijan in the conflict, and the failure of the process of normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia from 2009, these developments could also easily have threatened the continued involvement of PWI participating organisations from Armenia and Turkey, and the bilateral exchange project between these countries planned for 2014.

Secondly, the project period saw the effects of the deepening conflict in Syria spilling over into European countries, in particular in the form of refugee crises in both Turkey and Armenia. The emergence of Islamic State as a powerful actor in the Syrian and other Middle Eastern conflicts has had impacts upon Muslim communities in many European states, concomitantly raising tensions in those countries between Muslim and other faith communities.

²⁰ Interview 28 January 2015

Lastly, the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine and between Ukraine and Russia in early 2014 not only demanded the attention of RfR II, it also increased the relevance of the project to YMCA Russia as the country has found itself increasingly isolated politically from western Europe and other major powers.

All three developments illustrate how RfR II has retained its relevance over its lifetime. Regardless of the possible threats to continued participation of all the partners, there is no indication that there was conflict within or between participants. The project's response to the continuing isolation of Nagorno-Karabakh was to follow up the opening ProFest in Shushi (August 2012) with a 'study visit' in 2014 by PWI partners as an additional TGT project to the three that were originally planned.

Project monitoring reports recount how YMCA Armenia has been active in organising camps for children from refugee families making use of Community Resource Centres established under RfR I.²¹

PWI responded to the Ukraine conflict at the first opportunity by the inclusion of two YMCA Ukraine members in the PWI Reunion. The move was highly significant for the Ukraine – Russia connection, as political pressures dictated that the two YMCAs could not be seen to meet bilaterally. PWI provided a safe and impartial space for the two YMCAs to make initial contacts.

Elsewhere, the PMT reports that implementation has been carried out according to its original plan.

2.2 Efficiency

2.2.1 How many people have benefited directly and indirectly from the project?

Direct beneficiaries are those who have been involved in RfR events and actions, participating in training and engaging in the cross-border dialogue and cultural exchange that RfR has promoted.

In the period from project start to February 2015, 197 people have participated in the RfR's nine completed events, to a total of 342 attendances.²² This is considerably lower than the planned target number of 525 mentioned in the project proposal. It is also less than the indicator target of attitude change in 200 of all project participants. Even allowing for the expected attendance of around 70 at the upcoming third ProFest to be held in July 2015, and the fact that planned trainings in Do No Harm to be delivered by PWI participants to 150 people in their communities did not take place, the project has not achieved its expected reach.

44.7% (88) of project participants were male and 55.3% (109) were female. All participants were members of their sending organisations: 24.4% (48) were YMCA staff members, 65.5% (129) were YMCA volunteers (including board members) and a further 10.1% (20) were members of the non-YMCA partner organisations in Turkey and Cyprus.

Participants have been sent from a total of 25 countries, but 55.8% (110) of them have come from Armenia, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. This reflects the high numbers of YMCA members from this region who attended the two ProFests organised in Shushi (2012) and Prague (2013), rather than participation in the two TGT projects related to the South Caucasus (Armenia-Turkey Project and the Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit). It is assumed that the high level of interest from the South Caucasus is a legacy of the success of RfR's first phase from 2007-2010, which focused almost exclusively on this region.

²¹ The work and sustainability of YMCA's CRCs is the subject of the Impact Assessment of RfR I which is being conducted independently but in parallel with this outcome evaluation of RfR II

²² See Annex 5 for fuller summaries of participation in RfR II

Even though it was intended to establish greater continuity between events in RfR II than had been the case in RfR I, principally by means of the PWI and by developing TGT projects as extensions of PWI participation, two thirds (67.5%) of all project participants have taken part in only one event, and only 10.1% (or 20 people) have attended more than three events. The project team, however, reports that they have maintained contact with all project participants and are confident that the number of those who have dropped out of RfR for reasons such as leaving the YMCA, moving country, or simply losing personal motivation, is no more than 10. For a youth organisation and a youth project of this length, this is very low level of attrition, suggesting that RfR has successfully captured the imagination of its youth audience and is relevant to their interests.

The PWI was intended to reach a total of only 25 participants, who would follow all PWI events. The total number of PWI participants over its four events totals 66. Of these, 37 (56%) have attended only one PWI event. 17 PWI participants have attended three or all the four PWI events.

Those who have benefitted indirectly from RfR II are principally the wider staff and memberships of the 23 national and local YMCAs and the Turkish NGO which have sent participants to RfR events. These comprise approximately 50% of YMCA Europe's 1.8 million members within 5,500 local associations in 43 countries. They have received ideas, information, expertise, and contacts, as well as the opportunity to engage in and further develop the institutional, cross-border relationships created in and by RfR events.

2.2.2 Has the project been delivered at a reasonable cost, as planned? Could the project have delivered the same results to a lower cost?

Total project budget is Euro 520,000, which is divided into 7 broad budget lines. Project audits for the project's first three years, 2012-2014, indicate that the project has so far been delivered according to its planned budget. To December 2014, overall project expenditure has deviated from the planned budget by only minus 0.2%²³ suggesting high quality of the initial budgeting process, as well as efficient ongoing financial planning and management.²⁴

The major part of the deviation from the project's planned budget is attributable to a very high initial over-estimation (+73%) of annual audit costs, and careful management of operations costs, whose main sub-items are the travel costs of project staff (60.6% of planned budget) and the communication and other recurrent costs of project staff (24% of planned budget). It appears that under-spending within these two budget lines have enabled the project to exceed planned expenditure moderately on project events and the salaries of project staff.

Assessing whether the project has offered value for money is complicated, and inevitably involves resort to subjective value judgements. 46.2% of the planned budget has been allocated to training and dialogue activities with the project participants involved in the PWI, TGT projects, and ProFests. Over the period 2012-2014 a total of 51.9% of the project expenditure has been spent on these activities. This means that approximately 50% of all project expenditure is spent on project management and administration. This is a very high percentage of resources that does not benefit project participants directly. To a large extent this reflects the high level of international travel and communication costs necessary to manage a project of this nature which involves the organising of events and various planning meetings in different countries. These costs are reasonable, as too are

²³ This figure is based on an adjustment to the planned budget, removing the 4.6% allowed for budget reserve which, under RfR's financing contract with Bread for the World, is for only for 'unforeseen expenditure and may only be utilized in exceptional cases.'

²⁴ See Annex 6 for an overall analysis of project budget and expenditure 2012-2014

the salaries for the project management team, which are modest by standards in the European Union. In addition, it is important to note that the full costs of management are not represented in project budgets and expenditure accounts. The three members of the management team work on part-time contracts (of between 50%-66%), but it is clear that all of them devote more time to the project than they are paid for. In addition, the costs of financial management and accounting, undertaken by YMCA Europe in the Czech Republic, is not covered by the RfR budget.

Although it is difficult to see how the slim management team could have delivered more with the time available to them, value for money would have been increased if the project had spent more resources on delivering outputs; that is, if the project had been able to organise more than two to three events per year.

Another way to assess value for money is to assess the overall expenditure per individual participating in the project. Based on overall project expenditure to December 2014 of Euro 356,959, and the number of project participants to February 2015 of 197, RfR has spent only Euro 1,812 per participant over a three-year period. When this is set against the project outcomes in terms of individual empowerment, the promotion of cross-border cooperation, and influence within national YMCAs, the RfR represents excellent value for money.

It is not possible to make a detailed cost analysis and comparison of individual events, but project accounts show that the cost per capita of each PWI, TGT project, and ProFest is Euro 909, Euro 703, and Euro 359, respectively. These amounts cover participation of up to five days including all costs related to accommodation, food, venue hire, participants' travel, and external trainers and facilitators. This perspective confirms the project's value for money.

It appears that the markedly lower per capita cost of the two ProFests owes much to the modest travel costs allowed to participants (most of whom were from the region) at Shushi and the organisation of the Prague ProFest under the auspices of YMCA Europe's international festival, Love2Live, which covered accommodation and other sundry expenses.

Despite the orientation of RfR II, and the PWI in particular, towards education and training, only limited resources have been expended on external expertise, which in the main has been provided in conjunction with project donors Bread for the World and the CoE. The project has been highly successful in accessing expertise and knowledge from among its participants (particularly PWI), the project team, and YMCA Europe more generally, for providing much of the input to its training content. This has been achieved without compromising the quality of training inputs and the participants' learning experience.²⁵

Considering the pan-European character of RfR II and the importance of bringing participants together physically across geographical and cultural space to facilitate mutual learning and inter-cultural dialogue, it is hard to see how the same results could have been produced at a lower overall cost.

2.2.3 Was the management structure of the project the most appropriate for ensuring the efficient coordination of project events?

Project management is carried out by the Project Management Team (PMT) composed of three YMCA staff members located in their respective home countries, Armenia, Georgia, and Romania.²⁶

²⁵ Project monitoring surveys and PWI reaction and learning evaluations show that RfR participants consistently rate the quality of training and workshop facilitation very highly.

²⁶ The Project Management Team comprises:

The team is responsible for the coordination of all project activities, including the planning and organising of the PWI and ProFests, administrating the project website, Facebook page and other electronic platforms, communication with all participating YMCAs and project participants, the monitoring and evaluation of the project, and all reporting internally to YMCA Europe as well as to the project donors. To do this it has the authority to take all the daily decisions required to ensure project implementation.

Financial management is a shared responsibility between the Project Coordinator and the YMCA Europe Finance Manager in Czech Republic. Bookkeeping is also carried out by the YMCA Europe's Finance Department.

Apart from at RfR events, the PMT now meets in person at only two YMCA Europe meetings each year, but is in close email and skype contact, holding weekly online conferences to coordinate the team members' individual functions. With project officers located at distance from each other, the system demands clear divisions of labour and the ability for each team member to work autonomously. Team communication is said to be rather time-consuming, but, teething problems at project start apart, the system appears to work well. Given the pan-European character of the project and the importance it places on digital media as a means for cross-border communication, the management structure is probably the most appropriate for effective coordination. The only practicable alternative would be to establish a project office in one location, which, despite the attraction of simplifying internal communication, would inevitably give the project a geographical bias contrary to its ethos of inclusivity and impartiality.

Detailed planning and the daily management of PWI sessions and ProFests as they happen is provided by larger, more inclusive bodies, the PWI Planning Team and the ProFest Steering Group. Since the first PWI event in Istanbul in October 2012, the PWI Planning Team has comprised the PMT's three members and two female PWI participants from Kosovo and England.²⁷ The inclusion of these two PWI participants has ensured a high degree of participant involvement in the direction of the PWI and its content and also provided a degree of gender balance to the team.

The ProFest Steering Group is convened afresh ahead of each ProFest. It includes the three PMT members and the leaders of the host national organisations and the main sending organisations. Thus, for example, members of the Steering Group for the upcoming ProFest in Georgia in July 2015 include national leaders from the Caucasus countries, Russia, Ukraine and the USA.

Post-event monitoring surveys, while rarely polling participants on the management and organisation of events, suggest a high degree of satisfaction among all RfR participants regarding the coordination of events. This was confirmed by those responding to the evaluation questionnaire. 100% of respondents agreed (55.8% strongly agreed; 44.2% agreed) with the statement 'project events were well organised.' The survey respondents also confirmed their overwhelming

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1. Project Coordinator (YMCA Europe Executive Secretary) on a 2/3 time contract.
 2. Project Assistant with particular responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation (YMCA Georgia Programme Director) on a 50% time contract.
 3. Project Assistant with particular responsibility for internet and electronic communications in the project (YMCA Europe officer) on a 50% time contract.

²⁷ In the project's first year the PWI Planning Team included only YMCA Europe staff members from five countries and the Secretary General of RfR's Turkey partner, the Yücel Cultural Foundation. Among these was YMCA Europe Secretary General who is otherwise included in the project as overseer to the Project Coordinator and the PMT. This Planning Team was reformed mainly because it was too large for effective management.

satisfaction with event planning when indicating their approval of the locations chosen for each event (98.0%) and the quality of their facilitation and the expert guidance given (98.0).²⁸

2.2.4 To what extent did project management and governance structures enable appropriate, timely, decision-making?

Internal governance is provided, firstly, in the person of YMCA Europe's Secretary General, who 'signs off' on audit reports and oversees project implementation by maintaining regular contact with the Project Coordinator and the PMT. The Secretary General reports to YMCA Europe's Executive Committee,²⁹ which fulfils the role of ultimate monitor, ensuring internal probity and accountability for the use of resources. Although the Executive Committee is said to have the opportunity to provide input to the strategic direction of RfR II at an annual meeting at the beginning of each year, the way the system is described implies that, in the absence of a project steering committee, strategic decision making within RfR is undertaken by the Secretary General and Project Coordinator.³⁰ This arrangement is informal and as there are no official minutes from meetings between the Secretary General and the Project Coordinator, it is not possible to comment on the quality of the decision-making process. However, from the point of view of good practice with regard to inclusive participation in decision making and control against possible conflicts of interest, the absence of a voluntary steering committee whose members are not professionally dependent on YMCA Europe and who represent the full range of stakeholder interests in the project, is a significant shortfall. Despite the obvious logistical challenges of convening a steering committee for such a geographically wide-ranging project, any extension to RfR II should give serious consideration to introducing some form of volunteer and broader-based governance structure.

At the level of project delivery, the management structures (described above in section 2.2.3) have proved an effective means for ensuring high quality planning and decision making. The evaluation questionnaire asked RfR participants to respond to the statement that 'decisions taken by project management were appropriate, timely, and clearly communicated. All but one respondent out of 51, or 98% agreed with the statement (58.8% strongly agreed; 39.2% agreed). In addition to the formal inclusion of representative participants into the event planning teams, the RfR has been meticulous in consulting regularly with all participants and responding to their requests and interests. Gathering suggestions from participants for improvements to the content and organisation of events has been a key element of all post-event evaluations and online surveys. During events, all participants have had the opportunity to provide constructive feedback on a daily basis to the event planning teams to enable appropriate ongoing adaptations³¹ to workshop agendas and methods.³¹ The evaluation questionnaire showed 100% approval rating among respondents regarding the project management's efforts to consult with participants and incorporate their views and suggestions when planning and organising events.³²

²⁸ See Annex 8 RfR External Evaluation and Impact Assessment Questionnaire

²⁹ The Secretary General is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee

³⁰ Interview with Juan Simoes Inglesias, 28.01.15; Vardan Hambardzumyan, 27.05.15

³¹ All events have organised participants into nationally mixed Home Groups which have introduced the practice of cooperation between members of different national organisations, and also provided opportunities for participants to facilitate workshop sessions. See the project proposal p.13.

³² See Annex 8, External Evaluation and Impact Assessment Questionnaire, qu.13

2.2.5 How have project management and governance structures facilitated transparent use of resources and ensured accountability to donors and participants?

The main instrument of accountability to donors has been a six-monthly external audit of project finances, as required by the project's main donor Bread for the World. Audits are signed off by the YMCA Europe Secretary General. They clearly ensure that probity is maintained in project management and that the use of resources is in accordance with project plans and donor agreements. Financial accountability to Bread for the World is strengthened by the preparation by YMCA Europe's Finance Department of detailed financial reports every six months, with accompanying narrative Progress Reports from the PMT. Regular auditing of project finances is a standard requirement by many donors, but given the modest size of the overall project budget (with total annual expenditure of around Euro 120,000 – 130,000), Bread for the World's strict reporting rules, and the considerable administrative effort demanded of the financial management in assisting external auditors to prepare each report, it would seem that the requirement for six-monthly audits is somewhat excessive.

Bread for the World has also contributed directly to RfR's accountability by undertaking regular visits to project and the South Caucasus project region, as well as providing capacity-building assistance to project management staff for administration in the form of trainings and opportunities to attend conferences.

Financial information is not made public and is not passed on downwards to participants, so in the absence of a project steering committee, the financial accountability of RfR towards participating organisations and individuals is rather weak. On the other hand, accountability downwards for the *specific use and distribution* of resources in project activities and events is to a high standard. This is facilitated by the project's inclusive structures for planning events, regular and clear narrative reporting and feedback on all events (posted on the project website), and the inclusion of questions relating to the quality and appropriateness of activities in all post-event participant surveys.

2.2.6 How has the project monitoring and evaluation system worked?

Officially, the project Logframe provides the basis for the monitoring and evaluation of RfR II. It is oriented towards the measurement of the project's outcomes and how these contribute to desired impact. As already outlined in section 2.1.4, the logframe's lack of clarity and weakly specified indicators means that it is difficult to use it effectively as a tool for the management of monitoring and evaluation. Project staff stated that they had not used the Logframe to this purpose,³³ even though the funding contract with donor Bread for the World requires RfR to report against the indicators stated in the Logframe.

In place of collecting data against indicators of the project's outcomes and impact, project monitoring concentrates on evaluating the effectiveness of each PWI session and ProFest in terms of their design and organisation, as well as their learning outcomes among participants. This is done by carrying out pre-event surveys of participants' expectations, immediate end-of-event evaluations, and follow-up online surveys of participants one month after each event. This system is based upon Kirkpatrick's model for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of training,³⁴ according to its four levels of change: reaction, learning, behaviour, results. Potentially, Kirkpatrick's model offers an elegant framework for measuring the changes in participants' attitudes and behaviour, as well as

³³ Interview with Rezi Shavladze 28.01.15

³⁴ See <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/kirkpatrick.htm>

impact in the project's sending organisations suggested by the project's rationale according to the theories of 'individual change' and 'healthy relationships and connections' (see above section 2.1.2).

During the initial PWI session in Istanbul, 2012, a workshop on assessing change, led by the evaluator of RfR I, Bruce Britton, resulted in the participants designing a four-level model framework and timeline for the evaluation of effect and impact of the Istanbul PWI session. In addition to reaction evaluation questions and a post-event survey, the framework suggested a range of tools and questions to assess behaviour change six months after the event, and impact at a later date further down the line. On conclusion of the PWI session, it appears that the intention within the project management was to adapt the model framework to establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the whole project.³⁵ In the event, the model framework has not been implemented beyond Kirkpatrick's first two levels of reaction and learning. While monitoring at these levels has been rigorous and consistent, the system has not produced the data required to track the project's achievements and to manage for results.

- As monitoring exercises focused solely on assessing the effects of each RfR event individually, assessing the cumulative effects of the project has not been possible.
- There is insufficient consistency between the questions asked across each post-event survey to enable analysis of aggregated data.
- Monitoring has focused solely on individual change, as perceived by event participants. Although a baseline assessment was carried out of participating YMCAs and sending organisations in the Caucasus, Balkans, Russia and Turkey, with the intention of measuring their organisational capacities and their readiness to engage in peace-building activities, no follow-up monitoring exercises have been carried out to assess possible effect of the project on the organisations.
- Post-event online questionnaires, posted one month after each event are described as learning evaluations. However, in general, questions have been phrased in such a way that they do not 'test' new knowledge, skills, or attitudes. There is no evidence available suggesting that pre-event surveys have included measurement of baseline values of participants' skills and knowledge, or that learning objectives have been identified in events against which questions could be set in post-event questionnaires.
- Changes in participants' behaviour have not been consistently tested. Six months after the Istanbul PWI session, participants were asked to respond to an online 'post-event behaviour evaluation.' Although the questionnaire's results provide initial indications of how participants had started to use what they had learnt in Istanbul, the project staff said that the exercise was not repeated as they were not satisfied with the results.³⁶ It is challenging to design questionnaires to measure qualitative change such as behaviour which will yield clear data that can be analysed with confidence. There is also the danger in online monitoring that too many questionnaires lead to weakened response from participants. These obstacles could have been overcome, in the PWI at least, by making participatory exercises to evaluate individual change a standard PWI activity.

2.3 Effectiveness

2.3.1 To what extent has the project achieved its expected outcomes?

Expected outcomes are set out in the evaluation following evaluation questions 2.3.2 – 2.3.6. The main evidence for assessing the expected outcomes includes participants' responses to the evaluation questionnaire, peer-led participant interviews, and testimonials of personal change by

³⁵ Interview with Rezi Shavladze, 25.05.15

³⁶ Interview with Rezi Shavladze 25.05.15

those attending the PWI Reunion. This evidence is heavily biased towards those who have participated in the PWI in general, and the PWI Reunion in particular. Of the 52 who responded to the questionnaire, 20 attended the PWI Reunion, while only 11 participated in only ProFests and a further 10 participated only in TGT projects.

2.3.2 Did the project promote stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in targeted regions?

As noted earlier (section 2.1.4), it is not clear exactly what youth activism means and how it is interpreted within the project. To assess the outcome the evaluation concentrates on identifying evidence against the indicators of change in attitude and behaviour (both unspecified) which were reported on by the project to the donor Bread for the World.

a. Attitude change

Responses to the evaluation questionnaire indicate that a key outcome of RfR II has been positive change in the attitudes of project participants with regard to the values and messages of peace and reconciliation promoted by both RfR and YMCA. These responses are summarised below in Table 2.

TABLE 2 RfR Participant responses to the question: How has the RfR influenced your attitudes?

Answer Options	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	A lot	Response Count
I have become more tolerant of others	1	8	23	20	52
I have become more understanding of other people's points of view	0	2	25	24	51
I see that I can make a positive contribution to resolving conflicts	0	4	28	19	51
I have a more critical view of mass media coverage of conflict situations	1	12	22	16	51
I am more trusting of people from other cultures	1	4	34	11	50
I am more thoughtful and self-aware	0	4	31	16	51
I value friendship more	1	6	16	27	50
I am more hopeful that conflicts can be resolved in positive and peaceful ways	0	4	24	23	51
I am less likely to accept cultural stereotypes without first thinking about what they mean	0	5	24	21	50
I have greater respect for other people and their cultures	0	1	15	35	51
I am more aware of how other people might perceive me and my own culture	0	4	25	22	51
I find it easier to discuss problems and difficult situations in a friendly and constructive way	0	3	21	27	51

The positive change in the attitudes of project participants may be summarised as:

1. Increased tolerance and acceptance of difference, as well as greater readiness to engage with others from different and possibly antagonistic cultures.
2. Heightened self-awareness arising out of a strengthened ability, or willingness both to challenge personal preconceptions and beliefs and to adopt a critical and reflective stance towards received opinion and culturally accepted truths.
3. More cooperative, outgoing and constructive dispositions characterised by increased appreciation of friendship and the value of open dialogue to exchange views and overcome perceived differences or disagreements.

Testimonials from the participants of the PWI Reunion supported these questionnaire results. Many mentioned directly their increased tolerance, a new ability now to go beyond cultural stereotypes and to overcome previously held prejudices concerning peoples and cultures commonly perceived as antagonistic to their own. 13 of the 25 testimonials reviewed referred to how RfR has led participants to be more open-minded in general and more specifically to be more understanding of those from 'enemy' states or from societies which are conflict-affected. A corollary in many PWI participants is the acceptance of a responsibility beyond oneself and an interest or motivation to be involved in actions to promote peace and better relations with other young people from different cultures.

In their testimonials participants attributed their attitude change to iterated and cumulative opportunities in the PWI (and the associated TGT projects) for discussion, telling stories, shared learning, joint planning, socialising and travel with so many fellow participants from different cultures. Detailed analysis, however, of responses to the evaluation questionnaire suggests that RfR II has achieved these attitude changes in participants irrespective of how many or which kinds of project events participants were involved in.³⁷

b. Behaviour change

The evaluation assumes a strong causal relationship between attitude change and changes in participants' behaviour. It also assumes that any learning in terms of new knowledge and skills acquired by the participants from their involvement in RfR II will also be a significant factor in behaviour change. Evaluation enquiries in the questionnaire and participant-led interviews sought to understand the nature and extent of participants' learning and then to gauge behaviour change by asking participants to what extent and how they were putting their learning into practice.

Questionnaire responses suggest that RfR's events have produced significant learning outcomes for all its participants. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate which new skills and learning they had acquired as a result of their participation in RfR by selecting from a list of 12 capacity and learning areas. Their responses are summarised below in Table 3.

³⁷ Of the 20 respondents who have attended only one RfR event, 16 gave answers that broadly reflected the distribution of answers from the whole sample. Three gave significantly more negative responses, and one gave a significantly more positive response.

TABLE 3 RfR Participant responses to the question: Which of the following skills and new learning have you gained from RfR

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Conflict context analysis	51.9%	27
Conflict sensitive approaches (Do No Harm)	48.1%	25
Sharing feelings, opinions, and ideas with others in a constructive way	78.8%	41
Team-building	80.8%	42
Understanding of peace-building and reconciliation	71.2%	37
Inter-culturalism and cross-cultural dialogue	65.4%	34
Evaluating change	36.5%	19
Use of social media	42.3%	22
Digital activism	48.1%	25
Planning events and peace-building actions	48.1%	25
Risk assessment	19.2%	10
Leadership	59.6%	31

Participants perceive their learning to be highest in the areas of developing constructive interpersonal communications and relationship building ('sharing...' & 'teambuilding') and understanding of peace-building and reconciliation. This is logical as these three areas of learning embody the overall RfR approach and the values which underpin the approach. Lower scores for other areas of learning, particularly in specific skills, such as conflict analysis, or planning peace-building actions, and approaches, such as Do No Harm, and digital activism are to be expected, as these were only dealt with in any detail in specific PWI sessions.

Interviews confirmed that PWI graduates believed they have achieved significant learning outcomes. On average, each interviewee identified 3 – 6 areas of learning. Areas where there was a high degree of agreement include: cultural understanding (8 responses), planning and project management skills (7 responses), Do No Harm approach to conflict (7 responses), and communication and listening skills (9 responses). In addition, 5 respondents indicated learning in using social media and internet technologies more generally. 5 respondents identified teamwork.

With reference to eight aspects of their daily lives and their activity in the YMCA, the evaluation questionnaire also asked participants how useful they found their new learning. Answers to these questions are taken to be proxy indicators of behavioural change. The positive questionnaire responses³⁸ suggest that RfR participants believe the project has motivated them to be more communicative both inside and outside their immediate community and circle of friends, to take responsibility and initiative in life, to engage in peace building activities, and to be more active within their YMCAs. On the basis of the highest degree of agreement between participants in their responses, we can propose that behaviour change attributable to RfR II is most marked in three areas:

³⁸ See Annex 8, Question 11 for a summary of responses

1. Participants are actively seeking and making new friends outside their community (62.75% responses)
2. Participants are getting involved in peace-building activities (56.86%)
3. Participants are more likely to be leading projects and events, presumably in their local or national YMCAs (52.94%).

Participant-led interviews probed how PWI graduates are applying their RfR learning in an open-ended way. The majority of interviewees suggested that they applied their RfR learning in both their personal lives and in YMCA activities. Understandably YMCA staff members and YMCA volunteers emphasise different aspects of their behavioural change. Volunteers pointed to change in their personal behaviours which included cultivating open-mindedness and understanding of others when communicating with family and friends, as well as promoting peace in the community. Most staff members noted how they applied their learning in their local or national YMCAs. They did this in one of three ways:

1. Incorporating peace-building techniques into YMCA work in other fields, such as work with children and teenagers;
2. Training other staff in peace-building methods and approaches
3. Developing new projects in cooperation with other YMCAs, nationally or internationally, but not necessarily on the theme of peace and reconciliation.

2.3.3 Do the youth leaders trained continue to act for change in their sending organisations and respective communities (peace building, cross-border dialogue)?

This outcome area is assumed to refer solely to those involved in the PWI who were identified as potential 'opinion leaders' by their sending organisations. It is interpreted to mean observable change in the behaviour of PWI participants in terms of their active engagement and leadership of peace building actions within their communities and their sending organisations, as well as engaging in and promoting cross-border and inter-cultural dialogue within the RfR and between organisations participating in the RfR. The following have been identified as indicators of this outcome:

- Organising and leading TGT projects;
- Planning follow-on actions to the TGT projects;
- Promoting peace building and RfR's peace building methods and approach within participants' own organisations;
- Undertaking concrete actions in one's own community to promote peace and reconciliation;
- Engaging in cross-border dialogue and promoting peace building to a wider audience by use of social media and ICTs (digital activism).

PWI participants have been active in leading cross-border dialogue and promoting peace within the framework of TGT projects. They have taken concrete steps at the PWI Reunion to maintain and extend this activity. Through the TGT planning and implementation process, PWI participants have taken a lead in acting for change in their sending organisations by establishing the basis for a range of bilateral institutional cross-border collaborations between participating organisations. Outside the structured opportunities provided by PWI sessions and the TGT projects, however, the PWI participants have shown only a limited commitment to maintain cross-border dialogue and to promote peace in their own communities.

a. Organising and leading TGT projects

In 2014, PWI participants successfully implemented three TGT projects, the overall broad aim of which was to put PWI learning in peace building, inter-cultural dialogue and project planning into

practice in the context of RfR II's original focus areas of the South Caucasus, the Balkans and Turkey. They were also intended to provide the opportunity for local and national YMCAs (and the Turkish project partner) to develop cooperative relationships within which to promote further peace building activities and cross-border dialogue in and beyond RfR II.

The three TGT projects, each comprising a full week's activities in the host countries of Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey, and Kosovo, included the participation of 71 organisation members drawn from a total of 20 countries. Although this overall number is relatively small when set against the effort expended in staging the projects,³⁹ the TGT projects clearly extended the reach of RfR and its message of peace and reconciliation within participating organisations. 49, or 69% of TGT participants were outside the PWI (and so not involved in the planning process), with 13 having previously attended only one or both ProFests and 36 participants completely new to the RfR.⁴⁰

All stages of the planning of the projects, including defining the objectives, designing an appropriate agenda of activities, identifying participants and any external assistance required, was carried out by PWI participants. RfR project management staff were on hand to provide administrative 'back-up' only. While the administration in each country was carried out by the host organisation, leadership and facilitation of TGT activities was shared by members of each TGT planning team. A summary of each project is given in Annex 10.

A fourth project planned to take place in Russia between members of Russian and Georgian YMCA's did not come about owing to administrative obstruction over the issuing of visas to the Georgian participants.

b. Planning follow-on actions to the TGT projects

TGT project post-event evaluation questionnaires indicated a strong demand among participants to extend the cross-border cooperation established in each team, as well as to replicate the TGT approach in other contexts. After presenting the results of their respective projects at the PWI Reunion, all four TGT teams reconvened in workshop to plan follow-on actions. The Russia-Georgia team established a proposal for adapting their original plan to the framework of the project's third ProFest, planned to take place in July 2015. In doing so, the TGT team intend to broaden the scope of inter-cultural dialogue to embrace not only Armenia in the Caucasus, but also the Ukraine, from which participants were included in the PWI for the first time at Budapest.

All three of the other TGT's developed outlines of project extensions which aim to broaden participation in cross-border dialogue, reach new and larger audiences with the message of peace, and address the challenge posed by limited financial resources by means of creative use of social media and ICTs for communication.

c. Promoting peace building and RfR's peace building methods and approach within participants' own organisations

Evidence here relating to action strictly within participants' own organisations is relatively sparse and is essentially the same as that presented above in section 2.3.2 with regard to how RfR

³⁹ The total cost of planning and implementing TGT projects is recorded at a little over Euro 49,900

⁴⁰ Of 19 participants of the Nagorno Karabakh study visit, nine (all from Karabakh) had previously participated only in RfR ProFests and three (Karabakh, Belarus, and Czech Republic) had no prior participation in RfR. Of the 18 participants of the Armenia-Turkey TGT project, four (all Armenians) had previously participated only in RfR ProFests and ten (all Turkish) had had no prior participation in RfR. Of 34 participants of the Kosovo Reunion, 23 from ten countries (including six Balkan countries) had no prior participation in RfR

participants report how they have applied the project's learning. A close reading of PWI interview responses suggests that a majority of PWI participants who are staff members have taken efforts to either integrate the values and messages of peace into all their work, especially with children and youth, or have applied individual RfR tools and methods for a specific purpose, such as to undertake conflict sensitive planning, or to evaluate change.

Interview responses and testimonials of personal change strongly indicate that PWI participants are also promoting peace-building and cross-border cooperation in their organisations by developing a range of bilateral institutional relationships with other participating organisations, building on and extending the range of the collaborations already established in the PWI, particularly those emerging from the TGT projects:

- YMCA Ireland and YMCA Kosovo have developed a working relationship for organising youth exchanges and the sharing of skills, knowledge and experiences;
- YMCA Serbia has established cooperation and dialogue with YMCA Kosovo. Plans are being made for YMCA Kosovo to deliver leadership training to staff and volunteers in YMCA Serbia;
- YMCA Serbia reports planned future cooperation with YMCAs from Macedonia and Romania
- YMCA Kosovo is in the process of building partnerships with YMCAs in Bulgaria and Albania;
- YMCA Ukraine's inclusion in the PWI for the first time at the Budapest Reunion has already led to an agreement to cooperate on a peace-building training project in Ukraine with YMCA Armenia;
- Turkish project partner Yücel Cultural Foundation reports that it is further developing the direct cooperation with YMCAs established in RfR, both from an institutional point of view and between young people as individuals;
- Russia and Georgia have extended their cooperation in the planning of their TGT project into plans for a visit from YMCA Georgia to Russia in early 2016.

This information has been given mainly from those participants who are staff members, particularly those with authority in their organisations. There are indications in the data that volunteers have found it more difficult to influence events and practice in their organisations, although only one respondent explicitly said that her position as a volunteer made it difficult to influence the planning and decision-making process in her organisation.

d. Undertaking concrete actions in one's own community to promote peace and reconciliation

Although a number of PWI participants talk of engaging young people in their communities in YMCA actions, there is very little evidence to suggest that PWI participants have carried out organised peace building activities in their communities. The project proposal envisaged that PWI training would equip participants with the tools and confidence to promote the message of peace directly in their own communities. As a first step towards this it was expected that participants attending the first PWI session in Istanbul (October 2012) would carry out trainings in the Do No Harm approach in their local communities on the basis of the training and guidance they themselves had received. These trainings were not carried out by any of the PWI participants and monitoring records suggest that few efforts have been made subsequently by the participants to promote RfR's message locally in any organised manner.

A number of reasons have been put forward for this initial inertia. Too many participants at Istanbul (37), many of whom did not continue with the course, and an over-demanding training schedule left participants unsure of their learning and what was expected of them. In addition, the combination of often low organisational capacity in YMCA's from the Caucasus and Balkans, combined with the fact that their local post-conflict or conflict-affected societies typified by continuing internal tensions

concerning ethnic and religious identities, possibly makes the promotion of peace at the community level more challenging and sometimes more risky than cross-border cooperation under the auspices and direct support of the RfR.

e. Engaging in cross-border dialogue and promoting peace building to a wider audience by use of social media and internet technologies (digital activism)

Consistent with the above is the finding that PWI participants' use of social media and internet technologies as a means to promote peace within and beyond the confines of the project and as tools for cross-border dialogue and inter-cultural learning has been disappointing. The project has invested considerable effort in promoting the concept of digital activism in the expectation that project participants, particularly PWI participants, would seek to multiply the effect of RfR by regularly posting blogs, comment, pictures, and videos of their engagement at RfR events and their work within their local organisations and communities on the project's Facebook page and website. As it was conceived, digital activism was to have filled the gap and created the link between individual RfR events, as well as between the PWI participants and those involved in only the ProFests. In a sense, it was expected that digital activism would be the 'space' where the greatest quantity of project activity would take place and where many of its expected outcomes in terms of cross-border dialogue and raising greater support for project's message of peace and reconciliation would be realised. The frequency and type of engagement with digital communication in the project expected of participants has not taken place.

Although they comment that it is difficult to follow how project participants communicate with tools such as Facebook, project management express dissatisfaction with what they describe as the generally rather half-hearted, irregular, and sometimes irrelevant use by participants of the project's digital platforms, as well as the lack of apparent interaction between participants and followers generated by the Facebook page.⁴¹ The statistics concerning visits to, and use of the project's digital platforms point to the limited effect of digital activism in multiplying the project's message. While the RfR Facebook page is accessed considerably more frequently than the project website, it has gained only a very modest total of around 1,700 followers in over three years. Most of these followers are believed to be members of the participating organisations. In the 28 days up to 1 June 2015, the number of people engaging with the Facebook page was under 200 in total (including 46 from Armenia, 46 from Serbia, 16 from Russia, 12 from UK, and 10 from Georgia).⁴² These are very limited numbers indicating a very small likely effect of RfR outside the project.

Asked how digital platforms have affected their involvement in RfR, PWI participants gave a wide range of responses which suggests that, overall, digital activism has contributed to their communication with other participants in the project, stimulated greater use of internet technologies in their personal lives and within their own YMCAs, and also contributed to their sense of responsibility for and ownership of the project.⁴³

There is a feeling within the project management that the project's multiplying effect would have been greater if participants' had shown greater personal commitment to the project outside of its

⁴¹ Project management note that direct communication between participants is most likely to occur through email or personal Facebook pages. This is confirmed by responses to the evaluation questionnaire which indicate that RfR II participants are most likely to use their personal Facebook pages and email, in that order, to communicate with other participants (see Annex 8, Qu. 12).

⁴² Facebook user statistics forwarded by PMT.

⁴³ Of particular note is the use of internet technologies in the implementation of the TGT projects. The projects documented their activities and promoted their specific visions and messages by posting online on a variety of platforms a wide range of personal and group blogs, videos, and photographs.

scheduled events. This could have been more likely if there had been more continuity of content and participation between the PWI and ProFests, and if more than four PWI sessions had been organised at more frequent intervals over the project's four years. The project management is also of the opinion that greater care in establishing selection criteria for PWI participants at project start would have ensured that only those with the time and motivation necessary for continuous dedication to the project's objectives would have been selected.⁴⁴

On the other hand, the modest success of digital activism perhaps only illustrates that the project's expectations were over ambitious. With its loosely defined target audience widely dispersed geographically and culturally, its reliance on English as the only language of communication, and its very general message lacking specific social, political, or geographical focus, it is not clear how the project could have gathered greater support and momentum beyond existing YMCA networks.

2.3.4 Did RfR improve mutual trust and understanding between young people involved?

Participants at the PWI Reunion identified 'personal development and common understanding among [RfR] participants' as one of six project outcomes. This suggests that RfR II in general, but the PWI in particular, has stimulated mutual trust among its participants. Observation of the interaction between Reunion participants during both the workshop's various group evaluation and planning exercises and its social and cultural activities, confirms the high degree of trust between all its participants.

Testimonials of personal change, as well as participant-led interviews indicate that for some participation in PWI was initially challenging, as they were acutely aware that they would be asked to work closely with other young people from countries or cultures sharing a history of conflict or antipathy with their own. The evaluation data provide clear evidence that PWI participants have not only overcome any initial fears they may have had, but they feel that they have arrived at a clearer understanding of the realities of each other's lives and have established friendships with fellow participants from a wide range of countries, including many across previously perceived lines of conflict.

A key factor in the project's effect of building trust and mutual understanding among participants has been the TGT projects, both their planning in and between the PWI sessions in Yerevan (June 2013) and Strasbourg (December 2013), and their implementation. If the TGT planning process has been significant in developing trust between PWI participants, project implementation in Nagorno Karabakh, Turkey, and Kosovo was a means of testing this trust outside the safety of the PWI workshop environment. Implementation provided participants the opportunity to not only deepen their mutual understanding, but also to widen the circle of trust through the inclusion of participants new to the PWI and even RfR. TGT projects have increased cultural understanding and engendered feelings of empathy between participants from neighbouring and distant cultures. Friendships have been forged and a number of participants expressed the sentiment of no longer feeling alone, whether as an individual, or as a representative of an isolated region, such as Karabakh.

⁴⁴ PWI participants were selected by participating organisations according to the following loosely formulated criteria: Ability to speak English; stated commitment to attend all PWI sessions; openness to other cultural backgrounds and being prepared to work 'outside one's comfort zone;' leadership qualities, including readiness to motivate others and plan and lead events.

Box 1. PWI participants on mutual trust

With the knowledge comes respect and afterwards we with our own hands created trust, mutual understanding, communication, sharing we created the new community and atmosphere in it

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Russia

I have good friends in Turkey, who are really good guys who accept us as we are, people who are open-minded and ready to listen, talk, understand and have nothing to do with politics

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Armenia

I remember the touching farewell in Istanbul, when I really didn't want to let go of the Turkish participants.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant on TGT project, Armenia

[RfR] gave it to me the most beautiful thing - now we communicate with my "enemies". This project has melted the ice between the two sides.

Evaluation interview, PWI participant, Armenia

2.3.5 Do the targeted YMCAs maintain youth civil engagement initiatives for conflict affected communities and / or achieve active participation in regional or cross-border civil society peace dialogue platforms?

With the exception of the presentation at the first PWI session in Istanbul of a case study of aid to Roma IDPs according to Do No Harm principles, the project has not included any activities of relevance to this two-part outcome area. There is no evidence of any progress towards its achievement.

The RfR I EA makes clear that the participating YMCAs from the Caucasus were responding to the conflict in the region by working with refugees and IDPs and that strengthening this work was one of the project's aims. The RfR II project document identifies 'young men and women of refugee /IDP status or origin, as well as war children'⁴⁵with the apparent similar objective of strengthening local and national and local YMCAs to carry out this work. As it has been executed, RfR II has provided no inputs to participating YMCA's to facilitate or strengthen their capacities to do this. Monitoring reports note that YMCA Armenia has been organising camps for children of refugee families from Syria. This is only information available to the evaluation confirming or otherwise whether YMCAs in the Caucasus or Balkans are carrying out initiatives for such conflict-affected communities.

The RfR II project proposal places considerable emphasis on the assumed importance of civil society, especially youth civil society, as a driver of conflict transformation on the basis of its potential to facilitate inter-ethnic and cross-border dialogue.⁴⁶ It establishes the 'active participation of YMCAs into CS peace dialogue platforms at local, national or regional levels' as one of the project's key 'targets.'⁴⁷ However, the project has been delivered totally within the confines of the YMCA movement in Europe (in partnership with Yücel Cultural Foundation in Turkey) and without

⁴⁵ RfR II project document, p.7

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.2,3,4,5,& 6

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.7

cooperation, reference to, or even contact with wider civil society, whether in the form of individual CSOs at the national level, or civil society youth or peace networks nationally or internationally.

2.3.6 What have been the unintended outcomes of the project?

- PWI participants from Albania have formally founded the first YMCA in the country
- PWI participants from Cyprus have taken the decision to establish the first YMCA in the country.

These events are reported by the participants as direct outcomes of the project.

2.3.7 How have participants' lives been changed by the project?

Involvement in RfR has been a transformational experience for many of its participants, particularly those who have followed the PWI. Many participants talk of RfR II as a 'life-changing experience' that has impacted positively on the way they view the world, their sense of self, their relationships with other people, their confidence to act, and their engagement with and commitment to the YMCA movement.

a. Participants' worldview

The attitudinal change that the project has brought about in so many of its participants is often summarised in ways that suggests a radical alteration in the way participants understand the world, see themselves and how they interact with others around them. While some stress that their perceptions have been altered by their exposure to other cultures and stories about how others experience life, including violent conflict and its aftermath, others hint at an internal transformation involving a more fundamental shift in values and disposition towards others. Common to these testimonials is their attestation of increased tolerance, acceptance, and respect for others, and new-found freedom from prejudice and stereotypes.

Box 2 PWI participants on their worldviews

[RfR] changed the way I perceive life in general, it broke barriers and prejudices...and now I am more empathetic towards young people and know that we are all humans who have and share the same issues.

Evaluation interview, PWI participant, Turkey

[RfR] made me look at the world from a different point of view, assuming how global it actually is and how many things we can do together to change it for the better.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Bulgaria

This journey has changed my way of life, the way I look at life, it made me a human with a vision, a human who cares, a human who gives, even if it is a little.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, England

My mind is changed. I have learned that I don't have to judge people when I see them the first time. I learned that I have to listen to both sides of the conflict.

Evaluation interview, PWI participant, Armenia

b. Empowerment and self-confidence

Many participants talk of this sense of empowerment, or power within, as a process of personal growth or development, or as a 'journey' towards greater maturity of thought, enhanced capacity to reflect and analyse critically, and mastery of a range of practical and theoretical tools and skills.

For some, however, the empowerment achieved through RfR II is described almost as a process of psychological integration, of coming to terms with one's being and identity, and of internal healing and building of self-esteem.

Box 3. PWI participants on empowerment and self-belief

I was a bedevilled person, who didn't know on which way of life [...] to continue walking. I didn't believe in myself. For now, RfR makes me the person who knows what is the most important thing in my life – PEACE!....RfR pushed me to get my life back and claim it as mine again.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Georgia

[RfR] got me in touch with myself and helped me let go of my past aggressiveness, making me a new person.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, England

From my side I can surely tell that I grew up with the "roots". It happened just on time. That was in general the time of personal growth, improvement, personal change and, for sure, participation (or better, living and growing together) with RfR somehow created my personal knowledge is the treasure.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Russia

Back home, I can't say that I was changed but, definitely something was different on me. I could feel it, it was peace, an inner peace, a feeling that you can't explain something huge, I think it was from the energy that the group was spreading.

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Kosovo

A unifying theme in the stories of personal change is a captivating sense of hope and optimism for the future based upon self-belief, a commitment to RfR's vision of peace, and conviction in the collective power of young people to bring about change.

Box 4. Examples of PWI participants' expressions of hope

Another peace is possible. Peace begins with us, YOU and ME working together

Testimonial of personal change, PWI participant, Kosovo

We CAN work together to continue to build peace locally and globally and empower youth (and others!) to share the vision

Post-event testimonial, Istanbul PWI participant, Canada

I understand the young people from conflict regions much better and believe that a peaceful future is in our hands

Post-event testimonial, Bridges for the Future TGT project participant, Serbia

c. Friendships and personal relationships

RfR participants, including many of those involved only in ProFests and TGT projects, stress how their lives have been enriched through new friendships spanning cultural and geographical space that they have established through the project. For those from the Caucasus, Balkans, and Turkey, there is added significance in the fact that new friendships have often been made with those whom they have been conditioned to view as ‘enemies.’

In testimonials from PWI participants there is also considerable evidence suggesting that the personal change participants have undergone during the course of the project has impacted positively on the quality of their existing relationships, particularly with close family members. Participants feel they are now equipped to transcend political or ideological differences in order to communicate better and on a more fundamentally ‘human’ level. A number of participants assert that their personal growth and commitment to RfR’s values of peace and reconciliation has brought about positive reactions from parents and close friends in terms of the respect, support and love shown to them.

d. Commitment to YMCA

Significant numbers of PWI participants draw attention to how they now understand better what YMCA stands for internationally, the range of work it carries out throughout the world, especially with regard to peace-building, and the vastness of its global scope in terms of members and local and national organisations. This has helped them to understand the relevance of YMCA beyond the local level on which they are engaged in their everyday lives. The process has been inspiring, raising commitment to YMCA’s vision and values and increasing motivation to engage in YMCA’s work both nationally and internationally.

2.4 Impact

Impact measures the success of the project in contributing to the achievement of the overall project objective and the attainment of long-term and sustainable change, positive or negative, beyond the direct influence of the project. In short, the lasting difference to the original situation. Strictly speaking it is not possible to measure the impact of an intervention which is still in progress. Logically one would not expect impact to become apparent until considerably later, at which time it might be measured with an ex-post evaluation.

Considering the limited scope of this evaluation in terms of its reliance on the personal testimony of a relatively small sample of project participants to produce evidence of immediate outcomes, the challenge to assessing project impact is all the greater. However, the evidence already presented concerning project outcomes combined with further individual testimony in the evaluation data does enable a limited set of emerging impacts to be identified in the areas outlined in the evaluation ToR.

2.4.1 To what extent has the project contributed to the overall goal of a culture of peace that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region?

As discussed earlier in section 2.1.4, this objective is both unclear and extremely ambitious. There is no evidence of impact in this area. As project outcomes are only tangentially related to the objective, the project’s potential contribution to eventual impact is very low.

2.4.2 In what ways has the project impacted upon the YMCA as a Movement striving for peace and democracy?

a. The establishment of a regular pan-European YMCA Peace and Reconciliation knowledge sharing system

b. Active participation of YMCAs in CS peace dialogue platforms at local, national, regional levels.

Impact in this area is considered to be potential only at this stage. The project's undoubted success in promoting the values of peace and reconciliation throughout local and national YMCAs from 25 countries has created a sense of momentum within the participating organisations behind YMCA Europe's strategic programme in peace and democracy. Demand has been created in the project to extend and multiply the project's activities, as evidenced by the various cross-border institutional relationships between national YMCAs emerging from RfR II (see above section 2.3.3). Evaluation data also show that at the individual level there is considerable demand for a follow-on project to RfR II which would include extended participation and possibly new expert content in theory and practical methods. The PMT reports that publicity given to the project at YMCA Europe general meetings has raised considerable interest and firm requests for inclusion in the project from a number of national YMCAs, including Denmark, Germany, and Scotland.

All this suggests that RfR II provides a possible institutional structure, mechanism, or space within which:

1. YMCA's values of peace and democracy could be further promoted throughout the Movement in a coherent and consistent way;
2. Further and wider cross-border cooperation between more YMCAs, following RfR's now tried and tested methodology, could be facilitated;
3. The inclusivity of the Peace and Democracy programme and the Movement's cohesiveness could be strengthened. This could be achieved by increasing the numbers of countries represented in the project and integrating other peace work undertaken by national and local YMCAs by means of exchange of information, plans and lessons learnt.

In this way, RfR as an idea and structure could in the longer-term be developed into a regular pan-European YMCA Peace and Reconciliation knowledge sharing system envisaged in this question.

Information from PWI participants suggests that RfR II has strengthened YMCA as a movement for peace by producing a new generation of youth leaders committed to YMCA's vision who compose what is described as an informal network of friends and colleagues dedicated to pursuing peace-building.

As made clear in section 2.3.5 on RfR's engagement with civil society, there is no evidence of YMCAs actively participating in peace dialogue beyond their own memberships. Ultimately, lack of engagement with actors in the wider socio-political arena, particularly those who can influence the course of conflict, will leave YMCA unable to contribute to significant change with regard to peace and reconciliation.

2.4.3 In what ways has the project contributed to the building of the capacities of Youth NGOs to contribute to peace building, conflict transformation and inter-cultural dialogue?

The positive outcomes already noted in section 2.3.3 with regard to emerging cross-border cooperation between organisations and the successful results of the TGT projects suggest that participating organisations in RfR, particularly in the Caucasus and the Balkans, have significantly enhanced their capacity for undertaking peace work. Specifically RfR II:

- has provided an appropriate and easily understandable approach (Do No Harm) to the planning and implementing of peace-building activity;
- assisted organisational networking and communication skills, including the ability to make effective use of social media and internet technologies;
- raised the number of volunteers and staff members committed to peace work with relevant practical and theoretical knowledge;
- provided relevant information, particularly through the project's engagement with CoE, on funding opportunities for youth peace work.

How these capacity gains have influenced participating organisations is not completely clear, as formal assessment of project impact on organisational capacity is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Participating organisations vary considerably in their maturity, size, and levels of organisational capacity, with many in the Balkans, in particular, remaining at the early stages of their development. These differences will determine to a great degree any impact the project has had on each organisation. A general finding, however, is that there are clear indications that participating organisations are more active, particularly in engaging in international projects and they have either re-oriented their strategies towards greater engagement in peace-building or have strengthened existing strategies in this direction.⁴⁸

2.4.4 What other impacts has the project contributed to, intended or unintended, in the lives of participants, within youth CSOs, or on any other stakeholders.

Testimonials of personal change indicate that the project has been a major contributory factor to a variety of positive changes in the professional and personal lives of many of the PWI participants. A small number mention how they have reassessed what they expect from life and have set themselves new life goals. Two participants noted how their learning in RfR contributed significantly to their gaining new professional posts in YMCA World or their national movements. A further three stated that their formal responsibilities in the YMCA, whether as a staff member or a volunteer, had been enhanced. One participant talked about how his involvement in RfR had influenced his decision to re-engage with his local YMCA after a two-year hiatus. Another suggested her RfR 'journey' had contributed to major changes she had made to how she was planning her career in the longer-term.

The project has contributed to increased proficiency and confidence in the use of the English language.

One couple, recently married, met for the first time in the PWI.

Box 5. Example of project impact on RfR participants

I have had the best and happiest years of my life as a RfR participant

Evaluation interview, PWI participant, Nagorno-Karabakh

⁴⁸ See Annex 11 for brief summaries of project impact on selected participating organisations.

2.5 Sustainability

2.5.1 How likely is it that the project results and processes will continue after the project finishes?

Significant progress has been made towards ensuring that RfR's participating organisations will continue to promote peace-building and engage in cross-border cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue. The participation in the PWI of a large number of YMCA national secretaries and board members, and the increased engagement of other PWI participants (staff and volunteers) in their organisations should lead to the individual learning in peace work, project management, and leadership being integrated in national and local organisations.

Bilateral institutional relationships established in the project provide a basis for maintaining and extending dialogue and cross-border initiatives.

Remaining challenges to sustainability include:

- How to maintain the contact and communication across distance between participating organisations in the intervals between cross-border projects and YMCA events where organisations can meet in person.
- How the national organisations can mobilise sufficient resources to fund peacebuilding activities.
- How to facilitate broader cross-border collaborations including more than two organisations, building on the practice established in the TGT projects.

2.5.2 What measures have been taken by the project to ensure that structures, systems, relationships, and process endure?

The RfR approach is integrated fully into Europe YMCA's 2011-2016 strategic programme for Peace and Democracy, designated a 'signature' project. The YMCA Secretary General indicated that the approach is expected to remain at the centre of YMCAs programme for Peace and Democracy in the next strategic plan, 2016-2020.⁴⁹

Planning is underway within RfR and YMCA Europe for a third RfR project to consolidate and extend the achievements of RfR II.

The PWI Reunion established a framework for planning and implementing follow-on projects to the TGT projects.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Relevance

The project's aims, content and methods have been highly relevant to the interests and concerns of its youth participants, particularly those coming from conflict-affected or post-conflict countries.

The RfR II has also been highly relevant to the values, mission, and strategic priorities of YMCA Europe. It has provided a coherent framework for promoting peace-building and cross-border dialogue into the work of local and national YMCA organisations and across the YMCA Movement.

⁴⁹ Interview with Juan Simoes Inglesias, 28.01.15. The YMCA Europe Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is currently under discussion and is scheduled to be adopted at the 2016 General Assembly.

Project rationale, emerging from theories of ‘individual change’ and ‘healthy relationships and connections’ is, coherent, and consistent with the project’s intentions to

1. Strengthen young people’s capacities for conflict analysis, peace-building, leadership, mutual trust and inter-personal communication;
2. Stimulate inter-cultural dialogue and cross-border communication within the YMCA Movement;
3. Increase the capacities of local and national YMCAs to foster values of peace and reconciliation and increase inter-organisational cooperation across borders.

The PWI, with its associated TGT projects, was an appropriate mechanism for putting the rationale into practice. It has facilitated the participants’ sense of ownership of project outcomes.

Owing to a lack of communication in the project with other CSOs and civil society networks, either at the national or international level, the project has limited relevance to and potential impact on the wider socio-political context.

Formal project design, as articulated in the Logframe is weak. Objectives are over-ambitious and vaguely specified, and the linkages of cause and effect are not apparent, so that the design’s implicit theory of change is not plausible. In addition, indicators of success are neither specific nor rational measures of stated outputs or outcomes. Consequently, the project’s intentions regarding immediate outcomes or desired impact are not clear. The project has not been able to manage for results, and there is no consistent framework for monitoring and evaluating results.

The project has been inclusive in its approach to gender, religious and ethnic difference. It has consistently achieved a gender balance between participants and, given the small group of participants drawn from so many countries, there has been a reasonable number of non-Christian participants and members of ethnic minorities. However, there has been no discussion in the project’s content and activities of gender as a factor in conflict and peace-building.

The project has adapted positively and in a timely manner to political changes in the external context which either threaten or otherwise affect participating organisations, or demand a response from the project. This includes increased attention in the project to Nagorno-Karabakh and the inclusion of participants from Ukraine. The project will continue to face the challenge of how to maintain responsiveness to emerging threats without compromising the project’s coherence and consistency.

3.2 Efficiency

The overall number of those who have benefited directly from the project is small. Although the project has generated high interest in and commitment to the values of peace and reconciliation among participants, it has not managed to achieve the expected level of continuity of participation over its four years, particularly in the PWI.

A particular strength of the project has been its success in gaining participation from so many countries across Europe representing a wide diversity of cultural and socio-economic experience.

The project represents excellent value for money in terms of cost per output and cost per outcome. Value for money could have been increased if it had dedicated a greater proportion of its resources to the organising of a greater number or more frequent events.

The project has been managed highly efficiently. The dispersed structure of project management is the most appropriate for a project of this kind which has no fixed geographical focus and which draws participation from so many places.

Decision making by the project management has been timely, appropriate, and clearly communicated. Project management has been highly responsive to the interests of participants and their sending organisations. It has achieved this by involving participants in the planning of events and by consulting regularly with participants between and during all events.

Financial management and accountability to YMCA Europe and donors have been very strong. Strategic management, including project transparency and accountability to local and national YMCAs, would have been enhanced if there had been a formal, voluntary project steering committee representing a fuller range of stakeholder interests.

Monitoring has concentrated on assessing the delivery of individual events and their immediate effect on project participants. In the absence of clearly articulated project objectives, specific and relevant indicators of change, with accompanying baseline studies, the project has not been able to monitor the effect of the project as a whole, including the production of outcomes.

3.3 Effectiveness

The project has had an **empowering effect upon its participants**, particularly those who have attended the PWI. For many participants, involvement in RfR II has been a life-changing experience, impacting positively on the way they view the world, their sense of self, their relationships with other people, their confidence to act, and their engagement and commitment to the YMCA movement. Personal outcomes include:

- A commitment to RfR's vision of peace and reconciliation;
- Greater understanding of and belief in the mission and values of YMCA;
- A conviction in the collective power of young people to bring about change;
- Increased understanding of conflict and its causes;
- Increased understanding of peacebuilding, conflict analysis and conflict sensitive approaches;
- Increased tolerance, acceptance of difference, and understanding of other cultures;
- High levels of mutual trust within the group;
- New friendships across cultural and geographical distance, often with those whom they have been conditioned to view as 'enemies;'
- Strengthened analytical capacities and ability to challenge cultural stereotypes and prejudices;
- Heightened communication and team-building abilities;
- Leadership skills developed, underpinned by practical experience of project planning and implementation.

The project has been highly successful in achieving **cross-border cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue** between individuals and the project's participating organisations. In particular, strong relationships have been forged across lines of previous conflict and mistrust, such as those between Armenia-Turkey, Serbia-Kosovo, and Russia - Georgia. An important feature of this cooperation is that with the support of the project's TGT, it has been extended beyond the safety of events managed directly by RfR II to include participant-led, field-based initiatives which have included organisation members previously not involved in the project.

A significant project outcome is the **strengthening of the YMCA Movement** in Europe.

- A wide range of institutional relationships between local and national YMCAs for the exchange of skills, knowledge, and information, as well as for the development of cross-border peace-building and dialogue projects has been established;
- An informal pan-European network of young leaders committed to YMCA's mission and values and the promotion of the values of peace and reconciliation exists;
- PWI participants are more actively engaged in the YMCA and are applying RfR learning in leadership, project development, and communication in their own local or national organisations.

The effectiveness of the project in spreading its messages of peace and reconciliation beyond the membership of participating organisations, and in multiplying its peacebuilding activities outside the confines of project events to reach the communities in which YMCAs are located has been very limited so far. Challenges for the future include:

- How to use social media and internet technologies more effectively to reach a wider audience outside the YMCA;
- How to use internet technologies in a more systematic, frequent, and sustained way for cross-border dialogue;
- How to extend the project's work on promoting cultural understanding and tolerance within participants' local communities.

3.4 Impact

Strictly speaking it is still too early to assess project impact. The project was over-ambitious in expecting its outputs and outcomes to have a visible, positive impact on achieving 'a culture of peace that allows the transformation of existing conflicts.' Owing to the project's inability to transfer its effects beyond the memberships of participating organisations, likely eventual impact here is low.

There are indications that the project is raising interest in and demand for peace-building and cross-border dialogue within the wider membership of YMCA Europe. The RfR II provides a model of working practices and a possible institutional structure which might allow the integration of peace practices of all European YMCA organisations.

Participating organisations have significantly enhanced their capacity for undertaking peace work. YMCAs from the Caucasus and Balkans are more active, particularly in engaging in international projects, and they have either strengthened or reoriented their strategies towards greater engagement in peace-building.

Project participants assert that the project has been a major contributory factor to various positive changes in their professional and personal lives.

3.5 Sustainability

The institutional relationships between YMCAs established in the project, ongoing planning for follow-on projects to the TGT projects, and the inclusion in the PWI of a large number of national secretaries will ensure that cross-border cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue will continue in the short-term.

Challenges to longer-term sustainability include:

- How to maintain contact and communication across distance between organisations in the intervals between cross-border projects and YMCA events and;
- How the national organisations can mobilise sufficient resources to fund peacebuilding activities.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The detailed recommendations provided in this section are derived from the conclusions recorded in the above section. They are addressed to the main project stakeholders, YMCA Europe, the RfR II project, and the organisations participating in RfR II.

4.1 YMCA Europe

- a. Continue to support the RfR and its approach as a means of further promoting YMCA's strategic priority of peace and democracy.
- b. Consider developing the RfR's management structure to establish a coordinating body or platform for the integration of all work undertaken within the YMCA Movement for peace and democracy. This would serve the purposes of :
 - developing a consistent programmatic approach to promoting peace and democracy;
 - network building and further cross-border cooperation between YMCAs;
 - exchange of information, knowledge, and lessons learnt;
 - creating synergies between separate interventions to raise potential impact.
- c. Facilitate further support to the new YMCAs in Albania and Cyprus. Promote greater contact with YMCA Artsakh for its further inclusion in the YMCA Movement.
- d. Establish a voluntary project steering committee for the RfR to provide strategic management and project oversight with the participation of senior representatives of participating organisations.

4.2 Roots for Reconciliation II project

- a. Develop a follow-on project to RfR II continuing the model of participatory, sequential, and action-oriented learning established in the PWI and the TGTs.
- b. Establish clear, unambiguous, and achievable project objectives which express the direct change in participants and YMCA organisations the project can reasonably be expected to achieve.
- c. Base project planning on the development of a theory of change which articulates YMCA's vision of change for its strategic priority of peace and democracy and identifies the pathways of sequential pre-conditions, or specific changes in target groups and the context necessary to achieve the vision.
- d. Deepen the pan-European character of the project by including YMCAs from new countries, while continuing to identify and work on context specific peace issues.
- e. Maintain support to YMCA's whose countries are experiencing isolation as a result of conflict, such as Russia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Continue to develop relations with Ukraine.

- f. Broaden the concept of peace-building and build upon RfR II's success in inter-cultural dialogue to address conflicts and cultural tensions within countries of participating organisations, and throughout Europe in general.
- g. Develop relationships with other youth and peace-building CSOs and networks to raise the project's potential influence the wider socio-political context, to form partnerships, and for mutual learning. Encourage sending organisations to adopt the same approach in their own communities with the same purpose.
- h. Strengthen practical learning and participants' input to their sending organisation by introducing the principle that each PWI session is followed up by planned activities either in their organisation or in their local communities.
- i. Recruit a new cohort of PWI participants to multiply the opportunities for individual learning and increase the potential human resources for peace-building within each participating organisation.
- j. Strengthen the potential impact of the project on the YMCA Movement and its organisations by only selecting participants who are in a position to influence their own organisations. Ensure that sending organisations understand that the staff or volunteers whom they send are an important resource for the promotion of peace and democracy within their own organisation.
- k. Include PWI graduates from RfR II in the new project as workshop leaders, advisers, and trainers to further build their capacities, maintain continuity with RfR II, and to base project learning on prior experience and the outcomes of RfR II.
- l. Continue to use the Do No Harm approach as the project's guiding principle, but include gender, as well as power relations and the politics of identity as key themes of training on conflict analysis and peace-building.
- m. Promote the greater uptake of 'digital activism' in the project as a means to:
 - Facilitate regular cross-border dialogue and cultural exchange and to
 - Carry out peace campaigning by disseminating context-specific messages to specific audiences outside the YMCA.

4.3 Local and national YMCAs

- a. Continue to strengthen the institutional relationships developed in RfR II. Identify and plan joint projects. Engage more actively in cross-border dialogue using internet technologies, including the wider membership of the local YMCA.
- b. Understand PWI graduates from RfR II as important resources for pursuing YMCA's strategic priority of peace and democracy in their own community. Facilitate the transfer of PWI learning to staff and volunteers in the organisation.
- c. Develop relationships with other youth CSOs and civil society networks working on peace and reconciliation nationally or in the region in order to reach new audiences, exchange skills and learning, and develop joint projects and funding proposals.

- d. Apply RfR II learning to the identification and development of project proposals for actions in the local community. Integrate the Do No Harm principle into all YMCA activities.

Annex 1. Documents and web-based resources referred to in the evaluation

Documents

Bread for the World / EED (2011) *Regional Strategy Paper South Caucasus 2011-2015*, Bonn/Stuttgart, April 2011

Briton, Bruce (2009), *Report of External Assessment July-October 2009*, YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation Project, December 2009

CDA (2004) *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*, manual.

http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/sites/default/files/Reflecting_on_Peace_Practice.pdf

Church C. & Rogers, M (2006) *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*, Search for Common Ground

RfR, Annual Project Progress Report to EED, 01.01.2012 – 31.12.2012, dated 26 March 2013

RfR, 6-monthly Project Progress Report to Bread for the World, 01.07.2013 – 31.12.2013, dated 20 March 2014

RfR, 6-monthly Project Progress Report to Bread for the World, 01.01.2013 – 30.06.2013, dated 30 August 2013

RfR, 6-monthly Project Progress Report to Bread for the World, 01.01.2014 – 30.06.2014, dated 22 August 2014

RfR Baseline Analysis, undated

RfR expenditures report for period January – June 2012

RfR expenditures report for period July– December 2012

RfR expenditures report for period January – June 2013

RfR External Evaluation and Impact Assessment Questionnaire, posted March 2015

RfR financial report 2012, dated 20 August 2012

RfR financial report 2012, dated 5 March 2013

RfR financial report 2013, dated 24 March 2013

RfR financial audit report 2013, dated 23 September 2013

RfR financial audit report 2014, dated 31 December 2014

RfR Peace Work Institute Session 2, Summary Evaluation Report, 10-16 June 2013

RfR Peace Work Institute Session 3, Report of the study session, 1-7 December 2013

RfR TGT project report, Bridges for the Future, undated

RfR TGT project report, Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit, undated

RfR TGT project report, Armenia-Turkey Project, 20 November 2014

RfR TGT project Bridges for the Future post-event evaluation

RfR PWI Istanbul Seminar Post-Event Behaviour Evaluation

RfR, Report & Event Evaluation Results, YMCA Europe RfR ProFest 2012 “It’s mY story”, 23-29 August 2012

RfR, Report & Event Evaluation Results, YMCA Europe RfR ProFest 2013 “It’s mY space”, 4-10 August 2013

RfR, YMCA Europe Catch the Vision Conference, Summary Evaluation Report, 15-20 October 2012

YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation – Project Continuation Proposal, undated

YMCA Europe (2011) YMCA Europe Strategic Plan 2011-2016

YMCA Challenge 21: <http://www.ymcaeurope.com/data/files/challenge-21-36.pdf>, accessed 19.05.15

Online resources

RfR website: <http://rfr.ymcaeurope.com/>

RfR Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Rootsforreconciliation>

YMCA Europe website: <http://www.ymcaeurope.com/>

RfR YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgz20FF4C_HRouk7XRceBqW

Tandem Grant Tool project Flickr accounts:

- Tandem Project Study Visit to NK:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ymcaeurope/sets/72157647223873558/>
- Tandem Project Bridges for the future:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ymcaeurope/sets/72157646451893893/>
- Tandem Project Study Visit to Istanbul:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ymcaeurope/sets/72157648618413588/>

RfR Storify site: <https://storify.com/ymcaeurope>

Annex 2. People interviewed for the evaluation

1. External evaluation interviews

- **Vardan Hambardzumyan** YMCA Europe Executive Secretary & RfR II Project Coordinator, 19 January 2015, 27 May 2015
- **Rezi Shavladze**, RfR II Project Assistant & YMCA Georgia, 21 January 2015, 28 January 2015, 25 May 2015
- **Marius Pop**, RfR II Project Assistant & YMCA Georgia, 27 January 2015, 1 June 2015
- **Juan Simoes Iglesias**, Secretary General YMCA Europe, 28 January 2015
- **Bruce Britton**, Evaluator RfR I & external expert PWI I, 28 January 2015
- **Martina Hudcovská**, Finance Executive Secretary YMCA Europe, 2 June 2015
- **Ankica Dragin**, External expert PWI I-III, 4 June 2015

2. Participant-led interviews

- **Marta Campana Alonso**, Spain (with Despina Kyriakou, Cyprus)
- **Kristina Arakelova**, Georgia (with Rudina Kapo, Albania)
- **Tatul Bostanchyan**, Armenia (with Viktor Iliev, Macedonia)
- **Adi Davies**, Kosovo (with Maria Vardanyan, Armenia)
- **Rachel Dyne**, England (with?)
- **Gozde Erguc**, Turkey (with Frah Saeed, England)
- **Ivana Ilic**, Serbia (with Kristina Arakelova, Georgia)
- **Alexei Kostyakov**, Russia (with Gozde Erguc, Turkey)
- **Despina Kyriakou**, Cyprus (with Aleksandra Andonovska, Macedonia)
- **Dorina Lluka**, Kosovo (with ?)
- **Marina Martynenko**, Russia (with Dorina Lluka, Kosovo)
- **David Melkumyan**, Nagorno-Karabakh (with Tatul Bostanchyan, Armenia)
- **Mladen Pejic**, Bosnia & Herzegovina (with ?)
- **Frah Saeed**, England (with Iuliia Pustovoit, Ukraine)
- **Adrian Sheremeti**, Kosovo (with Marina Martynenko, Russia)
- **Hana (Majerova) Tancik**, Serbia (with Anastasia Tsygankova, Russia)
- **Anastasia Tsygankova**, Russia (with Ivana Ilic, Serbia)
- **Lusine Vardanyan**, Armenia (with Adrian Sheremeti, Kosovo)

Annex 3. Roots for Reconciliation Project Logframe

YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation – Project Continuation Proposal Attachment B – Project Planning Logframe / Monitoring & Evaluation Effect Chain

Project Planning Logframe	Project Monitoring & Evaluation Effect Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification Indicators	Assumptions
Overall Goal	Impact: Culture of peace is created that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region.			
Project Objective	Outcome: Stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe, the region of South Caucasus especially considered.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attitude change amongst 200 (50% female) participants of ProFests¹, plus 25 (50% f) PWI participants, plus 150 (50% f) participants of cross-border initiatives within PWI TGT, plus 150 (50% f) enrolled within DNH trainings provided by PWI participants in their local communities. In total 525 (50% female). 2. Behaviour change amongst at least 80% of PWI graduates (20 - 50% f) and 20% of other project activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project semi-annual, annual and final progress and financial reports, external audit resolutions; - Externally facilitated OEIA report, including comparative with BA, participant testimonials, stakeholder interview and questionnaire data; - TGF sub-project progress and financial reports by PWI graduates and backstopping staff; - Residential key activity (PWI sessions and ProFests) 	The participating YMCAs in the region of South Caucasus, as well as PWI and ProFest sending organisations maintain stable leadership situation and transitions do not affect agreed plans.
	Use of Outputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved mutual trust and understanding sustaining between young people coming from conflict affected areas. 2. Youth opinion leaders continue to act for change in their sending organisations and respective communities as multipliers of peace culture and cross-border dialogue. 3. YMCAs in the region of South Caucasus maintain youth civic engagement initiatives for conflict affected communities and active participation to regional or cross-border peace dialogue CS platforms. 			

Results	<p>Outputs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people coming from conflict affected areas gain knowledge, skills and attitude in peace culture and civic engagement. 2. Youth opinion leaders representing conflict sides gain quality knowledge, skills and attitude as peace programme practitioners and peace culture educators. 3. YMCAs in the region of South Caucasus build capacities for enhanced social transformation programme delivery and advocacy networking. 	<p>participants (100 – 50% f) through evidence of their ongoing and quality leadership in peace practice within and beyond the RfR framework. In total 120 (50% f).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Advancement of the targeted 3 South Caucasian YMCAs' programme delivery in youth civic engagement, peace dialogue and culture education through leadership and service capacities, as well as networks and platforms, built through all the RfR activities. 	<p>summary evaluations based on participants' end-of-event and / or follow-up surveys;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PWI participants' homework reports; 	
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA (incl. residential workshop and report); - Website development; - Regional Programme Festivals – ProFests, held annually except project year 3. - PWI (incl. curriculum and selection criteria development, participants recruitment, 3 residential training sessions and a reunion, plus 2 home-work semesters); - TGF sub-projects with PWI graduates; - PWI PT and ProFest SG meetings; - OEIA (incl. ToR development and expertise contracting, site visits, data collection and collation, residential workshop and report); 			<p>PWI participants nominated by sending YMCAs strictly in correspondence with selection criteria, including commitment of at least 3 year active and continued involvement.</p>
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial inputs as earmarked in enclosed budget breakdown, including funding sought from EED and YMCA contribution in cash; - Technical professional and volunteer assistance from participating and international partner YMCAs (incl. Universities) as contribution in kind; - Technical assistance through EED Dialogue and Support Office in South Caucasus; - Experience and expertise gained through the implementation of the RfR pilot phase 2007 – 2010; 			<p>Contextual changes do not result in impossibility or high risk in holding the planned activities;</p>

Annex 4. Roots for Reconciliation’s Theory of Change

An increasingly common way of establishing a coherent and relevant project design is to start the planning process by developing a Theory of Change. Working from a clear problem analysis rooted in the reality of one’s target groups, a Theory of Change identifies key ‘pathways’ of sequential (specific) changes that need to take place in order for the vision (or goal) of higher order developmental change to be realised. A theory of change, therefore, presents a narrative or story of how change takes places. Developing such a theory of change assists programme planners to identify the areas of change which lie within their sphere of influence and thus to develop appropriate and realistic objectives and strategies.

The RfR II project proposal presents a Theory of Change chart, described as an ‘impact orientation tool,’ which is intended to represent the RfR pathway of change, ‘ensuring [clarification of the] clear and measurable contribution [of project outputs] towards planned project outcomes and attribution (sic) towards the impact (overall goal) sought.’⁵⁰

Where the change is sought		Who?	
		Many People (strategies*)	Key People (strategies*)
What?	Personal level (change*)	a) Personal level change amongst many people Attitude change amongst participants[#]	b) Personal level change amongst key people Behaviour change of participants – acting as leaders[#]
	Socio-political level (change*)	c) Socio-political level change through many people Cross-border cooperation and peace dialogue[#]	d) Socio-political level change through key people Clear peace culture ‘signature’ of participating organisations + sustained dialogue an cooperation[#]

[#] Inserted by the evaluator from the proposal narrative

* Evaluator’s addition, after RPP model

The proposal suggests that that RfR II will contribute to a logical progression of change from outputs in box a), through outcomes in boxes b) and c), finally to impact in box d). However, this scheme is more abstract and ‘theoretical’ than what is presented in the project Logframe. The exact nature of each change is not described, and the proposed theory that

⁵⁰ YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation – Project Continuation Proposal, p.9

change among a limited pool of individuals ('many people') will initiate a process of cause and effect that will ultimately produce impacts at the socio-political level is difficult to understand.

The problem here is that RfR II's theory of change is based upon a misunderstanding and misapplication of a tool developed by Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP)⁵¹ for comparing peace building strategies. RPP have found that almost all peace building programmes can be found within the four boxes or quadrants.⁵² The four quadrants are not intended to represent a narrative of successful levels of change, but reflect where, within whom, and how a programme aims to contribute to peace. There are basically two programming approaches, represented by the two rows for personal change and socio-political change.

1. Interventions that seek individual-level change aim to change attitudes, values, skills, and behaviours, etc of individuals, on the basis that peace is only possible if individuals change. Most dialogue and training programmes, such as RfR, work at this level. Projects in which individuals, or small groups such as NGOs develop relationships to work together, trade, or develop joint actions are also those that work at the level of individual or personal change.
2. Interventions that seek socio-political change start from the assumption that peace requires changes in socio-political structures and mechanisms, such as reform of policies, legislation, economic structures, as well as the brokering of ceasefire agreements, changes to constitutions etc. In addition to work with key actors on achieving these changes, many people strategies in the socio-political domain would include those which impact on broader public opinion, community attitudes, and wider social behaviours and norms by means of public campaigning and advocacy in relation to key drivers of conflict, changes in inter-group relations, etc.

Understanding what is meant by 'more people' and 'key people' is also important for understanding the potential effect and impact of a programme. Key people are 'key to the conflict dynamics, able to decide or strongly influence decisions for or against peace, and / or able to spoil or undermine peace.' For RfR, this means that key people *are not* those who are 'key' to implementation, such as YMCA leaders, or categories of people, such as youth, unless they have a real role in the continuation of conflict.

By applying the RPP matrix we can see that RfR is located in quadrant a) of the matrix, as a strategy for stimulating individual and personal change amongst 'more people.' The evaluation also shows that RfR outcomes relate solely to the project's individual participants and the participating YMCAs and civil society organisations from Turkey and Cyprus.

⁵¹ Reflecting on Peace Practice was a learning exercise run by CDA between 2009-2012 which engaged over 200 agencies around the world to reflect on peace practice in order to learn how to improve its effectiveness. Using the lessons learnt from this exercise, CDA has developed a series of tools and methodologies for improving the planning, implementation and evaluation of peace practice. <http://www.cdacollaborative.org>

⁵² See CDA (2004) *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*, and also CDA (2013) *Reflecting on Peace Practice: Training of Consultants and Advisers Manual*, for a full explanation of the tool and how to apply it.

Analysis of peace building projects and their outcomes conducted by RPP using the matrix has resulted in key learnings which are of importance to further design and implementation of peace work. Firstly, RPP found that work that stays within any one quadrant of the matrix is not enough to drive significant change with regard to wider processes of peace and reconciliation. Potential for achieving change depends upon any project transferring its effects to another quadrant of the matrix. Perhaps of most relevance to RfR and any possible extension of the project is that RPP have found that projects that focus on change at the individual level which do not translate into action at the socio-political level have *no discernible effect on peace*.

Annex 5. Participation in Roots for Reconciliation II

Total number of participants until February 2015: 197

Number of participants by gender: Male -89; Female - 108

TABLE 4 Participation numbers at RfR II events 2012 – February 2015

Event	Number of participants*	Male	Female	YMCA staff	YMCA volunteers	Non-YMCA
ProFest 1, Shushi	58	29	29	10	48	0
PWI I, Istanbul	37	13	24	18	15	4
PWI II, Yerevan	24	12	12	10	12	2
ProFest 2, Prague	94	44	50	23	67	4
PWI III, Strasbourg	28	12	16	15	10	3
TGT: Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit	19	12	7	6	13	0
TGT: Bridges for the Future	34	14	20	17	15	2
TGT: Armenia-Turkey Project	18	8	10	2	5	11
PWI IV Reunion	30	13	17	14	12	4
All participants	342	157	185	115	197	30

* Excludes RfR staff and external facilitators and experts

TABLE 5 Number and percentage of people attending RfR events 2012 – February 2015

Number of Events	Number of people	%
1	133	67.5
2	24	12.2
3	20	10.2
4	12	6.1
5	3	1.5
6	1	0.5
7	4	2.0
8	0	0.0
TOTAL	197	100

TABLE 6 Country of origin of all RfR participants and PWI participants from 2012 to February 2015

Country	Number of RfR participants	% of total RfR participants	Number of PWI participants	% of total PWI participants
Armenia	54	27.4	7	10.6
Karabakh	32	16.2	1	1.5
Georgia	24	12.2	3	4.5
Turkey	15	7.6	7	10.6
Kosovo	9	4.6	4	6.1
Russia	7	3.6	5	7.6
Serbia	5	2.5	2	3.0
UK	5	2.5	3	4.5
Netherlands	4	2.0	4	6.1
Czech Republic	4	2.0	2	3.0
Ireland	4	2.0	2	3.0
Macedonia	4	2.0	4	6.1
Romania	3	1.5	1	1.5
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3	1.5	3	4.5
Bulgaria	3	1.5	1	1.5
Spain	3	1.5	3	4.5
Albania	2	1.0	1	1.5
Belarus	2	1.0	1	1.5
Cyprus	2	1.0	2	3.0
Finland	2	1.0	2	3.0
Iceland	2	1.0	2	3.0
Montenegro	2	1.0	0	0.0
Poland	2	1.0	2	3.0
Germany	2	1.0	2	3.0
Ukraine	2	1.0	2	3.0
TOTAL	197	100.0	66	100.0

Annex 6. Summary of Roots for Reconciliation II budgets and expenditure

TABLE 7 Summary of RfR II project budget, with budget and expenditure for years 2012-2014*

Budget item	Budget 01.2012 - 12.2015 (Euro)	% of budget 01.2012 – 12.2015	Budget 01.2012 – 12.2014 (Euro)	% of budget 01.2012 – 12.2014	Expenditure 01.2012 - 12.2014 (Euro)	% of total expenditure 01.2012-2014
PWI + TGT	150,000	28.9	125,000	33	130,844	36.7
ProFests	90,000	17.3	60,000	15.9	54,522	15.3
Personnel	120,000	23.1	90,000	23.8	102,468	28.6
Admin and Operations	99,000	19.0	76,500	20.2	66,709	18.7
Outcome Evaluation and IA	25,000	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Auditor	12,000	2.3	9,000	2.4	2,416	0.7
Reserve	24,000	4.6	18,000	4.7	0.0	0.0
Total	520,000	100	378,500	100	356,959	100

* Excludes payments in advance for activities in 2015

Annex 7. Project outcomes identified by PWI participants

1. Personal development and common understanding among participants
2. Young people's understanding of conflict situation
3. YMCAs/NGOs have developed their capacity on peacebuilding
4. Cross-border cooperation between YMCAs /youth NGOs
5. YMCA Movement strengthened by new generation of activists and leaders

Annex 8. RfR External Evaluation & Impact Assessment Questionnaire

We are asking you to complete this questionnaire because you are (or you were) a participant in the Roots for Reconciliation II (RfR) project. The questionnaire is an important part of an end-of-project evaluation we are conducting in order to assess what the project has achieved and the quality of its activities and events. The findings of the evaluation will help us to learn and improve future peace-building activities carried out by YMCA Europe and national YMCAs in Europe.

Thank you for agreeing to contribute to the evaluation. Your views and experiences are very important to us!

Qu. 1 Name (optional)

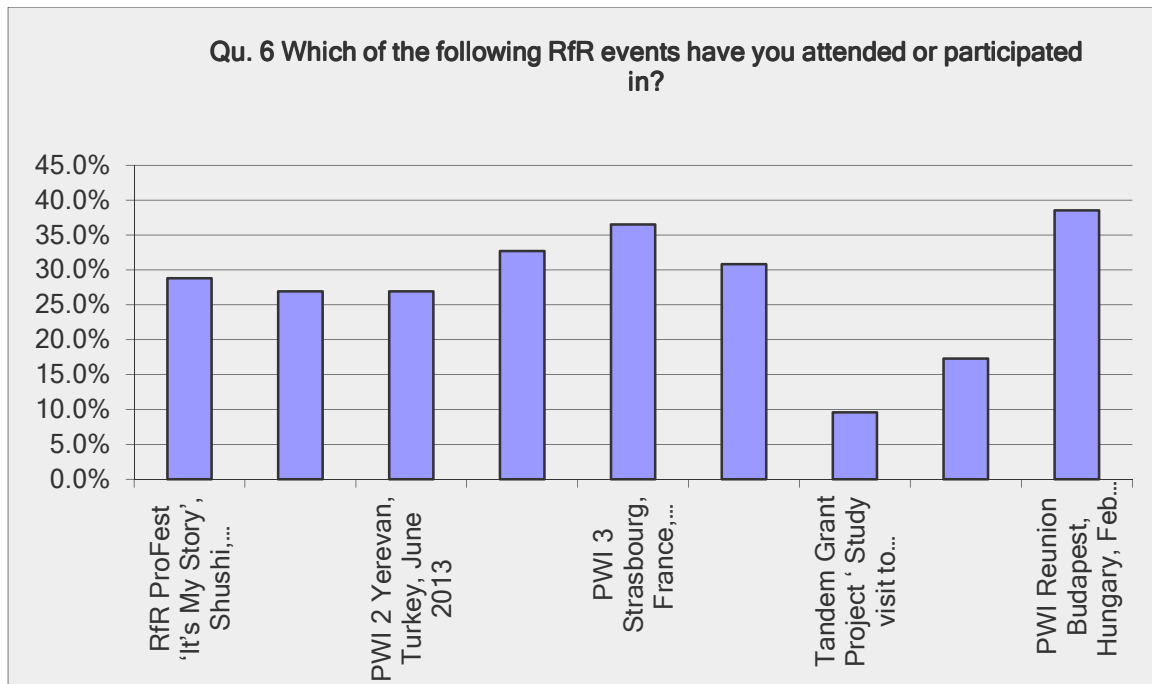
Qu. 2 Date of Birth

Qu.3 Gender

Qu.4 National YMCA/organisation

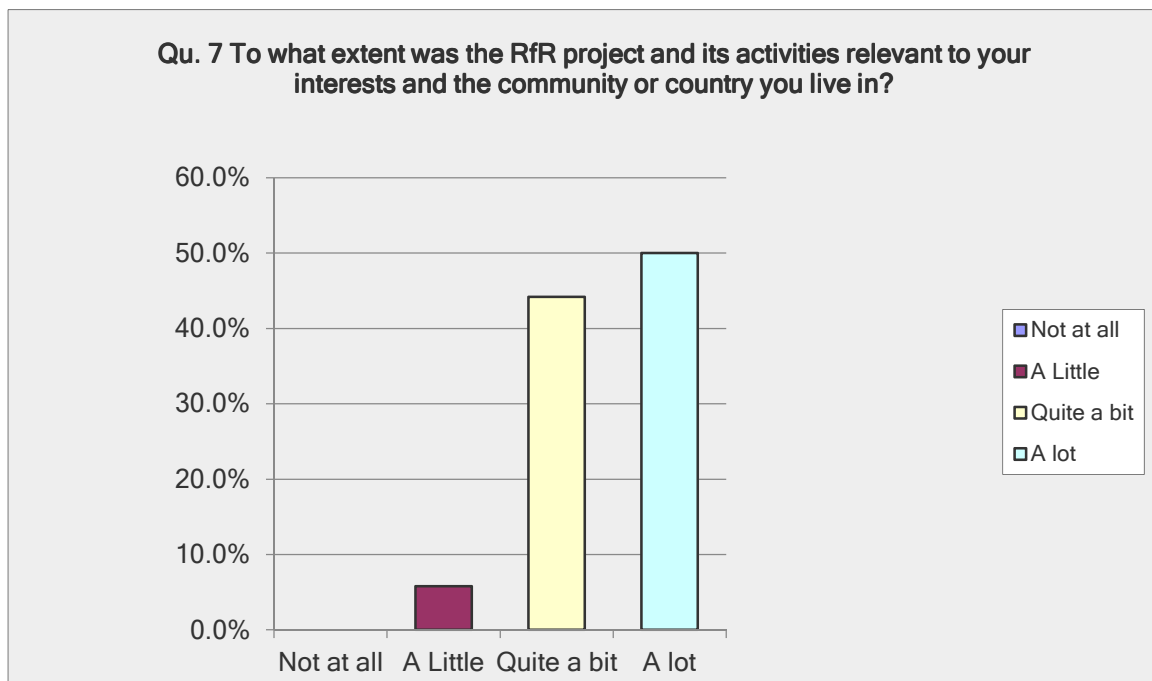
Qu. 5 What is your current involvement in YMCA?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Paid staff	26.9%	14
Volunteer / ordinary member / board member	69.2%	36
No longer involved	3.8%	2

Qu. 6 Which of the following RfR events have you attended or participated in?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
RfR ProFest 'It's My Story', Shushi, Nagorno Karabakh, Aug 2012	28.8%	15
PWI 1 Istanbul, Turkey (Catch the Vision Conference), Oct 2012	26.9%	14
PWI 2 Yerevan, Turkey, June 2013	26.9%	14
RfR ProFest 'It's My Space', Prague, Czech Republic, Aug 2013	32.7%	17
PWI 3 Strasbourg, France, December 2013	36.5%	19
Tandem Grant Project 'Bridges for the Future' Aug 2014	30.8%	16
Tandem Grant Project 'Study visit to Nagorno Karabakh, Aug 2014	9.6%	5
Tandem Grant Project 'Give Peace a Chance' Oct 2014	17.3%	9
PWI Reunion Budapest, Hungary, Feb 2015	38.5%	20



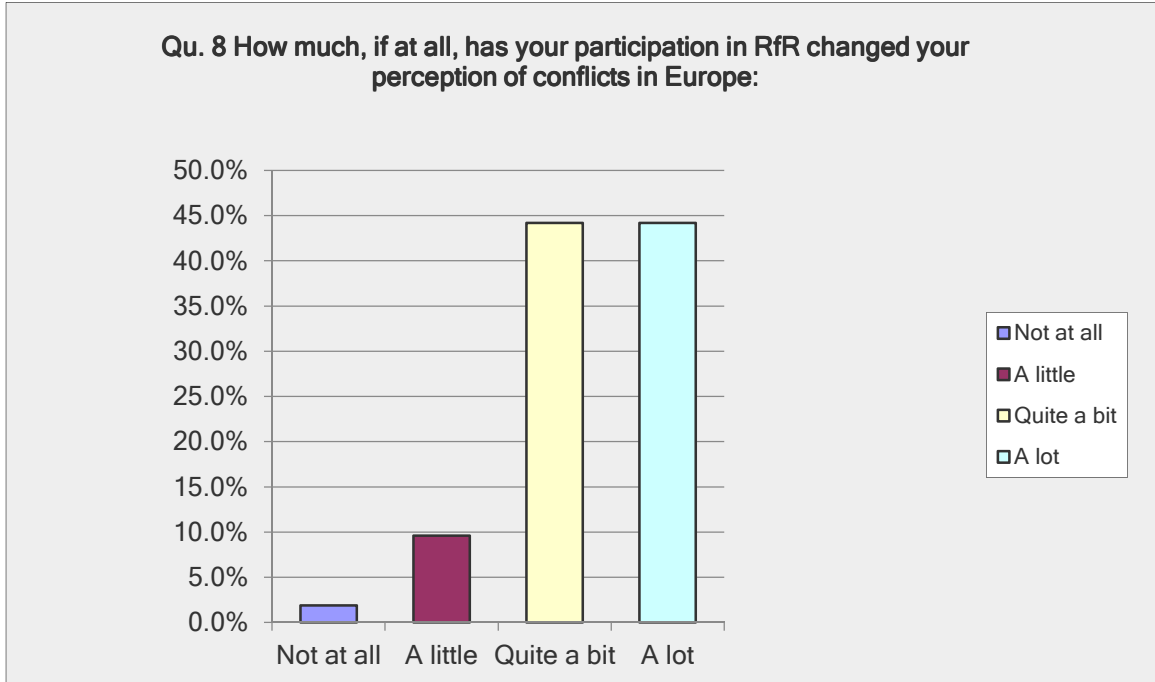
Qu. 7 To what extent was the RfR project and its activities relevant to your interests and the community or country you live in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	0.0%	0
A Little	5.8%	3
Quite a bit	44.2%	23
A lot	50.0%	26



Qu. 8 How much, if at all, has your participation in RfR changed your perception of conflicts in Europe:

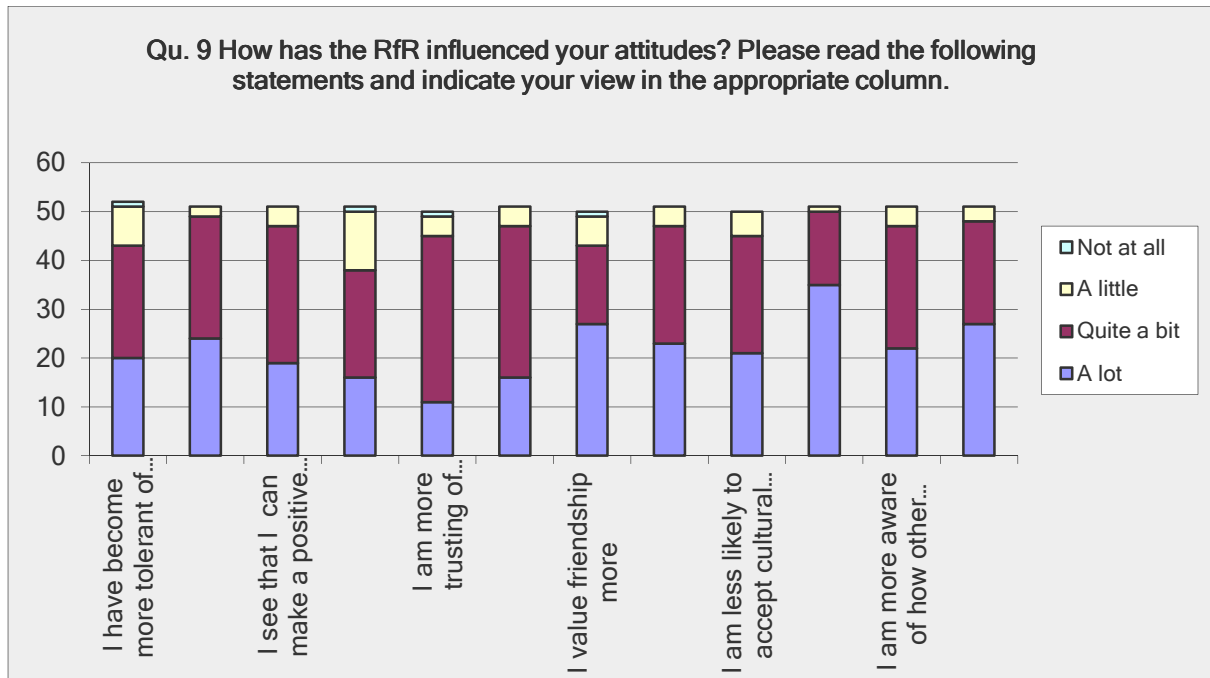
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	1.9%	1
A little	9.6%	5
Quite a bit	44.2%	23
A lot	44.2%	23



Qu. 9 How has the RfR influenced your attitudes? Please read the following statements and indicate your view in the appropriate column.

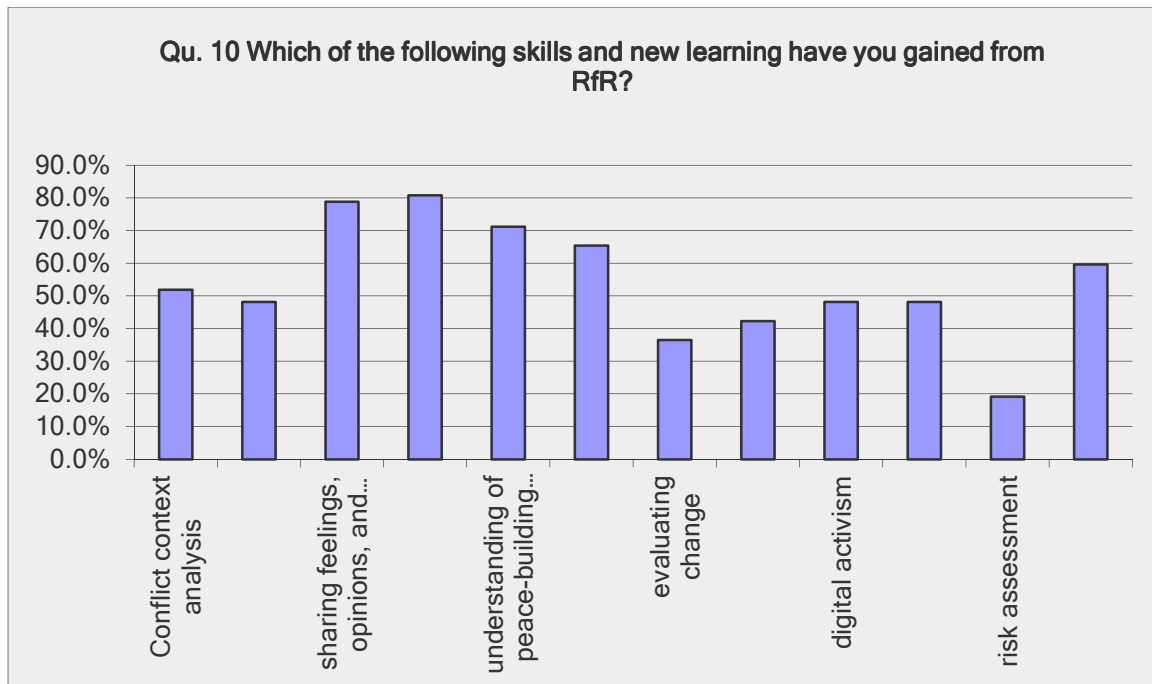
Answer Options	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	A lot	Response Count
I have become more tolerant of others	1	8	23	20	52
I have become more understanding of other people's points of view	0	2	25	24	51
I see that I can make a positive contribution to resolving conflicts	0	4	28	19	51
I have a more critical view of mass media coverage of conflict situations	1	12	22	16	51
I am more trusting of people from other cultures	1	4	34	11	50
I am more thoughtful and self-aware	0	4	31	16	51
I value friendship more	1	6	16	27	50
I am more hopeful that conflicts can be resolved in positive and peaceful ways	0	4	24	23	51
I am less likely to accept cultural stereotypes without first thinking about what they mean	0	5	24	21	50

I have greater respect for other people and their cultures	0	1	15	35	51
I am more aware of how other people might perceive me and my own culture	0	4	25	22	51
I find it easier to discuss problems and difficult situations in a friendly and constructive way	0	3	21	27	51



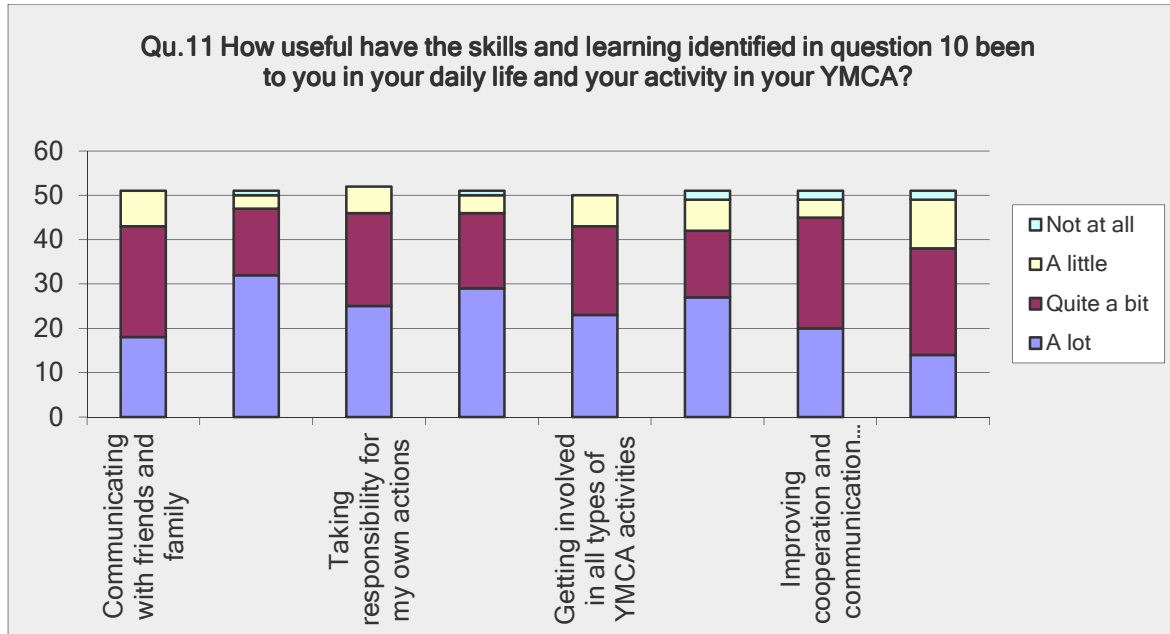
Qu. 10 Which of the following skills and new learning have you gained from RfR?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Conflict context analysis	51.9%	27
Conflict sensitive approaches (Do No Harm)	48.1%	25
Sharing feelings, opinions, and ideas with others in a constructive way	78.8%	41
Team-building	80.8%	42
Understanding of peace-building and reconciliation	71.2%	37
Interculturalism and cross-cultural dialogue	65.4%	34
Evaluating change	36.5%	19
Use of social media	42.3%	22
Digital activism	48.1%	25
Planning events and peace-building actions	48.1%	25
Risk assessment	19.2%	10
Leadership	59.6%	31



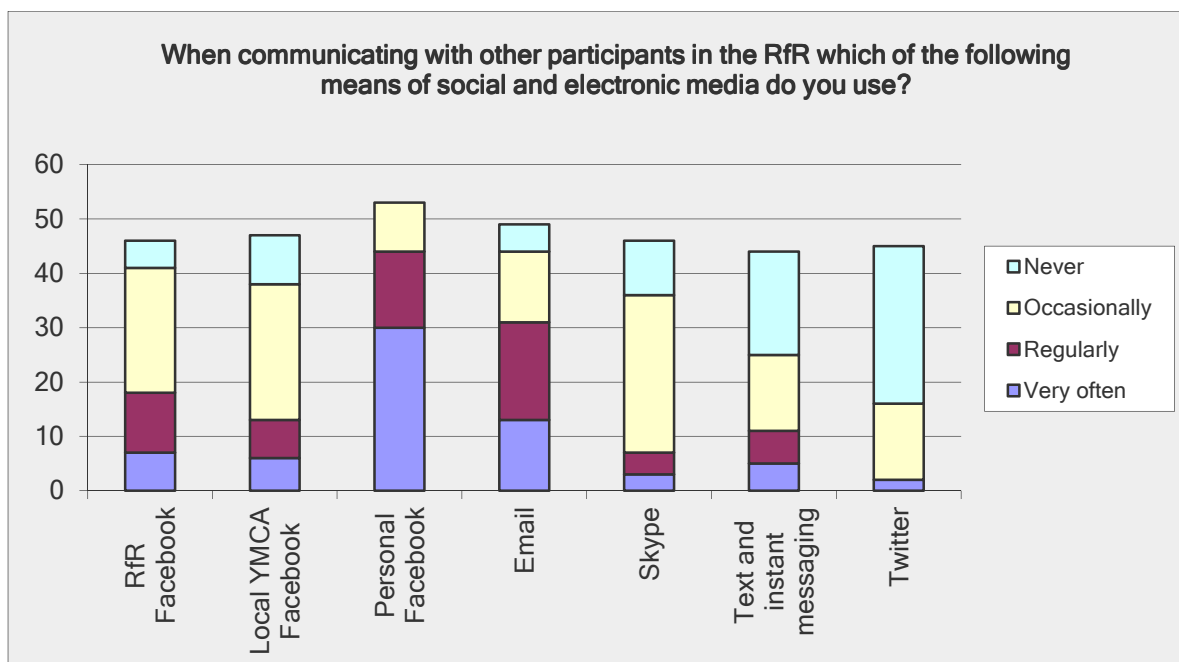
Qu.11 How useful have the skills and learning identified in question 10 been to you in your daily life and your activity in your YMCA?

Answer Options	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	A lot	Response Count
Communicating with friends and family	0	8	25	18	51
Making new friends outside my community	1	3	15	32	51
Taking responsibility for my own actions	0	6	21	25	52
Getting involved in peace-building activities	1	4	17	29	51
Getting involved in all types of YMCA activities	0	7	20	23	50
Leading projects and events	2	7	15	27	51
Improving cooperation and communication with colleagues	2	4	25	20	51
Solving problems at work and within the family	2	11	24	14	51

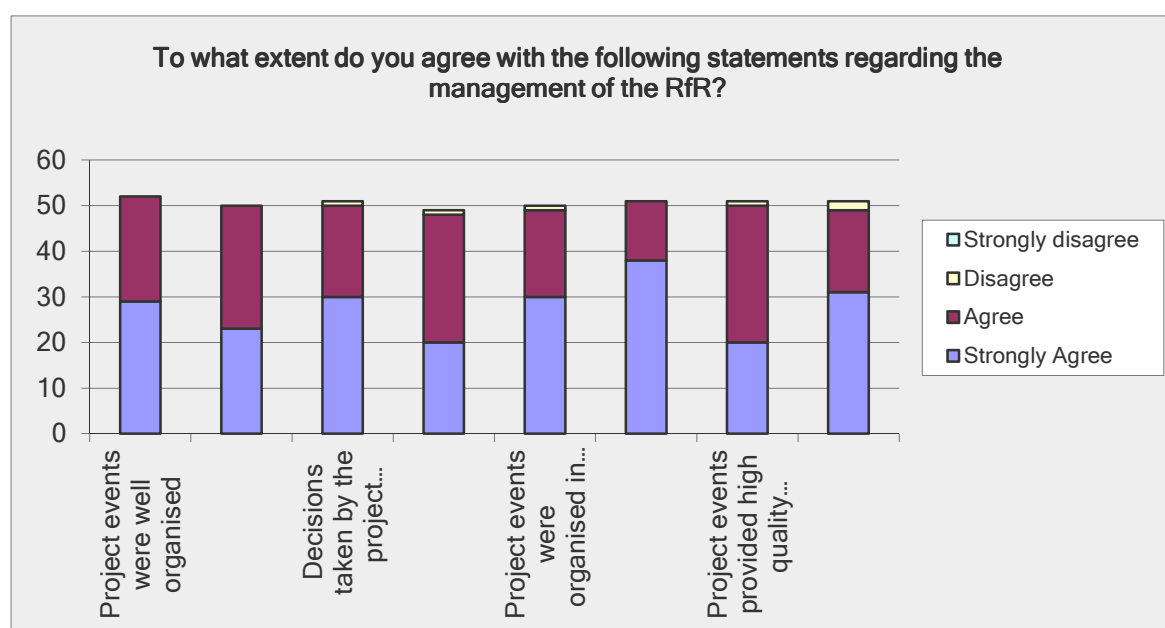


Qu.12 When communicating with other participants in the RfR which of the following means of social and electronic media do you use?

Answer Options	Never	Occasionally	Regularly	Very often	Response Count
RfR Facebook	5	23	11	7	46
Local YMCA Facebook	9	25	7	6	47
Personal Facebook	0	9	14	30	51
Email	5	13	18	13	48
Skype	10	29	4	3	46
Text and instant messaging	19	14	6	5	44
Twitter	29	14	0	2	45



Qu. 13 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the management of the RfR?					
Answer Options	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Response Count
Project events were well organised	0	0	23	29	52
Project management took sufficient care to consult with participants and include their views and suggestions when planning and organizing events	0	0	27	23	50
Decisions taken by the project management were appropriate, timely, and clearly communicated	0	1	20	30	51
Project activities took into account my specific needs as a man / woman	0	1	28	20	49
Project events were organised in appropriate locations which were accessible to potential participants	0	1	19	30	50
Project events provided a safe space for discussion, exchange and learning	0	0	13	38	51
Project events provided high quality facilitation and expert guidance	0	1	30	20	51
Project events promoted participatory learning	0	2	18	31	51



Qu. 14 Your testimonial. Please reflect upon your involvement in RfR and its activities. In your own words tell us: a. about your impressions of the project (good or bad) b. about your experiences of the events that you participated in c. how, if at all, it has influenced your attitudes and behavior (positively or negatively) d. anything else about the project that you think is important for us to know. Please note that this information is confidential, but we may quote it without your name in the project evaluation document.

Annex 9. Questions for participant-led interviews

Introductory question: Ask the interviewee which RfR events they have attended and what activities they have taken part in.

1. To what extent is the RfR and its activities relevant to your interests and the community or country that you live in?
2. When you first got involved with RfR, what were your expectations?
3. To what extent have your expectations been met?
4. What skills and what new learning have you gained from RfR?
5. How have you made use of these skills and learning in your daily life?
6. (To PWI participants) which of the resources from PWI have you used in your local community or in activities carried out through your YMCA? How have you used them?
7. In what ways has the RfR project promoted cross border cooperation and dialogue?
8. In what ways have your relationships with young people in other countries changed as a result of your involvement in RfR?
9. What effect had the Roots for Reconciliation Digital Platforms on your involvement and communication in RfR?

Annex 10. Summaries of Tandem Grant Tool Projects

Box 6 Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit

What was the project?

The Nagorno-Karabakh Study Visit was an awareness-raising and networking project carried out by eight YMCA members (volunteers and staff) from seven countries (Belarus, Czech Republic, England, Kosovo, Poland, Russia, and Spain) to Nagorno-Karabakh, hosted by YMCA Artsakh with the participation of 11 of its staff and volunteers.

Goals and objectives

- To learn about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and how it affects young people there;
- To learn about the limitations that young people face in Nagorno-Karabakh;
- To expand awareness of the YMCA Artsakh's work (for its potential development)
- To celebrate 10 years' of YMCA in Nagorno –Karabakh;
- For participants to learn from each other.

Project approach and activities

The study was conducted by means of a variety of informative meetings and visits which gave the opportunity for the visitors to enter into discussion and interact with the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. There were three types of activity:

- Meetings with significant individuals holding public office who provided important contextual background information to the recent past, as well as an understanding of current international, national and local issues in Nagorno-Karabakh. These included the Speaker of the Parliament, The Archbishop of Nagorno-Karabakh, officials, and the Ministers of Youth and Culture, and Defence.
- Meetings with YMCA members and their projects
- Undertaking sightseeing visits, as well as trips to war-affected areas.

Outputs

A video dairy recording the course of the study visit in 6 parts was produced and uploaded to the RfR YouTube channel. A compendium of photographs was posted on Flickr and participants produced a variety of personal blogs that were placed on the RfR and Europe YMCA websites and Facebook pages.

Outcomes

- YMCA Artsakh's sense of isolation was broken and regular communication with other members of the YMCA family was established.
- A sense of hope for Nagorno-Karabakh through solidarity was engendered in YMCA Artsakh and its members.
- Agreement within the group that there should be some kind of follow-on action to the study visit.

There are some experience that stay with you [...] and make you a richer person...This visit has done just that for me, it will be an experience I will share with not just my colleagues, family, friends, but to everyone who crosses my path in life and who else give such experience by YMCA.

To the young leaders of Artsakh YMCA you make the YMCA proud, you inspire me...God bless you and I truly wish you peace and may you live peacefully with your neighbours and within yourselves.

Frah Saeed, England

Box 7 Bridges for the Future

What was the project?

Bridges for the Future was a cultural exchange between YMCA members that took place in Prishtina, Kosovo, from 5-11 September 2015. The project brought together 34 participants from 11 countries: Kosovo -8; Serbia – 4; Bulgaria – 3; Macedonia – 3; Albania – 2; Montenegro - ; Romania – 2; Bosnia and Herzegovina – 1; and Ireland – 4; England – 3; Cyprus – 2.

Aim

To engage and utilise a new generation of peace advocates using social media and cross-country collaboration as tools of engagement.

Objectives

1. To develop participant's leadership capacities at grass roots level;
2. To increase the participant's competences and skills so they can contribute to the construction of peace in the region;
3. To develop participant's knowledge about how conflict can be transformed and how to reduce its negative impact on the lives of young people;
4. To increase the level of collaboration between neighboring post conflict countries;
5. To dispel myths among participants and promote values and good practice of intercultural societies;
6. To spread youth led and inspired messages from joint countries through social media about "Do No Harm" methodology;
7. To widen participant's horizons about cultural differences and conflicts within the Balkans;
8. To educate young people on how balance works in other places around Europe;

Project approach and activities

With an ostensible focus on the Balkans, its ethnic and cultural diversity and its complex history of inter-ethnic and political conflict, the project challenged youth to find connectors rather than dividers within the areas of culture, religion, politics, history, etc. To do this a pan-European approach was taken with the participants from Cyprus, England, and Ireland providing relevant alternative perspectives and experiences of conflict and conflict resolution from their own societies.

The project was run as a five-day workshop in which each country was responsible for delivering interactive presentations upon a peace building theme and in which participants worked together in small multi-cultural 'interest groups' to prepare electronic media presentations (videos and written content) to publicise peace messages to a wider audience.

Outputs

The project produced a wide range of electronic materials promoting peace and reconciliation and documenting project activities. These included daily posts on RfR and YMCA Europe Facebook pages, articles posted on RfR and YMCA (Europe and national) websites, photo albums on Flickr, as well as the release of 6 videos on YouTube.

Outcomes

- For many Balkan participants barriers to communication and fear of the Other were broken – especially for those from Serbia. Provided Balkan participants with ‘proof’ that peaceful cooperation between ethnic and religious communities in the region is possible.
- Created friendship across countries which have continued after the project;
- Inspired participants from Albania and Cyprus to continue to form their own local / national YMCAs
- Engendered a commitment to promoting peace within local/national YMCAs – including Bulgaria, Ireland, Macedonia, Serbia
- Stimulated a sense of optimism in the future and confidence in the group’s ability to work together.

Box 8 Armenia – Turkey Tandem Grant Tool Project

What was the project?

The Armenia – Turkey Project was a cultural exchange that took place in Istanbul from 20 – 26 October 2015 between 7 YMCA Armenia members (staff and volunteers) and 11 members of RfR participating partner, Yücel Cultural Foundation.

Aim

Youth exchange visit for promoting peace culture and cross-border dialogue

Objectives

- Establish amiable relations between participants during and beyond the event;
- Empower youth leaders for improved mutual trust and understanding.

Project approach and activities

The project brought together young people from two neighbouring countries with a long history of enmity and distrust and between which there are currently neither open borders nor diplomatic relations. The project’s approach was to stimulate intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and team building by means of sightseeing and carrying out fun activities together. The latter were organised within a training workshop, led by an external facilitator, on the themes of peace, love, friendship and collaboration through the medium of the creative arts. Workshop activities were designed to stimulate communication, cooperation, and cooperation between all members of the group, including constructive joint problem solving.

Over the week, participants were divided according to their preferences into three ‘interest groups’ which worked on producing project blogposts, a photograph album, and project video, respectively.

Outputs

The project established its own Blogsite, <http://youngbridges.org>, hosted by Yücel Cultural Foundation. A range of individual blogs were posted here, with over 100 photographs selected from the week, and two project videos, to record the project activities and bear witness to the cooperation achieved over its duration

Outcomes

- Fear of the Other and nervousness about working with each other without a third party to mediate completely dispelled;
- Mutual trust and cultural understanding established between project participants;
- Friendships and 'emotional bonds' made between Armenians and Turkish

One thing is clear that we as young people want the same and we all say no to wars and yes to peace

Haykuhi Karapetyan, Armenia

We just ate together sang together and started to love each other more. Then the peace runs upon us by itself. When you love each other, peace is the inescapable result.

Musa Enes Uslu, Turkey

Annex 11. Summary of project impacts on participating organisations

YMCA Armenia

The significance of the Armenia-Turkey relationship, established for the first time through RfR, particularly the Armenia-Turkey TGT project, is becoming increasingly apparent within YMCA Armenia. Promoting the relationship is a new strategic direction for the organisation, although as yet it remains unwritten and no resources have been allocated to it. RfR participants and national board members are committed to promoting this strategic direction with the rest of the national YMCA board.

YMCA Macedonia (Bitola)

The project has led to an unstated policy to establish more cross-border communication and to promote partnerships with other YMCAs in the region. Kosovo in particular is seen as a priority. The organisation has strengthened its assistance to Albania for the formation of the first YMCA there.

YMCA Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)

RfR was the first project that YMCA Artsakh was involved in. Project events in the country (ProFest and TCT projects) created momentum and enthusiasm within the organisation and helped the organisation to start 'real work in the YMCA,' and to find resources, human and financial. At project start, RfR facilitated a connection with Finnish peace-building organisation, CMI, which the organisation is trying to develop for the benefit of YMCA. The President of the Armenian Diaspora in Russia is using his position to raise funds for the organisation.

YMCA Russia

YMCA Russia (and particularly YMCA Ivanovo) has been active in youth exchanges for a number of years, RfR offered it a rare platform to connect Russians with others for intercultural learning. The RfR experience is being used to promote change in the national YMCAs towards the adoption of a more internationally oriented strategy.

YMCA Serbia (Bački Petrovac)

YMCA Serbia remains a very small and inexperienced organisation. RfR was the organisation's first international project. It has contributed significantly to a marked increase in the organisation's activities, particularly with regard to its involvement in the wider YMCA movement and relations with YMCAs in neighbouring countries. It is now:

- It is actively identifying and developing projects;
- It is pursuing cross-border partnerships;
- It has raised its visibility within the YMCA and the local community;
- It is sending members to other YMCA Europe and YMCA World events.

Yücel Cultural Foundation, Turkey

As a result of its engagement in RfR, the organisation's strategic thinking is increasingly oriented towards working internationally, particularly to promote cross-border cooperation and dialogue. It is increasingly looking for international sources of funding.

Annex 12. Evaluation Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCES EXTERNAL EVALUATION & IMPACT ASEMSSMENT OF THE YMCA EUROPE ROOTS FOR RECONCILIATION PROJECT

Project Name:	Roots for Reconciliation
Project Period:	January the 1 st , 2012 – December the 31 st , 2015
Project Target Regions:	Caucasus and Balkans
Project Key Activity Locations:	Turkey, Armenia, France, Hungary, Kosovo, Nagorno Karabakh, Russia, Czech Republic, and Georgia
Implementing Organization:	European Alliance of YMCAs (YMCA Europe)
Funding Partner:	Bread for the World ⁵³ (former EED) – Germany (est. 70% of co-funding)
Other Major Donors:	Council of Europe ⁵⁴ Department for Youth (est. 20% of co-funding)

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The YMCA Europe Roots for Reconciliation⁵⁵ project was launched in 2007. Its first phase (2007 – 2010) geographically was focused on the region of the Caucasus, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union became a real battlefield of geopolitical partitions and ethnic conflicts, known as wars in Karabakh, Abkhazia, Ossetia, Chechnya.

At that stage the aim of the RfR was to strengthen and extend the YMCA Movement in the region as a mass-membership, ecumenical network standing for integrity of creation, peace and justice. Central to the way the project worked was the enhancement of camping programme as a shared activity uniting young people across socio-political and cultural dividers, with added value for the YMCAs sustainable development. Thanks to the RfR three YMCA camp properties (Community Resource Centres⁵⁶) were set-up operational - YMCA Camps Lake Sevan and Aramian in Armenia and YMCA Camp Orange in Georgia.

⁵³ Hereafter BfdW

⁵⁴ Hereafter CoE

⁵⁵ Hereafter RfR

⁵⁶ Hereafter CRC

Parallel to CRC development within its framework the RfR started to imitate and hold various sets of cross-border service-learning activities for young people, in total enrolling 800 participants predominantly from Armenia, Georgia and Nagorno Karabagh, yet also from more than 20 counters all over the world ranging from Iceland to Russia, from the USA to Bangladesh.

The highlight event of the phase, clearly demonstrating the relevance and the capacity of the project, was the concluding programme festival - ProFest - held in August 2009 in Yerevan, Armenia. It brought together 70 young people from Armenia, Georgia, United States and Russia to manifest peace and cooperation – notably just after one year since Georgian-Russian military conflict in August 2008.

The 2007 – 2011 project phase budget was EUR 873'000, with the following key donors: EED Germany, ICCO Netherlands, HEKS-EPER Switzerland, Aramian Family (through the YMCA of the USA).

“The Roots for Reconciliation project has been very successful in devising a process that creates a safe space for relationship-building based on ‘Do No Harm’ principles. The young people have used this space to build relationships across cultural divides. They have done this on the basis of what can only be characterized as a deep love for their fellow young men and women. It is this ability to engender love across cultural and political divides that represents the main achievement of the project”. (*Conclusion of the Project External Assessment Report, 2009*)

The second stage of the RfR covers the period of 2012 – 2015, with estimated budget of EUR 520'000, and funding partnership with BfdW Germany and CoE Department for Youth.

With enhanced capacities in resource mobilization and scenario building, the current phase of the RfR has gone for much wider geographical scope – with especially including the Balkan region into its framework. The Balkans is another hotbed of recent violent conflicts in Europe, such as Bosnia or Kosovo. Moreover, number of Western European YMCA Movements (England, Spain) joined the initiative, sharing its theory of change and relevance to the their home contexts.

Stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe is the main objective of this phase of the RfR, he Caucasus and the Balkans especially considered.

The main innovation of the current project phase was the Peace Work Institute⁵⁷. It was designed as a series of 3 residential training seminars aiming to foster capacity building of selected 25 youth opinion leaders representing YMCAs and partner organizations from Armenia, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Turkey, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, England, Spain and Cyprus. This particular project component has been completed by December 2013 with all the planned training sessions held in Istanbul, Turkey (October 2012); Yerevan, Armenia (June, 2013) Strasbourg, France (December 2013). The curriculum included various educational modules, such as: Conflict Analysis & Transformation; Impact Orientation & Assessment; Social Media & Networking; Digital

⁵⁷ Hereafter PWI

Activism; program Development & Delivery; Do No Harm Methodology; Project Cycle Management, etc..

Right now the PWI graduates and their sending organisations are in process of planning and implementation of so called Tandem Grant Tool⁵⁸ projects, acting as sparring partners with their peers from the other side of the conflicts (Georgia-Russia, Armenia-Turkey exchange visits; Regional Event in the Balkans; Study Visit to Nagorno Karabagh). These projects are to be implemented during the second half of 2014, enrolling an estimated hundred of young people from the targeted countries as new members of the YMCA peace ambassadors in Europe. The results of the TGT projects will be evaluated at the PWI Reunion, to be held in cooperation with the Council of Europe in the European Youth Centre Budapest (February 2015).

Alongside with the PWI component, the RfR continues with its best practice tradition of programme festivals - ProFests - bringing together young people to open them up for cross-border cooperation through peer education in leadership development and service learning. They are expected to further strengthen the cooperation amongst participating organizations, meanwhile equipping youth with attitude, skills and knowledge in civic engagement and peace culture. So far 2 ProFests have taken place, each enrolling approximately 70 participants. The first one in Shushi, Nagorno Karabagh (August 2012) under the motto "it's mY story": the second - in Prague, Czech Republic (August 2013) within the framework of YMCA Europe Love2Live Festival and under the motto "it's mY space". The final ProFest of the current project phase is scheduled in July 2015, to be held in the YMCA Camp Orange, Georgia. The motto of this event is "it's mY camp", and it is expected to demonstrate the impact of the RfR both on behaviour change of young people affected by conflicts, and on movement strengthening of the YMCAs benefiting from this YMCA Europe initiative.

Effective January the 1st, 2015, YMCA Europe plans to start the externally facilitated project Outcome Evaluation and Impact Assessment⁵⁹ process, which is expected to be a concluding component for the RfR two phases so far and a bridging one for its follow-up initiative(s). It considers a set of activities specifically planned to this end, as well as mainstreaming it through certain major project activities planned in 2015. The RfR OEIA process is to be outsourced and commissioned to external facilitation and subject to this Terms of References.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The collapse of the Berlin Wall was believed to bring peace and stability to Europe. Hopes were high that all the nations in the continent will ensemble in the European Home, standing together for peace, justice and democracy. Yet while dismantling the Soviet Union and its satellites, a chain of inter-ethnic conflicts emerged on its wreckage, digging entire generations into vast assets of animosity and alienation, deterioration and deprivation. The latest developments in and around Ukraine come to further outspread and excavate the instability belt yet again dividing Europe. And this is on top of the unprecedented chaos in

⁵⁸ Hereafter TGT

⁵⁹ Hereafter OEIA

the neighbouring Middle East, clearly impacting Europe with its rapidly ensuing humanitarian crisis and ideological clash.

These developments, heavily accompanied by hi-tech and belligerent propaganda combats, are intensively building up radicalisation of attitudes and behaviours not only of official establishments but also of ordinary people, especially youth. Socio-economic deprivation and humanitarian crisis normally accompanying such unstable situations may come to further inflame the fire of hatred and intolerance.

If targeted by RfR Balkan region somehow remains detached from being directly affected by those conflicts, the Caucasus preserves full potential of being 'infected' by one or both of them, or 'sandwiched' in-between. Here the existing conflicts offer 'rich material' for being used as fuel for geo-political or civilizational clashes. The recent escalation of tensions around Karabagh has been especially worrying.

The key challenge for Civil Society organisations working on conflict transformation in these contexts is to avoid supporting war through taking 'premature' positions and sides, yet keep the channels of dialogue open and local capacities for peace intact. All in all every conflict has a lifespan, and the attitudes of reconciliation will ascent sooner or later. Thus we remain convinced that investing in youth activism for peace is one of the key areas attributing to sustainable conflict prevention and transformation. With modern information and communication technologies and platforms at their disposal, young people are fortunately free in searching positive values and activism for the pursuit of peace and security. Thus YMCA Europe remains committed to the RfR cause and theory of change as considerable part of its strategy, and believes in its feasibility notwithstanding the emerging contextual challenges. Moreover, the more we witness conflicts as media breaking news, the more the relevance of peace-work becomes obvious, clearly showing the greater need of peace culture and dialogue as the genuine way to resolve existing conflicts at the roots.

The potential and the role of 'indigo generation' in today's rapidly changing and accelerating world are crucial. It is no more appropriate to state that the youth is the future – youth is what matters now. For young people, who happen to live in conflict areas of Europe, the issue of peace is not just a matter of awareness and ideology – their lives are endangered, opportunities limited and hopes demolished. Yet they can make the change. Thus the YMCA Europe promotes peace (or security) understood as a long-term and deep-rooted process striving towards mutual-trust and equal dignity for all. As the umbrella organisation of the YMCA National Movements in Europe, it has the mandate and offers a structured platform for cross-border cooperation and collaborative work, constantly transferring organizational memory and competences (also in peace-work) from one generation of young leaders to the next one, from one geographical area to another.

The YMCA has outstanding legacy, unique organisational culture and rich experience in working with conflict-prone situations. The YMCA Europe has 'Peace, Justice and Democracy' as one of the pillars of its Strategic Plan 2011-2016. Through the RfR it has built tested operational and resource mobilisation capacities that will serve as a platform to successfully continue its conflict transformation work for the years to come.

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The primary purpose of this externally facilitated OEIA is the outcome evaluation of the RfR current phase inputs and processes utilised so far, and through contextual analyses refine whether the planned project objectives are achieved or likely to be achieved and how far it is to attribute to the impact sought.

Stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in the targeted regions (Caucasus, Balkans) is the main objective (expected outcome) for this phase of the RfR, with the following indicators to measure its achievement.

- ✓ At least 200 participants of all initiatives show that they have changed their attitude when dealing with conflict.
- ✓ 25% of all participants enrolled in cross-border initiatives or trainings show a changed behaviour through evidence of their ongoing engagement in peace practice.
- ✓ 80% of Peace Work Institute graduates show a changed behaviour through evidence of their ongoing engagement and leadership in peace practice - within and beyond the RfR.

At the impact level the RfR has been leveraging the strategic priorities of YMCA Europe and the key project funding partners - BfdW and CoE. Those priorities are:

- ✓ 'To empower young people to build the YMCA as a strong and widely recognised Movement striving for peace and democracy as an integral part of its Christian Mission.' (YMCA Europe)
- ✓ 'Culture of peace is created that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region.' (BfdW Germany)
- ✓ 'Building Youth NGO's capacities to be better prepared to contribute in peace building, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue.' (CoE)

In all data analysis we expect special attention to the criteria of gender balance.

The main instrumental purpose of the RfR OEIA is the formulation and documentation of findings and recommendations derived from the project delivery, which:

- ✓ Illustrate the degree to which the above-mentioned project objective has been achieved.
- ✓ Capture whether a long-term impact can be observed, especially the aforesaid strategic priorities considered.
- ✓ Evaluate the relevance of the project from today's perspective.
- ✓ Assess whether the measures ensuring the sustainability of the achieved project success are sufficient and feasible.

The secondary purpose of this externally facilitated OEIA is the impact assessment of the RfR previous phase (2007 – 2010).

As mentioned above during the RfR phase 2007 – 2010 two CRCs were established in Armenia and one in Georgia, aiming at enhancement of camping programme as organisational profile / market niche for the YMCAs in those countries, with added value on their cross-border / international cooperation and self-sustainability.

The key impact assessment questions here should be based on the Development Assistance Committee⁶⁰ criteria for evaluating developmental assistance, namely:

- ✓ **Relevance:** the extent to which the project was suited to the priorities and policies of the target groups, recipients and donors.
- ✓ **Effectiveness:** a measure of the extent to which the project attained its objectives.
- ✓ **Efficiency:** measuring the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs.
- ✓ **Impact:** The positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** measuring whether the benefits of the project endure termination.

The review of these criteria should go cross-cutting with YMCA Europe strategic priorities, which are:

Mission Awareness

- ✓ Relevant Programmes
- ✓ Sustainability

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY, PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

Outcome Evaluation of RfR current phase (2012 – 2015): YMCA Europe plans to start the process effective January 1, 2015, with having this Terms of References⁶¹ commissioned by the project key stakeholder (BfdW) and expert already contracted.

Through the implementation of the RfR the project staff and the planning teams of the major activities, mostly using the Survey Monkey online instrument, have regularly elaborated pre and post event surveys and prepared reports on each specific event. To this end specific Learning Framework was developed in the very beginning of the project delivery – at the PWI session in Istanbul, Turkey. Moreover, during the first year of the project implementation well-documented Baseline Analysis⁶² were carried out on all the targeted organisations, with conclusions and recommendations elaborated during the special BA workshop. And the last but not the least: RfR online platforms have been developed and are in place, showcasing testimonials and blogs, video and photo presentations, etc. that may well demonstrate the project dynamics and achievements. The first task of the contracted expert(s) should be analysing the results of those resources. Here the RfR staff (especially the project Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant) will be available to provide all necessary support to the expert(s). The expectation is that through researching the project documentation and data the expert(s):

⁶⁰ Hereafter DAC

⁶¹ Hereafter ToR

⁶² Hereafter BA

- ✓ Whereby possible, come up with findings and conclusions, putting the foundation for the OEIA process and deliverables.
- ✓ Identify areas where more data / updates are necessary, and offer methodology and tools for their obtaining. YMCA Europe maintains a contact database on all project beneficiaries.

Meanwhile the YMCA Europe would like to see this outcome evaluation as an externally facilitated participatory process, where the project beneficiaries themselves work on capturing the project achievements and defining necessary improvements. Thus we propose to set up an Assessment Team⁶³ composed of the graduates of the RfR PWI scheme, which will work together with the contracted external expert(s) on OEIA data collection, especially measuring individual level attitude and behaviour change amongst project participants. Besides the contracted external expert is expected to contact other relevant project stakeholders, such as

This process will be initiated at the Reunion of the PWI graduates to be held from February 8 – 14, 2015, in the European Youth Centre Budapest. This one-week-long residential session is designed to develop participants' competences in impact orientation and assessment, with focus on the application of those competences in conflict transformation work. Under the programme modules of:

- ✓ Impact orientation
- ✓ Impact assessment
- ✓ Communicating impact

The Reunion participants will form the AT and they will work with the OEIC evaluators and RfR project managers to:

- ✓ Design and test key questions and adequate tools for assessing the outcomes and impact of the RfR;
- ✓ Establish a structure and process, with a practicable work plan, for data collection in their own communities and within the social networks they have formed as a result of the project;
- ✓ Open up their capacities in analysing evaluation data, and for reporting evaluation data analysis to the evaluator.

In addition, with the facilitation of the evaluator, the workshop participants will carry out an evaluation of the Tandem Grants Tool initiative, building upon the work already carried out by the four separate Tandem Grants Tool projects. The results of this evaluation will inform the overall RfR OEIC.

⁶³ Hereafter AT

After the PWI Reunion the OEIA expert(s), in cooperation with the AT and the RfR staff, are expected to proceed to additional data collection. Developing and launching an end-of-project generic survey(s), using the Survey Monkey tool, can be an effective option.

Meanwhile the expert will be responsible to conduct structured interviews with other project key stakeholders, such as key leaderships of partner organisations, donors, external experts involved in the project delivery.

Here are the key evaluation questions, structured according to DAC criteria:

Relevance: To what extent the RfR and its objectives are supportive of the mission and strategy of YMCA Europe? What model of reconciliation has been used to guide the project design? What were the consequences of this choice? To what extent has project design built upon the lessons learnt and good practices identified from RfR previous phase? Is the project design coherent, positing a rational theory of cause and effect to produce expected results? To what extent do the project's activities and stated objectives meet the needs and context of the project target groups? To what extent does the project address issues of inclusivity? How has the project addressed the needs of both women and men? Has the project achieved gender balance in project participation? To what extent has the project ensured the inclusion of ethnic minorities and non-Christian communities in project activities? How has the project maintained its validity over its duration? Has the project changed and adapted in response to the results of monitoring and relevant changes occurring in the external context?

Efficiency: How many people have benefited directly and indirectly from the project? Has the project been delivered at a reasonable cost, as planned? Could the project have delivered the same results to a lower cost? Was the management structure of the project the most appropriate for ensuring the efficient coordination of project events? To what extent did project management and governance structures enable appropriate, timely, decision-making?

How have project management and governance structures facilitated transparent use of resources and ensured accountability to donors and participants. How has the project monitoring and evaluation system worked?

Effectiveness: To what extent has the project achieved its expected outcomes?

Did it promote to stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in targeted regions? Did it improve mutual trust and understanding between young people involved? Do the youth leaders trained continue to act for change in their sending organisations (peace building, cross-border dialogue)? Do the targeted YMCAs maintain youth civic engagement initiatives for conflict affected communities and /or active participation in regional or cross-border Civil Society peace dialogue platforms? What have been the unintended outcomes of the project? How have participants' lives been changed by the project?

Impact: To what extent has the project contributed to the overall goal of a culture of peace that allows the transformation of existing conflicts in the region? In what ways has the

project impacted upon the YMCA as a Movement striving for peace and democracy? Including, the establishment of a regular pan-European YMCA Peace and Reconciliation knowledge sharing system; and active participation of YMCAs in Civil Society peace dialogue platforms at local, national, regional levels. In what ways has the project contributed to the building of the capacities of Youth NGOs to contribute to peace building, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue? What other impacts have the project contributed to, intended or unintended, in the lives of participants, within youth NGOs, or on any other stakeholders?

Sustainability: How likely is it that the project results and processes continue after the project current phase termination? What measures have been taken by the project to ensure that structures, systems, relationships, and process endure?

The final collation and analysing of data and putting together the OEIA report(s) are the responsibility of the external expert(s). This is to be concluded by June 30, 2014, so that YMCA Europe can use this OEIA findings and conclusions as references in the project proposal(s) for the next phase of the RfR.

Impact Assessment of RfR previous phase (2007 – 2010): YMCA Europe plans to start the process effective February 1, 2015, with having this ToR commissioned by the project key stakeholder (BfdW) and expert already contracted.

The contracted experts, with assistance from RfR staff, should pay site-visits for impact assessment of the RfR CRCs in Armenia and Georgia, assuming data collection and structured interviews with national and local leaderships of the YMCAs in these countries. These site-visits can be arranged in April – May 2015.

As mentioned above, the key impact assessment questions here should be based on the DAC criteria for evaluating developmental assistance.

- ✓ **Relevance:** To what extent were the objectives of the project valid? Were the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives? Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
- ✓ **Effectiveness:** To what extent were the objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- ✓ **Efficiency:** Were activities cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
- ✓ **Impact:** What has happened as a result of the programme or project? What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries? How many people have been affected?
- ✓ **Sustainability:** To what extent did the benefits of the project continue after donor funding ceased? What were the major factors, which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

As a conclusion of the OEIA process, and actually of the overall project, YMCA Europe plans to hold a special OEIA Workshop in Armenia (Fall 2015), enrolling the RfR key stakeholders. This is where the YMCA Europe management response to the OEIA findings and recommendations will be tabled and agreed and follow-up plans conceptualised. The event is to be co-facilitated by both the OEIA experts and YMCA Europe key staff / volunteers.

The main deliverables of this OEIA are:

- ✓ Detailed Outcome Evaluation Report on the RfR current phase by June the 30th, 2015.
- ✓ Detailed Impact Assessment Report on the CRC component of the RfR previous phase by June the 30th, 2015.
- ✓ Brief summary of the RfR current phase outcome evaluation, preferably in form of a presentation by June the 30th, 2015.
- ✓ Brief summary of the RfR previous phase CRC components impact assessment, preferably in form of a presentation by June the 30th, 2015.

The documents should be written in English, in clear and accessible language, with references to sources of information (surveys, interviews, reports and project documentation) and with a structure where conclusions follow the findings, and recommendations follow the conclusions logically. The detailed reports should have:

- ✓ An executive summary, which can be used independently (maximum 3 pages).
- ✓ Explanation of the evaluation methods used and justification of selections made (maximum 3 pages).
- ✓ Detailed presentation of the findings based on qualitative and quantitative analysis (maximum 10 pages).
- ✓ Instrumental conclusions, with reference to the project outcome indicators and impact trends (maximum 3 pages).
- ✓ Annexes, photos, drawings, etc.

Estimated external expertise time required for the RfR current phase outcome evaluation is estimated to be 25 working days:

- ✓ Existing project documentation and data analysis: 5 working days.
- ✓ Budapest workshop preparation, consultations with donors and YMCA Europe: 2 working days.
- ✓ Session / workshop facilitation, Budapest: 5 working days (incl. travel). Plus 2 working days and travel costs covered by CoE and not included into this calculation.
- ✓ New evaluation and assessment data collection and collation: 5 working days
- ✓ Report writing: 5 working days.
- ✓ Preparation for session / workshop delivery, Armenia, including presentations: 3 working days.

Estimated external expertise time required for the RfR previous phase impact assessment is estimated to be 20 working days:

- ✓ Existing project documentation and data analysis: 5 working days.
- ✓ Site visits to YMCA CRCs in Armenia and Georgia, meetings and interviews: 7 working days.
- ✓ New data analysis and report writing: 5 working days.
- ✓ Preparation for session / workshop delivery, Armenia, including presentations: 3 working days.

YMCA Europe suggest to contract two experts, working separately on the RfR current phase outcome evaluation and RfR previous phase impact assessment, yet within this ToR and bringing the results together at the RfR OEIA Workshop. Below are the key criteria for selecting those experts:

- ✓ That the experts have adequate competences to meet the requirements as set in this ToR.
- ✓ That the experts are genuinely external and have had no direct involvement in any of the components of the project delivery.
- ✓ That the experts guarantee quality work at cost-effective consultancy fee and related costs.