Guiding Principles of Peace-Learning in Action

or a collection of ideas on how youth organizations could implement
the guiding principles of peace-learning into their practical work

SCI

Service Civil International

Working for peace

Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide ideas on how youth organizations could implement the guiding principles of peace-learning into their practical work, in

- ☑ Camps
- ☑ Sports Tournaments
- ☑ Excursions
- ☑ Workshops
- ☑ Arts Exhibitions
- ☑ Music Festivals
- ☑ or other activities

while upholding their organization's mandate and style.

In the *Practical Guide on Peace Education and Global Learning*, we highlighted the importance of aligning form and content, i.e. to live what we teach, or to walk the talk, in order to facilitate peace-learning in authentic and convincing ways. The alignment of form and content occurs on several, interrelated, levels:

- ☑ institutional: how the organization is connecting its purpose with its inner organization (for example how an organization working for the empowerment of citizens is itself democratically organized)
- ☑ action: how activities are facilitated (for example how fair-play is promoted in a sports tournament)
- ☑ personal: how the facilitators interact with others (for example how a facilitator deals with late-comers)

In the following chapters, you will find a few suggestions on how the promotion of peace can be integrated into these three levels. Concerning the institutional and the personal level, we suggest some guiding questions instead of practical solutions, in order to respect the diversity of organizations and individuals. Regarding the action level, however, we propose 15 concrete measures that can be taken in order to integrate peace-learning into the organization's activities.

You may read this annex as a general inspiration for your work, or scan it for useful tips when preparing a concrete activity. Whatever your aim, we hope you have fun reading this!

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Institutional level

An organization which "lives" in a peace-promoting way supports its facilitators in their work and allows them to focus entirely on the groups they are coaching. It also provides an example for the participants of how a peace-promoting structure might look like. Here below you will find a set of questions which may support you in your reflection on how your organization is working and how its peaceful aspects may be strengthened.

- ☑ why was your organization created, i.e. what is it seeking to address and how? Why did you bring together a group of people, or what need are you seeking to address?
- ☑ what were your organization's greatest successes and what contributed to it? what was your greatest experience of success in the organization?
- ☑ how are decisions taken in your organization?
- ☑ how are the responsibilities split?
- ☑ which are the communication and information channels and how do they work? what information is shared?
- ☑ how do you and your organization deal with disagreements?
- ☑ by which code of conduct are instructors bound?
- ☑ how are instructors being held accountable for their actions?

... which other relevant questions should be asked?

Ideally, an organizational team would choose a dialogue facilitation tool (see links on page 12) in order to embark on this reflection together, and regularly hold a reflection session. It is important to care about the individuals and the organization that implement the activities so that they can do it at their best.

Personal level

For promoting peace on the personal level, facilitators do not have to be super-human or perfectly peaceful persons. It is simply about being honest, humble, willing to learn, and motivated to work in complementarity with others who have different skills.

The preparation, presence, and state of mind of the facilitator strongly influence the activities and the peace learning process of the participants. How are you performing the tight-rope walk between bringing attention on yourself and the focus on the group?

Being grounded, well-prepared and confident, while flexible to move with the flow of the group as it evolves, are key characteristics of a successful facilitator. This entails perceiving the needs of the group and constantly matching one's tools with those needs. The more experience and the larger the toolbox, the easier it will be to find a matching tool. The sensitivity towards the needs of the group grows on high self-awareness and good communication skills, and can be trained.

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Self-awareness can be promoted through many different means, through intellectual analysis as well as feeling (yoga, meditation, etc.). Here below you find a set of questions which may support you in reflecting on where you stand, what you need, and how you communicate:

- ☑ what has driven you to lead this activity? what do you hope to gain from it?
- ☑ how does your work in this organization affect your identity and vice versa?
- ☑ what do you bring to this group and how is it expressed?
- ☑ what do you expect from others and how do you communicate that?
- ☑ what are your needs and wishes in this activity and how can they be met? how do you balance them with the group's needs?
- ☑ what are the boundaries that the participants and team colleagues cannot cross and where are they?
- ☑ how do you balance your intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects?
- ☑ where do you need which support and how do you get it?
- ☑ which areas do you want to develop and how can you do that?
- ☑ what questions do you have and where can you get a response to them?

There are many ways to do this reflection, for example:

- ☑ reflect on one question per day, for example during a relaxing activity such as cooking, showering or walking
- ☑ mind-map out the answers with writing and drawing
- ☑ tell a friend or mentor

Communication is essential for the prevention and peaceful transformation of conflict, be it inner, interpersonal, or intergroup conflict. It includes active listening skills and the ability to express thoughts and emotions in ways which are appropriate for the context. Extensive literature on communication and conflict transformation exists, and thus we highlight below just a few of the possible tools:

- ☑ Non-violent communication (Marshall B. Rosenberg): Through expression in 4 steps, i.e. observation, feeling, needs and wishes, and by listening and mirroring what the other says, someone who is in conflict can effectively communicate (called giraffe language) without attacking or defending (called shakal language).
- ☑ Transcend (Johan Galtung): Identify the real and legitimate needs of the people in conflict, look beyond the attitudes and behaviors to the contradictions underlying the conflict, and try to find a creative win-win solution which transcends those contradictions.
- ☑ Interactive problem-solving (Herbert C. Kelman): A change in perspective occurs when the people in conflict actively listen to the other's wide and heterogenous range of needs, fears, and concerns. This widening of perspectives leads to a greater understanding and a wider range of possibilities for finding common solutions.
- ☑ Appreciative Inquiry (David Cooperrider): The qualities of an organization, group and/or individual, its past successes, its vision and the strategy to get there are elaborated by the means of a set of positively formulated questions.

These tools are all relatively simple but require some practice in everyday life and while organizing and implementing activities.

Action level

In this section, we provide a collection of ideas for actions which may contribute to the implementation of the guiding principles listed in the practical guide. These actions can be integrated into most if not all activities of youth organizations. Some combinations need a bit more creativity than others.

A few examples of how actions can be combined with activities:

- ☑ In a camp, another youth group may be invited to participate in some activities.
- ☑ In a sports tournament, the debriefing may take the form of the participants saying one word about how they feel now and/or one impression of the day while they are doing stretching exercises.
- ☑ In an excursion, the participants may be asked to pair up and contribute to the group in a creative way.
- ☑ In a workshop, the opening ceremony may consist of welcoming the participants and an energizer to learn their names.
- ☑ In an art exhibition, the link to the outside world can be channeled through the visitors by integrating their views and skills into dynamic pieces of art.
- ☑ In a music festival, unity in diversity can be played by integrating different instruments, rhythms or music styles into one piece of music.

These actions must be adapted to the activities, their aims, their time-frames, the participants and the environment. Whatever your activity, it may also be useful to refer to the workshop and facilitation guidelines on www.peace-learning.org.

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Through the integration of guiding principles of peace-learning into the activities with the help of specific actions, the form (how something is taught/ learnt) of those activities becomes content (what is taught/ learnt), in which there is implicit peace-learning. Some of the actions, especially those framing the activities (choice of topic, closing ceremony, etc.), ask for a more conscious reflection by the participants.

Please refer to the *practical guide* on www.peace-learning.org to learn more about the guiding principles.

The table below summarizes actions which, if appropriately integrated into activities, may promote peace-learning:

Actions	Principles xxx = highly contributing; x = contributing						
	Promote a pro-active learning culture	Raise awareness & seek conscientization	Assure ownership and active participation	Ensure critical empowerment	Favor holism and comprehensiveness	Foster cooperation and reduce competition	Putting values into practice
Opening ceremony			x		x	xx	xx
Agreement on topic	xxx	xx	xxx			x	x
Agreement on detail preparation	xx		xxx	xx		x	x
Clarifying expectations and wishes	xx	x	xxx			x	x
Highlighting unity in diversity					xx	x	x
Active participation in "common life's daily tasks"		xx	x	xxx		xxx	xxx
Code of conduct		x	xx	xx		xxx	xxx
Collaborating with another youth group		xxx			xx	xx	x
Diversifying activities			x		xxx		x
Cooperative games				x	x	xxx	x
Make activities relevant		xxx	x	x	xxx		
Debriefing		xx		x			
Feed-back	x		x	xx		x	x
Appreciation ceremony				x	x	xxx	xx
Closing ceremony						xx	xx

* Each of these principles is properly described and explained in the practical guide on peace eduction and global learning (www.peace-learning.org)

Opening ceremony

Why not start with a common cooperative action before explaining how the day will continue? This may help to unite the group, get them warmed up, and make them curious about what is going to follow. Have a look at the collection of cooperative games on www.peace-learning.org for some ideas!

Agreement on topic

Including the participants into the choice of the topic and the activities which are held around that topic is one way of creating a sense of ownership and ensuring that the topic around which the activities evolve is relevant to them. The participants may develop an increased awareness of "burning" topics and of their own and their colleagues' pre-existing knowledge. Ideally, this action allows to establish a link between the participants personal reality and the wider contextual reality.

For example, the participants may decide to hold a workshop on identities, an arts exhibition around living art, an excursion to a waste water management plant, a sports tournament with disabled persons, a camp on a glacier or music festival on foreign tonalities.

It may be necessary to limit the participants choice of topics with regard to the organization's mandate and the wider purpose of the activities, as well as broad topic boundaries. For ideas about brainstorming and dialogue facilitation, see the links on page 12. With younger participants, it may be necessary to structure and shorten this process and to provide more input.

Agreement on detail preparation

In order to foster a sense of ownership and empower participants, facilitators can also invite them to decide on the detail preparation, i.e. on who is going to be responsible for setting up and cleaning up, to keep track of what is going on during the activity, to keep the time, or to watch the implementation of the code of conduct. For some ideas about how to facilitate this, see the links on page 12.

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Again, the way this is done should carefully be adapted to the age and background of the participants, and the purpose of the organization and its activities.

Clarify expectations and wishes

Each group member will look for and expect something different from the activity. If implicit expectations and wishes clash, conflict might be created. If these expectations are made explicit, however, the group members will be able to interpret someone's behavior in light of that person's desires, and will find it easier to understand and if needed address that behavior. For some ideas about how to facilitate this, see the links on page 12.

Highlighting unity in diversity

Each of us brings a unique personality and set of experiences and skills that together create the originality of the the group. If the group becomes aware of these gifts, it can build on them, and create greater inclusion.

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Some suggestions of how such an awareness can be promoted include to:

- ☑ create a collage of what the participants bring to the group, for example in the form of a puzzle, and then post it somewhere
- ☑ when the participants already know each other, let them reflect about who takes on a leading role in which activity or area
- ☑ hold spaces in which people can meet without an activity, in which they can share and be creative.

Appreciation ceremonies also can also highlight unity in diversity by creating greater awareness of how each of the participants contributes to the whole group.

Any action intended to highlight unity in diversity has to be prepared and implemented very carefully and adapted to the particular group and situational setting, or there is a risk that the action may be counter-productive.

Active participation in "common life's daily tasks"

Including the group members in the set up and cleaning, shopping and cooking gives them the opportunity to relate to each other in a different way and to take responsibility for the well-being of the whole group.

Additional (daily changing) task groups can be created: for making people laugh, for decoration, or for physical well-being not related to food.

What new ideas does your group come up with?

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Code of conduct

Set boundaries together, and everyone will stay attentive to how they are respected. This can be a powerful way of breaking down the "authority versus challenger game" and contribute to the empowerment of the participants.

To brainstorm and agree on a set of guiding principles, the participants could be asked for example "what kind of behavior would you like to see?" or "what values do you want to guide your actions, how are you going to implement them, and what happens if they are not respected?".

Collaborating with another youth group

If the activity, as well as the preparation and debriefing sessions, are held together with one or several other youth group(s) that do not necessarily know each other yet and come from diverse backgrounds in terms of language, origin, class, gender, physical abilities, participants can benefit from a different perspective, and maybe also be challenged in their way of acting.

For example, a football and a volleyball team can join for a sports tournament, immigrants with locals for an arts exhibition, or french speakers with german speakers for a music festival.

The guiding principles will be more powerful if stated positively, for positive statements illustrate wished behavior and hence provide alternatives to forbidden behavior.

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Diversifying activities

The most powerful learning experiences are those that speak to the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional aspects of a person, that are slightly out of the comfort zone (challenging), and that are fun!

There are a myriad of possibilities for diversifying activities, for example through changing

- ☑ place/space (inside-outside, small-big, close-far...)
- ☑ material (heavy-light, lots-little, handicap-support, ...)
- ☑ people (many-few, homogenous-diverse, ...)
- ☑ time (restricted-open, much-little, ...)
- ☑ sound (speaking-silent, loud-quiet, ...)
- ☑ information (much-little, dispersed-concentrated, ...)

In a sports tournament for example, additional material can be introduced. In an excursion, the facilitator may withhold some crucial information that the participants have to find in order to proceed and in a music festival, verbal communication may be restricted.

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Cooperative games

See the document on cooperative games on www.peace-learning.org for a rich collection.

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Make activities relevant

The value of experiences made during a particular activity is exponentially increased if it can be translated and linked to other situations. For example, if the theme around which the activity evolves is environmental protection, and the participants are separating plastic from paper, it is important to discuss how this can be done in everyday life, to learn how rubbish is handled in different neighborhoods, towns, states, or countries and how an action on one side of the earth can impact the situation on the other side. The link between the participant's personal experience in the activities and the wider context can be established through personal reflection and group discussions, but also through talking to experts, neighbors, and people coming from a different context.

Appreciation ceremony

Taking a moment to become aware and appreciate some of the positive things that occurred to us during the last day or week, and to receive appreciation by other people, can be really energizing and inspiring! However, any appreciation ceremony has to be well chosen and carefully facilitated, because there is a risk of counter-productive effects.

A few suggestions:

☑ In an appreciation round, participants write things that they appreciated onto little sheets of paper, fold them, write the name of the recipient and give them to the post(wo)men who deliver it.

☑ Participants receive a stone each, warm it in their hands and pass it onto someone else who passes it on again and so on.

☑ Participants sit on chairs with their eyes closed. The facilitators touch a few participants on their shoulders to ask them to get up and warmly touch the shoulder of the people who ... were peace, made others laugh, contributed to the group in a very original way, were quietly helping a lot, etc. (the list can be long, be creative!). From time to time, ask the "walking people" to swap with "receiving people". Make sure everyone gets a few "shoulder touches".

☑ Every participant has a message box into which others can put post little "appreciation messages" whenever they want. Variation: nicely prepared appreciation sheet posted on a wall.

☑ Every participant carries a paper on his/her back onto which the other participants write messages.

Debriefing

Debriefing promotes a conscious learning process and is a space for saying things which need to be said and heard. It may be useful to give the participants a couple of minutes to reflect beforehand.

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Debriefing can happen in sub-groups, which present a brainstorming mind-map, a short sketch, a human sculpture, or something similar to the rest of the group on the basis of their discussions. Why not have a coffee break to give the participants time to digest before officially closing the activity?

Here are a few suggestions of what may be asked:

☑ how do you feel right now?

☑ if you could describe only one moment during this activity, which one would it be?

☑ how successfully was the code of conduct implemented?

☑ what suggestions do you have for the next time such an activity takes place?

☑ how does what you did in this activity reflect or affect the wider context?

What would you ask?

Feed-back

Feed-back is most often given directly in specifically designed feed-back rounds. It can however also be given on a continuous and indirect basis, for example through the posting of a sweet and bitter corner sheet, on which people can stick post-its saying what they liked or didn't like, as long as it's anonymous for all people involved and expressed in a non-violent way.

Rules for giving feedback:

- ☑ offer feedback, but do not impose it upon someone
- ☑ feedback should be as current as possible
- ☑ mention first (a) positive and then (b) negative aspect(s)
- ☑ no moral valuations
- ☑ express opinions not as facts, but use "I-messages"
- ☑ do only address points which are of use for the other person
- ☑ be concrete and make clear formulations
- ☑ keep it short and precise, and if necessary repeat the substantial points briefly in the end.

Rules for receiving feedback:

- ☑ be curious and open
- ☑ pay attention to your own body language and show interest
- ☑ listen actively (repeat, ask)
- ☑ do not argue, do not explain, do not defend!
- ☑ possibly express a conclusion.

Closing ceremony

Similar to a opening ceremony, you can close with a common cooperative action, for example doing a game, holding a goodbye-round, creating a piece of memory, or anything else that connects people, before the group breaks apart and each person goes his/her own way.

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How to match activities, guiding principles, and actions?

If you have a specific **activity** in preparation, such as a camp, a workshop, or an art exhibition, read through the suggested actions and see whether you could fit them in.

- ☑ Would they make sense? What would you have to change for them to make sense?
- ☑ How can you adapt the actions to YOUR context, i.e. the characteristics of your group, the environment in which your activity will be held, the available time, etc.?

If you would like to work on one of the **guiding principles** in particular, you can also screen the activities to check whether and how they could be useful for promoting this particular principle.

Or, if you simply like a particular **action**, maybe you can find a way to integrate it into your organization's activities.

In short, the activities, principles, and actions are all interconnected and you can start from any point:

Actions

Principles   Activities
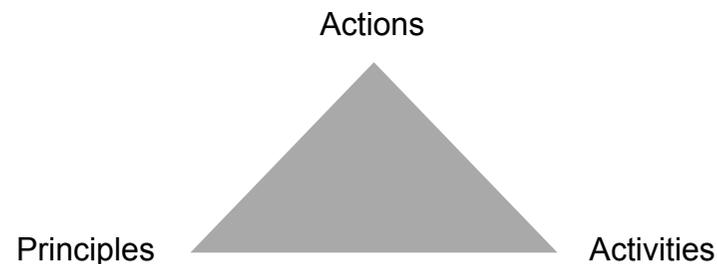
Conclusion

We hope that this Annex supports you in creatively integrating peace-learning aspects into your organization, your actions, and the activities you are facilitating.

> Creative activity could be described as a type of learning process where teacher and pupil are located in the same individual.
> (*Arthur Koestle*r)

In the same spirit as the practical guide, we welcome any constructive comments and suggestions, as well as additional inputs and examples of how you used this document!
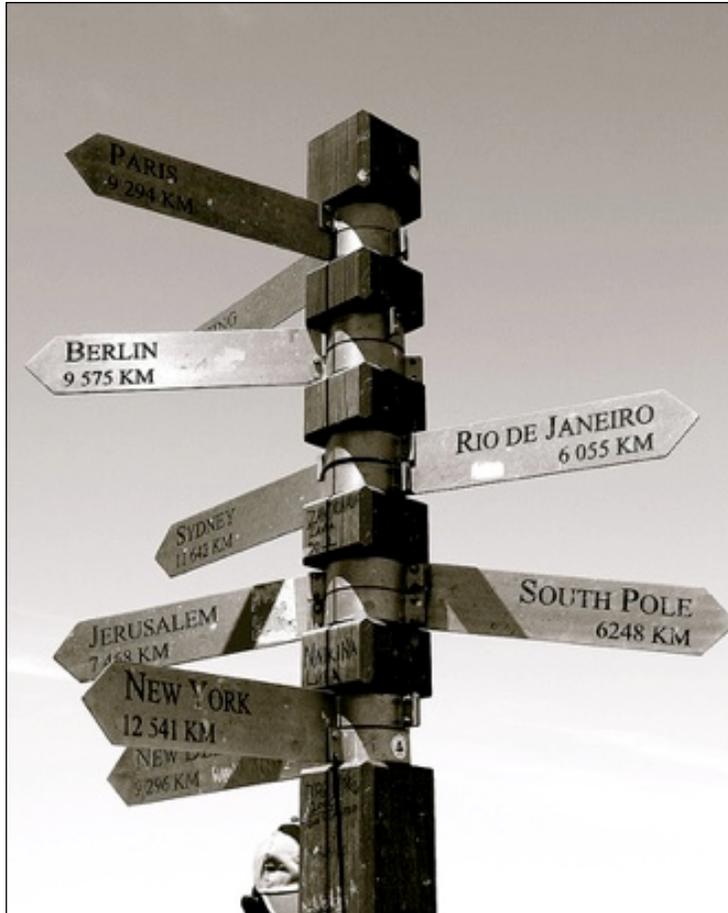
Link to "The Art of powerful questions":

http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf

Links to Dialogue Tools and Processes for social change:

http://i-p-k.co.za/wordpress/resources-downloads/

http://pioneersofchange.net/library/dialogue/Dialogue%20Project%20V%202.0c.pdf

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