



## **Culture for Peace**

**Promoting pluralism in Myanmar**



**Culture for Peace in Myanmar (also known as the C4P project) was implemented from early 2020 to the end of 2023 by a three-member consortium: HELVETAS Inter-cooperation gGmbH, the Local Resource Centre, and Religion for Peace in Myanmar. Co-funding was provided by the European Union.**

**Culture for Peace (C4P) aimed to contribute to a pluralistic, inclusive, and peaceful society in Myanmar by supporting civil society organisations to play a prominent role in fostering intercultural dialogue, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity.**

Text: Louise Coventry

Design: Hlwan Moe

Cover Design: Tri Awards

Culture for Peace: Promoting pluralism in Myanmar © 2023 by Helvetas  
Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

HELVETAS Myanmar  
No. 587, Unit (B), 6th Floor, The Regency Offices, Pyay Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon, Myanmar  
[www.helvetas.org/myanmar](http://www.helvetas.org/myanmar)

#### Disclaimer:

This report was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Information for this publication was sourced from project documents as well as an external review of the project completed in November 2023 by Kyawt Thuzar and Louise Coventry. Information was current as at November 2023 but is subject to change. Views expressed in this report are those of the author and may or may not be shared by project partners or the project co-funder. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author. Individuals and organisations are not identified in this report, unless explicit permission was given.



**Culture for Peace:  
Promoting pluralism in Myanmar**

*Yangon, November 2023*



Picture: Ko So, Yoma Arts Space, Taungyi.

## Financing arrangements

Financial contributions to Culture for Peace (in Euro)	
European Union	1,655,717
Helvetas Intercooperation gmbH	250,000
Total	1,915,717

# About Culture for Peace

Culture for Peace aimed to contribute to a pluralistic, inclusive, and peaceful society in Myanmar by supporting civil society organisations to play a prominent role in fostering intercultural dialogue, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity.

Culture for Peace worked with artists, interfaith groups and civil society organisations in Kayin, Shan, Kachin, Rakhine states and Mandalay region from early 2020 to the end of 2023.

Culture for Peace delivered:

1. Training for civil society organisations. Training exposed people to new and creative ideas for staging arts and cultural events and projects. Training explained strategies for inclusion, as well as how to write a clear proposal, how to manage a project from beginning to end (project cycle management) and how to manage a grant, among other things. The 'Pluralism Toolbox' comprised the foundation for training.
2. A small grants program for civil society organisations and artists. Securing a grant meant that civil society organisations could practise what they were learning in training sessions. For artists, securing a grant meant producing an artwork that celebrated pluralism and diversity.
3. Evidence for pluralism. Culture for Peace shared the tools from the Pluralism Toolbox at regional and international events and commissioned local researchers to explore the role of arts and culture in promoting pluralism in Myanmar.
4. Networks. Culture for Peace brought people together to exchange knowledge and ideas, and collaborated with other organisations and networks committed to promoting pluralism.

Culture for Peace was implemented by a three-member consortium: HELVETAS Intercooperation gGmbH, the Local Resource Centre, and Religion for Peace in Myanmar. Co-funding was provided by the European Union.

This document shares some of Culture for Peace's successes. It also shows the lessons learned from the project. Throughout the document, reflective poems written by project participants are used to illustrate what was learned. It is hoped that readers will be excited by these successes, inspired by the poems and apply the lessons learned to their own work.

## The Mash-Up

It's a mashup. Different ethnicities. Different religions. We are here together.  
I hear different languages. A cacophony of sound.  
I smell sweet sweat mingled with satisfaction.  
We can learn the history of our different peoples.

I hear different languages. A cacophony of sound.  
A harmonious wave ebbs and flows from the sounds of languages merging.  
We can learn the history of our different peoples.  
I hope to contribute to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among  
different ethnic groups.

A harmonious wave ebbs and flows from the sounds of languages merging.  
Dialogue and exchange. These are events that I can plan and lead. It is my  
contribution.  
I hope to contribute to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among  
different ethnic groups.  
And you? Do you want the same thing as me? Mutual understanding and peaceful  
coexistence?

Dialogue and exchange. These are events that I can plan and lead. It is my  
contribution.  
I want peace. Peace can be built on a foundation of trust.  
And you? Do you want the same thing as me? Mutual understanding and peaceful  
coexistence?  
Indeed, I do. I want peace.

I want peace. Peace can be built on a foundation of trust.  
I smell sweet sweat mingled with satisfaction.  
Indeed, I do. I want peace.  
It's a mashup. Different ethnicities. Different religions. We are here together.

-Participant from Kachin State

## Pluralism, Civil Society and Art

The cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and generational diversity of Myanmar people is astonishing. The former government of Myanmar officially recognised 135 distinct ethnic groups, but this is just the beginning. Some ethnic minority groups are yet to be recognised. Adding to the ethnic diversity of Myanmar is the fact that many of us hold multiple ethnic identities simultaneously. For example, if my father identifies with one ethnic group and my mother identifies with a different ethnic group, I may hold a dual ethnic identity. This means that I may be able to identify successfully with, and be accepted by, two different ethnic groups.

Identities are complex and intersecting. All of us have multiple social and political identities and these identities intersect with each other. Beyond ethnicity, our identities are formed by our experiences of gender, religion, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, disability and physical appearance, to name a few. The way that our identities intersect results in unique combinations of discrimination and privilege.

Everyone wants to live in a community where all of us can feel that we belong - we are included and respected - even if we have different traditions, heritage, experiences and interests. Communities that learn how to manage their diversity and leverage the benefits that come from that diversity can generate social cohesion and become stronger than ever. Civil society organisations and artists are well-placed to convene diverse groups in a divided society.

- There are an estimated 10,000 civil society organisations in Myanmar. These organisations together comprise a diverse mosaic representing past heritage, current interests and priorities, and future concerns. Civil society organisations can engage and empower citizens to create positive change in communities.
- Art inspires our collective imagination. It engages and connects us and challenges our assumptions. Art can help us understand and live with our fellow citizens, guarding against social divisions and threats and building the health of our civil society.

## They Say No

I see a crowd of young people, representing different needs and interests. They are in a small space. It is cosy but not comfortable.

I hear greetings in Rakhine language. Tha. Li. Swa. Ba. The youth do not know each other but they still greet. It is good to hear this.

The scent is diffused. I am sniffing to detect the pleasant smells.

This place is safe for the young people. We can talk openly. This is a place where we can build trust.

I hear greetings in Rakhine language. Tha. Li. Swa. Ba. The youth do not know each other but they still greet. It is good to hear this.

I feel happy to hear more greetings in different languages. Mingalabar. Assalamu alaikum. Tha Li Saw Ba. Knowledge will be shared here.

This place is safe for the young people. We can talk openly. This is a place where we can build trust.

I hope that there can be safe places for young people to visit in every state and region. Enduringly safe.

I feel happy to hear more greetings in different languages. Mingalabar. Assalamu alaikum. Tha Li Saw Ba. Knowledge will be shared here.

We will talk about the future, and ask questions of each other. We will learn about each other's dreams, hopes and beliefs.

I hope that there can be safe places for young people to visit in every state and region. Enduringly safe.

Why do the leaders of our country not allow us to create safe spaces where we can be together?

We will talk about the future, and ask questions of each other. We will learn about each other's dreams, hopes and beliefs.

Let's make the country better together with the strength of our diversity.

Why do the leaders of our country not allow us to create safe spaces where we can be together?

The leaders say no. The leaders of our country vie for position. They are not thinking about the people. But I believe we can change this.

Let's make the country better together with the strength of our diversity.

The scent is diffused. I am sniffing to detect the pleasant smells.

The leaders say no. The leaders of our country vie for position. They are not thinking about the people. But I believe we can change this.

I see a crowd of young people, representing different needs and interests. They are in a small space. It is cosy but not comfortable.

-Participant from Sittwe



## The Double Crisis

It is hard to imagine a more difficult context in which to deliver a project that promotes pluralism. Culture for Peace operated in Myanmar between 2020 and 2023. In that period, Myanmar experienced extreme and devastating change. In early 2020, as nations closed their borders to each other and curtailed domestic travel to try and stop the spread of the COVID 19 virus, Culture for Peace was just getting started. Fear was rampant and people were falling ill. Many activities that were planned needed to be reconsidered and delivered online instead of face to face. Then, in February 2021, the military seized power and ousted the elected (partly) civilian government. Life in Myanmar became chaotic: Untold atrocities and human rights abuses were unleashed on the civilian population. Many people, including artists and civic leaders, became targets and fled the country. Mistrust, already high, grew even higher as the costs of dissent increased. In the face of the 'double crisis', creating a culture of peace was more important than ever.

## A Taste of Freedom

I see the people milling around the food festival. Small groups gather. They are talking together.

I hear chatter. The clatter of spoons circling in pots and pans escapes from the kitchen.

I smell glutinous rice, pea soup, vegetable samosas and fried noodles.

The women are happy. They taste freedom. Today, they can show their talent for cooking to all who come with unsated appetites.

I hear chatter. The clatter of spoons circling in pots and pans escapes from the kitchen.

It is not the day for quiet and calm.

The women are happy. They taste freedom. Today, they can show their talent for cooking to all who come with unsated appetites.

I wish that the women could always feel happy. Satisfied with their contribution. To be seen.

It is not the day for quiet and calm.

I am so glad that I could help organise the food festival for our community.

I wish that the women could always feel happy. Satisfied with their contribution. To be seen.

Do you want to increase your happiness and satisfaction too?

I am so glad that I could help organise the food festival for our community.

I want to be a leader, someone who initiates events, like today.

Do you want to increase your happiness and satisfaction too?

Yes, I want to increase my happiness. I feel satisfied to make a contribution.

I want to be a leader, someone who initiates events, like today.

I smell glutinous rice, pea soup, vegetable samosas and fried noodles.

Yes, I want to increase my happiness. I feel satisfied to make a contribution.

I see the people milling around the food festival. Small groups gather. They are talking together.

-Participant from Kayin

# Explaining Project Activities

## Training for civil society organisations

Altogether, about 300 people from civil society organisations joined training activities and 70 people from different regions were trained as ‘master trainers’. The Local Resource Centre then supported these people to deliver ‘multiplier’ training in their own communities. Training was well-received by participants and resulted in demonstrable gains in skills. Specifically, the capacity of civil society organisations increased in terms of:

- Access to inspiration about a range of ways to use arts and culture to promote pluralism and peace
- Deeper understanding of inclusive practices to event planning and management
- Ability to plan and implement projects that address local priorities using understandings of project cycle management
- Ability to secure, manage and acquit grants

The Pluralism Toolbox which provides the foundation for much of the training curriculum was observed to be of high quality and is widely reported as helpful. Challenges were experienced in assuring the quality of training, in the face of the ‘double crisis’.

## Small grants program

Altogether, 80 small grants (maximum of 3,000 euros) and 20 large grants (maximum of 13,000 euros) were distributed to civil society organisations across three grant rounds. With these grants, 265 safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue were created. Examples of these safe and inclusive spaces include food festivals, interfaith visits, and cultural fairs.

Further, 114 grants of 800 euros were distributed to artists across two grant rounds and 114 artworks were created to showcase diversity and how to live together peacefully.

The reach of funded projects was extraordinarily high at 1.3 million people. The extraordinary reach may be one of the unintended consequences of moving activities online where more people can click, view, like and comment in their own time.

Grant-making practices were generally very good. Mentoring was provided to grant recipients and strategies were in place to engage unsuccessful grant applicants. These good practices seem related to the consortium partners’ depth of expertise in grant-making. To further improve the quality of projects funded by grants, it may be valuable to consider how best to incentivise and support collaborations between artists, civil society organisations and interfaith groups.

## Evidence for pluralism

The Pluralism Toolbox is available online and in multiple languages. The Pluralism Toolbox has an important role in inspiring people and organisations to be more inclusive in their plans and activities. Efforts to share the Pluralism Toolbox and showcase the story of C4P include presentations, workshops and documentaries. These seem worthy and valuable, even if the results of these efforts are not yet clear. However, research commissioned by Culture for Peace seems to have struggled with issues of quality. It is important to provide adequate support and supervision to researchers so as to ensure that data is generated appropriately and treated reliably and validly and that any claims made can be substantiated.

## Networks

Many of the plans for creating and supporting networks needed to change in light of the ‘double crisis’. Even so, sixteen exchanges were hosted and grant recipients (artists, community groups, interfaith groups) in every region had the chance to join local networks for sharing experiences and knowledge. Informants to the evaluation of Culture for Peace reported benefitting from their participation in social networks: Relationships and networks between artists and community organisations were strengthened, and collaboration was encouraged. Culture for Peace also built valuable international networks such as with Mekong Cultural Hub and developed synergies with other funded arts, peace and development projects in Myanmar.

## Buzzing and Flitting

I see the young people. They are buzzing and flitting in front of the community building.

I hear them asking questions about the venue. Is it ready for us?

I smell the heady combination of sweat and cheap perfume.

The young people go inside. They are discussing social cohesion. Their voices are animated. At first, there is some coldness. They come from different locations and they represent different ethnicities. But, as they talk, the building fills with warmth and connections.

I hear them asking questions about the venue. Is it ready for us?

Why are you here?

The young people go inside. They are discussing social cohesion. Their voices are animated. At first, there is some coldness. They come from different locations and they represent different ethnicities. As they talk, the building fills with warmth and connections.

I hope this warmth will be enduring.

Why are you here?

I am sharing information with them. I talk about how to live a peaceful life. I answer their questions. I can explain clearly and carefully.

I hope this warmth will be enduring.

Hey young people, do you believe that we can create a peaceful future for Myanmar?

I am sharing information with them. I talk about how to live a peaceful life. I answer their questions. I can explain clearly and carefully.

I want to engage the young people.

Hey young people, do you believe that we can create a peaceful future for Myanmar?

Yes, I believe that we can create a peaceful future for Myanmar.

I want to engage the young people.

I smell the heady combination of sweat and cheap perfume.

Yes, I believe that we can create a peaceful future for Myanmar.

I see the young people. They are buzzing and flitting in front of the community building.

-Participant from Lashio

# Evaluation Findings

The evaluation of Culture for Peace considered its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation also considered gender and social equity, and sensitivity to conflict. Here are some key findings from the evaluation of Culture for Peace:

## Relevance

High levels of adaptation occurred in response to the dramatic 'double crisis' in Myanmar. Topical and important themes were pursued using approaches that were relevant and appreciated by project stakeholders. There is evidence of learning and effective problem-solving on the part of consortium leaders. The evaluation recommended that the consortium leadership be congratulated for their creativity, ingenuity, and commitment to problem solving in a complex and continually changing context where the windows of opportunity for action were often very small.

## Efficiency

Grants produced outstanding value for money, because 1.3 million people participated in events or saw artworks that were created using grants. Yet, change is a natural enemy of efficiency. Dramatic changes in the context of Myanmar (the 'double crisis') compromised the efficiency of knowledge development, networking and advocacy. Many good practices have been adopted, but there is room to improve monitoring and evaluation practices, research practices and disability inclusion practices.

## Effectiveness

Culture for Peace achieved its objectives: Improvements to the capacity of civil society organisations were clear and meaningful, and grant effectiveness and reach were very high. The effectiveness of knowledge development and sharing, and networking and advocacy was generally low to modest. The most effective aspects of Culture for Peace were: the small grants program, the robustness of the partnership between the three consortium partners, and the multiplier effect of training. Opportunities for learning have been identified and include: monitoring and evaluation, incentivising deeper collaborations and investing in training quality.

## Internally Displaced

I see crowds assembling. The tents are lined up in neat rows. There are children playing outside in the furrows between tents.  
I hear someone call out, 'The singers are coming today!'  
I smell food but there remains a staleness. It loiters around the tents in the camp.  
The children in the camp want to continue their schooling.

I hear someone call out, 'The singers are coming today!'  
"Oh. Who are these people? What are they doing here with their guitars?"  
The children in the camp want to continue their schooling.  
I hope the children can return to their home villages and continue their schooling there.

"Oh. Who are these people? What are they doing here with their guitars?"  
"We need to sing songs that lift the spirits of the camp dwellers. Let's fill their hearts with hope and happiness."  
I hope the children can return to their home villages and continue their schooling there.  
Dear Venerable monks, when can these people return to their villages?

"We need to sing songs that lift the spirits of the camp dwellers. Let's fill their hearts with hope and happiness."  
I want them to understand deeply and inhabit the music. Be one with the music.  
Dear Venerable monks, when can these people return to their villages?  
When there is a chance and it is safe, the displaced people will return to their villages.

I want them to understand deeply and inhabit the music. Be one with the music.  
I smell food but there remains a staleness. It loiters around the tents in the camp.  
When there is a chance and it is safe, the displaced people will return to their villages.  
I see crowds assembling. The tents are lined up in neat rows. There are children playing outside in the furrows between tents.

-Participant from Rakhine

# Evaluation Findings (continued)

## Impact

Looking beyond what Culture for Peace delivered, we can assess whether long term change has occurred or is likely to occur. So far, there is good evidence to support claims that positive changes have occurred in the hearts and minds of individuals who engaged with Culture for Peace. We see an increased commitment to inclusive practice from civil society organisations and greater interactions between interfaith, artist and civil society groups which is beginning to change the fabric of communities by increasing tolerance and respect. Grants make a difference in maintaining income, increasing and attracting new income, and saving for the future. Because it continues to be available as a resource and source of inspiration, the Pluralism Toolbox is likely to have impacts in communities for a long time to come. New knowledge has been created, but there is an argument to be made that perhaps the full suite of relevant knowledge needed for civil society organisations to promote pluralism has not been adequately supported. Together, we make a leap of faith that including people in events will result in pluralism. A clearer and well-articulated chain of causality or theory of change would be very useful for establishing exactly how change is or isn't occurring in communities. No unintended negative impacts were found.

## Sustainability

The sustainability of achievements made by Culture for Peace is mostly good. Enduring benefits include:

1. Contributions to strengthening civil society organisations, in the form of new expertise and new funds, some of which can be - and are - retained to support later projects.
2. Relationships and networks. These will continue after the project is completed.
3. Online storage of resources such as artworks, video clips, documentaries and the Pluralism Toolbox.
4. Some grants resulted in tangible assets like artworks, libraries, trees, and handcraft businesses which will continue to be available after the project is completed.

## Gender and social equity

Women, young people and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics were effectively included in the Culture for Peace project. Challenges were experienced in including people from diverse religions. Diverse ethnicities were included, however, deeper reflection on how this inclusion occurred and the risks associated with it will be valuable. Good intentions to include people with disabilities were not backed up with deep understanding of the preconditions for inclusion, such as making provision for reasonable accommodation. The benefits for marginalised communities arising from Culture for Peace include: increased visibility, safety, recognition and stronger relationships.

## Conflict sensitivity

The unsafe and insecure nature of the environment in which Culture for Peace was delivered posed enormous challenges. The evaluation commended consortium leaders for their relentless prioritisation of staff and participant safety. It also recommended that greater attention be given to the principles of Do No Harm, as there are risks of harm, such as psychological harm, that extend beyond concerns for physical safety.

## Encounters at the Gallery

I see people laughing. They seem happy milling around the gallery space.  
I hear chit-chatting and traffic noise from the road beyond the gallery.  
I smell cigarette smoke. I can disentangle the smell from the smoking pile of leaf litter outside.  
After seeing my paintings, people come to introduce themselves to me.

I hear chit-chatting and traffic noise from the road beyond the gallery.  
Never mind the noise. I remain quiet and peaceful.  
After seeing my paintings, people come to introduce themselves to me.  
I search for that feeling of completeness and satisfaction that arrives after creating art freely.

Never mind the noise. I remain quiet and peaceful.  
The peace is running through my veins.  
I search for that feeling of completeness and satisfaction that arrives after creating art freely.  
Do you also like to create something in freedom?

The peace is running through my veins.  
I want everlasting peace on this earth.  
Do you also like to create something in freedom?  
Of course, I like to create in freedom.

I want everlasting peace on this earth.  
I smell cigarette smoke. I can disentangle the smell from the smoking pile of leaf litter outside.  
Of course, I like to create in freedom.  
I see people laughing. They seem happy milling around the gallery space.

-Participant from Taunggyi



# Learning

Like all projects, much was learned along the way. Some of what we learned we knew already, but we were reminded of its importance and so we want to remind you too. Here, the partners responsible for delivering Culture for Peace share advice about how to conduct a successful project to promote pluralism in Myanmar.

Participants in Culture for Peace learned about Project Cycle Management. Project Cycle Management is a tool to help make our projects more successful. It is included and explained in the Pluralism Toolbox. Recognising this, advice learned from Culture for Peace is explained using the framework of Project Cycle Management.

The first step is to identify the issue that the project could address. This step is called IDENTIFICATION.

From Culture for Peace, we learn that:

- It is important to address the most pressing and urgent priorities.
- We should be alert to changes in our environment. We should look into the future and think about what changes we can predict will be coming.
- Do not assume that all of those who want to be involved in your project have the same understanding of key concepts and priorities. Explore and recognise how meanings can be different locally and regionally. For example, meanings attached to peace and meanings attached to ethnic identity may be different from country to country, and from town to town.

The second step of Project Cycle Management is DESIGN. In this second step, we start to think about how community priorities can be addressed. From Culture for Peace, we learn that it is important to:

- Consider retaining the most successful elements of any prior projects that you have conducted.
- Engage all relevant stakeholders at the earliest possible opportunity. This is critically important for promoting ownership over project design and securing ongoing engagement.
- A clear and simple theory of change (perhaps represented visually) can assist in maintaining project coherence in times of dramatic change to contexts, strategies and deliverables.
- Think carefully about what harm could potentially be caused, remembering that harm can occur in a wide range of ways. Develop strategies to avoid harm and make sure that they are included in your project.

## What Comes Next?

It is mostly quiet, but I see the togetherness.

I hear talking, exchanging. They are asking about each other's culture.

I smell the grilled meat. The meat is carefully wrapped in bamboo leaves and stuffed in bamboo and thrown on the fire. I can smell fish paste and fermented wine (htan yay).

Every ethnic group should maintain their cultural traditions. But at the same time, we need unity. The unity comes from deep inside our hearts.

I hear talking, exchanging. They are asking about each other's culture.

We keep to ourselves.

Every ethnic group should maintain their cultural traditions. But at the same time, we need unity. The unity comes from deep inside our hearts.

I hope for unity. Feelings of unity can inspire true peace.

We keep to ourselves.

I am taking a photograph. I want to chronicle our cultural exchange, our engagement in conversation.

I hope for unity. Feelings of unity can inspire true peace.

What could happen to us if all the cultures are banished and if we lost the unity and we could not have peace?

I am taking a photograph. I want to chronicle our cultural exchange, our engagement in conversation.

I am documenting the success because here today there is togetherness and unity.

What could happen to us if all the cultures are banished and if we lost the unity and we could not have peace?

Our culture will be lost. Our generation will be in ruins. Ethnic groups will vanish. Genocide comes next.

I am documenting the success because here today there is togetherness and unity.

I smell the grilled meat. The meat is carefully wrapped in bamboo leaves and stuffed in bamboo and thrown on the fire. I can smell fish paste and fermented wine (htan yay).

Our culture will be lost. Our generation will be in ruins. Ethnic groups will vanish.

Genocide comes next.

It is mostly quiet, but I see the togetherness.

-Participant from Mandalay

## Learning (continued)

The third step of Project Cycle Management is IMPLEMENTATION. The following advice should prove useful when implementing a project:

- Ensure necessary expertise is available directly and internally to project partners. For example, it is risky to rely on voluntary, advisory groups to source expertise that is essential to your project.
- Ensure that projects that rely on training of trainers follow good practices such as:
  - √ adequate allocation of time for initial training
  - √ regular refresher training
  - √ teaching of andragogical principles and practices to master trainers (This is distinct from teaching master trainers about the subject matter.)
  - √ provision of detailed but flexible curriculum and accompanying resources
  - √ clear guidance about which topics and activities are compulsory and which are optional
  - √ specification of quality standards e.g. minimum number of face to face hours, and establishment of quality assurance mechanisms, and
  - √ generous support for ongoing learning, such as peer review, feedback, or communities of practice
  - √ regular assessment of training outcomes (not just inputs, or satisfaction surveys)
- Where collaborations across sectors are desired, ensure adequate opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas at the earliest possible stage and consider directly incentivising partnerships.
- Where organisational strengthening is desired, ensure that organisational development plans are highly customised, and locally led. Provide accompaniment and/or embed resources inside organisations, wherever possible.

The fourth step of Project Cycle Management is EVALUATION. What we learn from Culture for Peace is as follows:

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation frameworks include an ongoing commitment to learning and remain flexible enough to accommodate changes to contexts, strategies, and deliverables.
- Include story-telling and other forms of qualitative data generation in monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Finally, the framework of Project Cycle Management requires us to LEARN THE LESSONS. Remember that not all projects will achieve their objectives. The most important thing is to learn, then apply the learning so you can improve.

## The Interfaith Visit

I see young and old together. I can tell from their clothing that they practise different religions. They look at each with curiosity. And perhaps a little suspicion.

I hear greetings. Chit chat and muffled laughter.

I smell the body odour. It collides with the freshly painted walls of the Hindu temple, joss sticks and flowers.

Today we have an opportunity to learn and show our friendliness. We can ask questions in freedom.

I hear greetings. Chit chat and muffled laughter.

As we gather, at first, there is no sound at all. Silence. Nervous, shifting feet. Then I hear some complaining words. What did you say?

Today we have an opportunity to learn and show our friendliness. We can ask questions in freedom.

I want more friendliness. I want us to talk more. I want to explore and learn in depth. Truly understand.

As we gather, at first, there is no sound at all. Silence. Nervous, shifting feet. Then I hear some complaining words. What did you say?

I encourage the visitors. Come on in! I greet others with joyfulness. Welcome! I initiate small talk. How are you today? I can smooth the way. Relax. Ease the conversation.

I want more friendliness. I want us to talk more. I want to explore and learn in depth. Truly understand.

Are you happy to come and learn about the Hindu traditions? Do you have knowledge about this already? Is there more you want to know?

I encourage the visitors. Come on in! I greet others with joyfulness. Welcome! I initiate small talk. How are you today? I can smooth the way. Relax. Ease the conversation.

Let's respect every religion and every culture. We can live together in harmony.

Are you happy to come and learn about the Hindu traditions? Do you have knowledge about this already? Is there more you want to know?

I am happy to learn more. Having knowledge about different religious temples and customs will help me to live in harmony with others.

Let's respect every religion and every culture. We can live together in harmony.

I smell the body odour. It collides with the freshly painted walls of the Hindu temple, joss sticks and flowers.

I am happy to learn more. Having knowledge about different religious temples and customs will help me to live in harmony with others.

I see young and old together. I can tell from their clothing that they practise different religions. They look at each with curiosity. And perhaps a little suspicion.

-Participant from Kachin

## Conclusion

Overall, Culture for Peace was very successful, even though it was delivered in a complex, changing environment that was often experienced as hostile.

To summarise the key successes:

- A Pluralism Toolbox is available online in multiple languages. The toolbox inspired people to plan and deliver more inclusive projects and to use arts and culture to promote pluralism. It will likely continue to inspire people.
- Training was mostly based on the Pluralism Toolbox. Trainers were able to 'multiply' the training in regional areas.
- A well-conceived small grants program enabled civil society organisations to apply what they learned in training. Artists were also able to access grants to produce artworks promoting pluralism. Activities and artworks supported by grants reached 1.3 million people.
- The robust partnership between consortium members helped to ensure that Culture for Peace could continue during difficult times.

The project partners experienced some challenges to their work, not least because of the 'double crisis' in Myanmar:

- In particular, generating evidence for pluralism, connecting people through networks, and advocacy was made more complex because of changes in the environment.
- Consideration can usefully be given to:
  - ✓ stronger monitoring and evaluation frameworks that attend to issues of quality,
  - ✓ closer monitoring of training quality,
  - ✓ considering the principles of Do No Harm,
  - ✓ incentivising and supporting cross-sectoral collaborations,
  - ✓ strategies to support research quality

Find the Pluralism Toolbox here:

<https://www.helvetas.org/en/myanmar/what-we-do/how-we-work/our-projects/Asia/Myanmar/myanmar-cultureforpeace>

## The Meaning of Dialogue

I see the meaning of dialogue.  
I hear the sound of conflict.  
I smell hatred and cruelty.  
But I can taste the tang of meeting, talking and making friends.

I hear the sound of conflict.  
Inside, I feel peace. At least, an absence of conflict.  
But I can taste the tang of meeting, talking and making friends.  
No pride and prejudice.

Inside, I feel peace. At least, an absence of conflict.  
I live in peaceful coexistence with others.  
No pride and prejudice.  
What is the meaning of peace?

I live in peaceful coexistence with others.  
I honour my words in my actions. I have integrity, warmth, friendliness and openness.  
What is the meaning of peace?  
An absence of conflict. An absence of unresolved issues.

I honour my words in my actions. I have integrity, warmth, friendliness and openness.  
I smell hatred and cruelty.  
An absence of conflict. An absence of unresolved issues.  
I see the meaning of dialogue.

-Participant from Rakhine



INCLUSION HUMAN  
 CREATIVITY EQUALITY CO-EXISTENCE  
 INTERFAITH LEARNING  
 PAINTING RELIGION  
 PLURALISM PHOTO CULTURE RESPECT SOCIAL  
 DOCUMENTARIES RIGHTS LOVE IDENTITY  
 VALUE ETHNICITY ARTS MOBILE COHESION  
 DIVERSITY SHAPING ACTIVITY PLAY  
 MUTUAL SOCIETY TRADITION PEACEFUL  
 VALUE ART LIBRARY NON-VIOLENCE  
 TOOLS JUSTICE TOOLBOX  
 LONG-LASTING



ဗို. ဦးစုမန္တိုင်အဖွဲ့  
 Local Resource Centre



The full report of the final external review of Culture for Peace is available on request.  
 Please direct requests to [myanmar@helvetas.org](mailto:myanmar@helvetas.org)