Monitoring and Evaluation in Arts-Based Peacebuilding

Armine Avetisyan

Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)

PEACEBUILDING
M&E
SOLUTIONS FORUM
OCTOBER 1, 2019
WASHINGTON, DC

The power of arts and culture to transform conflict

The Afghanistan National Institute of Music supports girls' leadership while preserving cultural heritage and building inter-ethnic trust.
[more: p12 in the Full Report]

The Lamenting Forest performance confronts environmental exploitation and community devastation in Indonesia.
[more: p16]

Tokay Tomah, a Liberian singer and dancer, defies ongoing violence and supports movements for peace.
[more: p43]

In Peru, Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani opens doors for witnessing, truth-telling, healing, and enacting transitional justice in the aftermath of violent conflict.
[more: p26]

IMPACT

IMAGINING TOGETHER

PLATFORM FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

IMPACT's Path

Voices from over 500 people and groups in 7 regions

- MPACT Meetings: Executive and Steering Committees
- Conversations with thought leaders
- Interviews and online research
- Learning exchanges
- Creative collaborative design labs

The Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation Ecosystem

- made up of communities, networks, institutions, and people - including artists, cultural workers, conflict transformation practitioners, scholars, activists, funders, policymakers, arts educators, diplomats, and those in related fields
- similarly to ecosystems in the natural world, the ability of each player to thrive depends on all others
- involves work at the nexus of arts, culture and conflict transformation that values both aesthetic and socio-political dimensions

Roberta Levitow, a founder of Theatre without Borders, offers this picture of her vision of *acct*
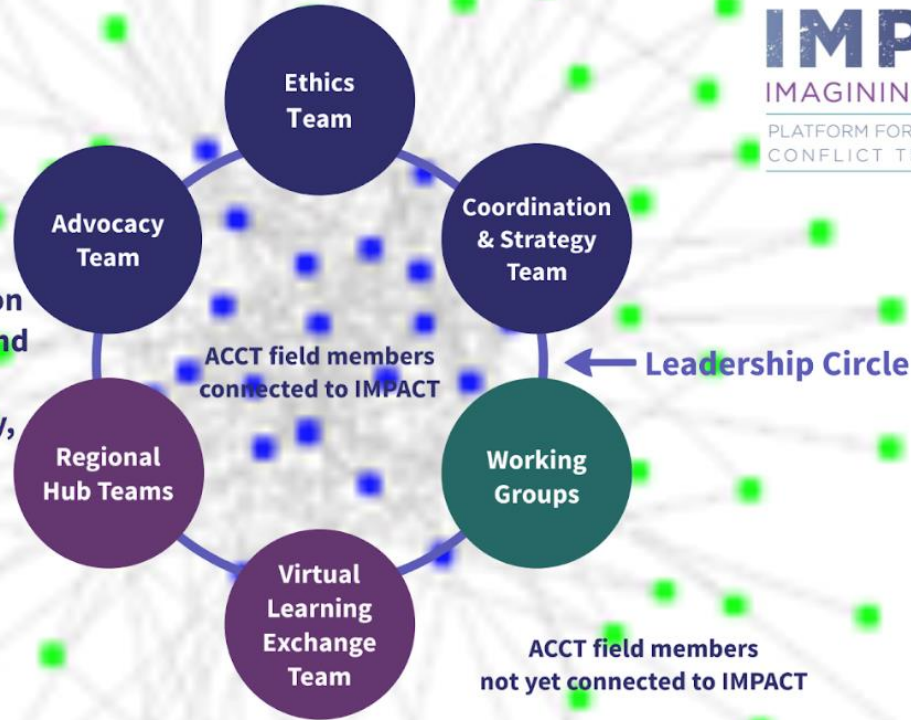
Imagine IMPACT

An emerging strategy to strengthen the
arts, culture, and conflict transformation ecosystem

IMPACT
IMAGINING TOGETHER
PLATFORM FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

IMPACT is an initiative of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at Brandeis University, in collaboration with the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College and Maseno University in Kisumu, Kenya. The planning phase was supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Document developed by Armine Avetisyan, Cynthia Cohen, Emily Forsyth Queen, and Toni Shapiro-Phim in April, 2019.

Photo of reconciliation ritual in Cambodia from *Notes on Pchum Ben* by Ly Daravuth.

bit.ly/ImagineIMPACTfull

Proposal: A Web of IMPACT Teams

Experiments to increase the Arts, Culture, and Conflict Transformation (ACCT) ecosystem's effectiveness and influence by strengthening relationships, thinking strategically, and coordinating action.

Strategic Priorities
Sept 2018 - June 2019
- Coordination & Strategy
- Principles & Values
- Advocacy with Donors & Related Fields
- Connectivity & Inclusion
- Knowledge Generation & Sharing
- Evaluation

Ethics Team

Advocacy Team

Coordination & Strategy Team

ACCT field members connected to IMPACT

Regional Hub Teams

Working Groups

← Leadership Circle

Virtual Learning Exchange Team

ACCT field members not yet connected to IMPACT

IMPACT
IMAGINING TOGETHER
PLATFORM FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Developed by Emily, Armine, and Cindy in response to discussions from the Sept 2018 IMPACT Design Lab
Last updated: Nov 6, 2018

Evaluation in arts, culture and conflict transformation field

➢ What to evaluate: aesthetic value or socio-political outcomes?
➢ How to evaluate: which strategies and tools?

Evaluation in arts, culture and conflict transformation field

Methodology

- Desk research
- Conversation /interviews with funders, practitioners
- Learning exchange
- Written responses to the questionnaire

Evaluation in arts, culture and conflict transformation field

Peacebuilding

Arts and Peacebuilding

Arts and social transformation
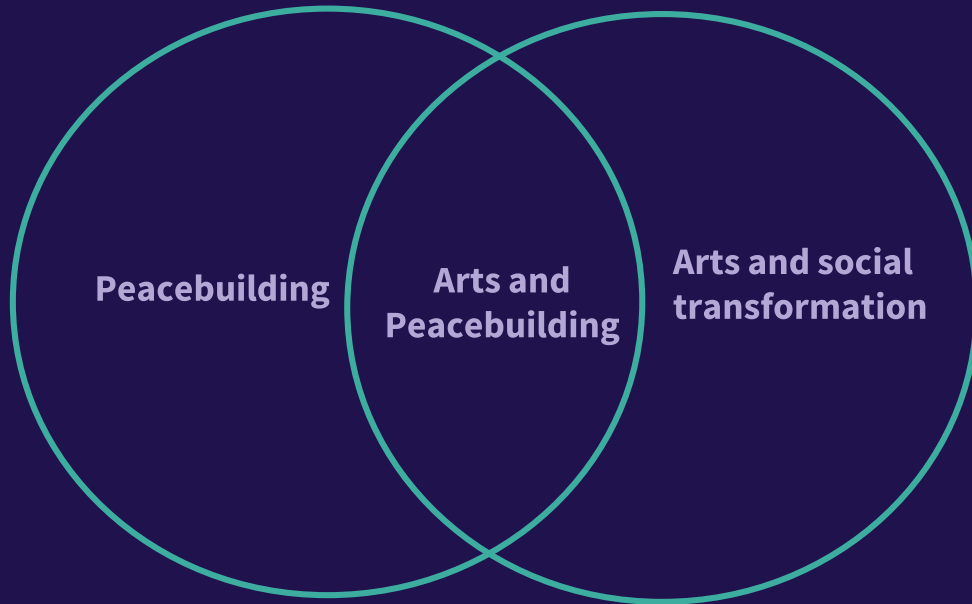
Common challenges

- Complexity
- Ambiguity
- Emergence
- Power dynamics

Helpful Frameworks

Moral Imagination (Lederach, 2005)

- Relationship
- Paradoxical curiosity
- Creativity
- Risk

Permeable Membrane (Cohen, 2011)

- Aesthetics
- Political and ethical sensibilities of artists and cultural leaders
- Conscious and non-conscious factors informing their choices

Hunter & Page (2014)

- What was intended?
- What emerged?
- What insights were gained?
- What happened next?

IMPACT's Learning Exchange on Monitoring and Evaluation

April 2018, Washington D.C.

Peacebuilding / Arts and Social Transformation

Similarities:

- Addressing similar problems in communities
- Dealing with complexity and emergence
- Aiming for change both in people and in systems
- Minimizing harm by centering community concerns and showing conflict sensitivity
- Focusing on building human capacities as well as organizational and community capacities
- Acknowledging importance of process as much as outcomes

Differences:

- Pre-determined goals vs goals emerging from values
- Scaling and replicability vs uniqueness of each project
- Differing priorities from funders' perspectives
- Accountability vs. learning

IMPACT's Learning Exchange on Monitoring and Evaluation

April 2018, Washington D.C.

Emerging trends and bright spots

- Countering Violent Extremism work striving to understand change in people, leading to validation of arts-based approaches
- New insights from Neurosciences contributing to both arts and conflict research
- Developmental evaluation gaining more credibility
- More openness to embrace diversity of thought in terms of qualitative and quantitative data
- Evaluation methodologies evolving from creative placemaking arena of arts field
- Evaluation frameworks being used to look at aspirations, especially in terms of community engagement
- Broader recognition of the importance of ethical frameworks

IMPACT's Learning Exchange on Monitoring and Evaluation

April 2018, Washington D.C.

Questions to address:

- Do we ask relevant questions in terms of what communities care about?
- Are we building the capacities of people in the communities to evaluate the initiatives intending to support them?
- How to better communicate the value of evaluation?
- How to address lack of shared language around attributes, impact, definitions of peacebuilding?
- What are alternative ways of looking at quality of arts-based programs?
- How power dynamics concerns feature in the evaluation of arts-base work?
- Is it possible to evaluate, measure, document the intrinsic value of the arts?
- How can the arts be useful as resources for evaluation?
- Do we have fears of failure, how do we handle them?

Evaluation Approaches Most Relevant to Arts-Based Peacebuilding

- Creative evaluation: picturethinking, storythinking (Patton, 1981)
- Participatory evaluation (Korza &Baceon, 2012; Patton, 2015; Stern & Seifert, 2009)
- Developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011; Gable, 2008)
- Evaluation focused on principles (Patton, 2017)
- Value-Based Approach (Klamer, A., Petrova, L., & Kiss, D.,2016)
- Re-interpretation of creative evaluation ("TerraLuna Collaborative", n.d)
- Principles-focused developmental evaluation ("TerraLuna Collaborative", n.d)

Funders' perspectives on M&E in their work related to arts, culture and conflict transformation

Case Studies

- USAID
- British Council
- European Cultural Foundation, Netherlands
- Ford Foundation, USA
- Solidar Suiza, Bolivia

Funders' perspectives on M&E in their work related to arts, culture and conflict transformation

Key tendencies:

- Increasing importance in developing and institutionalizing evaluation and making use of the results to inform their work
- Prioritizing learning in evaluation
- Evaluation serving to improve strategies, programmes, and action alongside with thriving to prove their impact
- Realizing greater appropriateness of qualitative data
- Increasingly valuing stories and testimonies of the participants as credible data
- Increasing popularity of innovative approaches requiring flexibility and openness to adaptation
- Involving grantees in the evaluation and building their capacity through evaluation

Concluding notes

- The field of arts, culture and conflict transformation is in need of its own cohesive toolkits and frameworks for monitoring and evaluation, which would speak to the sensitivities and nuances, ambiguities and complexities of both peacebuilding and arts fields

- Funders and practitioners can work together for creating inclusive, effective strategies and frameworks for evaluation in the field that would enhance learning, help build informed policies, improve practice and empower actors

- Local context always matters

Thank you!

Armine Avetisyan
arminkav@brandeis.edu

Photo courtesy of The Afghanistan National
Institute of Music