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Arts and
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Research Council



Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) University of Edinburgh Large Grant Report:

*An Evaluation of the impact of the
Medium Grants in Rwanda and Nepal*



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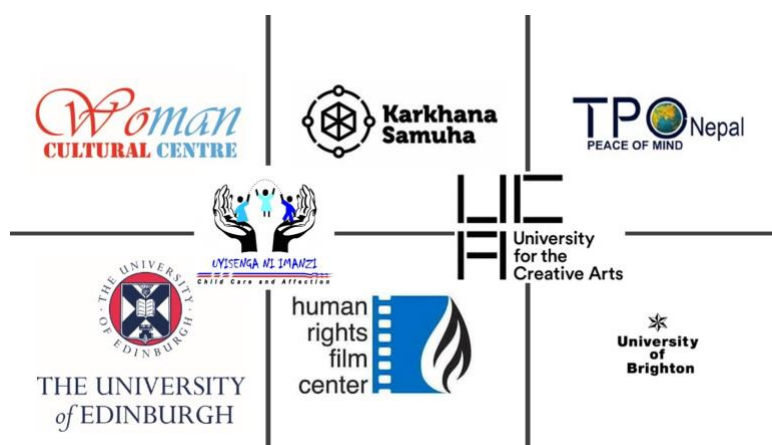
May, 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	5
Executive Summary	6
Glossary	10
List of Acronyms	11
1. Background and Introduction.....	12
1.1. Overview of Mobile Arts for Peace.....	12
1.2. Overview of the Aim and Objectives of the Mobile Arts for Peace Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	12
1.3. Outline of the Report	14
1.4. Arts-Based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in Partnership with Youth.....	14
1.5. The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Team.....	15
1.6. Medium Grants.....	16
1.7. Youth Advisory Boards.....	20
2. Methodology.....	21
2.1. Overview of Methodology	21
2.2. Evaluation Methods	22
2.2.1. Creative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Toolbox.....	22
2.2.2. Survey.....	24
2.2.3. Interviews	25
2.3. Participants.....	25
2.4. Data Analysis.....	28
2.5. Ethical Considerations	28
3. Evaluation Findings and Discussion	30
3.1. Theme 1: Artistic expressions and inner peace: Bridging social divisions and cultivating harmony	30
3.1.1. Art was used to powerfully break down societal divisions.....	31
3.1.2. Inner peace brought outer peace and bridged social divisions	35
3.1.3. Conclusion	37
3.2. Theme 2: Working together across generations: creative messaging and social respect.....	38
3.2.1. Cultural forms enhanced dialogue between children and youth and parents, educators, and policymakers.....	39

3.2.2. MAP influenced policy and fostered working together with families and educators through creative intergenerational communication of messages.....	42
3.2.2a. In policy spaces.....	42
3.2.2b. Within families.....	43
3.2.2c. Between educators and students	45
3.2.3. Youth gained social respect through intergenerational dialogue...	50
3.2.4. Conclusion	51
3.3. Theme 3: Arts-based approaches to strengthen confidence, connectedness, and hope.....	52
3.3.1. Children and youth grew in self-confidence and found new ways to express themselves.....	53
3.3.1a. Confidence in community	56
3.3.2. "Kubaho ni ukubana" – Living is living together: Children and youth gained a sense of connectedness to peers, family, and leaders.....	57
3.3.2a. Connectedness to peers.....	57
3.3.2b. Connectedness to family and community	59
3.3.2c. Connection with government and policymakers.....	59
3.3.3. Children, youth, and adults gained a sense of hope which also helps them share hope with others	60
3.3.4. The arts have powerful potential for mental health practice	62
3.3.5. Conclusion	65
3.4. Theme 4: Nurturing growth among children and youth: Skill development and meaningful participation.....	66
3.4.1. Children and youth artistic and life skills were developed through MAP.....	67
3.4.1a. Artistic skills	67
3.4.1b. Communication, leadership, and expressing oneself	70
3.4.2. Arts-based methods facilitated meaningful participation of children and youth in MEL and in project activities.....	72
3.4.2a. Impacts of meaningful participation on youth advisory members.....	72
3.4.2b. Equal participation of all – Gender	74
3.4.3. Youth and adult allies' perspectives guided MAP MEL approaches throughout the project in an iterative way	79
3.4.4. Conclusion.....	80

3.5. Theme 5: Arts-based approaches as foundations for change in curriculum and policy	81
3.5.1. Conclusion	86
4. Final Conclusion and Recommendations	90
4.1. Conclusion on Intersections of Themes.....	90
4.2. Global Frameworks.....	92
4.3. Recommendations	94
4.3.1. Children and Youth	95
4.3.2. Family.....	95
4.3.3. School and Community	95
4.3.4. Government (Local and National)	96
4.3.5. International.....	96
4.4. Future Research Themes and Approaches	97
4.5. Evaluation Team Reflections: Methods and Process.....	97
Figures, Tables and Boxes.....	99
References.....	102
Appendices.....	105
Appendix 1: Toolbox Sample Activities	105
Reflect Tool 1: River Journey.....	110
Reflect Tool 2: Artistic Reflection.....	113
Reflect Tool 3. Traveling Opinions.....	115
Reflect Tool 4: Proverb Dramas	117
Appendix 2. Psychosocial Support MAP Survey-Nepal	118
Appendix 3. Consent Forms.....	121





Acknowledgements

The Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Large Grant team wishes to acknowledge the following individuals and organisations who have been pivotal to making this process come to fruition.

We are grateful to the **children and youth** from the MAP Medium Grants in Rwanda and Nepal who have contributed their ideas and perspectives throughout this process. We would like to thank the youth advisors who have dedicated their time and energy to co-developing and carrying out tools, facilitating in communities, documenting the process, and participating in sessions such as YAB (International Youth Advisory Board) meetings, presentations, analysis, and validation workshops.

Thank you to the **University of Northampton (UoN)** who held the Large Grant focused on Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan (please see the [report here](#)). Working together enhanced this project (please see [the joint four-country report](#) on the MAP website).

At the **University of Edinburgh (UoE)**, we would like to thank Professor Kay Tisdall for her invaluable support throughout the process and for her insightful reviews. We wish to thank Grace Kong for her support in administration, finances, and copyediting, which was essential for the success of the project. We are grateful to Laura Weiner for her formatting and copyediting.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the team at the **Human Rights Film Centre (HRFC), Nepal**, who were instrumental to the synthesis evaluation. Bishnu Khatri, Co-Investigator of the MEL Large Grant Team, contributed invaluable to the MEL process throughout and led the activities in Nepal. We extend gratitude to the partners at **Karkhana Samuha** and **Janaki Woman Awareness Society** in Nepal (JWAS). We are grateful to colleagues at the **University of the Creative Arts** who are spearheading the commissioned project. Thank you to the team from **TPO Nepal**, namely Dr. Kamal, for their contributions to assessing the psychosocial wellbeing of the children and youth participants in Nepal.

We extend gratitude towards the team at **Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, Rwanda**. Specifically, Dr. Chaste Uwihoreye, Country Director, Mr. Zivugukuri Jean Marie Vianney, Project Coordinator, Mr. Kigundu Emmanuel, Project Officer and the financial team headed by Agathe Uwanyirigira. The team would also like to express our gratitude to the Clinical Psychologists who dedicated their efforts to support young people the MAP school clubs. We are grateful to Katese Odile Gakire at the **Woman Cultural Centre (WCC)** who is working in partnership with Ingoma Nshya, Women's Initiatives (INWI), and Nofit State (Wales) for the Gira Ingoma project.

At the **University of Lincoln (UoL)** we would like to thank Professor Ananda Breed for her invaluable support throughout the process and for her insightful reviews. We wish to thank Sarah Huxley for her contributions towards case studies and reviews throughout, as well as Vina Puspita for her graphic design of diagrams and Ami Montgomery for her support in administration and financing.



Executive Summary

For everyone to live in a peaceful and fair society, programs like MAP should be conducted more where many youths can gather and get exposure to societal problems, and actually take action on making this world fair.

(Female Youth advisor, Kathmandu, Nepal)

Introduction. Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) is a four-year (2020 to 2024) international, multi-disciplinary project that provides a comparative approach on the use of interdisciplinary arts-based practices for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Indonesia, and Nepal. It is a project between universities, cultural artists, civil society organisations, and children and youth across the world. This evaluation (Large Grant) led by the University of Edinburgh has collaboratively evaluated the impact of four projects (Medium Grant) as well as two Commissioned Projects in Nepal and Rwanda (see Box 1). Another Large Grant, led by University of Northampton evaluates the impact of four projects (Medium Grant) in Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia (see report [here](#)).

This project has focused on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)– SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals– and supports the UNESCO Midterm Strategy 2022 to 2029 and the UNESCO Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education 2024, as it seeks to enhance education and lifelong learning through arts education and to ensure cultural arts are central to education policies, strategies, curricula, and programmes.

Methodology. The evaluation sought to respond to the overall MAP Research Questions as well as to assess progress toward the MAP Medium Grant Outcomes, co-developed with the project teams (see Tables 1.6a,b). This was done through a qualitative arts-based participatory MEL process that is strengths-based and relational. The evaluation methods used in this project were mainly 1) creative participatory MEL tools outlined in a Creative MEL Toolbox (with four tracking tools and four reflect tools) that were co-developed with youth advisors for use with groups of children and youth and 2) Interviews with adult stakeholders. A short survey was carried out with 22 young people in Nepal to assess psychosocial wellbeing. A total of 650 children and young people (193 M, 457 F) aged 7 to 24 years participated in MEL activities and interviews were carried out with 18 (12M, 6F) teachers, policymakers, master trainers, mental health professionals, and caregivers.

*We are all like
drops of water.
Little drops of
water make the
mighty ocean.*
(Female Youth
advisor,
Kathmandu,
Nepal)

The project was approved and cleared by the University of Lincoln originally and then the Moray House School of Education & Sport (University of Edinburgh) Ethics Committee. The MEL also adhered to the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Child Safeguarding Policy. Voluntary and informed ongoing consent and assent, confidentiality, anonymity, secure data management, and do no harm protocols were followed and efforts were made to minimize power imbalances between researchers and participants.

Findings

This section of the report presents findings under five core themes in relation to the five MAP research questions. They draw on data from MEL toolbox activities, interviews, and survey results. The themes capture the powerful role of arts and culture in children, youth, and adults' lives.

Theme one shows how artistic forms can enhance dialogue across generations to break down societal divisions and bring inner peace which contributes to outer peace to bridge societal divides.

Theme two highlights the role of arts and cultural forms to increase opportunities for intergenerational dialogue, strengthen youth confidence and skills, and build a commitment for youth to work across generations to contribute to their communities.

Theme three draws on children, youth, and adults' understandings, experiences, and embodiment of arts-based methods for peacebuilding and the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth. This section emphasizes the relationship of psychosocial wellbeing and building sustainable peace.

Theme four introduces how cultural forms and artistic skills can be included in research in diverse contexts and provide opportunity for life skill development. Additionally, it explores gender equality in relation to the arts.

Finally, **Theme five** presents how engagement in arts and local cultural forms through MAP impacted children, youth, families, teachers, and other community members across different settings and provided some potential for alternative spaces and communication for peacebuilding at local – and in some cases, national – levels.

Theme 1: Artistic expressions and inner peace: Bridging social divisions and cultivating harmony

- o Art was used to powerfully break down societal divisions.
- o Inner peace brought outer peace and bridged social divisions.



Theme 2: Working together across generations: Creative messaging and social respect

- o 2.1 Cultural forms enhanced dialogue between children and youth and parents, educators, and policymakers.
- o 2.2 MAP influenced policy and fostered working together with families and educators through creative intergenerational communication of messages.
- o 2.3 Youth gained social respect through intergenerational dialogue.



Theme 3: Arts-based approaches to strengthen confidence, connectedness, and hope

- o 3.1 Children and youth grew in self-confidence and found new ways to express themselves.
- o 3.2 "Kubaho ni ukubana" – Living is living together: Children and youth gained a sense of connectedness to peers, family, and leaders.
- o 3.3 Children, youth, and adults gained a sense of hope which also helps them share hope with others.
- o 3.4 The arts have powerful potential for mental health practice.



Theme 4: Nurturing growth among children and youth: Skill development and meaningful participation

- o 4.1 Children and youth artistic and life skills were developed through MAP.
- o 4.2 Arts-based methods facilitated meaningful participation of children and youth in MEL and in project activities.
- o 4.3 Youth and adult allies' perspectives guided MAP MEL approaches throughout the project in an iterative way.



Theme 5: Arts-based approaches as foundations for change in curriculum and policy

Conclusions and Recommendations. First, threaded throughout all projects was the importance of the arts in promoting self-expression and psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth. Second, drawing upon traditional local cultural art forms that were adapted for MAP played an important role in strengthening psychosocial wellbeing and peacebuilding among youth, as they draw on local methods for healing. Third, art forms that were reserved for certain genders, backgrounds, or castes can become accessible to those who were once restricted. This opens up the potential for children and youth to experience healing, strengthen psychosocial wellbeing, and to enhance equity in society. The importance of enhancing gender equity was also emphasized and there is a need to address harmful gender norms on a broader level which requires even more dialogue between generations and genders. Key recommendations which build on the SDGs and support the UNESCO Midterm Strategy and Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education are below.

Before I was in darkness, but now I have the confidence to help others.
(Female Visualising Peace participant, Rwanda)

Group		Key Recommendations		
Children and Youth	Utilise the arts -Recognise and create opportunities that allow for arts to lead to self-expression, leadership, education, societal transformation and improved wellbeing	Work with adult allies -Invest time in building meaningful relationships with youth researchers and expanding arts education -Co-creation of and discussion on arts education and arts-based research	Provide spaces for peacebuilding -Equip both boys and girls with opportunities to improve gender equality across communities	Increase inclusion Expand the reach of arts education to engage more with out of school children, such as street children, working children, and other boys and girls not enrolled in school.
	Families, Schools, and communities	Encourage family participation -Engage parents, caregivers, siblings, and non-formal family structures in arts education activities	Include adults -Invest in training for adults involved -Greater focus on teacher/student relationships in the classroom	Change arts education -Deliver diverse forms of art across formal, non-formal, and informal settings -Greater focus on local indigenous
				Expand beyond the classroom -Create opportunities for children/youth in different school and community spaces

			cultures/art forms	
Government/ International Settings	Create education opportunities -Add/improve culture and arts education in policies in education and social services	Promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing -Bridge creative education and health policies to improve mental health practices	Align and Expand arts education -Align education with existing global frameworks -Map out arts education programmes globally to create a platform of success stories	Engage policymakers -Create formal and non-formal opportunities to meet with policymakers, including intergenerational opportunities
MAP Visioning	Expand YAB/YAAR -Find a dedicated space and forum for meeting -Achieve international exposure -Strengthen bonds	Continue skill development -Spend school holidays working with MAP to strengthen and apply skills -Foster artistic and international exposure -Conduct more workshops	Create profound societal impact -Promote inclusivity across genders and cultures -Engage with key policymakers and stakeholders	Collaborate and pursue further funding opportunities -Secure funding opportunities for YAB/YAAR and other collaborative research and advocacy



Glossary

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is the process of realizing sustainable peace in a way that ensures justice, equality, and harmony (Early Childhood Peace Consortium, 2023). Peacebuilding efforts work to address root causes of violence and to reduce structural violence, emphasizing social justice, equality, economic development, and access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and housing.

While **direct violence** is defined as conflict between people that harms them (such as physical brawls, bullying, and violent attacks), **structural violence** is defined as the political and economic forces that cause suffering on individuals and populations, usually the most vulnerable people in society (Farmer, 2003).

Social justice initiatives – including enhancing gender equality, youth participation, education, skill building, and economic strengthening – can all be considered peacebuilding efforts.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is when you feel good in your mind, body, spirit and heart. Everyone has different things that make them feel well. Feeling worthy, connected, hopeful, respected and safe are all important parts to feeling well (see Tracking Tool 2). Some things that contribute to wellbeing are supportive relationships with friends, family, and community; doing activities you enjoy; being creative; having access to natural spaces, culture, religion, health, and social care; and having a role to play in your family or community.

Confidence

Confidence is a psychological characteristic that influences wellbeing, performance, and overall behaviour. It can be defined as a belief in oneself, one's abilities, and one's judgment. It involves having trust and assurance in one's capacity to handle situations, solve problems, achieve goals, and interact effectively with others.

Outputs

Outputs describe our project activity or are the immediate result of an activity. Sample outputs include the number of workshops conducted or the number of policy papers written.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes the project members wish to accomplish through a project. These changes can be at the individual level or group level (families, communities, or institutions). Outcomes describe the effect that the project hopes to have on individuals or groups/communities.



List of Acronyms

- *HRFC*: Human Rights Film Centre
- *IICRD*: International Institute for Child Rights and Development
- *MAP*: Mobile Arts for Peace- a four-year (2020 to 2024) international, multi-disciplinary project
- *MEL*: monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- *PPPF*- Picturing Past Present and Future- project seeking to enhance dialogue between young people and policy through young women-led photographic documentation of bicycle journeys
- *PSS*: Psychosocial Support survey
- *SDG*: Sustainable Development Goals
- *SEL*: Social Emotional Learning
- *TMPI*: Think Make Play Improve- approach to explore co-creation processes with and for youth
- *UNM*: UYISENGA NI IMANZI- an organisation in Rwanda working with different beneficiaries living in precarious situations
- *YAAR*: Youth Advisory Advocacy Research- team of 22 females (ages 16 to 22) from across Nepal working together to learn, contextualise, and lead arts-based MEL tools with MAP participants
- *YAB*: International Youth Advisory Board- a group made up of 1-3 young women and 1-3 young men from each country – Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan – that work with adult allies to contribute meaningfully to the MAP project and MEL processes



1. Background and Introduction

1.1. Overview of Mobile Arts for Peace

Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) is a four-year (2020 to 2024) international, multi-disciplinary project that provides a comparative approach on the use of interdisciplinary arts-based practices for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Indonesia, and Nepal. It is a collaborative project between universities, cultural artists, civil society organisations, and children and youth across the world. Several types of projects have been funded through MAP in Phase 2: Small Grants (32 youth-led research projects), Medium Grants (8), Commissioned Projects (2), and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Large Grants (2). This synthesis evaluation is a Large Grant that has collaboratively evaluated the impact of four Medium Grant projects as well as two Commissioned Projects in Nepal and Rwanda (see [Table 1.6a](#)), synthesising these at the level of analysis and presentation of the findings.

MAP has focused on Sustainable Development Goals – [SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing](#), [SDG 4 Quality Education](#), [SDG 5 Gender Equality](#), [SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions](#), and [SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals](#) – as does this project. Further, the project supports the [UNESCO Midterm Strategy 2022 to 2029](#) and the [UNESCO Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education 2024](#), as it seeks to enhance education (formal, non-formal, and informal) and lifelong learning through arts education, and to ensure cultural arts are central to education policies, strategies, curricula, and programmes. Furthermore, it recognises that learning “in, through, and with cultural diversity is vital for overcoming divisions and fostering mutual understanding” across gender, caste, age, race, ability, socioeconomic backgrounds, and lived experiences (UNESCO Press Release 2024). Our findings show that young people can partner and lead in shaping and delivering arts-based monitoring, evaluation and learning processes, and we encourage that the implementation of the Framework include and build upon such approaches.

1.2. Overview of the Aim and Objectives of the Mobile Arts for Peace Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

An evaluation of MAP Medium Grants was undertaken using arts-based methods. These methods were used within participatory arts-based research with MAP participants. Such a combination of arts-based methods and participatory action research has been shown to draw out contextual and lived experiences of participants, an approach that generates rich insights as well as promotes healing and psychosocial wellbeing (Breed et al. 2022; Lee et al. 2020). The project worked to develop ethical, meaningful, and creative ways to involve children and youth in the MEL process.

The MEL process builds from the MAP project by contributing to sustainable and inclusive processes across local, national, and transnational contexts. It is global,

intergenerational, and collaborative, bringing expertise and fresh ideas to support the cross-country documentation of processes and impacts. This project undertook in-depth work in two of the countries: Rwanda and Nepal.

The approach of this evaluation is to embed the following values:

- Centring youth active roles and contributions within research and processes, especially in relation to MEL,
- Focusing on understanding the impact on youth themselves,
- Exploring cross-cultural and cross-project learnings,
- Seeking adaptability and agility, and
- Amplifying our stakeholders and partners as they lead.

The evaluation sought to respond to the overall MAP Research Questions (see [Figure 1.2a](#)) as well as to assess progress toward the outcomes that were co-developed by the MAP Medium Grant teams at the University of Lincoln in 2022 (see [Figure 1.2b](#)).

MAP Research Questions and Medium Grant Outcomes

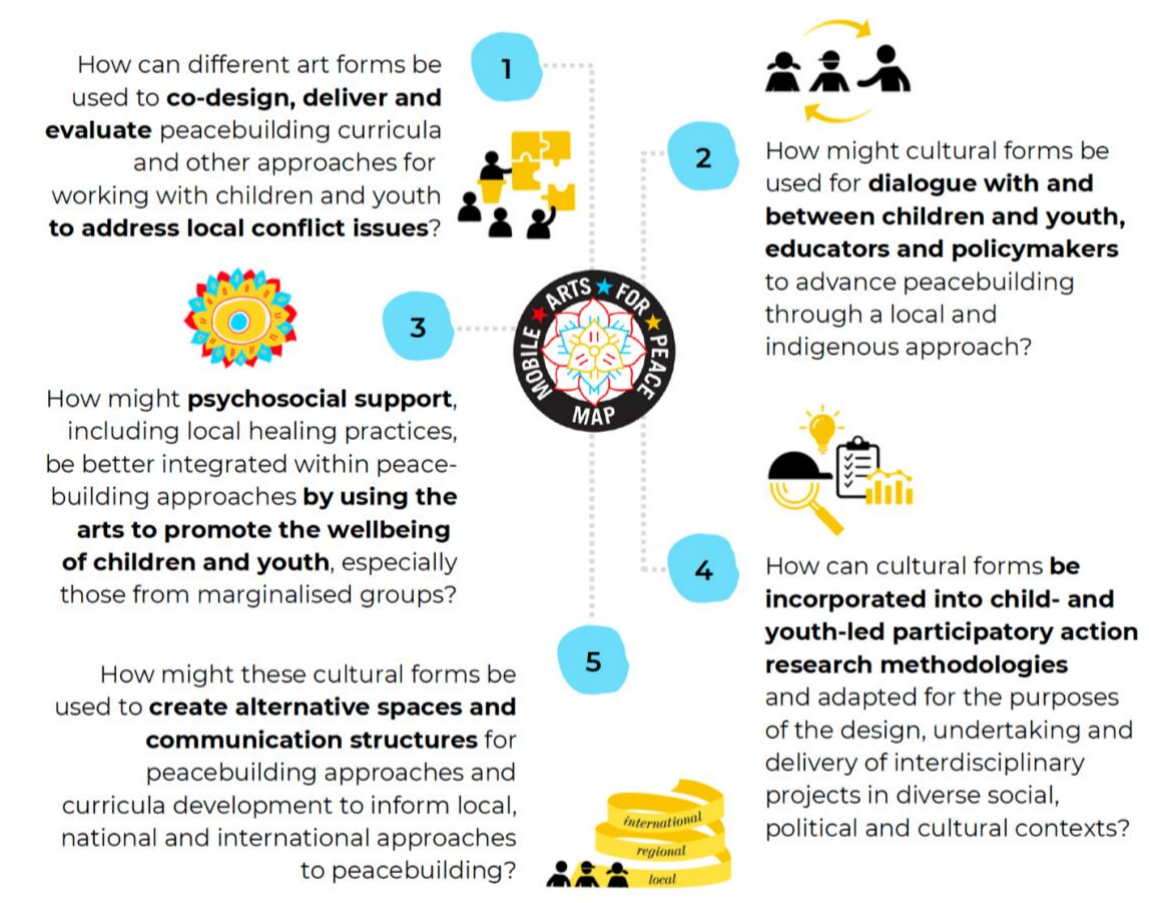


Figure 1.2a. MAP Research Questions



Figure 1.2b. MAP Medium Grant Outcomes

1.3. Outline of the Report

This report begins with providing background and overview of MAP Medium Grants and of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach (**Section 1**), including the partnership with youth advisors. **Section 2** provides an overview of the methodology of the evaluation, as well as ethical considerations. **Section 3** is divided into 5 sub-sections, each representing a research question and major theme. Examples from the Medium Grant projects in Rwanda and Nepal are used to support the findings, including several case studies. **Section 4** outlines the conclusions and recommendations at the child and youth, family, school and community, government (local and national), and international levels.

1.4. Arts-Based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in Partnership with Youth

Research has become increasingly familiar with participatory approaches that have the potential to recognise youth expertise and lived experiences (Jiménez 2021). This understanding has been extended further to recognise the value of youth to be involved across all aspects of research knowledge production – and their rights to such involvement – across all aspects of research, from acting as lead researchers and co-researchers, to carrying out knowledge exchange (Cuevas-Parra & Tisdall 2019; Lee

et al. 2020). This greater involvement of youth has raised critical debates, currently under scrutiny, that challenge traditional adult research practices, such as authorship, ethics, intergenerational relations of power, scientific rigour, and reciprocity (Collins et al. 2020; Wright et al. 2022). This evaluation adds to these critical debates, contributing to the ever-growing literature and practice on research with or led by children and youth. Literature and practice have grown immensely over the last few decades on research with or led by children and youth.

Qualitative and arts-based approaches to monitoring, evaluation, and learning “began to flourish in the seventies as alternatives to prevailing [more quantitative] methods” (Simons & McCormack 2007, p. 293). An increased emphasis on people as individuals and the importance of relationships shifted evaluations to embrace qualitative methods that already existed in research (e.g., photostories, focus groups, storytelling). Simons and McCormack (2007) argue that creative arts in evaluation challenge us to “engage differently” and “see differently”, opening up new ways of seeing and understanding (p. 295). Creative evaluation examples range from Kushner’s (1985) image, metaphor, and colour to explore dreams and music, to watercolour, quilting (e.g. Hurlbut and Brousselle 2023) and other dance, music, and creative forms (Kustatscher et al. 2022). Ashworth (2020) suggests that creative evaluation invites participants to engage their whole selves in evaluation processes. Bishop and colleagues (2019) highlight how creating art can assist evaluation participants to be active players in sharing their stories, cultures, and identities. Arts-based approaches are varied, and Hurlbut and Brousselle (2023) argue evaluators must be intentional with artistic medium choices to answer their evaluation questions.

While there are some examples of academic literature and openly available grey literature featuring creative and arts-based methods for monitoring, evaluation, and learning, knowledge remains sparse with significantly more available on arts-based methods in research. Similarly, there is ample research on youth-led and intergenerational participatory and arts-based research methods, however there is a dearth of literature that explores both arts-based evaluation approaches and youth-led/intergenerational monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Similarly, there is a gap in literature that explores the intersection of Participatory Action Research and arts-based monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Therefore, while this study prioritises monitoring of, evaluating of, and learning from the MAP Medium Grants, it will also contribute to a new body of literature on the critical role of working in intergenerational partnership with youth through accessible and engaging arts-based MEL processes.

1.5. The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Team

The MAP Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Large Grant in Rwanda and Nepal was led by the University of Edinburgh (UoE) in partnership with the Human Rights Film Centre (HRFC), TPO Nepal, Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, and the International Youth Advisory

Board. The lead writers on this report were Dr. Laura Wright (Project Investigator) University of Edinburgh and Dr. Laura Lee (Co-Investigator and Senior Researcher). This report is accompanied by a [video report](#), which was led by Co-Investigator Bishnu Khatri and the team at HRFC. Several youth advisors, Medium Grant partners, and core grant team members contributed to design, data collection, case study writing, and review (please see acknowledgments for further details).

1.6. Medium Grants

The Medium Grants launched in March 2023 with eight projects across four countries. All eight projects aim to develop “two-way arts-based communication structures between young people and policymakers” (Current Projects, MAP Website, 2024). Researchers, partner organisations, and youth advisors worked together to design and deliver arts-based research projects with and for youth, building on the impact from earlier phases of the MAP project (e.g., Phase 1 projects, Small Grants youth-led arts-based project; see [Mobile Arts for Peace: Small Grants Evaluation Report](#)). Partners included youth, community members, researchers (academia, institutional, and community-based), cultural and arts organisations, civil society, NGOs, and policymakers. This report focuses on the four Medium Grants in Nepal (1), Rwanda (2), and across both countries (1). It also includes insights from two special Commissioned projects. Details on these projects are introduced below with links to further information.

Table 1.6a. Four Medium Grants

Project	Location	Organisation	Duration
Intergenerational Dialogue	Nepal	Karkhana Samuha	Nov 2022-April 2024
Description	This project aims to facilitate intergenerational dialogue through a co-created participatory arts-based community curriculum using a human-centred design approach. It draws on Karkhana’s “Think Make Play Improve” (TMPI) approach to explore co-creation processes with and for youth, creating a peacebuilding curriculum that makes visible their desires and concerns, using indigenous and contextualised forms of storytelling. It works with child clubs, youth clubs, and researchers, local government officials, and higher education institutions.		
Picturing the Past, Present and Future	Nepal and Rwanda	University of Brighton, Janaki Woman Awareness Society in Nepal (JWAS), and Uyisenga Ni Imanzi (Rwanda)	Jan 2023-Aug 2023

Description	This project seeks to enhance dialogue between youth and policy through young women-led photographic documentation of bicycle journeys to improve the wellbeing of women and girls. The project aims to fuse physical education and art with advancing civic education policies. Curriculum policymakers, families, and community members are also actively engaged.		
Visualising Peace	Rwanda	Kwetu Film Institute, UNM, Never Again Rwanda, University of Lincoln, and Uvisenga Ni Imanzi	Jan 2023-April 2024
Description	This project supports partner organisations to develop Participatory Action Research and communicate their ambitions to community members and targeted policymakers. The project has produced a set of films made in collaboration with youth and raised mental health awareness through youth-led arts exhibitions. The films were shared with civil society and policymakers to increase awareness and foster change.		
Gira Ingoma-One Drum Per Girl	Rwanda	The Woman Cultural Centre (Rwanda)	Jan 2023-April 2024
Description	<p>This project aims to address persistent gender stereotypes and discriminatory patterns (e.g., norms, barriers, practices, perceptions) that prevent girls from engaging in non-traditional activities/roles in the creative and cultural industries such as drumming, warrior dance (<i>intore</i>), poetry (<i>kwivuga</i>), and singing.</p> <p>Two hundred and fifty (250) girls from ten (10) primary and/or secondary schools in Huye District, supported by their teachers and trainers, have engaged in a quarterly dialogue with policymakers at school, sector, district, provincial, and national levels on how to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the cultural sector. The aim is to empower Rwandan girls to dream, act, and reinvent themselves on their own terms.</p>		

Table 1.6b. Commissioned Projects

Project	Location	Partners	Duration
<u>Dēudā Folklore and Social Transformation in Nepal</u>	Nepal	University of the Creative Arts	Dec 2022-March 2024
Description	This project explores how Dēudā song, dance, and music can support dialogue in post-conflict settings for peacebuilding and advocacy. The project appraises how this folklore has helped build social cohesion in remote communities. Furthermore, the potential for Dēudā as an artistic educational mechanism is explored.		
<u>MEN-ART: Addressing Mental health through Youth-Led Art Exhibitions</u>	Rwanda	Kwetu Film Institute & Uvisenga Ni Imanzi	Dec 2022 – March 2024
Description	In this project, youth clubs identified different mental health challenges across contexts and harnessed their imaginative skills to make films to enhance social cohesion and mental wellbeing. The films provide a creative conduit for political engagement.		

Two Large Grant field visits fostered opportunities to deepen relationships, learn more about the projects, develop collaborative plans, and carry out several MEL Toolbox exercises, data validation, and other activities to support the MEL data collection process. In September 2023, the University of Edinburgh team visited Nepal. We met together with the Medium Grant teams (see [Figure 1.6c](#)), and also worked to map out partnerships across MAP in Nepal (see [Figure 1.6d](#)). During this visit, endline evaluation activities were also undertaken. In January 2024, a visit was made to Rwanda, where validation workshops and project visits to Medium Grants took place.

1.7. Youth Advisory Boards

In the MAP project, the International Youth Advisory Board (YAB) brings together youth from Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and Rwanda every third Saturday of the month online (with occasional extra meetings). Two youth advisors typically attend from each country, bringing in learning from their local and national youth advisory teams, and then sharing back with the youth they work with. The YAB's objectives are to: ensure youth influence the direction of MAP overall; contribute meaningfully to the MEL of MAP, including as peer researchers, co-developing tools, implementing tools, and co-analysing data; and facilitate creative knowledge sharing and dissemination of findings from MEL activities. The shape and direction of the YAB is determined collaboratively with/by the youth and adults (in-country support people). The group also has a WhatsApp group where regular communication on MEL activities and other opportunities and reflections are shared. Members of the YAB are encouraged to use their experiences and knowledge to help each other, reflect together, and to decide on and lead new actions in each country as part of the ongoing project.

At the local level, MAP Rwanda works with a national youth advisory board of 17 members aged 16 to 21 – 15 associated with Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, who lead two of the Medium Grants in Rwanda – and two youth advisors who have led the MEL activities with the Gira Ingoma project.

In Nepal, a Youth Advisory Advocacy Research (YAAR) team included 22 females (ages 16 to 22) from across Nepal working together to learn, contextualise, and lead arts-based MEL tools with MAP participants. The Kathmandu YAB member trained the YAAR members on the MEL tools and facilitated several of the sessions with the YAAR themselves (with support from adult colleagues). In other sites, such as Hetauda and Tikabeira, the YAB members coordinated participants to come together and contributed to the facilitation of evaluation activities.

Note: *In this report, the YAB and YAAR members from Nepal and Rwanda, as individuals, will be called “youth advisors”. When we refer to them as groups, they will be called YAB and YAAR.*



2. Methodology

2.1. Overview of Methodology

The theoretical framework for the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning draws on an interdisciplinary child rights-based approach (Collins et al. 2021), as well as a social ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Prout & James 2015). The social ecological framework considers the various levels of children and youth's environments (i.e., individual, family, community, national). A social ecological and holistic approach emphasises an interrelated understanding and application of evidence on arts activities on youth psychosocial wellbeing that links individual, family, community, culture, and broader social systems (Garbarino & Kostelny 1992; Jack & Jordan 1999). We take a relational approach recognising social interactions, shared meaning making, and relationality (Bowlby & McKie 2019). Our MEL approach is a strengths-based approach, emphasising youth are social actors with agency and the ability to influence their own lives, the lives of others, as well as the societies in which they live (Dahlberg et al. 2007). A qualitative arts-based participatory MEL process is employed to conduct research in collaboration with youth and adults. A participatory approach is valuable for MEL conducted with youth and can support intergenerational relationships between children, youth, and adults, as well as aid research participants to critically reflect, co-construct meaning, and identify actions and solutions. An additional benefit of participatory arts-based MEL is its transformative potential for the co-researchers themselves, including research skills, artistic skills, and building leadership, confidence, and social connection (Nunn 2022). The approach provided space for youth and local MAP Large Grant and Medium Grant colleagues to lead arts-based MEL as well as for the MAP Large Grant UoE team members to carry out interviews, arts-based activities, and participant observation alongside team members.

In this project, an international and intergenerational exploration of the processes, mechanisms, and impacts of arts-based approaches for peacebuilding created an opportunity for deep learning. Weaving together narratives from Nepal, Rwanda, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan, the team creates youth-led and intergenerational monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes that draw from the rich work of youth and adult researchers taking place in each MAP project country, to gather cohesive learning across the four sites. Data was captured in local languages and English, and then translated by colleagues in each site and uploaded into SharePoint. The MAP MEL Team recognises the complexity of translation and interpretation and the potential to lose nuances embedded in language. The data validation process supported us to check in with youth advisors on appropriate terminology and analysis, so that ideas when translated still captured depth of meaning.

Aligned with the principles of MAP, active youth involvement in all stages of research design, delivery, and dissemination is essential for undertaking research that will have real world impact. Such active involvement across the research stages is often termed “co-production”. Importantly, throughout the MEL process, the adult

facilitators encouraged the young people to express themselves and to be critical, offering alternative points of view. As explored by Lee et al. (2022), ensuring that youth can “freely express their views without the fear of correctness or judgment” (p.8) and encouraging mutual exchange (between adults and youth and between youth) are essential ingredients to meaningful intergenerational partnership in research.

This evaluation was able to gather information about the processes and, in terms of outcomes, primarily the views of those involved in the projects and stakeholders. These were captured during and shortly after the end of the Medium Grant projects. Further tracking would be required for the projects’ longer-term outcomes to effectively assess realisation of outcomes and longer-term impacts. This could be done through applying any of Creative MEL Toolbox “Reflect” tools, as well the Wellbeing Thermometer Tracking tool which can all be used to document change over time. Most methods can be used with young people, adults, or intergenerational groups.

2.2. Evaluation Methods

The evaluation methods used in this project were mainly: 1) creative participatory MEL tools that were co-developed with youth, advisors for use with groups of children and youth and 2) Interviews with adult stakeholders.

2.2.1. Creative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Toolbox¹

The Creative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Toolbox provides an overview of the participatory arts-based MEL process, a guide for youth researchers and adult support teams, and step-by-step details on how to facilitate and document tools. There are three tracking tools (baseline – start of the project, midline – middle of the project, and endline – end of the project), including four Evaluation tools. Youth and adults across Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan were engaged in visioning, reviewing, and contextualising tools for their context. The combination of tools integrates diverse art forms, mixed methods, and triangulation to capture different data to explore the research questions and outcome areas. They also allowed for contextualisation by the local teams.

¹ See [Appendix 1](#) for a sample tool from the Creative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Toolbox.

Table 2.2.1a. Tools

(See the Creative MEL Toolbox (see [Figure 2.2.1a](#)) and the [Appendices](#) for more details on the tools)

Tracking our progress along the way: Baseline and Monitoring Tools	Reflecting on our Progress: Evaluation Tools
Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Murals Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer Tracking tool 3: Tracking Our Journey Collage	Reflect tool 1: River Journey Reflect tool 2: Artistic Reflection Reflect tool 3: Travelling Opinion Reflect tool 4: Proverb Dramas



Figure 2.2.1a. The Medium Grant MEL Toolbox and Journey

The River Journey was the most commonly used tool across teams to capture the journey of MAP. The Wellbeing Thermometer was recommended to carry out at the baseline as well as at the endline to track change, and this was done by most teams as well.

2.2.2. Survey²

A Psychosocial Support (PSS) survey was designed by TPO Nepal and then reviewed by the wider MAP Large Grant team. The final survey had 18 questions, covering participant demographics, perception of wellbeing, and the impact of MAP on psychosocial wellbeing. It was sent out after the qualitative research with youth participants, in order to understand youth experiences of psychosocial wellbeing. Twenty-two responses were received from 18 participants who identified as female and 4 participants who identified as male in Kathmandu and Hetauda. The sample was selected because the participants had engaged in MAP throughout the length of the Medium Grant projects. The survey gives *indicative evidence* that is further supported by the other evaluation methods.

A larger MAP MEL survey was led by the University of Northampton across Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan. The Nepal and Rwanda findings from this survey will be shared in the collaborative final four country summative report.



Figure 2.2.1b. The Medium Grant MEL Creative Toolbox Tools

² See [Appendix 2](#) for the Psychosocial Support Survey.

2.2.3. Interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out to explore stakeholder experience of the MAP Medium Grants projects in Rwanda and Nepal. Interviewees included policymakers, teachers, community, caregivers, mental health practitioners, and academics. Interviewees were invited as key informant interviews to capture a range of diverse stakeholder experience and to supplement the youth focused data. Interviews occurred in person and online ranging from 30 to 60 minutes in duration.

2.3. Participants

A total of 650 children and young people (193 M, 457 F) aged 7 to 24 years participated in MEL activities and interviews were carried out with 18 (12M, 6F) teachers, policymakers, master trainers, mental health professionals, and caregivers from Rwanda and Nepal.

The breakdown of participants involved in the various methods is found below in [Figure 2.3a](#) and in [Tables 2.3a-d](#). Please note that some youth participated in several methods. Though it was attempted to get the same group for the various stages (i.e., baseline, midline, endline), this was sometimes difficult. There are more female participants, as some of the projects were focused on girls and young women. However, more males filled out the baseline (TI survey) in Rwanda. Most projects included children and youth aged 10 through 24, with the exception of Gira Ingoma in Rwanda which also included girls aged 7-9 years.

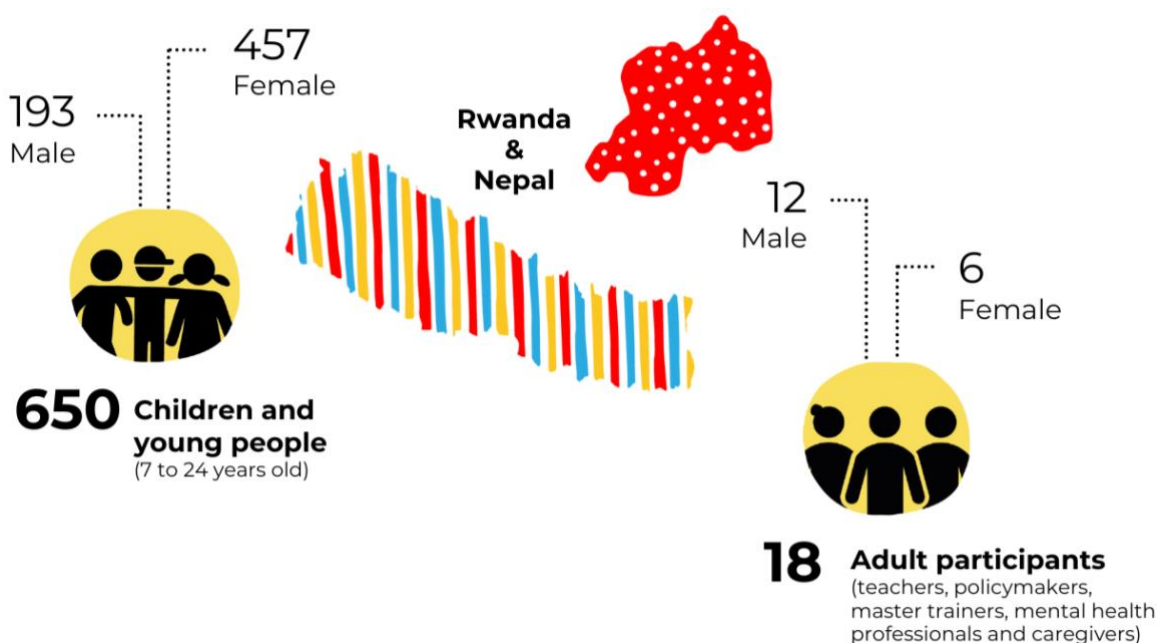


Figure 2.3a. Participant Demographics

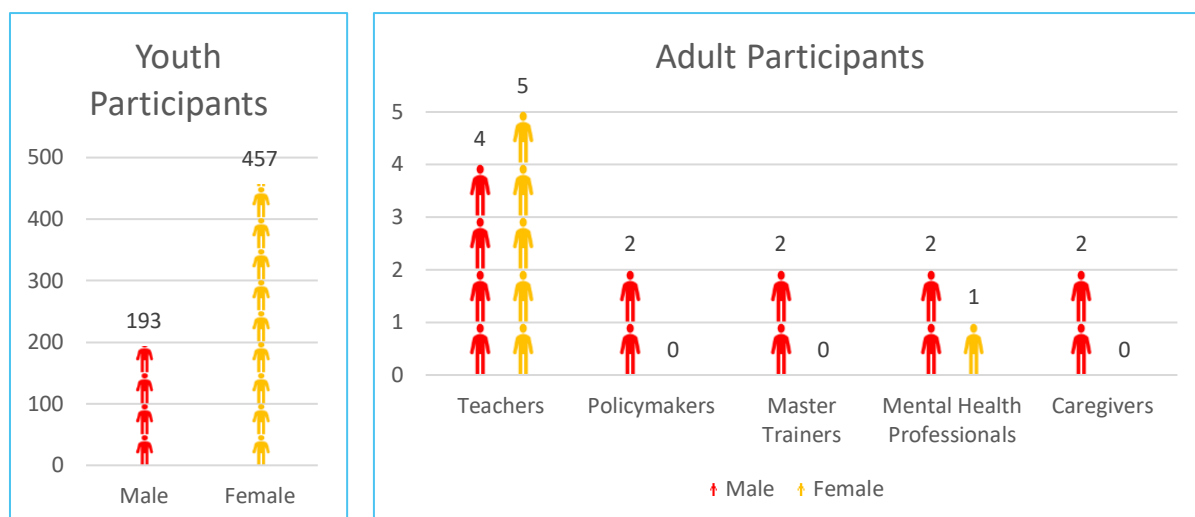


Figure 2.3b. Participants in MEL activities

Table 2.3a. Toolbox Youth Participants in Nepal

MEL PHASE	MEL TOOLS	TOTAL Female participants (ages 10 - 24)	TOTAL Male participants (ages 10 - 24)
Baseline	Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer	17	0
	Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Murals	23	0
Midline	Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer	28	10
Endline	Reflect tool 1: River Journey	28	2
	Reflect tool 2: Artistic Reflection	8	2

Table 2.3b. Toolbox Participants in Rwanda

MEL PHASE	MEL TOOLS	TOTAL Female participants (ages 7 - 24)	TOTAL Male participants (ages 10 - 24)
Baseline	Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer	71	11
	Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Murals	71	11
Midline	Wellbeing Thermometer	20	4
	Tracking tool 3: Tracking our Journey Collage	25	11

MEL PHASE	MEL TOOLS	TOTAL Female participants (ages 7 - 24)	TOTAL Male participants (ages 10 - 24)
Endline	Reflect tool 3: Traveling Opinions	25	11
	Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer	72	0
	Reflect tool 1: River Journey	47	0
	Reflect tool 4: Proverb Dramas	20	4
	Reflect tool 2: Artistic Reflection	25	11

Table 2.3c. Survey and Interview Participants in Rwanda

MEL PHASE	MEL TOOLS	TOTAL (F)	TOTAL (M)	Details
Baseline	Survey T1	4	29	
Endline	Survey T2	7	13	
	Interviews	7	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP Club Facilitators (1 M, 4F) • Master Trainers (2M) • Caregivers (2F) • Mental health professionals (2M, 1F)
TOTAL		18	46	

Table 2.3d. Survey and Interview Participants in Nepal

MEL PHASE	MEL TOOLS	TOTAL (F)	TOTAL (M)	Details
Baseline	Survey T1	6	34	
Endline	Survey T2	5	36	
	Interviews	0	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymaker • Academic
	Psychosocial wellbeing survey	18	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth
Total		29	76	

2.4. Data Analysis

We used a thematic analysis and reflexive approach to systematically and rigorously analyse the data (Braun & Clarke 2022), according to Braun and Clarke's (2022) six step process: Familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, summarization (writing up). Data, including Toolbox documentation forms and notes, photos of arts-based outputs, interview transcripts, and survey results were reviewed by the evaluation team and read over for familiarization. Analysis of the arts-based data was done in conjunction with the transcribed verbal data so that the analysis was based on the youth and adults' verbal perspectives and descriptions of their images and not the researchers' assumptions. Data was coded using NVivo software by Lee with support from Wright. Data codes were checked with Nepal Co-I and data validation was done across both countries with youth advisors. During the writing phase, data was printed out from NVivo and highlighted with multi colours, engaging more closely with the physicality of the data through an arts-based process of highlighting, writing, and drawing ideas.

The first iteration of the codebook was generated by the UoE research team with youth input through country-specific online sessions using collaborative tools (Zoom and Jamboard) to refine the codebook. Further codes were added through a grounded theory approach as sub-themes arose through the coding process. Once the data was coded, themes were generated as the data set was analysed in relation to the research questions. The codes were then assigned to the five research questions, which are each presented as themes 1 through 5 in the following section. Themes were reviewed by the Large Grant team and youth advisors (online and through the use of WhatsApp) and then the report was written up.

A participatory data validation and analysis process took place with YAB members from both Rwanda and Nepal through online and in-person sessions. In both Rwanda (October 2023) and Nepal (November 2023) online sessions were held with national YAB and YAAR members whereby images from data (e.g., River Journeys, posters, poetry, dance) were reviewed, and key ideas and themes from the images and data discussed. Youth had a chance to be introduced to coding, providing feedback on the overarching themes, suggesting sub-themes, and offering their perspectives based on their engagement in leading MEL activities. At these sessions, themes were organised around the outcome areas, and sub-sections to these areas. A data validation workshop was held in person in Rwanda (January 2024) whereby youth were invited to validate data and engage in a participatory activity to express the data in embodied and artistic forms that resonated with them. The majority of youth chose to express themselves through poetry. The poems served to highlight the data and key themes that stood out the most to the youth advisors, providing a valuable contribution to analysis.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

All monitoring, evaluation, and learning was conducted in accordance with children and youth rights (as outlined in the United Convention on the Rights of the Child) and best practices in researching with children (e.g., Ethical Research Involving Children [ERIC]) and adults. The MEL was approved and cleared by the University of Lincoln originally and then the Moray House School of Education & Sport (University of Edinburgh) Ethics Committee. The MEL also adhered to the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Child Safeguarding Policy. The ethics addressed critical elements such as voluntary and informed ongoing consent and assent³, confidentiality, anonymity, do no harm protocol (ensuring no harm to participants and prioritising their wellbeing over the research), power imbalances between researchers and participants, and use of data. Informed consent was given by children and youth and adults for the use of their images in photos and other arts-based outputs, such as videos. The limits of confidentiality were also clear so that participants knew that any information that indicated a young person was at significant risk to themselves or to another would have to be reported to the appropriate authorities. The ethics in this research adhered to required procedural ethics (as outlined above) and prioritised an ethics of care that respects and recognises humans as relational, and emphasised the value of participants being respected and listened to in the research (Bussu et al. 2020).

³ See [Appendix 3](#) for the Consent Forms.



3. Evaluation Findings and Discussion

Through analysis of the data in relation to the MAP Medium Grant Outcomes and to the MAP Research Questions, the following findings were uncovered. The findings are shared in the following sections according to five major themes, corresponding to five research questions. The impact area among the MAP Medium Grant outcomes is also outlined below.

- [3.1. Theme 1: Artistic expressions and inner peace: Bridging social divisions and cultivating harmony](#)
- [3.2. Theme 2: Working together across generations: Creative messaging and social respect](#)
- [3.3. Theme 3: Arts-based approaches to strengthen confidence, connectedness, and hope](#)
- [3.4. Theme 4: Nurturing growth among children and youth: Skill development and meaningful participation](#)
- [3.5. Theme 5: Arts-based approaches as foundations for change in curriculum and policy](#)

3.1. Theme 1: Artistic expressions and inner peace: Bridging social divisions and cultivating harmony



RQ1. How can different art forms be used to co-design, deliver, and evaluate peacebuilding curricula and other approaches for working with children and youth to address local conflict issues?

This theme draws on the toolbox results where participants used the tools for both planning and reflection, as well as interviews. Theme one explores the following two sub-themes:



1.1 Art was used to powerfully break down societal divisions.



1.2 Inner peace brought outer peace and bridged social divisions.

A variety of visual and performative art forms were used in Rwanda and Nepal as peacebuilding approaches and to address local conflict issues throughout the Medium Grants. This section explores the sub-themes and concludes with a summary in relation to the research question.



3.1.1. Art was used to powerfully break down societal divisions

The youth in Rwanda and Nepal shared the need to actively work towards peace in society. Societal barriers that youth felt needed to be broken down included gender divisions, ageism – where the views of children and youth are not considered as valuable – ethnicity, and caste. These views were held by youth in both Rwanda and Nepal.

As part of a visualisation exercise for Gira Ingoma in Rwanda, the girls (ages 6-15) shared what their ideal world would be (see [Box 1](#)). Living peacefully, with love and care, and breaking down barriers of class were of paramount importance to the girls.

Box 1. Our ideal world (Girls in Gira Ingoma, Rwanda)

- living together peacefully
- sharing and caring between people
- a world full of love
- no rich people no poor people just everyone being the same
- beautiful houses with beautiful gardens where all the kids would meet to play, sing, dance, drum and have fun together
- all God's creatures living together without the fear of getting hurt

In the final evaluation session with youth advisors in Nepal, the group was asked to present an artistic expression to their MAP journey using image theatre. Though three different groups came up with different themes to work with (e.g., communication, connection), the images of all three groups presented transformation from individuality and division to more connectedness and unity – amongst each other and the communities around them. One young woman explained that “being together makes us stronger”, and highlighted that “groups have been excluded – castes, regions where they are from ... working together is important, we are stronger together than on our own.”

An artist involved in the PPPF (Nepal) commented about the importance of the participants from all generations (as some brought sisters, aunties, grandmothers, and mothers to participate) in creating art but also reflecting on it, “giving them space to reflect on how they felt”, for example, after the exhibition.

A youth advisor (20 years old) reflected on the need to break down societal barriers in Nepal:

Even though we are taught in school about being inclusive and breaking down barriers, it's surprising that these problems still exist in real life... It wasn't until I got involved with YAAR and MAP (MEL) where I truly understood the impact of these barriers and the importance of getting rid of them. It's surprising that there is a gap between what we learn and what actually happens... we need to take real action about these problems rather than just talking.

A policymaker in Nepal shared about the impact of the arts as a tool to diminish inequalities and societal barriers – gendered, between generations, or between castes – and noted that he had seen these barriers broken down through his engagement with MAP over four years:

There are different kind of, let's say, inequalities that we can see at home. So, I'd say gender inequalities so, discrimination based on caste, ... or based on job ... And then they came up with different ideas. How we can minimize those inequalities into the society. And then what could be my roles and responsibility for transforming the society ... when they presented their ideas in a very artistic form it became a very, let's say, impactful. We say that art is a power to influence people. We argue that art is a kind of public asset. It's not only the logical or the brain-based things. It's all about the imagination. So, these things helped to make a very good discourse in education settings.

In a similar vein, during the outcome vision mural activity in Rwanda for PPPF, one young person reflected on the phrase, “Together we stand; divided we fall”, saying, “this implies that as younger people we have the right to stand and fight what is not right and what destabilises our peace through exhibitions and arts, disseminating the information across the social media.” This emphasises the power of arts in providing youth a tool to communicate their thoughts and feelings and to affect change in the society around them.

A mental health professional from a Rwandan health center shared that through the use of arts-based methods, genocide survivors explored and “discovered their problems, sharing to each other as the way of healing mechanism and gaining stories of resilience.”

Adults and youth in all settings raised the importance of collaborating closely with government and civil society groups and actors, including schools, to build peace. This collaboration helps them to gain a sense of solidarity amongst one another – working across institutions and generations. Growing their own sense of peace, they can then extend this towards others. A Rwandan teacher who facilitates MAP activities in their school described MAP as a “source for solidarity in the community”. He explained:

MAP ... has been a good place to meet and share ideas of what can be done to solve disagreements in community/schools and family... and raising a sense of togetherness and increased openness to express our feelings, thoughts, and emotions.

The Rwandan youth advisors from Visualising Peace reflected on the power of the methods to encourage peace and conflict resolution. They highlighted how the project not only increased cultural participation but promoted a deeper understanding of local traditions that will encourage cultural preservation while also contributing to peacebuilding through breaking barriers between youth and policymakers. Similarly, a participant from PPPF shared their River Journey (Figure 3.1.1a). The second pane has three drawings: the flower represents individuals, the flag represents government, and the bird represents society. The artist explained that, “MAP has provided [them] with knowledge that peacebuilding can start within an individual and then spread peace to others instead of waiting for government to initiate it in society.” The fruit tree at the end visually expresses: “I have received knowledge from MAP that everyone can be a peacebuilding agent and spread to others, and that can lead to development of infrastructures and society at large ...”

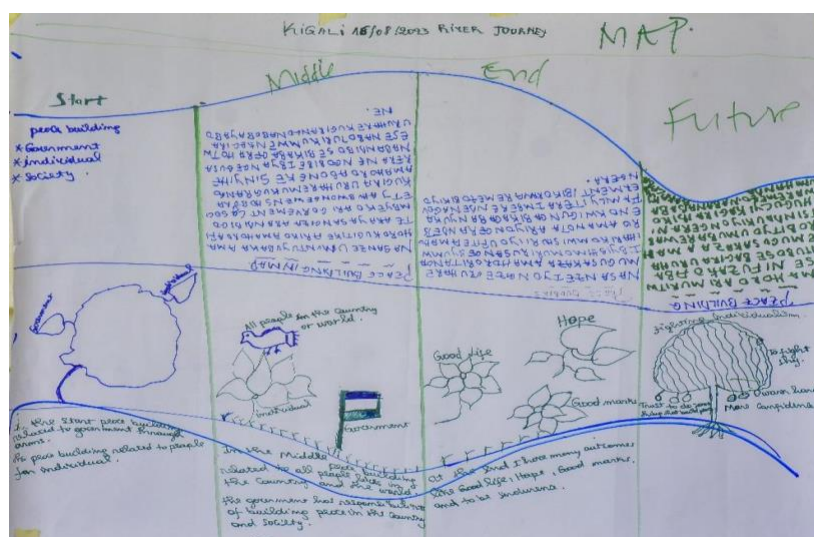


Figure 3.1.1a. River Journey by a participant from Picturing Past Present and Future in Rwanda

In contemplating the changes they'd like to see in their community, Intergenerational Dialogue Medium Grant participants in Nepal collectively expressed their aspirations for a discrimination-free society and, relatedly, improved healthcare access for all (see [Figure 3.1.1b](#)). Key actions identified for this transformation included fostering harmony in society and strengthening education facilities while providing essential training opportunities. Taking responsibility for these changes, the participants recognised the vital roles of families, teachers, and ward officers. During the course of the Medium Grants, they worked towards the short- and medium-term goals to conduct awareness sessions with the schools and introduce the children to the use of theatre for advocacy. In the long term, they plan to conduct street dramas to address discrimination and to advocate for the construction of health posts in every village.

In Rwanda, MAP teachers/facilitators shared about the impact on community peace building and conflict resolution. One facilitator shared, “of course, yes, MAP played big role in these areas because it has been good place to meet and share ideas of what can be done to solve disagreements in community/schools and family. It provides a different overview of things and raises a sense of togetherness and increased openness to express our feelings, thoughts, and emotions.” Another teacher added that MAP and arts-based methods are “a source for solidarity in community.”

An important impact in Rwanda was that through MAP clubs, several street-connected children were counseled and reintegrated back into schools. They are now re-engaged with their peers and teachers and the families are being supported to encourage their education. A rehabilitation specialist in Rwanda explained that through arts, MAP “promoted the way of working with parents of street connected children in the process of re-integration and changing mindsets.” A teacher involved in these efforts shared that MAP methods – in this case visual - made it easy for her to advocate for the children with different problems to policymakers and other stakeholders, like head teachers and local leaders. She also learned through MAP how to effectively calm and address the maladaptive behaviors of street children and to support them and their families. The arts-based methods, such as drawing, provided a tool to bridge the generations and, as a teacher, work with children and their parents.

Changes we'd like to see		short term change	long term change	key action	who's responsible
① जातिगत बिच भेदभाव नहने,	- विद्यालयमा जातिगत भेदभावमा अरु सकिन्छ,	- शिक्षणको एक जोडी गर्दा हाटका गरि अनुदानमा भेदभाव गर्नु नुहने भन्ने बुझाउने,	- समाजमा सेवामा लाग्ने	- परिवार, शिक्षण, भिक्षुता, ठाकाजी, कक्षा गर्दा	
② गाउँ घरमा नताश्छा जोका नहने,	- गाउँ घरमा गठमा जोका निर्माण गर्ने,	- भग्नावशेष पुर्नाउन जातघातमा संवेदन गराउने,	- सबैलाई तालिम दिने र बिचको संविधान गराउने	- ठाकाजीको माइला,	

How	
- संघीयता सम्झात दिन सम्झेर	- गाउँ घरका व्यक्तिहरू ठाकाजी गराउने

Group-1

Figure 3.1.1b. Intergenerational Dialogue Medium Grant participants' in Nepal aspirations for changes in the community



3.1.2. Inner peace brought outer peace and bridged social divisions

One of the keys to enjoying a full life and having lasting happiness is our ability to maintain inner peace, even in the face of difficult or painful problems.
(PPPF participant, Wellbeing Thermometer)

Participants in all contexts emphasised the importance of fostering peace within themselves as individuals. This, on its own, was important to youth. However, they also shared that peace within is needed to extend peace towards others. A poem by a youth advisor in Rwanda (see [Box 2](#)) powerfully showed this theme, also highlighting the enhanced sense of confidence and ability to express oneself (see [Theme 3](#)).

Box 2. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda

*The shy I was, the less I felt
The shadow I faced, the less I focused
The same I had, the less I followed
The shell I covered, the less I expressed*

*As the dark appeared, the confidence faded
As the dark proceeded, the confidence disappeared
As the dark disappointed, the confidence rose
As the dark faded, the confidence was a trail*

*Myself exposed, discovered confidence
Myself expressed, discovered career
Myself expectant, discovered concreteness
Myself expired, discovered caring*

*Inner peace, became a rhythm
Inner peace, spread experience
Inner peace, became a share
Inner peace, spread opportunity*



Figure 3.1.2a. Medium Grant participant vision mapping exercise (midline)

One Medium Grant participant from Rwanda drew a photo of herself living in love, peace, cooperation, and respect with different creatures around her (see [Figure 3.1.2a](#)). She emphasised the importance of these qualities being fostered within herself, then extending to the school and community. In the River Journey reflections, another participant shared that at the start of the programme, “I had no inner peace” – she was only searching for it from peers and social media. “MAP has taught me that peace building starts within and you can share and spread what you have

experienced ... to others” in the schools and wider society. This is of critical importance as participants also shared that they do not always feel safe in the community due to societal divisions. When doing the Wellbeing Thermometer activity, youth reflected on their own level of wellbeing - connectedness, safety, hopefulness, worthiness, and respect. One young person shared how the process of doing this activity served as a “healing mechanism”, and said, “one of the keys to enjoying a full life and having lasting happiness is our ability to maintain inner peace, even in the face of difficult or painful problems.”

Participants also shared ways that societal barriers could be broken down through seeking internal peace then working together with others. Young women in Hetauda, Nepal (ages 15-19), for example, shared that “Inequality is there – young people have responsibility to change ourselves, change society; changes need to be internalized” (see [Figure 3.2.2c Case Study 1](#)). They envisioned in the future strong relationships between teachers and students, and students becoming leaders of the nation, no matter what their background. They emphasised, “It’s not only for peace, it’s for peace of mind.” A member of YAAR chose a bench as her image, sharing that, before, she could only see problems in society. MAP has provided a place for her to “sit” and see her own problems. As she has removed stress in her own life, she wants to be a bench for others, where they can sit and discuss societal issues, and work to build a stronger and more united society.

A group of teachers in Hetauda, Nepal, from 3 different schools, reflected on the impact of MAP in bringing about transformation within the students, as well as change in society. They shared that the arts-based methods prompted a curiosity in students’ minds and helped them to think critically. This provided an opportunity for them to consider the social environment around them and gave them confidence to start initiatives to tackle societal challenges. One teacher gave the example of a shy student who joined the MAP club and grew in confidence over time. He is now part of a group that is planning to do an environmental campaign and sharing his desire to break down caste distinctions in the community.

3.1.3. Conclusion

The MAP participants reflected how artistic forms can enhance dialogue between youth and adults, including educators, parents, and policymakers, in order to break down societal barriers that are obstacles to building a peaceful society. Their stories and images show how it is essential to provide spaces and methods to reflect and foster peace within so that youth are then able to share and contribute to peace with others.

3.2. Theme 2: Working together across generations: Creative messaging and social respect

Ababiri bishyize hamwe ntakibananira:*

**Two or more people working together, nothing can overcome them*



RQ2. How might cultural forms be used for dialogue with and between children and youth, educators and policymakers to advance peacebuilding through a local and indigenous approach?

This section highlights the ways that the arts, in particular cultural forms, have been used in powerful ways in MAP to enhance dialogue between generations. The following three sub-themes are explored below:



2.1 Cultural forms enhanced dialogue between children and youth and parents, educators, and policymakers.



2.2 MAP influenced policy and fostered working together with families and educators through creative intergenerational communication of messages.



2.3 Youth gained social respect through intergenerational dialogue.

The following sections outline these themes further as they arose in the Medium Grants and special projects.



3.2.1. Cultural forms enhanced dialogue between children and youth and parents, educators, and policymakers.

It was evident that through the methods applied in MAP Medium Grants and commissioned projects, bridges between generations were created that enabled communication (see [Figure 3.2.1a](#) for the overview).

In the Mid- and Far Western Province of Nepal, in the commissioned project, Dēudā Folklore & Social Transformation in Nepal, Dēudā folklore dance and song was explored as a method to enhance intergenerational dialogue and advocacy. As a traditional art form, it has historically been used to expose and comment on social issues for resistance and social movements. Communities would engage in the dance for hours, and sometimes days, creating and sharing messages through song. The project is exploring how Dēudā can be used for enhancing unity and harmony among youth in conflict areas. In MAP, the art form was taught to school children who used it to advocate to adults and policymakers against child labour. In March 2024, the Dēudā project engaged members of Provincial Assembly, from provincial minister, prominent scholars, professors, educators, cultural authorities and leaders, media, folk singers, and other artists and community members to disseminate research findings and to foster discourse with policymakers on the necessity to preserve culture and support social transformation through Dēudā and integrate it into school curricula. Provincial Assembly member, Sudurpaschim Province voiced support stating, “we are positive to do everything possible from policy level, including a private member bill if needed.” At the municipality level, a rural municipality chairperson showed interest to introduce culture coaches to preserve Dēudā in school. Furthermore, at the University level, a Professor from Far Western University committed to deepening folklore studies and encouraging student dissertations on Dēudā. The event, alongside ongoing advocacy has had a significant impact on dialogue and commitments for curriculum integration and policy changes. Longer term impact should be explored in the future, beyond the scope of the Large Grant. In Rwanda, poetry (*kwivuga*) is a powerful traditional art form that has been used to share ideas and messages. Today, it is also thought to be a rising art form among youth in Rwanda (REFS). When given the choice to use any art form to express themselves during validation workshops, youth advisors and Medium Grant participants all chose poetry – with some creating an additional visual. Poetry, whether originally written in Kinyarwanda or English, is a powerful method to express youth views, displaying emotions and ideas that are difficult to share otherwise.

Visual cultural art forms are used in both Nepal and Rwanda in PPPF. In Janakpur, Nepal, Mithila arts was used as a method among girls to enhance their cultural awareness and to create space to share their views. Similarly, Imigongo, a traditional art form, was used in Rwanda. Both forms have origins in relation to the intergenerational transmission from women to girls and thus the use of the forms demonstrates the way that MAP was able to use and adapt traditional art forms to enhance intergenerational dialogue. The team in Nepal described this initiative as a way to support girls and women to paint, giving them the opportunity to express themselves and to share their ideas. In Nepal, child marriage is common in the region

and girls often do not have the opportunity to express themselves, so this was an important initiative for girls to speak through art. Parents were also involved. They were invited to the exhibition and mothers joined the River Journey activity carried out for the evaluation. In her River Journey, one girl in Nepal shared her connection with the parents in the programme and also the pride that sharing their stories through this art form brought both the girls and parents (see [Figure 3.2.1b](#)):

Our parents were also invited to the programme. They were so happy for us when we were presenting our Mithila painting with other visitors. There was an exhibition of our paintings. We explained our paintings to the visitors. The visitors understood the paintings easily as we explained them about the paintings. This was a moment of pride and joy for both us and our parents.

The arts served as a bridge between the generations – the girls, their teachers, parents, and grandparents – as a rich opportunity for sharing their views about issues. One of the girls participating in Mithila arts described the happiness that arose from sharing her views on issues through her paintings:

We drew many Mithila paintings to reflect those proverbs, issues and proverbs which we discussed. We shared our painting experiences with our teachers and friends. We were very happy during the painting program, which was very interesting.

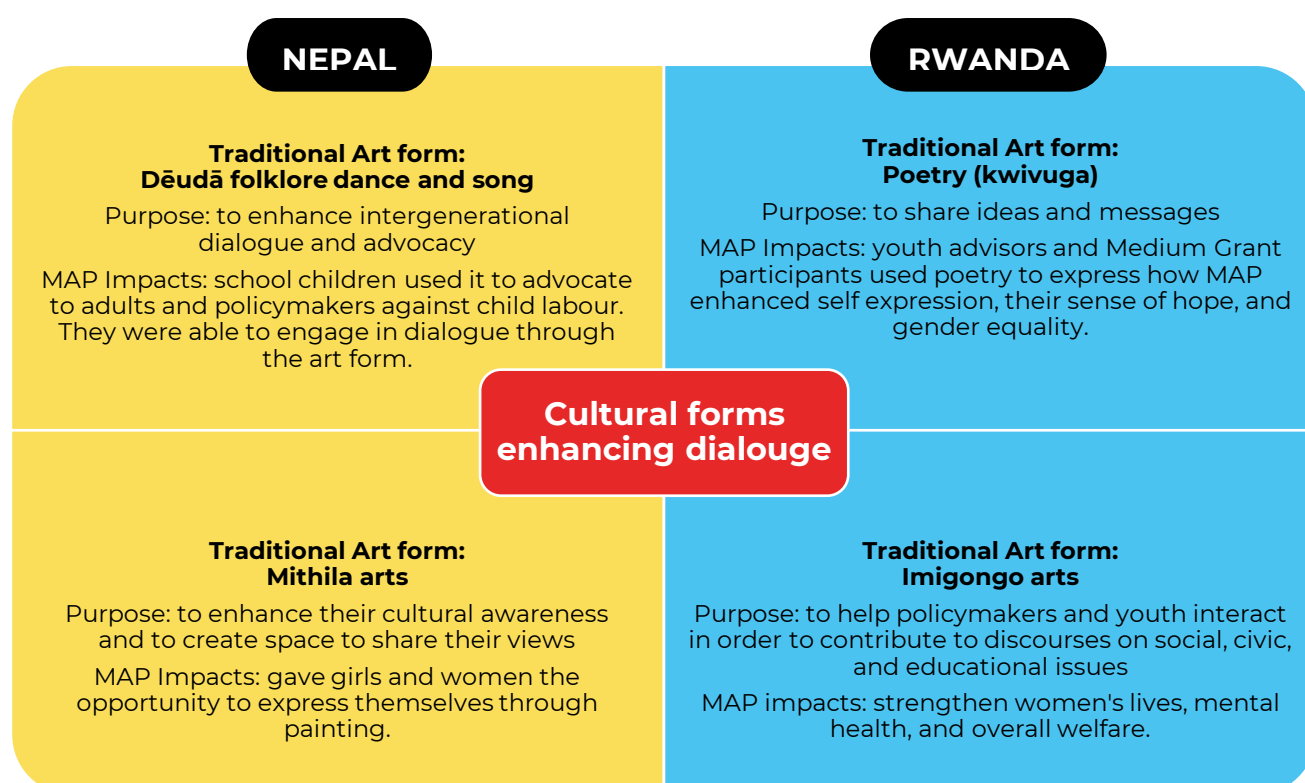


Figure 3.2.1a. Examples of cultural and art forms enhancing dialogue in MAP



Figure 3.2.1b. River Journey activity for PPPF, Janakpur, Nepal



3.2.2. MAP influenced policy and fostered working together with families and educators through creative intergenerational communication of messages

3.2.2a. In policy spaces

Youth were able to use arts-based methods as a tool to convey their thoughts and ideas to policymakers in both Rwanda and Nepal. The connections to policymakers and opportunities created in MAP through support of MAP project facilitators' scaffolding were critical to creating linkages, or bridges, between the young people and the policymakers, but the methods also gave youth the freedom to share their thoughts in creative ways (e.g., dance, image theatre, poetry) providing them with an embodied way to share. As one of the Rwandan MAP teacher facilitators shared, "sometimes children cannot easily communicate the problem they have but through drawing they can give detailed information about their lives."

One of the Rwandan Medium Grants participants shared in the Wellbeing Thermometer activity (endline) that they gave "feeling worthy" a "10" because they now see themselves as a "democratic person who respects others and fights for human rights which make him/her more loved and taken as a vital person in society and family." This quote shows the importance of using methods that can foster relationships and skills to enhance the sense of worth and respect of youth so that they can impact family and community, including in policy spaces.

Box 3. UNESCO event in Nepal

The YAAR group performed at the [UNESCO event in September 2023](#) powerfully sharing their key messages through the use of image theatre. They created two panels – one where youth voices were not heard, but ignored, and a second image where youth voices informed decision making even through the bureaucratic obstacles. In their visioning activity, the youth advisors emphasised the role of youth in policymaking and community leadership and shared that they wish to see YAAR expand and grow, "with its own space and office, working together with youths, community leaders, policymakers, change makers and mentors." (Youth advisor, Nepal, Visioning activity).

In Rwanda, one of the mental health professionals shared the way that youth are able to recognise their own challenges while advocating about mental health at schools:

Through arts at school young people were able to discover their own problems, informing the policymakers about the arts and cultural engagement in education. (Interview, Rwanda)

In Rwanda, a rehabilitation specialist involved in MAP shared how girls were becoming pregnant and they would not go back to school after giving birth. However, they shared that MAP's work with policymakers has contributed to the support of youth in this situation through raising this issue in creative ways such as in art exhibitions where community and policy stakeholders were invited.

A youth advisor in Nepal raised the challenge that, though they have made progress in dialoguing with policymakers, through engaging in platforms where they could share their views on key topics, such as at the UNESCO event and through writing policy briefs, there is a greater need to focus on this moving forward. She shared:

I feel like we are missing youth representation in national level policymaking and it is important for youth researchers to have a seat at the table. We must emphasise on researching, writing, and making policies and strategies that can help the youths and the communities. (Youth advisor, Validation workshop)

3.2.2b. Within families

The importance of intergenerational understanding, gender equality, and unity within families was emphasised by participants in both Rwanda and Nepal. In Nepal, 19 of the youth who completed the Psychosocial Support (PSS) survey strongly agreed that MAP activity sessions make a difference to the wellbeing of their family.

In both country settings, projects emphasised dialogue and enriching relationships in school, but students also spoke of how they were able to use their skills in their families to increase unity, to decrease conflict, and to have tools to solve problems collaboratively. They spoke of the need for more gender equality in families and shared that MAP was helping this to be realised through its impact on them and their relationships with family members. Some parents also had direct interaction with facilitators, such as when facilitators did home visits (usually to discuss an educational or home situation of a child) or when parents attended performances. In the PPPF project in Nepal, as described above, mothers were directly involved in creating the reflective River Journeys with their daughters. The daughters led the process while the mothers reflected and contributed additional ideas. In the YAAR in Nepal, several young women noted how parental support for their education and extracurricular activities contributed to their ability and interest to engage in MAP initiatives. Accounts showed how this was a powerful tool to bring them together and create even more effective change in their family settings. In Rwanda, a teacher shared how they have intentional conversations with children where they are free to talk about their feelings and thoughts and how they also, at times, invite caregivers. They shared that this helps, “to convey the wishes of their children to them and create the capacity of giving time to their children.”

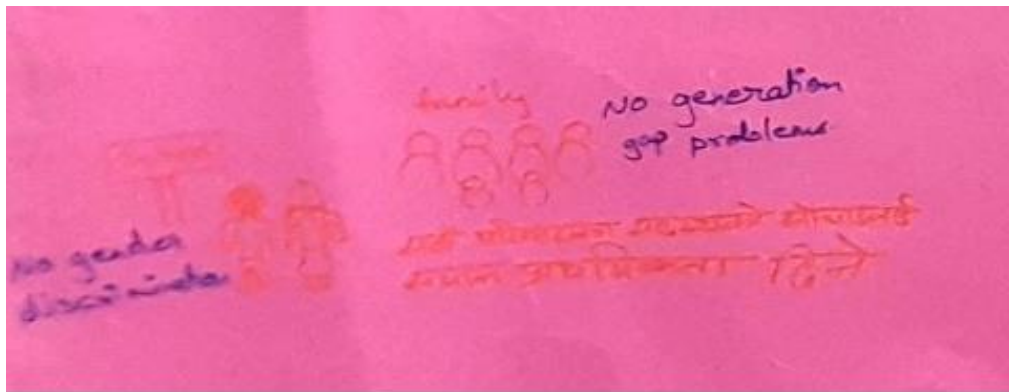


Figure 3.2.2a. Depiction of Gender Equality Concerns

Children advocated for gender equality by depicting boys and girls in various roles, emphasising equal opportunities, intergenerational understanding, and unity in schools and within families (see [Figure 3.2.2a](#)). [Figure 3.2.2b](#) below, drawn by a girl in Hetauda (outcome vision murals), symbolises a girl's ascent to success, supported by her family, and encourages parents to walk hand-in-hand, emphasising the importance of parental support and harmonious relationships. This interpretation was shared by the girl herself and is not based on the adult researchers' interpretation.

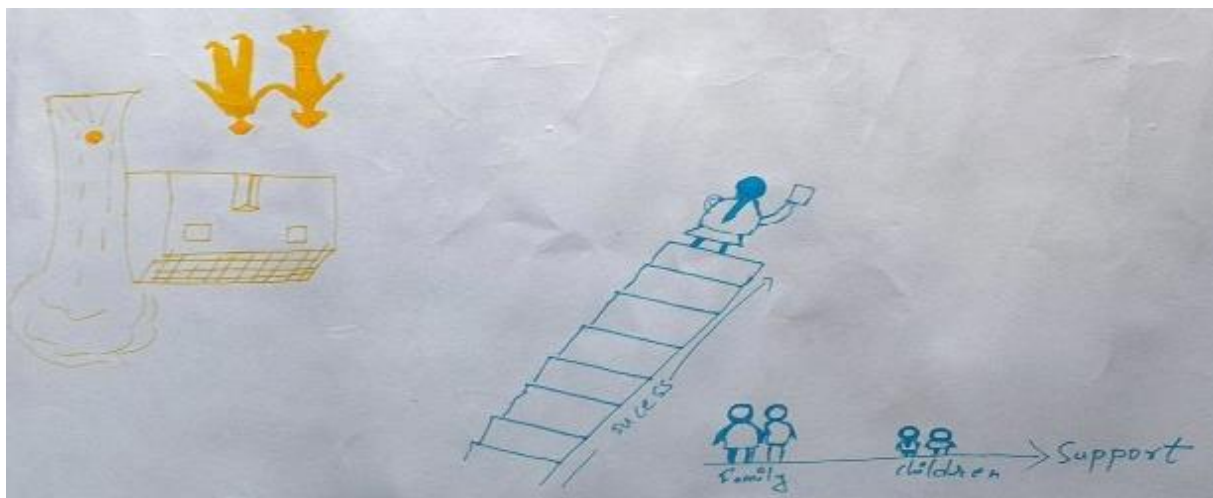


Figure 3.2.2b. Outcome vision mapping drawing by a girl in Hetauda, Nepal

One of the youth advisors in Rwanda also shared the importance of gender equality in the home, sharing that this was conveyed by participants in the Gira Ingoma project. In the validation workshop, her group wrote the following poem:

Box 4. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda – I’m strong

*I'm strong because I'm with my family,
Mom, Dad, Don't worry.
You won't cry when I'm around
I will be there for you
Girl fearless because you have the ability*

*You're not alone
Your smile always on your face (eyes)
Keep shining always,
You can do anything that your brothers can
You are strong*

3.2.2c. Between educators and students

In all contexts, the projects’ arts-based methods were found to deepen the relationship between students and teachers, enabling foundations for trust and for more effective learning to take place. As one of the teachers in Hetauda, Nepal, explained: “the teacher-student relationship became closer, the power dynamic diminished as they were internalising the arts-based methods” (see also [Case Study 1](#)). Similarly, in Rwanda, the teachers joined the students in the final evaluation activities and the students expressed how their relationship with the teachers was key to helping them develop confidence and peace within themselves.

In the context of the Intergenerational Dialogue project in Nepal, students and adult stakeholders from different schools participated in collaborative dialogue through the activity outcome vision mapping (brainstorming “changes you’d like to see”), where they discussed various issues in their community and presented it to their teachers, leaders, and seniors in order to voice their opinions and ideas.

Through the Wellbeing Thermometer activity, participants of Medium Grants (Lalitpur) expressed a sense of hope, respect, and connection, fostering feelings of worthiness and safety. They shared that “strong bonds” had been created with their teachers, allowing for the exchange of innovative ideas and offering students the chance to boost their confidence and explore new cultural approaches by the students and the teachers. Students commented that MAP created a “safe space where they could open up to share ideas.”

In Tikabhairav Lalitpur, Nepal, the students held a collective vision for their community, aspiring to see schools in villages provide educational opportunities beyond the 8th grade, extending up to the high school level, and ensuring the provision of clean water, a clean environment, hygienic toilets, and well-managed playgrounds within these educational institutions. Their collective vision also involved creating a better education system that was unrestricted and celebrated diversity while promoting critical thinking. Recognising that achievement of these goals

requires partnership with school administration; they planned, in the short term, to engage in open dialogues with the school's principal, discussing the pressing issues and potential solutions. In order to achieve long-term change, they planned to collaborate with the Ward Chairperson to address the broader status of schools within their authority. The children gained confidence to approach the adults, knowing that they could use creative methods such as image theatre to communicate.

Arts-based methods have served to develop teachers' skills, to enhance the critical thinking of students, and to create more skills to enhance students' social emotional learning (SEL) (See [Case Study 1](#)). Out of the 22 youth who completed the PSS survey in Nepal, 18 felt strongly that MAP helps them to learn socio-emotional skills and knowledge that are important for the future, while four somewhat agreed.

Case Study 1: Intergenerational Dialogue in schools: Enriched curricula and enhanced teacher – student relationships in Nepal

Background

Karkhana has been working in schools throughout Nepal. Teachers were trained in MAP teaching methods and many became passionate facilitators. The Intergenerational Dialogue project served to build on past MAP engagement in schools and communities to bring even greater impact. As part of the endline evaluation activities (September 2024), children from four schools and teachers from two schools from Hetauda came together. Among other activities, the River Journey was used as a reflective tool to consider MAP's impact.

The teachers decided to create their own river, while the older and younger children created their own (see [Figures 3.2.2c](#), [3.2.2d](#) and [3.2.2e](#), respectively). It was evident in all three River Journeys that the student-teacher relationship had deepened, diminishing power dynamics that inhibited the formation of two-way trust and mutual care. The teachers were proud and excited to talk about their enhanced relationships as well as meeting learning outcomes in creative ways. Their image of the apple tree in the three panes of [Figure 3.2.2e](#) (i.e., past, present, future) shows how they see the evolution of students' ways of thinking, moving towards critical examination of the world around them. The strong relationship between the students and teachers was also evident through their interactions with one another as they created and presented the River Journeys. An HRFC evaluation team member commented, "The teachers are dedicated and motivated ... thoughtful and creative. Teachers don't want to share their weakness in front of students, and yet they did!"

Key Findings

- Arts-based methods have a powerful impact on the relationships between teachers and students, specifically in Nepal. These methods provide an avenue for teachers to develop soft skills such as interpersonal, communication, problem solving, and awareness of social-emotional learning (SEL) needs.
- The longitudinal impact of programming (and funding) in communities lays a foundation for trust and relationship-building, which can be built upon, making the programming (in this case, the Medium Grants), particularly impactful.
- Student learning is enriched by MAP methods being carried out in school for a sustained period. This provides time for relationship building between students and teachers



Figure 3.2.2c. River Journey, Hetauda, Children aged 5-17 years

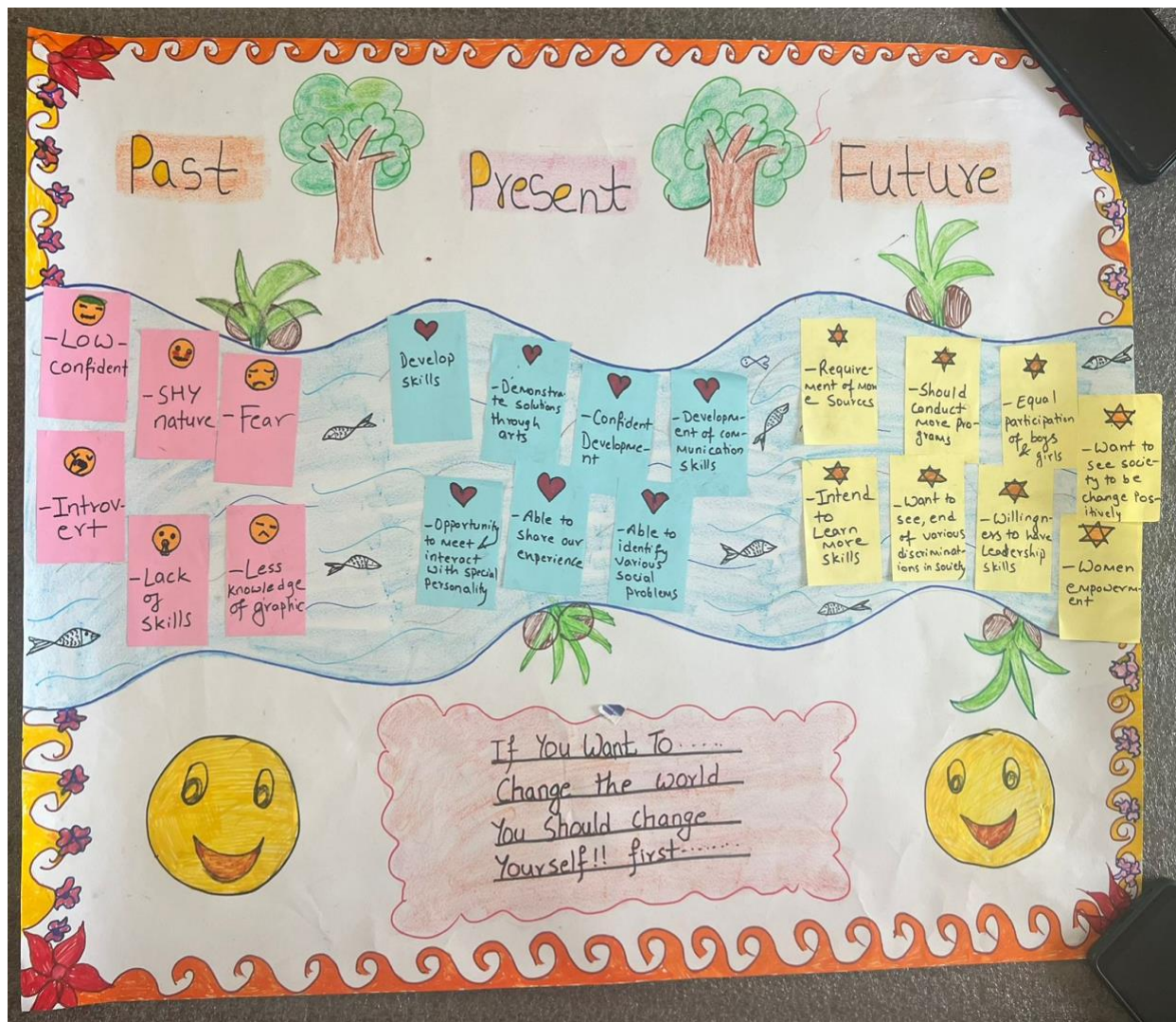


Figure 3.2.2d. River Journey, Hetauda, Youth aged 18-20 years



Figure 3.2.2e. River Journey, Hetauda, Teachers



Figure 3.2.2f. Images of students journey to develop critical thinking from the River Journey, Hetauda, Teachers



3.2.3. Youth gained social respect through intergenerational dialogue

The Wellbeing Thermometer was carried out at least twice in most project locations. There was an increased perception of youth feeling a greater sense of respect through all projects. For example, the YAAR group in Kathmandu all ranked “respect” as a 7 through 10 (out of 10), with six ranking it as “10” at the end of the project, while baseline responses were spread from 1 through 10 (only one person ranked it as a 10) at the start. Similarly, most participants in both Medium Grants in Rwanda ranked 9 or 10 at the endline, whereas the responses were varied at the start. The related dimension of “worthiness” was also explored through the Wellbeing Thermometer activity, a concept which showed a dynamic relationship with “respect”. As young people felt respected, particularly by adults, their sense of worthiness was strengthened, contributing to their own self belief that their opinions and views were worth sharing. Similarly, as they gained a sense of self-worth, they gained confidence to present their views and engage in intergenerational spaces, leading to the opportunity to gain a sense of “social respect”.

One of the youth advisors in Nepal had the opportunity to go to her hometown, Tikabhairav, and so the YAAR group gave her the role as the lead in the organisation of the session with children at the school. Because she had history with the community and school, she was nervous and it was challenging, but she shared that “the board chair was supportive and was happy and that cheered me up and gave me strength; it made me feel that I was doing something.”

After performing for policymakers at the UNESCO event (September 2023) in Nepal (see [Box 3](#)), youth advisors shared how they felt excited and that their views and opinions were valued and listened to. It was not always easy, however. The youth advisors shared that in Hetauda it was hard to get the board chair’s “buy in” – “we didn’t feel respected, we got shot down”, but “it was easier to be respected by the teachers, principals, and students.” Locally, there was a greater sense of increased respect whereas at the national level this was sometimes more challenging.

As youth increased a sense of respect from others, this extended out towards society. Arts-based methods encourage students to think beyond themselves and to consider how they can strengthen their families, community, and school. The children in Hetauda shared that in the future, “We don’t know how this will turn out. We need to evolve ourselves. We need to cause a revolution in our community, we need to help to develop it.”

When discussing the theme of “respect”, one female youth advisor in Nepal shared that there is still a long way to go with regards to respect for and true understanding of women in society:

The “fight for women” intention is good, but people don’t grasp the concept of feminism – it’s not about competing, but it’s about mutual respect for each other’s choices.

The trusting relationships between children and facilitators were critical in fostering respect that could then put youth in a position where they could dialogue with other adults such as policymakers. In Rwanda, a teacher shared in an interview:

Some children had a feeling of worthlessness like those who used to be street children and felt like they were not valued, but after joining MAP they know their value and they strive for maintaining it.

This was also echoed by a facilitator (interview) who noted that several children were encouraged through MAP to leave their life on the streets and go back to school. The relationships of the children with the caring adults from MAP, who encouraged them to go back to school and who led the school clubs, was critical for the children in accessing a safe space to grow and to gain confidence and respect.

There was also a relationship between some of the youth advisors and children who were part of MAP Medium Grants that led to mutual respect. In Gira Ingoma, Rwanda, the children's accounts of "being respected" showed how they felt valued and respected by the youth advisors, which enabled them to share more openly about the impact of the project. For example, while doing the murals, depending on the participant's inspiration or need, the YAB members made sure that every participant had the materials that they needed and the children shared that this made them feel respected. One girl rated "respect" with a 10/10 in the Wellbeing Thermometer activity and shared:

The fact that you let me join the activities even though I was late and also the fact that you helped dry myself up and get dry clothes made me feel very respected and that is why [I] rated a 10 out of 10.

This also shows the effective role of youth advisors in supporting participants holistically and sensitively, and the importance of engaging youth in MEL.

3.2.4. Conclusion

This section has outlined how MAP Medium Grants provided opportunities for intergenerational dialogue in many ways, including through youth-led MEL activities. Youth not only gained confidence, skills, and opportunities in dialoguing with adults, but they developed a desire and commitment to work with other children, youth, families, and communities. As children in Hetauda Nepal exclaimed, "We had problems in the past; now we continue our good work, explore new areas of interest, join new groups, and lead our juniors!"

3.3. Theme 3: Arts-based approaches to strengthen confidence, connectedness, and hope

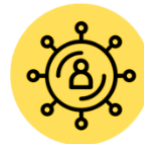


RQ3. How might psychosocial support, including local healing practices, be better integrated within peacebuilding approaches by using the arts to promote the wellbeing of children and youth, especially those from marginalised groups?

This theme draws on children, youth, and adults' understandings, experiences, and embodiment of arts-based methods for peacebuilding and the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth, as well as facilitators and families to some degree. This section uses data from River Journeys, Wellbeing Thermometers, image theatre, outcome visioning, artistic reflections, interviews, presentations, and focus group discussions. Further, it uses the findings from the Psychosocial Support (PSS) survey carried out in Nepal. Theme three explores the following four sub-themes:



3.1 Children and youth grew in self-confidence and found new ways to express themselves.



3.2 "Kubaho ni ukubana" – Living is living together: Children and youth gained a sense of connectedness to peers, family, and leaders.



3.3 Children, youth, and adults gained a sense of hope which also helps them share hope with others.



3.4 The arts have powerful potential for mental health practice.

This theme concludes with a summary of all four sections and reflection on MAP's contribution to psychosocial wellbeing.



3.3.1. Children and youth grew in self-confidence and found new ways to express themselves

Box 5. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda

*Here I come to life – what do I do?
Should I give up?
No apparently it isn't allowed,
But why? No specific reason.
Are you serious? It is just because for
you
I aint strong enough
Let me prove you wrong
Here I am fully determined to prove you
wrong
Should I take risk and be judged by the
community
To achieve my future ambitions? Yes.
Here I go with my dreams while
concocted to be served:
"Oh God you should just give up"
"You should just find something else to
do"
This is an abomination
Here I am now fighting with my anxiety
Fighting with my mental health
Fighting with my emotions*

*Asking myself if my visions are worth
fighting for
Here I fall in deep depression
Because everyone made me believe I'm
worth nothing
This inner voice of mine not wanting to
shut up
Telling me am doing the right thing
Is making it worse
"Am I competent enough?" let's
Work on that!
After a life being patient, here the
outcomes
Here is everyone praising what everyone
once cursed
Here is everyone healing what they broke
And here is me proud of myself because I
didn't give up on my vision and I stayed
connected to...
My heart
Others
My dreams.*

Through MAP, children and youth across Medium Grant projects in Rwanda and Nepal experienced self-discovery, gained self-confidence, and developed new arts-based and creative ways to express themselves. Youth advisors' participation in Creative MEL Toolbox training and leadership in facilitating MEL activities with their peers created space for them to explore new art forms and build leadership and confidence in themselves.

Across Nepal and Rwanda Medium Grants, children and youth self-confidence increased and they found new ways to express themselves. In Nepal, several youth participants spoke of how they had felt fear of being judged by their peers and wider society. By participating in the MAP project, they became more comfortable to speak and express themselves. For example, during a visual explorer activity, one youth used a lavender flower image:

A soft and light colour that mirrors [my own] personality. I initially struggled to express myself and feared judgement. However, my time in YAAR has empowered me to express myself freely and authentically. (Female youth, Wellbeing Thermometer visual, Kathmandu, September 2023)



Figure 3.3.1a. Lavender Flower, Wellbeing Thermometer Reflection, Endline, Nepal

Youth advisors note that they initially had “feelings of shyness, lack of confidence, and difficulty in communication.” As time progressed, they began to feel “growth” and “increased comfort in communication” (midterm, MEL YAAR). They highlighted that it can be “hard to respect yourself” and “that we need to learn to overcome ourselves” (youth advisor, Nepal). The young people’s reflections reflect great respect for themselves with MAP aiding them to discover a higher and illuminated sense of self.

This enhanced self-confidence was noticed by families and community members as well. In Rwanda, a caregiver shared that the interaction between youth prior to MAP was poor but that MAP helped them to “be open and talk what’s in their mind and work collaboratively to find solutions” and to “give advice to each other” (interview). Through the Wellbeing Thermometer activity participants in PPPF in Rwanda reported they were able to express themselves with more confidence to address problems they experience in society (midline, Wellbeing Thermometer, PPPF Rwanda). Several youth participants spoke of fear at the start or prior to starting their role with MAP. Their fears ranged from fear of judgement, to lack of confidence, to uncertainty of others within the space. Over time, youth noted enhanced confidence, connection, and safety to express themselves. A female youth advisor in Rwanda said, “I was afraid before but now I can, I believe in myself. Before I kept everything inside, but now I am happy to express myself” (PPPF and Visualising Peace, validation workshop, January 2024).

In Gira Ngoma, a trainer commented in her opening speech during the Large Grant visit to a school that the girls started so timidly and now have increased the skills and confidence. When they sang and drummed, confidence exuded from their faces (see [Figure 3.3.1b](#)).



Figure 3.3.1b. Gira Ingoma participants in Huye Province drumming for the Large Grant team

As the programme progressed, youth noted how they became more confident in themselves. Youth also used imagery to express their feelings of transformation. For example, in Rwanda a youth advisor noted feeling “transformation from the dark (inside) to the light (outside)”, and another shared “at the start of the project, [I] was in that mess, as it went forward [I] had light in [my] life and was lifted out of the cloud” (YAB analysis session). Youth advisors further shared that when confident “we’re more likely to move forward towards people and opportunities [and] not back away from them.” They also felt more confidence to try again if things did not work out well (Rwanda Travelling Opinion).

In addition to the youth advisors gaining confidence, children involved in MAP projects also shared feelings of confidence. During a River Journey reflection in Hetauda one child stated, “I built my confidence, it gave a platform to share my feelings, I can share my feelings to others, I can speak!” Similarly in Rwanda, during an artistic documentation, one youth participant shared that when they began they felt as if they did not know what they were doing, and as time progressed, they felt proud

and were able to “be who I am.” At the end, the participant felt confident to listen and support others, and was keen to encourage others. Furthermore, youth identified key elements that helped them to express themselves through artistic reflection. These ranged from feeling confident, seeing self-expression as a right, and overcoming fears of being judged, disappointing family, and not achieving expectations. One young person also shared the value of being able to express oneself regardless of the emotion, sharing that they are now able to “be happy with those who are happy, and be sad with those who are sad” (Rwanda, artistic expression), and with full confidence the ability to contribute at a greater level to unity and peace in the community.

Box 6. Expressing Myself as I Am (Female youth, Rwanda)

I display who I am as a result of the society I inhabit. Before, I was unable to express my feelings or my pride in myself, but after attending Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, I learned how to be authentic and talk to people without fear. I work in a way that makes everyone feel at ease and understands that we must all show ourselves. As an example, when I visit my friends and witness them acting inappropriately, I show myself. If there is someone with bad character, I talk to him and tell him that he is wrong and I convince him/her that I don't hate them. By demonstrating who I am with the aid of Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, I encourage the people I live with, since those who don't know where they're from can't know where they're going.

3.3.1a. Confidence in community

Not only did youth gain confidence in themselves and amongst one another, their self-confidence expanded to speaking up in their own families, schools, communities, and in larger settings.

For example, one female youth advisor in Nepal shared her new ability to share with her village through working with other YAARs to coordinate with “community leaders and the school to organise an event on arts-based education.” Another noted the transformation has been from the “personal level, [to the] family level, society level also” and “I can present myself in a different way among others” (Female youth, Nepal, Impact Week). Youth in both Rwanda and Nepal highlighted an increased sense of wellbeing as a result of being able to express their emotions and contribute to addressing problems across their communities. This increased confidence was shared through verbal and artistic expression which in turn enhanced children and youth wellbeing. As one youth participant stated, it “increased my confidence to express my feelings and ideas in public and to know themselves better and to connect to others” (artistic documents, Rwanda). Intergenerationally, there was also increased respect and appreciation for children and youth confidence. Adults in the project valued the changes they saw in the children and youth, with one stating the “special impact is our children, they can speak openly now” (Impact Week, Rwanda). In the same vein, in Nepal (Intergenerational Dialogue, Hetauda), at the final

evaluation workshop, teachers commended youth for their strengthened confidence and ability to share about their experience and ideas in front of the group.



3.3.2. “Kubaho ni ukubana” – Living is living together: Children and youth gained a sense of connectedness to peers, family, and leaders

Arts-based methods and processes can support children and youth in diverse settings to build their own confidence and comfort to engage with and feel connected with their peers, family, and leaders across generations, culture, ethnicity, castes, regions, race, ability, socioeconomic experience, gender, and sexual orientation. In MAP, the data shows strong connectedness to peers, particularly the youth advisors, as well as enhanced relationships with family, facilitators, and community.

3.3.2a. Connectedness to peers

In MAP, arts-based MEL supported youth advisors to come together and feel connected. In Nepal, the YAAR felt a lack of cohesion and connectedness prior to and at the start of their engagement. Through image theatre, the young women expressed their relationships as the “letters Y-A-A-R scattered chaotically.” Whereas closer to the end of their YAAR MEL experience, they showed an image of the letters together highlighting the transformation of coming together united, cohesive, and as a purposeful entity (image theatre, YAAR; see [Figure 3.3.2a](#)).



Figure 3.3.2a. Image Theatre, YAAR United, Nepal

While taking part in a Wellbeing Thermometer image reflection, one youth shared an image of a leaf. When she first began, she began as an individual. After being a part of YAAR for some time, she felt connected from the veins of the leaves, and is hopeful for more chances to continue together (see [Figure 3.3.2b](#)).



Figure 3.3.2b. Wellbeing Thermometer Visual Explorer stories

In addition to the power of art, the intersection of play in art was a valuable element for connectedness. For example, “when clashes happen, we use humour” as a form of play and everyone brings their strengths doing tasks to feel connected (Female youth advisor, Nepal).

During the PPPF midline Wellbeing Thermometer in Rwanda, feeling connected was ranked the most highly of the wellbeing pillars. Participants attributed this to the spaces for story sharing, listening, and being heard, that provide connectedness and shared understanding of life experiences. Youth in Rwanda noted an increase in confidence to connect with others and the power of storytelling in friendships, to listen and share with one another.

Children and youth across the projects also felt confident to express themselves to one another and to feel connected to address problems in the community together. Child and youth participants in regular MAP programming engaging in arts (e.g., songs, poems, drawings, paintings) were able to support each other and connect fellow students (Rwanda). Similarly in Nepal, children in Hetauda (final evaluation, see [Figure 3.2.2c](#) and [Case Study 1](#)) reflected on their feelings of uncertainty prior to joining MAP, and its impact on their ability to make friends and have a sense of connectedness. They also noted the role of trusted teachers to support them to engage and have opportunities to build friendships: “Before joining I wasn’t friendly with friends, [but the] teacher encouraged me to be part.”

3.3.2b. Connectedness to family and community

In addition to feeling connected to peers in the MAP programmes and as youth advisors, findings also showed a sense of connection to family and community members. One caregiver in Rwanda shared how MAP aided “family interaction” and helped them to make “decisions together about what can be done.” The experience supported to unify the family (Caregiver, Rwanda). Others who faced family challenges and/or who had lost family members felt MAP acted as their family: “I used to live with hurting and being alone but after joining I became happy and I have got family. I got people to fill in the gap of my dead family.” (Youth, Rwanda).

A facilitator/master trainer in Rwanda described the way that he used arts-based methods to create connections with marginalized young people living with HIV. He shared that “there is problem in young people with HIV including stigmatization, hopelessness, and harassment, but ... through the practice of arts-based methods, the students have gained confidence as well as being sharp.”

3.3.2c. Connection with government and policymakers

As explored in earlier themes, children and youth also expressed feelings of greater connection with government and policymakers through arts-based methods. In this section we note how these interactions contributed to their wellbeing. For example, YAAR in Nepal presented an image theatre (a still image of before and after) to policymakers, researchers, and practitioners at a UNESCO MAP event (See [Box 3](#)), that sparked critical dialogue among various adult stakeholders. Participants in the event, such as policymakers, artists, NGO leaders, and UNESCO staff all commented about what they thought the young people were presenting. The young people then had the opportunity to share their intentions about the still image. Two of the young people were also in a panel and had the opportunity to express themselves in the forum.

In Rwanda, youth expressed that being connected as youth can help them to collectively communicate with policymakers and community members, for example through art exhibitions. Adult stakeholders also shared how MAP brought young people together and connected them to government and policymakers. A master trainer in Rwanda shared that promoting the artistic talents of young people through MAP has given them the skills and confidence to bring impact in the community, such as mental health awareness. He shared, “MAP has opened the mindset to think beyond the clouds of the general problems in the community, workmates and employees ... Through MAP it has become easy to launch the activity of awareness in the community.”



Children and youth participants' enhanced future orientation about their lives also linked with further feelings of connectedness and confidence to contribute meaningfully to their communities and be active participants in others' lives. Youth advisors expressed a major shift in the way they see the world and their future, as a result of being a part of MAP projects. For example, youth in PPPF in Rwanda had dreams of being strong women that inspired others, being good researchers, doctors, and astronomers. The sense of hope they felt was also tied to relationships they built across racial, ethnic, gender, and generational backgrounds through arts-based MAP experiences.

Hope for the future is critical for positive mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. A teacher in Rwanda shared that some students were “hopeless for the future due to their past living conditions”, but after joining MAP expressed “hope for better futures.” Hope at the start of several of the projects was low (as shown in the Wellbeing Thermometers), yet as time progressed participants shared being “full with optimism and hope” and with feelings of “worth and safety” (Hetauda Debrief Reflections, see also [Figure 3.3.3a](#)).



Hopes ranged from personal aspirations to helping others. Helping others featured prominently in the data with children and youth reflecting on their own transformations and the desire for others to have similar experiences.



While hope increased amongst those participating in MAP Medium Grants projects, there were some cases where gender discrimination, economic barriers, and social circumstances placed limitations on hope. For example, during the Wellbeing Thermometer activity some young women expressed hopes but highlighted that “most of the things they do are only for men”, making it hard to know if “lawmakers will support them” and if things can change (Rwanda youth). Additionally, a caregiver reflected on her son’s strengthened knowledge of peacebuilding, yet his economic position left him facing challenges (Rwanda). As such, hope increased on the Wellbeing Thermometer and through evidence from other artistic activities with positive future orientations, yet contextual realities still placed constraints on actualisation of hopes and possibilities in certain spaces.



3.3.4. The arts have powerful potential for mental health practice

Throughout each section above it is evident that art has a powerful potential and impact on mental health and mental health practice. Through engaging in poems, songs, drumming, painting, drawing, theatre, and other creative opportunities, children and youth engaged in processes of reflection, healing, and greater connection with their peers and themselves. A policymaker in Nepal shared that engaging in the arts has a positive impact on mental health and can be “used as a tool to navigate their [youth’s] stress” (policymaker, Nepal). In the PSS survey 16 of youth participants strongly agreed and the remaining six somewhat agreed that MAP broadened their concept of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, and thus their ability to reflect on and engage with their own psychosocial wellbeing. One interviewee shared that story sharing as an art form supported healing “heart wounds” (Rwanda). The youth and adult allies highlighted that activities such as vision murals provided supportive spaces for people to express themselves and explore solutions. These opportunities were also linked with local mental health experts (e.g., community-based counsellors, psychologists). A clinical psychologist in Rwanda voiced the value of arts-based methods for clients to show their problems and externalize through story. In addition to benefiting children and youth, it equipped him to support staff members in stress management through arts-based processes, in turn enhancing their abilities to support children and youth. [Case Study 2](#) shows how the arts has strengthened mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in communities and families in Rwanda through influencing policy.

Case Study 2: Influencing Policy and Strengthening Communities in Rwanda -The Power of the Arts to strengthen mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in communities and families.

Summary

UYISENGA NI IMANZI (UNM) was established in 2002 with its mission to address the intergenerational impacts of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. Since the beginning, UNM has been actively working with different beneficiaries living in precarious situations, including genocide survivors, orphaned and separated children, teen mothers, and individuals with mental health issues and/or substance abuse.

Since 2002, UYISENGA NI IMANZI's provision of mental health services has made significant strides, propelled by the development and implementation of culturally tailored tools for adolescents and adults. These tools, born from a fusion of cultural metaphors and proverbs, narrative therapy principles, youth-friendly games, and MAP arts-based methods, have been meticulously crafted to cater to the unique mental health needs of the Rwandan population (Breed, et al, 2022).

These innovative tools have undergone rigorous validation by the Rwanda Biomedical Center and the Ministry of Health, ensuring their appropriateness and efficacy within the Rwandan cultural context. Since their inception in 2020, they have been deployed and integrated into the mental health landscape. A total of 162 mental health professionals and 45 teachers have been trained in their use, hailing from diverse districts including Rwamagana, Kicukiro, Rubavu, Hye, Gicumbi, and others. Many initiatives ascended from that fusion including MAP online curriculum, MAP Small Grants, MEL arts mental health, PPF, Visualising Peace, and Baho Neza mental health.

Background

IMIGONGO ARTS was sparked during a royal parade. According to local beliefs, the practice of decorating with cow dung was invented in the late 18th-early 19th century by Prince Kakira, the son of King Kimenyi of Gisaka in the eastern Kibungo region near the Tanzanian border. Mixing cow dung, a readily available medium, with ash and clay, Prince Kakira adorned the dull walls of his hut with the paste-like compound. He then taught local women his method, and they passed it on through the generations.

As part of several initiatives, young woman of Nepal and Rwanda have participated in PPF in the Imaginations Dreams and Journey. The project was implemented with the aim of supporting women in communicating the social challenges they have faced and their aspirations for the future. The project was implemented by the two [Civil Society Organizations \(CSOs\)](#): [Janaki Women Awareness Society](#) (Nepal) and [Uyisenga Ni Imanzi \(Rwanda\)](#). They use MAP to strengthen women's lives, mental health, and overall welfare. The concept of arts-based communication systems helps policymakers and youth interact in order to contribute to discourses on social, civic, and educational issues. This programme worked together with six schools, twenty young women, and six facilitators/teachers of MAP clubs at school.

Key Findings/Learnings

- The participants mentioned that through IMIGONGO ARTS of Rwanda and Mithila arts from Nepal they have gained different cultural perspectives, sharing how other cultures address their problems through arts. The exploration of IMIGONGO ARTS provides a lens through which individuals and communities can gain insights into diverse cultural perspectives, storytelling traditions, and artistic expressions. It fosters a rich tapestry of global cultural understanding and appreciation.
- Participants shared “how their life stories had changed as a result of various resilience and safeguards, such as having friends, teachers who regularly provide them with emotional support, and a large umbrella that shields them from various issues.”
- “[Participants] envisioned the[ir] bright future[s] through their hopes, dreams and values”, which were reflected in their drawings, poetry, songs, and music.
- MAP participants also spoke to increased social emotional learning, happiness, self-exploration, the “ability to share [their] own stories, resilience, knowledge about mental health conditions, their rights, and the value of getting psychosocial support.”
- “Young women were able to create their own safe spaces for sharing their painful stories, hardships, [and] their journey of life”.

Through Baho neza mental health initiatives, 414 community-based counsellors are continually being trained and coached to be a community resource for people at risk for mental health concerns, including groups of genocide survivors, teen mothers, families’ victims of family conflicts, drug abuses, beneficiaries of psychiatric services, and others with different vulnerabilities. Additionally, groups have been established in 92 villages in the Nyaruguru district and 115 in Nyagatare.

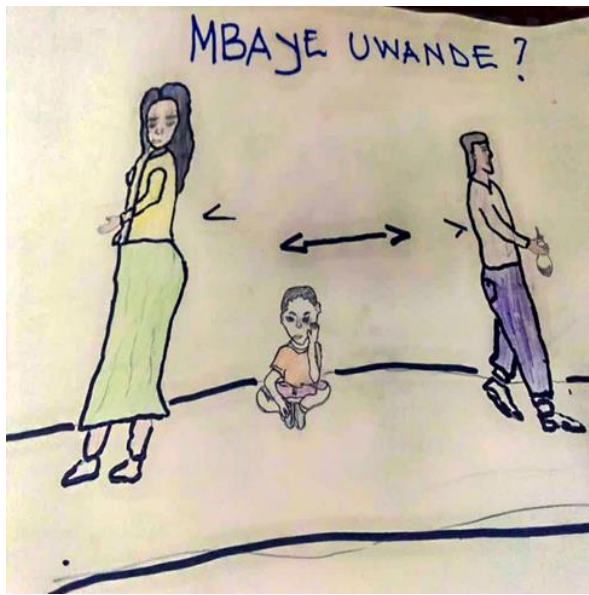


Figure 3.3.4a. Images created show the rejected child by his parents (left) and his envisioned future as the beautiful tree with fruits and the sun set resembling the light reflecting future (right).

3.3.5. Conclusion

This section has emphasised the relationship of psychosocial wellbeing and building sustainable peace. There is great potential to enhance the interlinkages when engaging children and youth in arts-based methods.

3.4. Theme 4: Nurturing growth among children and youth: Skill development and meaningful participation



RQ4. How can cultural forms be incorporated into child- and youth-led participatory action research methodologies and adapted for the purposes of the design, undertaking and delivery of interdisciplinary projects in diverse social, political, and cultural contexts?

The MAP Medium Grants and commissioned projects show how cultural forms and artistic skills were learned through MAP and applied in various ways to effect change in individuals' lives, families, schools, and the broader community. The evaluation shows how children and youth can gain artistic skills in their cultural arts forms that, in turn, can be included in participatory action research in diverse contexts. This requires flexibility for both youth and adults to do so effectively.

In this section the following sub-themes are explored:



4.1 Children and youth artistic and life skills were developed through MAP.



4.2 Arts-based methods facilitated meaningful participation of children and youth in MEL and in project activities.



4.3 Youth and adult allies' perspectives guided MAP MEL approaches throughout the project in an iterative way.

This section also shows how the outcome, “skill development” was achieved through the Medium Grant projects.



3.4.1. Children and youth artistic and life skills were developed through MAP

In both Nepal and Rwanda, there was significant skill development of the children and youth involved – both those serving as youth advisors as well as Medium Grant participants. In Nepal, of the 22 youth who completed the PSS survey, 17 strongly agree and five somewhat agree that participating in the MAP sessions makes a difference in their level of understanding, skills, confidence, and wellbeing. Most of the survey respondents responded that MAP helps them to develop or self-improve as a person (13 strongly agreed and nine somewhat agreed).

3.4.1a. Artistic skills

MAP provided the opportunity for children and youth to develop artistic skills. One of the youth advisors in Hetauda, Nepal reflected on the artistic skills gained through MAP and shared, it “helps us to identify our hidden talents, to realise our capacities, helps to build our confidence.” A rehabilitation specialist in Rwanda shared a Rwandan proverb, “umuntu atanga icyo afite” (“a person gives what he/she has”), explaining that you cannot help people with the skills you don’t have. She went on to share that the children and youth involved in PPPF were able to discover their talents:

Young people have shown their role in peacebuilding and how they can be respected in the society. They have gained their hopes, abilities, strength and competences for their future through arts, drawings as well as picturing their pasts, present and future through imaginations.
(Rehabilitation specialist, interview)

A master trainer in Rwanda (interview) shared that they enjoy having the opportunity to equip youth with confidence through arts and music. In Rwanda, Gira Ingoma, the girls learned drumming skills, juggling skills, warrior dance, and proverb and poetry writing (see [Case Study 5](#)). The youth advisors shared that the children learned “drumming beats for them to be able to create their own beats.” They also aimed to “be able to create their own traditional poems” and to “practise warrior dance for the participants to become real ‘intores’ (warriors).” One participant shared:

Our trainer loves us very much. She teaches us songs that makes us very happy. And before going back home we tell her goodbye and that we will see each other tomorrow.
(7-year-old girl, Gira Ingoma)

In Nepal, girls were introduced to Mithila arts, the traditional visual art form, and in Rwanda, youth learned Imigongo art (see [Figure 3.4.1a](#)) giving them the chance to learn artistic skills and to express themselves (see [Case Study 3](#)). Youth are also being taught the Dēudā song and dance in the Mid- and Far Western Province, providing them with a powerful local cultural tool for social transformation.

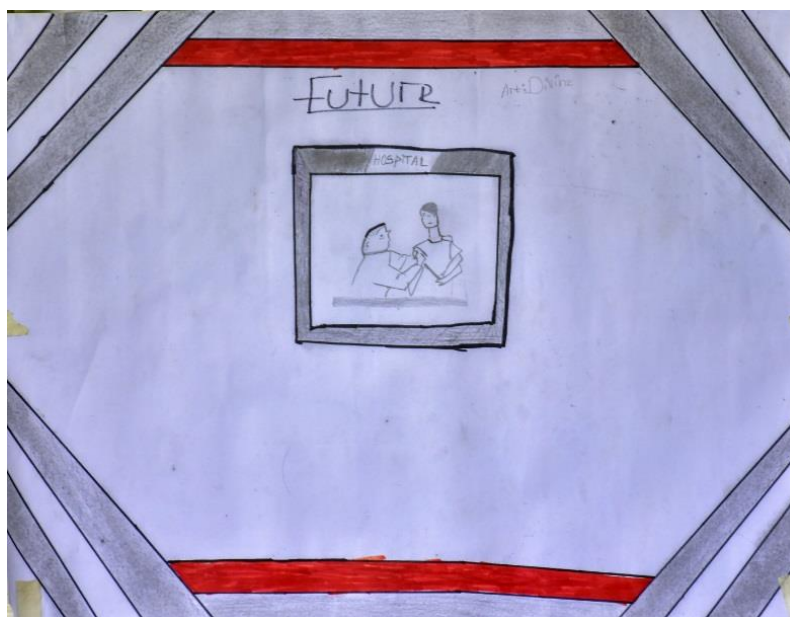


Figure 3.4.1a. Imigongo art by a participant of PPPF, Rwanda depicting their future hope – to help others through being a doctor.

Case Study 3. Informing Local Curriculum: working with young female artists to create a Mithila Arts Curriculum in the Madhes province of Nepal

Summary

In September 2023, MAP organised a National Dialogue on Culture and Arts Education with UNESCO that served as a pivotal platform to integrate culture and the arts into the education system. One of the gaps identified at the event was the development of local arts curricula. MAP secured internal funding to create a local curriculum with Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS), focusing on the use of Mithila arts (an art form led primarily by women and girls), in the southern central region of Nepal, part of Madhes province. This served as an example of local arts curricula but also to foreground the role young female artists themselves can play in creating and generating curricula in collaboration with local civil society organisations.

From December 2023 – May 2024, the Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS) is exploring the development of a local arts education curriculum centred on the use of Mithila paintings. Mithila arts are a traditional art form from the ancient Mithila kingdom of Nepal, which are still popular in the central and southern regions of Nepal, especially in and around Janakpurdham, the capital city of Madhes province. Traditionally the art form is passed from women to girls (primarily from mothers to daughters) and historically conveys religious rituals, weddings, and natural and farming scenes. However, Mithila arts are increasingly used to convey contemporary issues (e.g. creating awareness on gender injustice). The curriculum aims to introduce grades 1-5 (~ children aged 5-11) to the art form – both its form and the nature of the

symbols – as well as to consider how girls and women can be re-imagined through the living art form itself (see [Figure 3.4.1b](#)).

JWAS reviewed the guidelines prepared for developing a local curriculum by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Nepal and created an inclusive process setting up partnerships with relevant local municipality and education bodies to inform the development alongside the contributions of young female artists. Through a series of workshops and interviews with (young female) artists and curricula experts, a co-created exemplar of a local arts education curriculum was developed. This complements the national piloting of an arts education framework (see [Case Study 4](#)).

Key Findings/Learnings

- Bringing together both artists and education experts from local regions is highly productive for the development of local arts education curricula.
- Ensuring that all stakeholders including teachers, students, and local officials from ward and municipality levels are engaged is beneficial.
- Allowing for adaptations to traditional art forms, which present women and girls as active contributors to their communities alongside men and boys, can open up discussion and dialogue in rural communities.

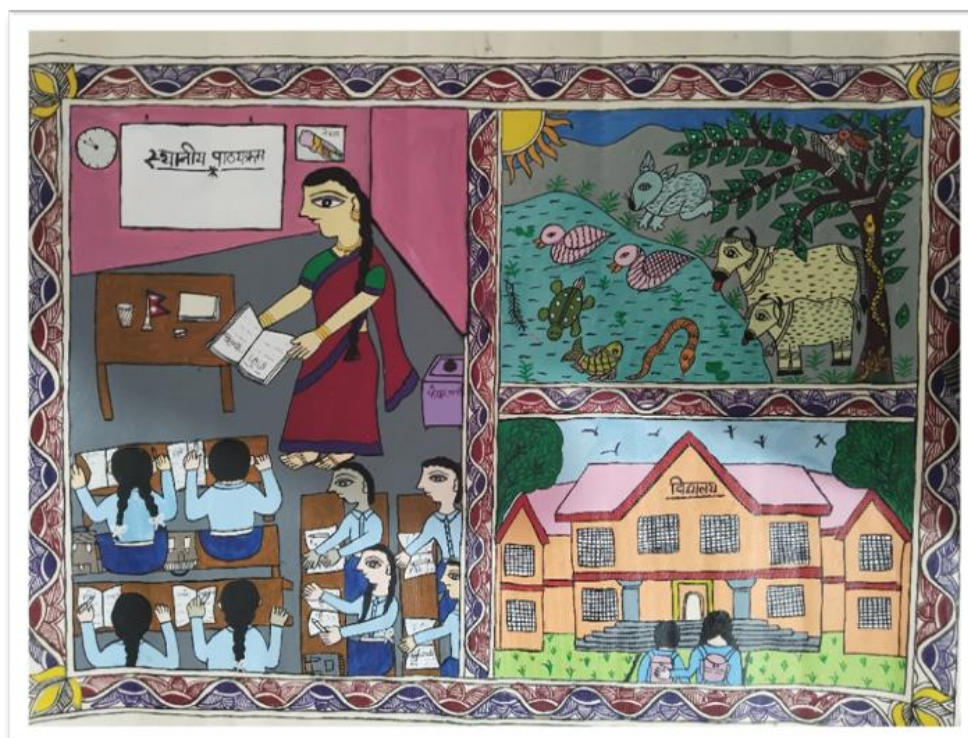


Figure 3.4.1b. “Creating a Mithila Arts curriculum” Credit: Ruby Pathak and team

3.4.1b. Communication, leadership, and expressing oneself

There was significant development of life skills among both adults and youth, such as communication skills, leadership skills, and expressing oneself.

Adults

A master trainer from Rwanda shared that MAP helped her to improve her social interactions, helping her to understand people's attitudes, behaviours, and actions. She also shared that she could now relate to people, be an active listener, and understand their feelings. She shared:

You listen without interrupting and respect others' thoughts and ideas ... Active listening creates a kind of trust ... and then so others can come to you without any fear.
(Master Trainer, Impact Week)

Another teacher shared that he learned skills about caring for mental health and is now a school counsellor (Impact Week).

Teachers in both Rwanda and Nepal shared how MAP strengthened their teaching abilities, moving from literary and didactic methods to pictures, and iterative discussions to foster mutual communication. A teacher in Nepal described their River Journey in the final evaluation:

"MAP boosted us! It started building up our confidence... We used to define words, teach them words... Now we are giving them concrete pictures." (Male teacher, Hetauda).

A female teacher added, "I can say I am more confident; [MAP] made me more confident and encouraged" (Female teacher, Hetauda). A teacher and MAP facilitator in Rwanda shared that he was grateful to find impactful ways to reach students. MAP increased his ability to connect with the children and now he also calls parents to discuss educational and personal matters together to help the students (MAP school club visit, January 2024).

Youth

In a validation workshop with youth advisors in Rwanda, youth shared their increased sense of confidence, as explored in [Theme 3](#), as well as their skills in planning and coordinating events, working with children, counselling, and ability to express themselves in public settings. One youth advisor also recognised the importance of "doing mistakes to be able to learn from them" (see [Figure 3.4.1c](#)). Another youth advisor shared her aspiration to become a professional counsellor so that she can

build on her skills and help others as a career (validation meeting, Rwanda, January 2024).



Figure 3.4.1c. River Journey of a youth advisor in Rwanda

In Nepal, the YAAR group shared similar reflections. All of the girls came from different backgrounds and were shy at first, afraid to share their thoughts and ideas. At the end of the project, they felt confident and were able to freely express themselves, lead children and other youth, and were excited about the artistic and MEL skills they had developed. One youth advisor shared that she learned valuable skills, such as “effective communication and taking charge of her life” and “became determined to pursue her goals” (endline evaluation). Another depicted her journey as starting from a leaf, gradually collecting drops of water, symbolising her acquired skills and opportunities, leading to personal growth (endline evaluation). During the Wellbeing Thermometer activity another youth advisor shared about how these skills will be useful in the future:

At first I was just blank. Now I have a clear path. I learned leadership, communication skills, cooperation – that are useful in my future. I will also change my future and change society.
(Wellbeing Thermometer, endline evaluation)

MAP Medium Grant participants also gained skills. A facilitator in Rwanda shared that MAP helped children to open up and talk about their feelings, enhancing their ability to communicate and to move towards healing. A caregiver in Rwanda shared that because of his involvement in MAP, her son was listening better, being respectful, loving school, and had stopped using drugs (interview, Rwanda).

Out of the 22 participants who participated in the PSS survey in Nepal, 17 strongly agree and five somewhat agree that involvement in the MAP project helped them to

increase their leadership skills and ability to voice themselves. In Hetauda, Nepal, children shared in their River Journey about their communication skills. One girl gave a speech for the group and shared that she would never have been able to do this before her involvement in MAP (endline evaluation, Intergenerational Dialogue, Hetauda).



3.4.2. Arts-based methods facilitated meaningful participation of children and youth in MEL and in project activities

3.4.2a. Impacts of meaningful participation on youth advisory members

Throughout the MEL process, youth advisors gained valuable research skills and experience through co-creating and delivering MAP MEL activities. In addition to learning the specific tools, the youth expressed gratitude that they now had better comprehension of the project cycle and project planning principles (Rwanda YAB member training session, April 2023). Youth also commented how the research and communication skills are helping them in their studies and other projects they are involved with. One youth advisor shared:

I was able to boost my confidence because of YAAR and also learn how to study in a new way. I also use arts now in my studies and have been able to remember my curriculum more easily. It was surprising how fun studies become once we add arts to it.
(Youth advisor, Nepal, endline)

Youth advisors in Nepal reflected on the skills they had learned in arts-based methods, the networks and connections they were able to make throughout the programme, as well as future opportunities (see [Case Study 4](#)).

Case Study 4. Juhi Adhakari, about the Future Vision of the Youth Advocacy Advisory Research group

Summary

In Kathmandu valley, the YAAR Team was formed with 30 young girls, aged 16-24 and representing diverse backgrounds, with a shared vision of empowerment and social advocacy. Being a lead of the YAAR has been an enlightening and transformative journey for me. Through this platform, I've had the opportunity to engage with diverse individuals from all over Nepal, each with unique backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, experiences, and aspirations. Together, we embarked on a journey of policy advocacy, using arts-based methods to talk about pressing social issues in our communities.

The journey of YAAR started with an intense 4-week training program focusing on arts-based methods, research skills, and social issues. However, it was not limited to theorizing – rather, the YAAR team then conducted workshops in four regions of Nepal (i.e., Surkhet, Hetauda, Tikabhairav and Lalitpur). One of the most profound aspects of this experience was using arts-based techniques – such as image theatre, clay sculpture, drawing, and painting – as tools for social change. These methods allowed us to go beyond language or cultural barriers, tapping into the common language of creativity to express our thoughts, emotions, and concerns. Through image theatre, we expressed the narratives of marginalized voices, shedding light on issues such as chaupadi partha (i.e., taboo related to menstruation), gender inequality, caste discrimination, environmental degradation, and more. Drawing and painting enabled us to capture the truth of our collective struggles and aspirations, shaping them into art forms that resonate with audiences.

My experience as the lead of YAAR has been nothing short of transformative. There are also many future opportunities stemming from my participation at YAAR. With a vision to bring change in my community, this program has given me the tools to go out and do something meaningful. Looking ahead, I am excited about the future opportunities that lie on the horizon for art, activism, and advocacy. Whether through community projects, exhibitions, or policy forums, I am committed to continuing my journey as a catalyst for positive change in Nepal and beyond. As we move forward on this journey, I am grateful for the friendships forged, the lessons learned, and the endless possibilities that await us as a team.

Key Findings/Learnings

- We have collaborated with many stakeholders, including fellow youth advisors, professors, artists, researchers, and local-level policymakers. These collaborations enriched our discussions, bringing forth a diversity of perspectives and insights that deepened our understanding of complex social problems. Local policymakers were engaged through powerful images which led to increased awareness and support from them. Moreover, they have provided paths for amplifying our voices and advocating for change at both local and national levels. By harnessing the power of the arts, we've communicated our messages in such a simple manner, compelling local policymakers to take action on issues that matter most to our communities. Networking with policymakers and fellow youth like myself who are facilitating change has accelerated my growth further.
- The most rewarding aspect of our involvement with YAAR has been the connections I made with fellow members. Through shared experiences and collaborative endeavors, we formed strong bonds, uniting us in a common cause for social justice and equity. These relationships have been a source of inspiration and support, empowering me to navigate the challenges of activism and advocacy with resilience and determination.
- Armed with the skills and insights gained through YAAR, we are confident in our collective ability to create a more just, equitable, and compassionate

community for all. Throughout this program, there were lots of benefits and immense value that added growth in my professional and personal life.

- Through art-based methods, we developed my artistic skills and creative problem-solving skills. As we learned to express complex societal problems in the form of arts, we connected with people and formed a sense of community and urgency in dealing with our social problems. We also learned a lot about public speaking and communication. There are different ways to communicate with local policymakers, students, teachers, and national policymakers; each personnel have added a broader perspective on the educational system of Nepal.
- We also learned to be empowered and empower others to speak up on personal problems reflected in my community. Through arts-based methods, collaborative engagement, and steadfast commitment, we have begun to unravel the complexities of social injustice and pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.

The programme ended with the "Future Visionary of YAAR" activity. The YAAR members gathered around chart papers to draw their handprints, with each fingertip bearing keywords representing their vision for the future (see [Figure 3.3.3b](#)). Their visions included expanding YAAR, owning a dedicated building, making a profound societal impact, achieving international exposure, strengthening their bonds, and engaging in impactful work. The steps envisioned by the girls included securing funding opportunities for research and advocacy, promoting inclusivity across genders and cultures, fostering artistic and international exposure, conducting more workshops, and engaging with key policymakers and stakeholders. They reflected on their evolving perceptions of art-based methods in peer-learning and envisioned a future filled with possibilities and positive societal impact.

Youth advisors in Kigali, Rwanda also reflected on their engagement with MAP and Uvisenga Ni Imanzi and shared that they wanted to spend every school holiday working with them so they could learn more and apply their skills. The desire for continuity of their youth advisory role not only demonstrates commitment, but shows that they felt they were a valuable member of the team, meaningfully contributing to the processes of peacebuilding through project activities.

Relationships with adult allies in the partner organisations were critical to meaningful youth engagement. The adult staff and volunteers served as support and encouragement to youth, but gave them the space to try methods, learn from mistakes, and grow their skills and experience. Adult allies stepped back, giving the opportunity for youth advisors to lead.

3.4.2b. Equal participation of all – Gender

One of the seven desired MAP outcomes (see [Figure 1.2b](#)) is “meaningful participation of all genders.” Through the MAP Medium Grants, girls were encouraged to learn

cultural forms, such as in PPPF in Nepal and Rwanda. As described above, Gira Ingoma worked with girls to learn cultural art forms that were historically reserved for males (see [Case Study 5](#)).

Participants in all Medium Grants expressed the desire for equality between genders. In the baseline session in Hetauda, children portrayed boys and girls both going to school, working together to maintain a clean environment, and the freedom of both genders in society (see [Figure 3.4.2b](#)). Later, in the evaluation one of the young girls shared:

*In society it is male dominated – most places men are leaders.
If we provide more training to girls they will be capable; able to
take leadership roles in community and will be helpful to change
society. (Female primary student, Hetauda, River Journey,
endline)*

Having equity within households was also important in Nepal and Rwanda, as described in [Theme 2](#) (family).

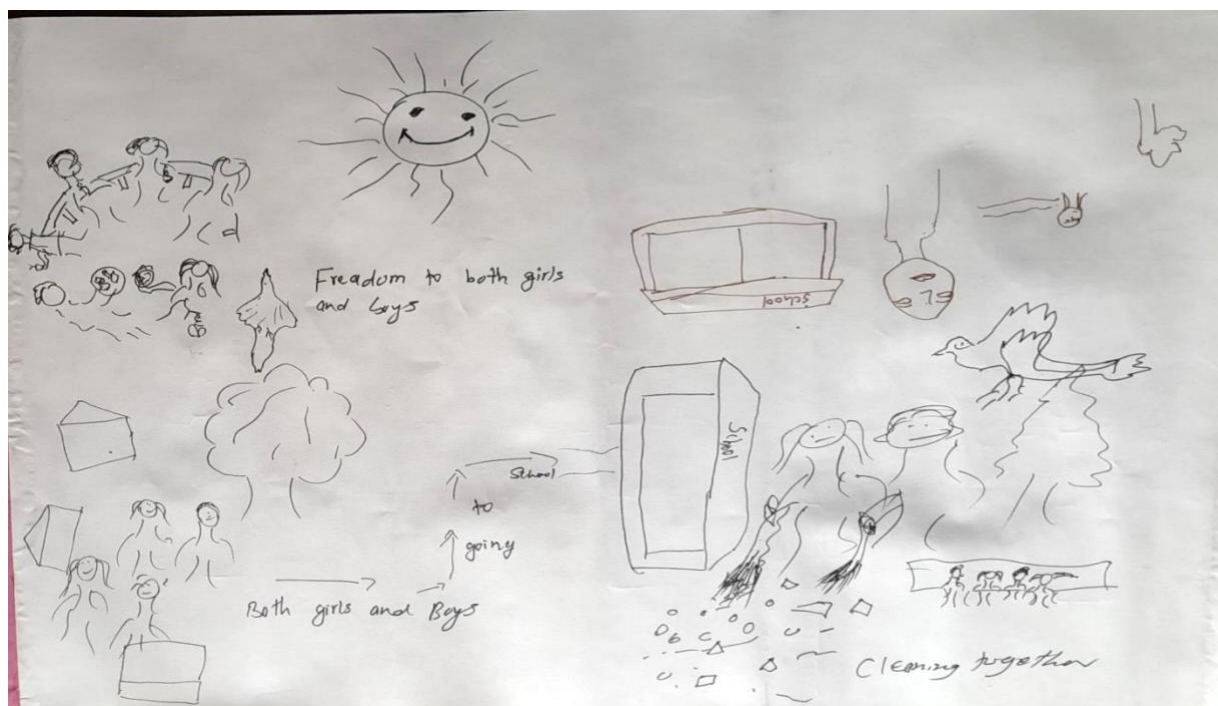


Figure 3.4.2a. Drawing by a child in Hetauda, Nepal during the outcome vision murals activity, baseline

In Rwanda, a young man involved in the Visualising Peace project reflected on how gender equality has been encouraged through MAP and the need to continue to work together as men and women in order to progress society. He shared that the “power of girls and women has been hidden and we are trying to [reveal] them.”

Box 7. Poem – Echoes of progress: A Tapestry by girls and women

*In a world where dreams unfurl
Girls and women heart awhirl
Promotion rises, a hopeful dream
Leaders, notice their arts, it is their dream*

*Talents bloom like flowers in spring
Aspiration dance, taking wing
Females rising, breaking through
Leader, see the strength they stew*

*Artistry whispers in every stroke
Bold endeavours, barriers broke
Hopeful hearts in every gaze
Leaders recognize their vibrant blaze*

*Girls, women a force untold
Leadership blossoms, stories untold
Promotion echoes, a resounding call
In the tapestry of progress, one and all.*

In Nepal, there were significantly more young female participants than male participants. One of the coordinators shared that a focus on girls first was necessary, but recognised the need to engage boys and men to make transformative gender changes (partner meetings, Nepal, September 2024). One of the youth advisors reflected on their female-only group:

YAAR all of us girls, already there is a bond created. I don't think boys, our friends, understand the barriers. Every time we go out we have to communicate to parents where we are going and for what reason. We can't stay out late. It's a safe space for all of us girls here. We feel more sense of each other. We validate each other's experiences and opinions.

However, one of the youth advisors in Nepal felt that they should now consider including male participants in order to make sustainable change in society (validation workshop).

Case Study 5. The power of the arts: Girls drumming to building confidence and influence policy in Butare, Rwanda – “Gira Ingoma” – One Drum Per Girl

Gira Ingoma has been training 250 girls in ten primary and secondary schools in Huye district, Rwanda to learn drumming skills. The girls have also been encouraged to critically think about and deconstruct the proverbs that are taught in Rwandan culture. They are taught to create their own proverbs and poems that they incorporate into their drumming performances. Policymakers, parents, and community members are invited to the performances and festivals, profiling the girls' newly learnt skills and messages.

Traditionally in Rwanda, drumming has been a cultural art form for boys and men, but not for girls. The project “aims to address persistent gender stereotypes and discriminatory patterns (norms, barriers, practices, perceptions, etc....) that prevent girls from engaging in non-traditional activities/roles in the creative and cultural industries such as drumming, warrior dance (intore), poetry (kwivuga), singing, juggling, etc. ... thus perpetuating inequalities and exclusion.” ([Gira Ingoma, MAP website](#)). As the girls learn the skills to play the drums, to do the warrior dance, to sing, and to write poetry, these cultural art forms are extended to all. At the festivals, Ingoma Nshya, hundreds of girls came together to perform.

Even though there are not enough materials (e.g., drums, spears, shields, ankle bells) for each and every girl, the students share them, which “encourages everyone to respect each other’s rights, feel connected while learning as well as feel hopeful that there is more to come.” (Youth advisor, Gira Ingoma).

One of the youth advisors shared that when they tried to talk to the girls and to carry out MEL activities with them, they were shy, looked away, and would not open up. When they asked them to show them their drumming, however, the girls' faces lit up, they smiled and played the drums with power and energy. The University of Edinburgh team member who witnessed their performance felt that their performance exudes a playful yet powerful spirit. The drumming and song enable them to have fun while sharing their ideas, for example about girls' education, drumming, and the need to support both to reach their dreams.

[Artistic Expression, final evaluation:](#)

*Dear Ingoma Nshya,
We appreciate your participation,
it's no secret that we love you,
Because of the dedication you show us,
Everytime I jump people are amazed,
Percussions break a lot of things,
And I send my sincere appreciation to Ingoma Nshya*

*Long ago, when I was useless at home
When I didn't know what's first and what's next,
And I would always see people around
And I would never talk to them
Thinking it was the right thing to do,
Yet I was excluding myself and feeling lonely.*

*Luckily Ingoma Nshya came
It came to beat us all,
And you made us "Girls" your priority,
And my fear ended there
We combined our efforts
And those gifts became abundant.*

[Key Findings/Learnings](#)

- Art has the power to transform lives. The girls in the programme gained a sense of respect, pride, and confidence from the programme. Teachers and caregivers shared how this has been transformative in classrooms and homes as well.
- Disrupting gender norms that discriminate against women can increase girls' sense of worthiness. One girl who ranked a 10/10 for "feeling worthy" shared, "Because women were not allowed to drum, but now I can drum freely."
- Cultural art forms should be seen as dynamic. It is important to continue these art forms and incorporate them into interdisciplinary projects, while critically reflecting on any inequities that they may perpetuate and adapting approaches where needed.
- The programme increased the girls' sense of hope, with 78% of girls completing the Wellbeing Thermometer ranking "feeling hopeful" with a 10/10 (see [Figure 3.4.2b](#)).



Figure 3.4.2b. Girls completing the River Journey activity in an evaluation activity, Gira ingoma.



3.4.3. Youth and adult allies' perspectives guided MAP MEL approaches throughout the project in an iterative way

Throughout the MAP MEL process, youth together with adult allies were engaged in co-developing the MEL tools, carrying out the tools, and adapting methods and approaches. An iterative process was carried out in the tool creation and implementation. Youth shared challenges that they had encountered during the MEL process and made suggestions for adaptations or improvements. For example, a youth advisor in Nepal described her engagement in adapting methods:

I shared how we as a team used those M&E tools that were designed by the larger grant. I shared the difficulties while performing the monitoring and evaluation and also gave recommendations on what should be further improved in the tools while performing those tools in other countries.

International Youth Advisory Board meetings were also an opportunity for youth advisors from each country to contribute to tool development, to share their learning with one another, and to offer ideas for adapting methods. They also had the opportunity to share cultural art forms from their context.

Additionally, collaborative planning contributed to fostering a sense of ownership of the process and tools, as well as a sense of pride in the process and outputs. An adult ally in Rwanda described the positive impact of collaboratively carrying out creative methods:

[the methods] have promoted participants' emotional externalization, especially happiness and joy. Moreover, children testified that the tracking tools enhanced them to be problem solvers, and they have got [a] chance to feel open and included with each other as well triggering sociability within the club participants.

A youth advisor in Rwanda shared that “the tracking tools should be taught to many people – it helps to learn if what you are doing is effective” (validation workshop, January 2024).

3.4.4. Conclusion

MAP Medium Grants provided a meaningful opportunity for youth – participants and youth advisors – and adults to gain artistic and life skills through their engagement in cultural art forms and to contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes. The skills that have been gained could be creatively applied in design and implementation of participatory arts-based research in diverse contexts. Participants expressed the desire for meaningful participation of all genders. Progress towards gender equality was made through the Medium Grants, though this is an ongoing process.

3.5. Theme 5: Arts-based approaches as foundations for change in curriculum and policy



RQ5. How might these cultural forms be used to create alternative spaces and communication structures for peacebuilding approaches and curricula development to inform local, national and international approaches to peacebuilding?

Engagement in arts and local cultural forms through MAP impacted children, youth, families, teachers, and other community members across different settings and provided some potential for alternative spaces and communication for peacebuilding at local – and in some cases, national – levels, such as the arts-based approaches to strengthening psychosocial wellbeing in health clinics in Rwanda (see [Case Study 2](#)). Through participating in MAP clubs and youth advisory roles, children and youth enhanced confidence (as explored in prior sections) and self-expression, which impacted their ability for peacebuilding more widely. Such approaches can be scaled up to national and international levels through influencing curriculum and policy.

A policymaker in Nepal shared that though policy and curriculum change is important, it is the implementation and the resources that is critical to making it sustainable. They commended MAP for the work they have been doing, with young people in particular, while also raising an important challenge:

In all this young youth researchers come very enthusiastic, ... very open. And I guess they have this zeal. You know, in a way in their life that they're kind of connected with MAP, and they're doing something that I could feel. But the same time I also have kind of a concern that a lot of programs like this come and they create kind of a lot of expectations, you know, and disappear. So I guess that is also kind of a tricky part at the same time.

He finished with a question, “I think that's pretty important to reflect on is sustainability, isn't it?” He agreed that ongoing partnerships with government bodies and organizations such as UNESCO are critical to sustainability.

Three main elements contributed to the pathways for change in these settings (see [Figure 3.5a](#)): 1) partnerships, 2) mutual social respect, and 3) trusting relationships built over time between children and youth and adults. The initiatives in both Rwanda and Nepal showed the importance of partnerships in creating sustainable curriculum and policy change.

Partnerships in both places were between civil society (i.e., the partner in-country organizations / Medium Grant holders, other NGOs, and community-based organizations) and government groups and departments (i.e., in Rwanda, the Ministry of Health and Health Centres; in Nepal, the Curriculum Development Centre/Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, UNESCO). Trusting relationships between these partners was shown to be a critical element in the pathway to sustainable change and, as such, ethical engagement with young people.

Another important part of the pathway toward creating sustainable change was mutual social respect between adults and young people (this is explored fully in [Section 3.3.1](#)). As young people gained more confidence to engage in policy spaces, for example, at the UNESCO event or in a meeting with the Curriculum Development Centre in Nepal or at the arts for mental health and psychosocial wellbeing events in Rwanda, their knowledge and familiarity of the people and issues increased, leading them to be more comfortable in these spaces. This, in turn, provided spaces and opportunities for the adult stakeholders to engage with young people and, as they communicated and worked together, to gain social respect for the young people. Finally, the development of trusting relationships that were built over time was critical to creating change. Where MAP worked in locations for several years, for example in Hetauda, Nepal where school clubs had been in place for four years, the pedagogical approaches and curricular changes became more engrained, as teachers were skilled and experienced in applying them. The students were also more accustomed to these approaches and were motivated by the extracurricular activities that took time to develop, such as arts camps in the school holidays and using the recording studio. The trusting relationships between the students and teachers was developed over time and engagement in and out of the classrooms ([see Case Study 1](#)).

Notably, other “ingredients” that were important in the policy change landscape that were explored in [Section 3.2.2](#), need to precede these three elements. These are 1) the role of adult allies such as MAP facilitators and mentors for youth from the partner organizations in acting as a “bridge” between the young people and policymakers, creating opportunities and opening spaces for the groups to interact, and 2) the use of arts-based methods in these spaces as a tool for youth (and adult allies) to convey their views and ideas to policy-makers. Notably, the trusting relationships between the youth and adult allies also takes time.

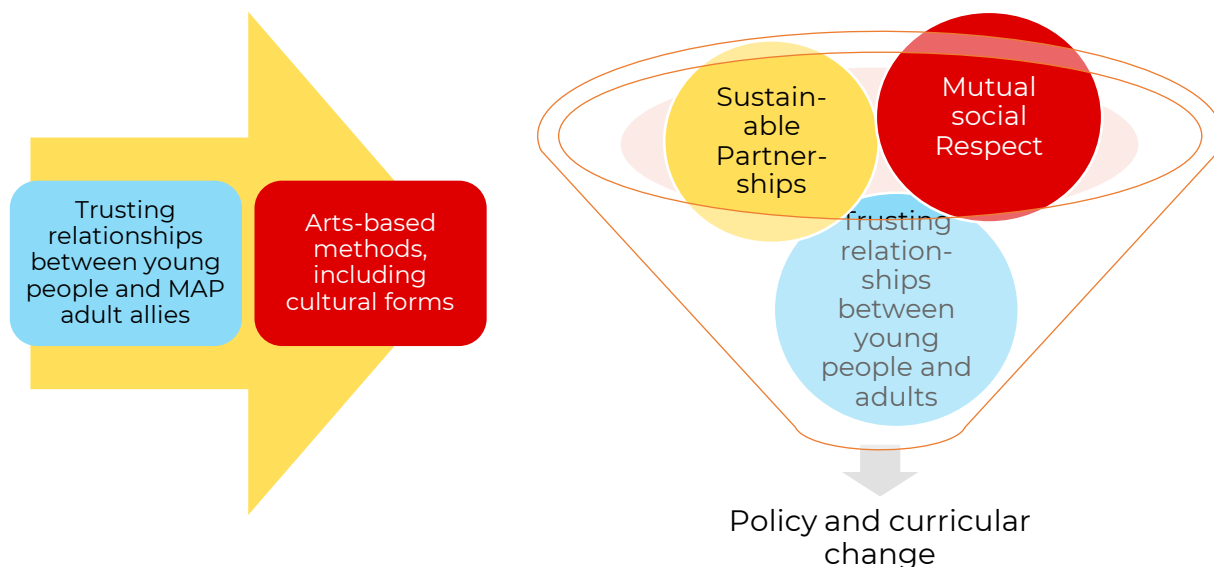


Figure 3.5a. Ingredients in the pathway to creating policy and curricular change intergenerationally through arts-based methods

A comment from a policymaker in Nepal demonstrates the importance of building mutual social respect and trust between adults (policymakers, teachers, etc.) and young people as foundational to intergenerational dialogue:

In [the] Nepali context, largely, we have a kind of mindset that the teachers ...should be a senior, and they know everything they are in like an ivory tower, so that they can explain everything to the children. But there is a gap, not only the gap of ages, but gap of thinking, gap of imagination ...And we prepared a group of those young people, and then those students, they became very open with them, and they thought that, we belong into the same community. Almost same background ... So no hierarchy. This is also very important, because, if there is a hierarchy, students they do not open up with their ideas, and once they do not feel, secure, psychologically, emotionally, and mentally, they do not. In fact, ... let's say participating in dialogue is very much important in the educational setting, because it's not only asking questions and responding to the questions. It's all about participating in an interaction, a dialogue so that that component become very, very effective. Because what? The why? I'm saying these things? Because one of the purposes of this ...entire project is to raise different kind of social issues. there are different injustices.

With regards to the important long-term element of the policy and curricula change process, an important limitation of this evaluation is that the main focus is on the MAP Medium Grants, which are a brief part of the full MAP journey in Rwanda and Nepal. It is therefore difficult to map out the full policy and curriculum journey and impacts of MAP. However, with the projects being associated with school clubs and other MAP initiatives from earlier phases, some of these impacts were evident in the

evaluation activities with Medium Grant participants and in Large Grant field visits. This question was therefore explored through observation during in person field visits, interviews with stakeholders, as well as through the endline Toolbox tools that mapped the impact of the Medium Grants, such as the River Journey (carried out with young people and teachers) and Traveling Opinions. As such, a few examples of policy and curriculum influences are highlighted below.



Figure 3.5b. Hetauda Math Classroom, Nepal

In Nepal, the policy journey has extended beyond the Medium Grants, and has been ongoing over the course of earlier projects. Key to these impacts has been the work of the Medium Grant holders. Kharkana, who has continued the work through the Intergenerational Dialogue Medium Grant, has been engaging with policymakers in local and national government and has used mostly image theatre, painting, and folksong as art forms to create dialogue, including between youth and policy stakeholders. They have a partnership with the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) who are also on the advisory board for Karkhana. JWAS has worked with the local government on their projects, engaging them in youth-led initiatives that have used Mithila arts through the Picturing Past, Present and Future project. As a member of the Kharkana Medium Grant team shared, the event held with MAP and UNESCO “created an enabling environment for youth to advocate on their own issues and provided a platform for youth from both groups to present policy outputs and their views on issues through image theatre and painting.” Importantly through Intergenerational Dialogue, Karkhana supported the young people to produce two written policy briefs, which were distributed at the event.

An academic involved in arts education highlighted the value of diverse forms of art (e.g., stories, poems, theatre, drawing, painting, sculpture) to integrate different forms of teaching and learning (interview, Nepal). In the school setting, the arts fostered new discourse for more in-depth learning and influenced everyday pedagogy, alongside improving intergenerational relationships. The arts disrupt the hierarchy of teachers “know[ing] everything” and being in an “ivory tower”, and create space to “open up with [students]”, creating a feeling that “we belong into the same community” (Academic, interview, Nepal). This shift through arts enhances intergenerational dialogue and fosters alternative enhanced forms of communication.

Arts-based approaches in schools are showing foundations for change in curriculum and teaching pedagogy. In Rwanda, a teacher shared his journey in training in MAP and becoming a Master Trainer to train educators in seven districts on how to use art in teaching. He also trained lecturers in universities on how art can be used. This role changed his own teaching, as well as impacted curriculum and teaching pedagogy across Rwanda. Additionally, in Rwanda the One Drum team is working to integrate Ingoma Nshya’s art in the national curriculum.

At the school level, training in MAP methods and activities have influenced “thoughts, feelings, and behaviour” of teachers in their engagement with students (teacher, interview, Rwanda). For example, one teacher shared her role beyond academic material, to connect with students and support them in other aspects of their lives. The MAP exercises are not only used for art education; they also are integrated into other subjects such as English and Maths to support learning. For example, arts-based methods were built into English classes to use art to represent words (teacher, interview, Rwanda). In Nepal, teachers have integrated art into teaching maths activities through craft (see [Figure 3.5b](#)), and engagement in social issues through film, such as in a secondary school in Hetauda. MAP has also contributed to protecting and supporting culture in schools.

At the community level, arts-based activities have also been built into health centre programmes in Rwanda. One health professional shared pride in receiving a certificate of appreciation for use of “arts-based methods in helping the clients and the community” (interview, Rwanda). Furthermore, he has taken the methods to other aspects of his life, such as in the church.

A Master Trainer in Rwanda shared the power of arts in general, and song specifically, to raise issues to policymakers, an important step to effectively moving toward policy change. He stressed the importance of “making research in the community in order to find out the problems through arts and songs ... and addressing the problem to policymakers.” He continued, “Through songs, art has enhanced the dissemination of information about the raised issues in the community like family conflicts, drug abuse and other related issues.”

Teachers also act as adult allies, listening to youth and amplifying their ideas to policymakers. MAP clubs and activities have fostered space for youth to express

feeling and emotions they may not be able to express only through words (e.g., “communicate the problem they have through drawing” (Teacher, interview, Rwanda)). In addition, teachers with a new understanding of children and youth, “help to convey that feeling of young people to government and policymakers” (Teacher, interview, Rwanda). Through arts (e.g., drawing, poems, songs, theatre), youth were able to share problems with policymakers and it increased collaboration intergenerationally between children, youth, and policymakers (Teacher, interview, Rwanda). Similarly, community-based programmes linked with schools, such as drumming, have created space for girls to strengthen their confidence and speak with lawmakers and policymakers addressing gender-based discrimination (One Drum).

*We say that art is a power to influence people
(Academic, interview, Nepal).*

This showed how art can be integrated into teaching and learning, and the second one is how inter-generational dialogue can be developed as a pedagogical process.

3.5.1. Conclusion

Evidently, children, youth, and adults at multiple levels have strengthened intergenerational relationships and fostered opportunities to transform pedagogy, implement curriculum, and create greater intergenerational dialogue with policymakers, particularly in spaces where MAP has been engaging prior to the MAP Medium Grants. Critical elements to influencing policy and curriculum change that emerged were: partnerships, mutual social respect between children and youth and adults, and trust built over time. Although youth advisors are very enthusiastic, there was also concern raised about creating expectations and future sustainability (interview, Nepal). Reflecting on the ingredients for sustainable change and greater work beyond MAP, building from the arts education and arts-based programmes to continue to shift policy and quality implementation will be valuable.

Case study 6: Listen Up! How an arts-based roundtable kick-started a national Arts Education Framework in Nepal

Summary

Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) in Nepal, in collaboration with UNESCO Kathmandu, hosted a [National Dialogue \(Roundtable\) on Culture and Arts Education](#) in September 2023. The event re-imagined a policy roundtable by embedding arts-based methods and intergenerational approaches as key aspects of dialogue itself. This involved YAAR demonstrating “image theatre” to present their perceived problem of a lacking in youth representation at education policy tables, especially for girls. Decision makers and cultural artists were encouraged to discuss and propose solutions. The youth advisors also contributed to/shaped intergenerational panels on culture and arts education, as well as demonstrations of under-represented living art forms such as Dēudā. Finally, policy (art) briefs were presented for feedback from participants (see: [Youth Researchers as Generational “Translators” in Educational Policy](#) and [Exploring Arts-based Methods in the Social Science Curriculum \(Grades 6-8\)](#)). Through art forms such as image theatre, discussion, policy (art) briefs, and facilitating/MCing roles, the youth advisors generated a didactic form of communication aimed at improving and strengthening their role in future arts education in Nepal which instigated a partnership to develop a national Arts Education Framework.

We conveyed our hope that there is a seat at every education policy table for young people, especially girls, to share their ideas and innovations concerning their future and development. (Juhi Adhikari, lead YAAR)

Background

The UNESCO-MAP National Dialogue convened over 70 diverse voices and practices from across generations, bringing together youth and key national stakeholders working in the field of culture and arts education. The event celebrated promising local and national arts-based practices through exhibitions, performances, and reflective dialogue sessions. The aim was to recognise and value these practices, but also envision a future where they are integrated in formal and informal education systems. Using evidence and practices from MAP, UNESCO, and other organisations, the dialogue was directed towards creating a roadmap to shape curriculum development and innovative arts pedagogy in the country.

There is currently no National Arts Education Framework in Nepal and this gap, identified at the roundtable, catalysed a partnership between Kathmandu University’s education department and MAP to pilot such a Framework with session plans. The aim is to integrate arts-based exercises from the MAP manual into the existing secondary school curriculum across a range of subjects (e.g., arts in biology, social sciences). Five postgraduate students from Kathmandu University have drafted sessions with pedagogical inputs from MAP centring on use of local cultural forms, child-centred learning, and allowing for adaptations to cultural

forms by young students. The draft sessions are currently being piloted to gather learnings from public school secondary school students themselves.

Key Findings/Learnings

- The development of a pilot Arts Education Framework has been well received by the Under Secretary for the Ministry of Culture in Nepal at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi, February 2024.
- UNESCO Kathmandu office value the evidence being generated by MAP on youth-led arts-based methods: “The whole dialogue led to the recognition of broader art forms including cultural art, dance, modern art and more. MAP has encouraged a re-thinking of our education system and curriculum, redefining education including for whom? How? For what? Highlighting the teacher preparation process, what are the problems, what should be done and how can it be done.”(Dr Dhurba Raj Regmi (Chief of Education)).
- Moving forward, the hope is that youth advisors can contribute towards further developing the framework and, dependent on funding being secured, its implementation and monitoring.



Image Theatre in action Credit: UNESCO Kathmandu



Officials and artists contributing solutions Credit: UNESCO Kathmandu



4. Final Conclusion and Recommendations

This concluding section summarises and discusses the key intersecting findings as they relate to the overarching research questions and makes recommendations at the child and youth, family, school and community, government (local and national), and international levels. It provides suggestions for future research and concludes with overarching reflections on the MEL.

4.1. Conclusion on Intersections of Themes

The MAP Medium Grant projects and commissioned projects, though diverse in their approaches and artistic mediums, had several strong cross-cutting themes and impacts. All projects addressed all five research questions, with some questions having more prominence than others.

First, threaded throughout all projects was the importance of the arts in promoting self-expression and psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth. Children and youth went through healing processes that allowed them to express themselves in new ways. Children and youth also gained a sense of hope, and the ability and passion to help others. In the same vein, as they discovered their peace within themselves, they were inspired to foster peace among those around them. The MAP Medium Grants thus demonstrated the interlinkages of the arts, psychosocial wellbeing and support, and peacebuilding.

Second, drawing upon traditional local cultural forms that were adapted for MAP played an important role in strengthening psychosocial wellbeing and peacebuilding among youth, as they draw on local methods for healing. The projects also showed how these art forms are dynamic, and approaches to art forms such as drumming or proverbs can adapt and shift to address structural inequities and break down societal barriers. For example, in the Medium Grants girls were encouraged to paint, to write poetry, to drum, and to dance.

Third, art forms that were reserved for certain genders, backgrounds, or castes can become accessible to those who were once restricted. This opens up the potential for children and youth to experience healing and strengthen psychosocial wellbeing as well, and to impact society to become more equitable. [Figure 4.1a](#) shows a drawing by a youth participant in Intergenerational Dialogue, Nepal, who shared that the “ideal world” would have equal involvement of all, regardless of age or gender. It also built vital socio-emotional skills for current and future thriving.

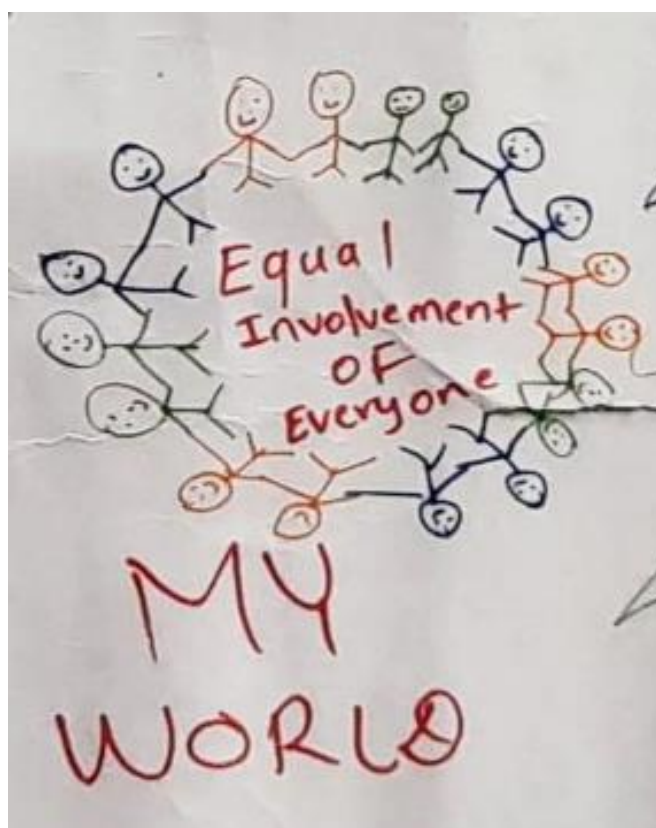


Figure 4.1a. Drawing by an Intergenerational Dialogue participant, Hetauda

The Medium Grants also had a strong thread woven throughout on enhancing gender equity. While some of the projects focused solely or mainly on girls, this was intentional due to the need to enhance girls' access to the arts and opportunities for leadership roles, such as the YAB. It was critical to create space for girls and young women to express themselves, share their ideas, and become confident in their actions. Thus, the cross-cutting focus on intergenerational dialogue was important so that girls' ideas were not only expressed, but also listened to and acted upon collectively. However, there is a need to address harmful gender norms on a broader level which requires even more dialogue between generations and genders. As a young woman in Hetauda, Nepal shared:

If we provide more training to girls, they will be capable, able to take leadership roles in community ... The programs can help to change society, patriarchal thinking, inequality is there – young people have responsibility to change ourselves, change society... changes need to be internalized.
(Young woman, Hetauda, endline)

Across all Medium Grants, the arts fostered powerful intergenerational dialogue and relationships for transforming communication and bringing together individuals across generations, castes, religions, genders, socioeconomic experiences, abilities, and other lived experiences. Art broke down barriers and served as a bridge between generations, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Youth were able to

use arts-based methods as a tool for self-expression to convey their thoughts and ideas to policymakers in both Rwanda and Nepal. The social connections to policymakers and opportunities created through MAP was critical, but the methods also enhanced their feelings of worthiness and gave participants the freedom to share their thoughts in creative ways, providing them with an embodied way to share freely.

4.2. Global Frameworks

The MEL process has captured findings in each of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) areas; SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 5 Gender Equality, and SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. It is also aligned with the UNESCO Mid Term Strategy 2022-2029 and new UNESCO Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education (2024).

The MAP Medium Grants, building on the wider MAP initiative, has made a strong impact toward strengthened wellbeing (SDG 3). Evaluations of PPPF in both Rwanda and Nepal, Visualising Peace in Rwanda, and Intergenerational Dialogue showed that the MAP project served to enhance youth psychosocial wellbeing. In Rwanda, the arts-based methods have been integrated throughout the country by the Ministry of Health into the local health clinics, where the holistic arts-based methods now have potential to strengthen mental health nationally in culturally appropriate ways.

All projects had teachers and young people as facilitators, who learned new methods, growing their skills and confidence to deliver quality education (SDG 4), and building on previous MAP work in the contexts where the curriculum has been enhanced at local, regional, and national levels. The impact of these enhanced teaching methods supported students to think critically, become motivated to study, and – in some cases in both Nepal and Rwanda – encouraged students to return to school. It also enhanced the teachers' motivation to engage with the students on a meaningful level, which was evident in interviews and visits with teachers who lead MAP school clubs and facilitated in the MAP Medium Grants. This also links with UNESCO's Midterm Strategy Objective 1, "to ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies" (UNESCO, 2022). Gender equality was also a strong theme throughout all projects in both Rwanda and Nepal (SDG 5).

In so far as SDG 16 works to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, all of the Medium Grant projects contributed to this goal, enhancing existing efforts of the teams to build peace within and across, unity, and work towards healing in society. The cultural art forms and activities disrupted barriers, supported self-expression, and enhanced relationships across people with diverse backgrounds which contributed to inclusive, just, and peaceful societies. This finding aligns with UNESCO's Midterm Strategy Objective 3 ("To build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting

freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage” (UNESCO, 2022)).

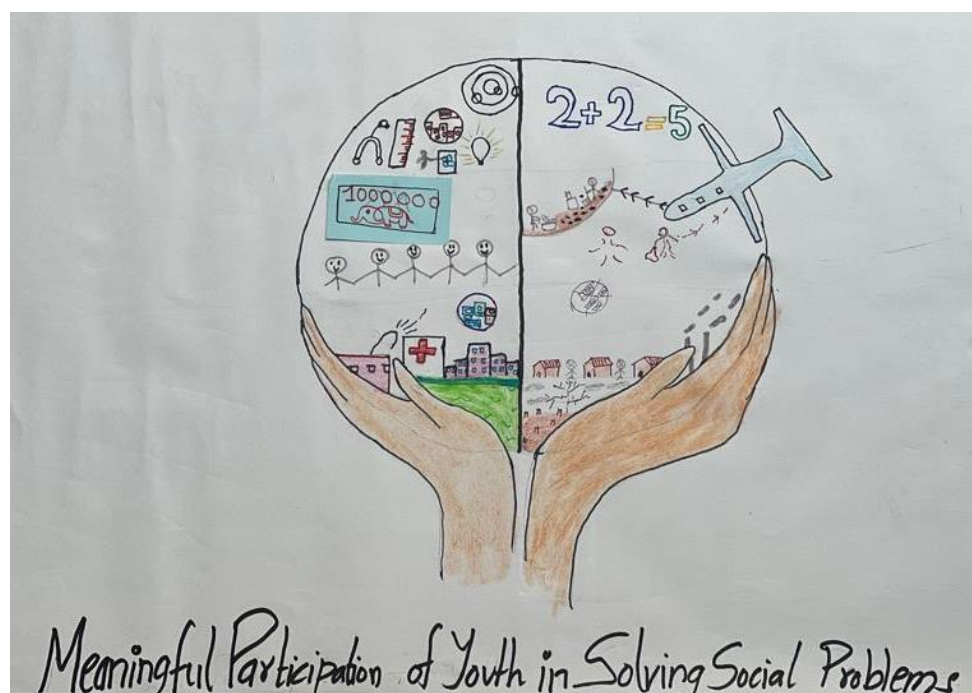


Figure 4.2a. Kathmandu workshop with YAAR, Nepal Midline

Youth across contexts emphasised the importance of taking care of the environment. Many of them expressed the desire to create a peaceful world by ensuring that the environment was free from pollution and that they would have a clean environment in the future. There is potential to enhance linkages with land-based methods and with climate change initiatives, also building on SDG 13 (Climate Action). This could offer new ways of imagining living harmoniously with the earth and preserving social connection.

The Medium Grants and the MEL methods fostered an enabling and creative environment where youth were free to express themselves. The methods, in particular the River Journey and the Wellbeing Thermometer (“feeling hopeful” theme), enabled youth to reflect on their hopes for the future and foster imagination for possible futures. Many youth participants envisioned a peaceful and unified world, where there is equality and where key social issues, such as education, health, justice, and protecting the environment, are addressed (see [Table 4.2a](#)). They also described personal qualities and individual journeys that they hope for in order to achieve broader goals. The intersections between these themes shows the impact of arts-based methods to foster inward healing, outward thinking, and ways of being among youth.

Table 4.2a. Future hopes of youth advisors and youth in MAP Medium Grants

<p><i>Equality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal participation of people • Girls' education • Men and women supporting each other • Support gender equity • Address social problems • No discrimination • Young and old working together • Children playing • Fathers and mothers living harmoniously 	<p><i>Address Social Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal law for all • Sustainable education • Practical knowledge and long life • Education • Health access for all • Sustainable use of natural resources • Save our environment • End social problems • No child labour • Drug abuse • Promote sustainable development
<p><i>Peace and Unity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No violence • Understanding • Love • Respect • No discrimination • Support of each other • Family supporting their children to succeed in life • Socialisation of children • Save and promote culture • Connected 	<p><i>Individual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing • Freedom • Leading, successful • Build confidence • Self-expression • Self-respect • Peace within • Empowerment • Seize opportunity • Love yourself, positive thinking • Stop comparing with others

4.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed based on the MAP MEL Large Grant findings and children, youth, and adults' recommendations and visions for the future. These were analysed and consolidated with further recommendations developed through cross-cutting analysis by the evaluation team. Recommendations connect with UNESCO's Framework for Culture and Arts Education and UNESCO's Midterm Strategy, in particular Objectives 1 and 3:

- 1) Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education;
- 3) Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage (UNESCO Framework for Arts and Education 2024).

The recommendations also seek to actualise Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its

benefits” and Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), “for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

For sustainability and positive transformation at the child and youth, family, school and community, government (local and national), and international levels, ongoing commitment and resources (both non-monetary and monetary) are required. We do not seek to provide concrete recommendations to deliver, but more to foster space for critical dialogue based on the impacts and learnings from the MAP projects and MEL process for ongoing progress and creative transformation for culture, arts, and education locally, nationally, and globally. We invite those preparing for intergenerational arts education and arts-based research/MEL to reflect on these recommendations and how they connect with their own future plans.

4.3.1. Children and Youth

- Enable co-creation and intergenerational dialogue between children, youth, and adults through arts education and arts-based research/MEL.
- Recognise and create opportunities for arts integration for self-expression and leadership for child and youth psychosocial wellbeing, education, and societal transformation.
- Invest time in building meaningful relationships with youth researchers through arts-based processes to support their feelings of trust, safety, worthiness, and self-confidence for positive experiences and better research.
- Expand the reach of arts education to engage more with out of school children, such as street children, working children, and other boys and girls not enrolled in school.
- Equip boys and girls, young men and women intergenerationally with knowledge, skills, and opportunities for enhancing gender equality across communities.

4.3.2. Family

- Engage parents, caregivers, siblings, and non-formal family structures in arts education activities to support intergenerational relations, enhance peacebuilding, and contribute to healing processes and to equity and inclusion. This also contributes to lifelong learning for adults.
- Foster safe supportive opportunities for children and youth to share their learning and ideas with families to decrease conflict and discrimination, increase unity, and solve problems collectively.

4.3.3. School and Community

- Akin to the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts and Education (2024), recognise culture and arts education “as an ecosystem” which recognises diverse forms of art and culture and teaching pedagogies, and which is delivered in all contexts across formal, non-formal, and informal settings.

Explore further the intersections of arts education across school and community.

- Invest in facilitator (e.g., teacher, health care workers, social services) training, mentoring, and community of practice for ongoing sustainability of MAP arts education methodologies in schools, services (e.g., mental health, child and youth care), and communities.
- Increase emphasis on local indigenous cultures and art forms in the classroom. Curriculum development needed.
- Identify more opportunities to elevate children and youth roles in MAP clubs and inter-school opportunities.
- Utilise arts education to deconstruct teacher student hierarchies and create platforms to enhance intergenerational relationships and education.

4.3.4. Government (Local and National)

- Integrate culture and arts education into relevant policies, strategies, and programmes across education and social services. Where local policies and curricula already exist, invest energy in developing quality implementation plans and processes to support shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours for better arts education at regional and national levels.
- Develop opportunities through formal and non-formal political platforms for artistic forms to enhance dialogue between children and youth, and policymakers to break down societal barriers for peaceful society and gender inequality.
- Recognise the relationship between arts education and psychosocial wellbeing, and bridge education, health policies, and curricula to enhance mental health practice and mental health across schools and communities at local and national levels.

4.3.5. International

- Implement the new [UNESCO Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education](#).
- Strategically align advocacy for culture and arts education with the SDGs, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (particularly Article 30 and Article 31), and the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Map out arts education programmes and initiatives globally to develop a platform of success stories and learning for both those newly engaged and those seasoned in arts education.

It would be motivating to see the different art forms we used being made into a structured module that others can also learn from. Creating a proper module for training and disseminating youths into their fields and communities to encourage arts in education would be something that would complete this journey and sustain it. (Youth advisor, Nepal)

4.4. Future Research Themes and Approaches

- Use the strengths and lessons learned in the MAP youth-led arts-based MEL process as a foundation and evidence for transforming traditional evaluation approaches to creative participatory arts-based methods and approaches (where appropriate).
- Explore the relationship between using arts-based approaches to research with arts-based processes being researched.
- Explore potential for links to climate change and environmental protection initiatives through arts education and the link with peacebuilding. This would contribute to the UNESCO Midterm Strategy objectives, 1, 2, and 3.
- Continue to interrogate the relationship of arts-based methods and psychosocial wellbeing.
- Identify further ways to capture embodied forms of arts-based MEL findings, alongside/instead of written forms. Push for greater appreciation and credibility of non-traditional documentation.
- Develop opportunities for arts-based approaches to be introduced into curricula in school and teacher education.

4.5. Evaluation Team Reflections: Methods and Process

Overall, the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) Medium Grants and commissioned projects have had considerable impact at the personal level (e.g., children, youth, family, teachers, health practitioners, policymakers) and collective level. They have also built from prior MAP projects' work on policy and curricula change contribution to the implementation of policy into practice (e.g., teachers using arts education in Nepal) to advocacy for policy development and change (e.g., Mental Health Policy in Rwanda). The data was highly positive. This could be both due to the power of arts and the MAP projects, and our emphasis on strengths-based arts tools that are led by local teams. There could be scope to pull out more "areas for growth" through other mechanisms.

We found that MEL is effective at capturing journeys and stories of change through arts-based approaches and active intergenerational partnerships with youth and local teams. The embodied relationships with art foster powerful experiences of transformation for the youth advisors and participants, both supporting learning about the projects and contributing to their own self-expression, confidence, and psychosocial wellbeing. We find this approach to support reciprocity and ethics of care, through providing added value to participants' lives alongside the MEL process.

Although youth expressed significantly positive experiences, some results (e.g., the MAP Nepal PSS Survey) noted feelings of being overwhelmed. As such, we may reflect further on how to actively engage youth advisors, respecting and recognising their education, work, family, and personal commitments. Quality engagement of youth advisors in MEL benefits from strong organisational support where adult allies can aid in logistics, coordination, and any documentation the youth advisors' request.

Youth have provided invaluable insights for MEL design, contextualisation, delivery, analysis, and future reflection improving the entire MEL process.

We end with a few reflections from youth:

Before I was in darkness, but now I have the confidence to help others. (Female Visualising Peace participant, Rwanda)

For everyone to live in a peaceful and fair society, programs like MAP should be conducted more where many youth can gather and get exposure to societal problems, and actually take action on making this world fair. These programs really help in engaging youths in the betterment of the world because there are so many problems and people are still unaware about this. Little steps like these can definitely bring change to society.
(Female Youth advisor, Kathmandu, Nepal)

We are all like drops of water. Little drops of water make the mighty ocean. (Female Youth advisor, Kathmandu, Nepal)

All of us, we met when all of us have different problems, different issues, but ... MAP – it's kind of our pillar, where we can still rely on to continue our journey to the bright future life.
(Artist and PPPF participant, Impact Week, Rwanda)



Figures, Tables and Boxes

Figure 1.2a. MAP Research Questions.....	13
Figure 1.2b. MAP Medium Grant Outcomes.....	14
Table 1.6a. Four Medium Grants.....	16
Table 1.6b. Commissioned Projects.....	18
Figure 1.6c. The MAP Team in Nepal.....	19
Figure 1.6d. Partner Mapping in Nepal.....	19
Table 2.2.1a. Tools.....	23
Figure 2.2.1a. The Medium Grant MEL Toolbox and Journey.....	23
Figure 2.2.1b. The Medium Grant MEL Creative Toolbox Tools.....	24
Figure 2.3a. Participant Demographics.....	25
Figure 2.3b. Participants in MEL activities.....	26
Table 2.3a. Toolbox Youth Participants in Nepal.....	26
Table 2.3b. Toolbox Participants in Rwanda.....	26
Table 2.3c. Survey and Interview Participants in Rwanda.....	27
Table 2.3d. Survey and Interview Participants in Nepal.....	27
Box 1. Our ideal world (girls in Gira Ingoma, Rwanda).....	31
Figure 3.1.1a. River journey by a participant from Picturing Past Present and Future in Rwanda.....	33
Figure 3.1.1b. Intergenerational Dialogue Medium Grant participants' in Nepal aspirations for changes in the community.....	35
Box 2. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda.....	36
Figure 3.1.2a. Medium Grant participant vision mapping exercise (midline).....	36
Figure 3.2.1a. Examples of cultural and art forms enhancing dialogue in MAP.....	40
Figure 3.2.1b. River Journey activity for PPPF, Janakpur, Nepal.....	41
Box 3: UNESCO event in Nepal.....	42
Figure 3.2.2a. Depiction of Gender Equality Concerns.....	44
Figure 3.2.2b. Outcome vision mapping drawing by a girl in Hetauda, Nepal.....	44
Box 4. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda – I'm strong.....	45
Case Study 1: Intergenerational Dialogue in schools: Enriched curricula and enhanced teacher – student relationships in Nepal.....	47
Figure 3.2.2c. River Journey, Hetauda, Children aged 5-17 years.....	48
Figure 3.2.2d. River Journey, Hetauda, Youth aged 18-20 years.....	48
Figure 3.2.2e. River Journey, Hetauda: Teachers.....	49

Figure 3.2.2f. Images of students journey to develop critical thinking from the River Journey, Hetauda: Teachers	49
Box 5. Poem by youth advisor, Rwanda.....	53
Figure 3.3.1a. Lavender Flower, Wellbeing Thermometer Reflection, Endline, Nepal.....	54
Figure 3.3.1b. Gira Ingoma participants in Huye Province drumming for the Large Grant team	55
Box 6. Expressing Myself as I Am (Female youth, Rwanda).....	56
Figure 3.3.2a. Image Theatre, YAAR United, Nepal	57
Figure 3.3.2b. Wellbeing Thermometer Visual Explorer stories.....	58
Figure 3.3.3a. River Journey of Visualising Peace participant, Rwanda.....	60
Figure 3.3.3b. "Future Visionary of YAAR" activity	61
Figure 3.3.3c. Visual explorer card, dandelion.....	61
Case Study 2: Influencing Policy and Strengthening Communities in Rwanda -The Power of the Arts to strengthen mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in communities and families.....	63
Figure 3.3.4a. Images created show the rejected child by his parents (left) and his envisioned future as the beautiful tree with fruits and the sun set resembling the light reflecting future (right).....	65
Figure 3.4.1a. Imigongo art by a participant of PPPF, Rwanda depicting their future hope – to help others through being a doctor.....	68
Case Study 3. Informing Local Curriculum: working with young female artists to create a Mithila Arts Curriculum in the Madesh province of Nepal	68
Figure 3.4.1b. "Creating a Mithila Arts curriculum"	
Credit: Ruby Pathak and team.....	69
Figure 3.4.1c. River journey of a youth advisor in Rwanda	71
Case Study 4. Juhi Adhakari, about the Future Vision of the Youth Advocacy Advisory Research group	72
Figure 3.4.2a. Drawing by a child in Hetauda, Nepal during the outcome vision murals activity, baseline	75
Box 7. Poem – Echoes of progress: A Tapestry by girls and women.....	76
Case Study 5. The power of the arts: Girls drumming to building confidence and influence policy in Butare, Rwanda – "Gira Ingoma" – One Drum Per Girl.....	77
Figure 3.4.2b. Girls completing the river journey activity in an evaluation activity, Gira ingoma.....	79
Figure 3.5a. Ingredients in the pathway to creating policy and curricular change intergenerationally through arts-based methods.....	83
Figure 3.5b. Hetauda Math Classroom, Nepal.....	84

Case study 6: Listen Up! How an arts-based roundtable kick-started a national Arts Education Framework in Nepal	87
Figure 4.1a. Drawing by an Intergenerational Dialogue participant, Hetauda.....	91
Figure 4.2a. Kathmandu workshop with YAAR, Nepal Midline	93
Table 4.2a. Future hopes of youth advisors and youth in MAP Medium Grants	94



References

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Toolbox Sample Activities

Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing

Purpose: To contextualize the five Wellbeing Pillars to the local context and to understand the steps young people are taking to support their wellbeing and create positive change in their communities.

Art modalities: Writing, drawing, with performing arts including singing, dancing or theatre

Materials: Flipchart papers, sticky notes, pens, markers

Time recommended: 1.5 hours

Who will do it? Young people involved in the Medium Grant project

When will you do it? This tool should be carried out three times:

- At the start of the project (with [Tracking tool 1](#))
- In the middle of the project (with [Tracking tool 3](#))
- At the end of the project (with [Evaluation tools](#))

Part A. Wellbeing free listing

Process

Explain that we are looking at the Five Pillars of Wellbeing (see box).

Five Pillars of Wellbeing

- Pillar 1: Feeling safe:** Feeling safe both physically and emotionally.
- Pillar 2: Feeling connected:** Feeling connected to supportive people and groups in your community.
- Pillar 3: Feeling worthy:** Feeling worthy, and with roles, responsibilities and identities that reflect who we are, where we come from and what we do, or we would like to do.
- Pillar 4: Feeling respected:** Feeling respected, with the ability to address injustice in our lives and access to our rights.
- Pillar 5: Feeling hopeful:** Feeling hopeful about the future with a zest for life.

Figure 1.
The 5 Pillars of Wellbeing

Hang up 5 sheets of flipchart paper and write the name of one pillar on each paper.



Safe	Connected	Worthy	Respected	Hopeful
------	-----------	--------	-----------	---------

Hand out 4-6 sticky notes and pens or markers to each youth. Ask them to consider the 5 words on the wall. Going through each, one by one, ask youth:

What do you think of this concept? What is most important about this to you? What is one word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of this pillar?

Invite them to write or draw a word or phrase – any that come to mind! – on a sticky note and then stick it to the corresponding flipchart. Continue to do this for each of the 5 pillars, with at least one on each flipchart.

Once everyone has placed their sticky notes on the flipcharts, read out loud, summarizing the words on the flipchart (or have a volunteer do this).

Use the following questions as a guide:

1. What ideas stand out to you from these responses?
2. How do the arts and creativity impact wellbeing?
3. How does wellbeing relate to peacebuilding?
4. What actions can we take to strengthen our wellbeing?

Part B. Wellbeing Thermometer

Process

Draw a thermometer on a flipchart with a 1 (low) on the bottom and a 10 (high) on the top. This is for youth to visualize.

Explain to the youth that they will be measuring how they currently feel about each pillar.

- Please note: if you do not think youth will feel comfortable thinking about this on a personal level and/or you think it may be triggering or cause harm, you can ask them to think about their peers or other youth in their community. Please ensure you have appropriate supports and referral mechanisms in place – see ethics – prior to facilitating this activity.

Invite them to look at the thermometer and to consider the first pillar (feeling safe). Invite each youth to think quietly for a minute and then write the number that corresponds to how they currently feel in relation to the pillar (1 – low, not so well; 10 – high, very well). Once they have finished, they can hand the sticky note to the facilitator.

Once the facilitator has all the sticky notes, they place them on the thermometer on the wall so that the group can visualize this pillar of wellbeing. This should be done in a way to ensure that the group does not know who the sticky notes were written by. Record the results in your documentation form, then remove the sticky notes.

Repeat this with pillars 2, 3, 4 and 5. Briefly describe the pillar, invite youth to consider how they currently feel, write their number and drop it in the box. *Remember to record the results each time in the documentation form. Be sure to record the numbers in each of the boxes separately.*

Come together in a circle to close with a final discussion. Ask:

1. How has MAP contributed to wellbeing and peacebuilding in the lives of young people and your community? Please provide specific examples.

If you are at the mid-point or end-point of your project, ask:

2. What pillar had the most significant improvement? How do you think this was accomplished?
3. What else could have been done to improve wellbeing?

Please include these responses in the [documentation form](#) – Tracking tool 2: Wellbeing Thermometer.

→ **Note: This needs to be completed each time you carry out this tool!**



Explain to the youth that we will be using this tool at the beginning, the middle and again at the end of the project in order to see if by working together we were able to make improvements in wellbeing.

Alternative options: feel free to be creative and try these alternatives or think of your own!

Buckets and objects. You can hand each child 10 small objects (e.g., stones, Legos, buttons). The child can then choose how many to put in each pot. For example, if they rate 7 for safety, they will put 7 stones into a bucket under the safety pillar.

"Living thermometer". Use tape to make 10 markings, one foot apart from each other, on the floor and number them 1 through 10. Invite the youth to stand on the marking of the thermometer that represents their response. For example, if they rate 6 for connection, they stand on the "6" marking.

Movement activity. After conducting this tool, please carry out an activity (from other MAP resources) to help young people process their thoughts and emotions. Here is one activity:

Human sculptures

1. Invite participants to find a partner. Ask partners to be number 1 and number 2.
2. Invite participant number 1 to mould (move) participant number 2's body into how participant number 1 is feeling. For example, if they are feeling sad, you might have a frowning face and head down. Finally, invite all the pairs to look around the room.
→ Note: in some cultures and communities it is not okay to touch another person of the same or different gender. In this context, ask your partner to move their body in the way that you feel.
3. Now, switch roles! Invite participant number 2 to mould participant number 1 into how they are feeling. Invite all pairs to look around the room.
4. Close the activity by stating that sometimes these types of activities make us feel happy and relieved and sometimes they make us feel bad and sad. It's okay to have all emotions and reflect on how we feel.

Reflect Tool 1: River Journeyⁱ

Purpose: To explore the most significant changes that have taken place over your MAP Journey and to reflect on our progress towards our progress markers.

Art modality: Drawing or painting

Materials: Flipchart paper (4-5 pasted together), paints/crayons/other colours, documentation forms ([Documentation form](#) – Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Murals and [Documentation form](#) – Reflect tool 1: River Journey)

Time recommended: 60 minutes (90 minutes if doing additional drama activity)

Who will do it? Youth participants and adult allies (if possible, the same group that did [Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Murals](#))

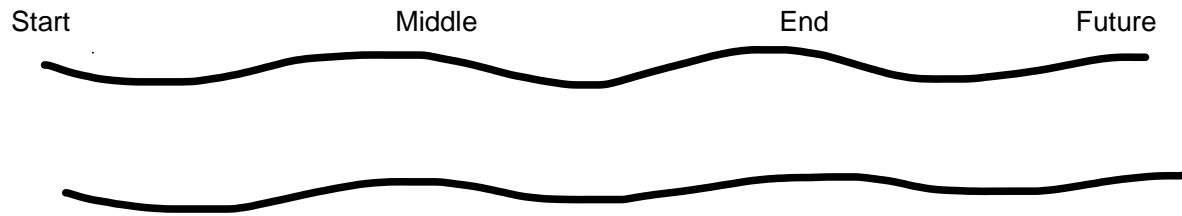
When will you do it? The MEL Youth Researchers will lead this activity at the end of the MAP project.



Process

Step A: Reflecting on our journey

Place a long piece of paper on the floor or wall, and write start of project, middle of project, end of project, and future in intervals across the top.



Ask participants to close their eyes. Guide them to vision their journey, saying:

“Envision a beautiful river, flowing from the start (their first day joining MAP) to the middle (halfway through the project), to today (end of project) and into their future (What do they hope will happen next?).”
Remind them of the **outcomes** that you have been working toward together.

“What were your lives like at the start? In the middle? Toward the end? Now that you have finished MAP and are looking into the future?”

“Now, think about the outcomes that we have been working toward. (Describe these for your project). What are some of the most important changes that have occurred between each of these time periods (start, middle, end, future)?”

→ Note: These changes can be personal, in MAP groups (youth, adult or intergenerational), or in the community.

Ask participants to draw a river on the page (2 lines) and together write and draw on the river their individual stories. They can draw pictures and add words and stories to the page. They may also include significant activities/events that led to the changes.

Once complete, ask participants to draw or write any significant “stories” that reflect the changes that they experienced as a result of MAP.

“What activities and events were significant to you/led to these changes? Please draw or write these on the river (or on separate paper if more space is required).”

Lead a discussion using the following questions as a guide. Please record your notes in the documentation form.

1. What were the most significant changes that were revealed in your river journey?
2. Why are these significant? How do they impact the group’s journey towards the outcomes?
3. Were the changes experienced by the majority of participants? Please explain.
4. What have you learned that you will take forward into future activities you plan, and into your lives?

Optional Drama Addition: If you have time (90 minutes recommended), invite participants to work together in small groups to develop a 3–5-minute theatre skit sharing one of their most significant change stories. You can video and/or take notes about the significant changes described. Afterwards, allow the group the opportunity to share about this story and open it up to the group for questions. Please take notes and add these to the documentation form.

Step B: Reviewing our progress markers

Please now review the progress markers from tracking. Referring to your group reflections, think through your progress to date.

Please write down the key changes on each progress marker on your [documentation form](#) – Reflect Tool 1: River Journey (**Annex 1**).

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for participants to share an artistic response as they reflect on the MAP Medium Grants journey.

Art modalities: Poem, song, drawing, video, drama or image

Materials: Flipchart paper (4-5 pasted together), paints/crayons/other colours

Time recommended: 60 minutes

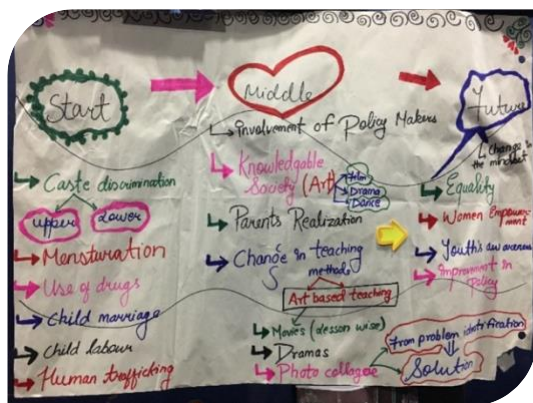
Who will do it? Youth participants and adult allies

When will you do it? The MEL Youth Researchers will lead this activity at the

Reflect Tool 2: Artistic Reflectionⁱⁱ

Process

Review the project outcomes and progress markers with the participants. Invite participants to reflect on their journey with MAP.



Options:

- This activity may be done as individuals or in groups.
- You may share the instructions in advance in order to save preparation time during the session or carry this out in two sessions (1- preparation and 2- sharing/presenting)

Instruct participants to create a poem, drawing, song, image, frozen image, drama or movement that relates to how they have experienced the MAP Medium Grant project.

Invite them to reflect on this statement and to respond using any art modality that they'd like:

Reflecting on the MAP outcomes, which outcome do you feel is the most important? Why?

If participants have not created an artistic response in advance of the session, you may provide them time during the session to prepare their creative response (suggested time: 30-40 minutes).

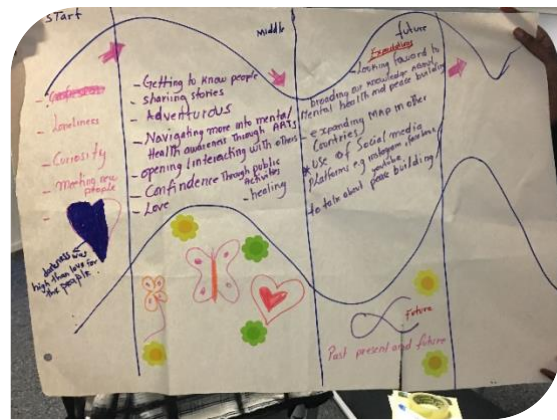
Another option is to invite participants to create a frozen image or movement to express a key moment, feeling or observation from the MAP Medium Grant.

Once the artistic reflections are prepared, invite participants to share these one by one with the group

Questions:

1. What were some of the main feelings that were experienced across participants?
2. What MAP outcomes resonated most with the group? Why do you think this is?
3. What were the primary “gifts” (i.e., skills or ideas) you have brought to move towards MAP outcomes? Or, what are the ways that you have contributed to MAP?

Please include your notes in [documentation form](#) – Reflect Tool 2: Artistic Reflection.



Reflect Tool 3. Traveling Opinionsⁱⁱⁱ

Purpose: To explore young people's perspectives on the impacts of MAP and to evaluate the effectiveness of MAP Medium Grants towards achieving the outcomes.

Art modalities: Poem, song, drawing, video, drama or image

Materials: Paper and tape to mark stations (optional), balls (optional), documentation forms ([Documentation form](#) – Tracking tool 1: Outcome Vision Mapping, [Documentation form](#) - Reflect Tool 3: Traveling Opinions)

Time recommended: 60 minutes

Who will do it? Youth participants

When will you do it? The MEL Youth Researchers will lead this activity at the end of the MAP project.

Process

Preparation: Set up stations around room or outdoor space. Papers can be taped up with the words: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*.

Review the statements below and add a few specific details to your programme and group to reflect your programme outcomes (see results table below for example):

- *Outcome:* Increased social cohesion between young people from host and refugee communities.
- ✓ *Statement:* "The arts help me to make friends from other communities"

Method: Call young people to the centre of the space and explain to them that they will hear a statement and need to decide if they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Each time a statement is called, they will physically move to this corresponding space and will be invited to use different movements to arrive at their "station" of choice: walk, swim, flow, crab walk, jump, dribble, etc.

→ Note: young people may simply walk to the stations if they prefer or choose their own movement.

1. When you are ready to begin, read out loud the first statement and the movement they will do. Young people decide which station to go to and then go to that station using the appropriate means (walk, run, swim, etc.)
2. Count and record the number of girls and boys at each station. Ask the young people why they chose the responses that they did using probes (e.g., "for those of you who "agreed", why did you choose this?")
3. Call the youth back to the centre and repeat steps 2 and 3 with the remaining statements.
4. Write the number of young people at each station and discussion notes in the [documentation form](#) – Reflect Tool 3: Traveling Opinions.

Statements (you can choose which ones to use):

Area	Statement
General	MAP has had positive impacts on the lives of young people. MAP has had positive impacts on young people's families. MAP has had positive impacts on my community.
Peacebuilding and community cohesion	Engaging in the arts has helped me to make friends with people from diverse backgrounds in MAP. MAP has helped to tackle issues that cause conflict in my community.
Mental Health and wellbeing	MAP has had a positive impact on young people's overall wellbeing.
Meaningful participation – Gender	Girls and boys have equal opportunities in MAP activities. Opportunities for girls have improved through MAP.
Meaningful participation - Intergenerational	MAP has helped young people to engage more meaningfully with adults.
Skill development	I have developed new skills through MAP.
Policy and curriculum	Decision makers have made improvements for the lives of young people after participating in MAP activities. (as applicable)
Program specific statements	<i>(Each group to fill in)</i>

Purpose: To reflect on key learnings from the MAP Medium Grants journey.

Art modalities: Proverbs, drama, poetry

Materials: Flipchart paper (4-5 pasted together), flipchart marker,

[Documentation form](#) – Reflect Tool 4: Proverb Dramas

Time recommended: 60 minutes

Who will do it? Youth participants

When will you do it? The MEL Youth Researchers will lead this activity at the

Reflect Tool 4: Proverb Dramas^{iv}

Process

Introduction: Proverbs are an art form and communication form to communicate a piece of “truth” or advice or give a lesson. Almost every culture has their own proverbs. Start with a discussion about proverbs. Ask participants where they learned them (as a child? At home? In school?) and how they are used.

As a large group, ask the young people to brainstorm proverbs that they know. Write these down on a flipchart. You may write down the literal proverb (word for word), and if you’d like you can add a note on what they interpret the proverb to mean.

Now ask the young people to form groups of 3-4 people.

Ask each group to choose a proverb and to prepare and perform a drama illustrating the “moral lesson” of one of the proverbs. Give groups 15-20 minutes to prepare their drama.

Everyone meets together again and takes turns acting in the drama. Take a video of the dramas, if possible. The larger group then guesses which proverb they are acting out.

Finally, talk about the lessons from the proverbs. Encourage everyone to be open and honest.

1. What do you think of these “lessons”? What attitudes, beliefs and practices do they demonstrate? Do the “lessons” support your outcomes?
2. What attitudes, beliefs and practices have been supportive of the outcomes of our project? How have you built on these through MAP? What more can we do to build on these?
3. What attitudes, beliefs and practices provide potential barriers to reaching our outcomes? How have you worked through MAP to overcome these barriers? What more can you do to overcome these barriers?

→ Note: This activity provides the MAP MEL Researcher insight into family values, community values and the cultural knowledge of young people. It also sheds light on their opinions and positioning on the issues that they are facing. It provides an opportunity to reflect on how the activities they have done during MAP have supported their wellbeing and progress towards their outcomes, and what barriers they have faced.



Appendix 2. Psychosocial Support MAP Survey-Nepal

The survey questions below will be asked to the adolescents and youth from YAAR and a few schools. The aim is to get a comprehensive understanding of their views and experiences with regard to the contribution of the MAP project on the overall mental health and psychosocial well-being.

Section 1: About you	
1. How old are you (completed age in years)?	
2. What is your gender?	a. Female b. Male c. Third-gender d. Prefer not to say
3. To which ethnicity do you belong to?	a. Brahmin/Chhetri b. Dalit c. Janajati d. Madhesi e. Tharu f. Others (Please specify)
4. If you are currently studying, in which class (grade) are you currently studying?	a. 6 b. 7 c. 8 d. 9 e. 10 f. 11 g. 12 h. N/ A
5. How long have you been involved with the MAP project?	a. Less than 6 months b. 6-12 months c. 13 months – 18 months d. More than 18 months
6. Do you have any experience of prior involvement within any group of adolescents or youth club, etc. or any other research? If no, skip question 7.	a. Yes b. No
7. What was/were those? (Open-ended)	
8. How would you rate your prior involvement before the MAP project?	a. A lot b. Some c. A little bit d. None
9. How much do you agree that children and youth's involvement in projects like MAP is important and can make a difference in their lives?	a. Strongly agree b. Somewhat agree c. Neither agree or disagree d. Somewhat disagree e. Strongly disagree

Section 2: About the activity you participated in over the MAP project

For the following statements, please respond using one of the following of five options:

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Neither agree or disagree
- d. Somewhat disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

10. How much do you agree that - The project has broadened your concepts and understanding of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing?	
11. In my community in context of Nepal, mental health and psychosocial conditions are common among children, youth and my peers.	
12. MAP Activities that you participated in led you, at times, to remember about past difficult or painful experiences.	
13. The MAP project supported you to learn about the need to seek mental health and psychosocial counselling and supports when needed.	
14. Mental health was a common topic that was discussed or portrayed during the MAP project activities.	
15. Participating in the MAP sessions makes a difference in your level of understanding, skills, confidence, and well-being.	
16. A) Participating in the MAP activity sessions makes a difference in the wellbeing of your family.	
B) Participating in the MAP activity sessions makes a difference to the wellbeing of my wider community.	
17. How much do you agree that that because of the involvement in the MAP project ...	
... you experienced more stress, emotional burden, or suffering, and/ or you felt you have been missing out on other things?	
... you were overwhelmed by the workload and commitments?	
... you were frustrated because the involvement did not allow you to do what you wanted to do?	

... you had negative psychological impacts?	
... you experienced greater stigma or discrimination while talking about mental health?	
18. Your involvement in the MAP project helps you ...	
... to learn socio-emotional skills and knowledge that are important for your future?	
... to meet and be with people who support you?	
... to feel enjoyment?	
... to develop or self-improve as a person (for example- foster social and interpersonal relationships)?	
... to feel better or more positive about yourself, and others?	
... increase your leadership skills and ability to voice yourself?	
... to feel a sense of hope about the future?	
... to feel more confident in building peace in your community?	

Appendix 3. Consent Forms

Consent form for MEL Toolbox Activities for Youth and Adult Participants

(page1/1)

	Please tick	
	Yes	No
The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning has been explained to me and I have had any questions answered.		
I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.		
I understand that I can change my mind and stop taking part at any time, and that I don't have to participate in any activities or answer any questions that I don't want to.		
I also understand that I can change my mind about being part of the project after the workshop by notifying the research team.		
I understand that people will read about the things I say but they will not know that I said them as my name and personal information will not be included.		
I understand that the results of this study might be published in the final report, research summaries, academic journal articles, or other creative outputs (e.g., blogs, infographics).		
I agree to be recorded during the activities. I understand that these recordings will not be shared.		
I agree for my ideas and art pieces to be photographed.		
I agree to be filmed.		
I understand that I can ask not to be photographed or filmed during an activity. I understand that the photos and videos will be used in presentations and information about the project, in print and online but my name will not be used.		
I understand that if I change my mind after photos have already been shared online then the research team will do its best to withdraw these pictures but cannot confirm that all traces of these images can be deleted.		
I understand that if I have any concerns I can talk with one of the project team anytime, even after the project has finished.		
I understand that the notes and recordings will be kept in a secure place. Personal data (name, contact details and audio files) will be destroyed at the end of the project (April 2024). All other data will be kept securely for 25 years.		

Signature and age of person giving consent (*the participant*) and **date**

Signature of person obtaining consent (*the researcher*) and **date**

Thank you for taking the time to support this research. If you have any questions, please feel free to email the University of Edinburgh researchers Laura Wright laura.wright@ed.ac.uk and Laura Lee leelauramay@gmail.com.

MAP MEL Toolbox Consent form for Caregivers

(p. 1/2)

	Please tick	
	Yes	No
The research has been explained to me and I have had any questions answered.		
I understand that my child's participation is entirely voluntary.		
I understand that I can change my mind and ask for my child to stop taking part with their consent at any time, and that they don't have to participate in any activities or answer any questions that they don't want to.		
I also understand that I can change my mind about my child being part of the project after the workshop by notifying the research team.		
I understand that the results of this study might be published in the final report, research summaries, academic journal articles, or other creative outputs (e.g. blogs, infographics, stories).		
I understand that people will read about the things my child says but they will not know that my child said them (my child's name will not be included)		
I agree that my child can be recorded during the workshop. I understand that these recordings will not be shared.		
I agree for my child to be photographed.		
I agree for my child to be filmed.		
I agree for my child to be recorded during Zoom workshops and performances.		
I understand that my child can ask not to be photographed or filmed during an activity. I understand that the photos and videos will be used in presentations and information about the project, in print and online but my child's name will not be used.		
I understand that if I change my mind after photos have already been shared online then the research team will do its best to withdraw these pictures but cannot confirm that all traces of these images can be deleted.		
I understand that if my child or I have any concerns we can talk with one of the project team anytime, even after the project has finished.		
I understand that the notes and recordings will be kept in a secure place. Personal data (name, contact details and audio files) will be destroyed at the end of the project (April 2024). All other data will be kept securely for 25 years.		
I have had time to think about it, and I am happy for my child to take part in this project.		

[for illiterate caregiver]

Researcher will read out each sentence in the form below and seek consent orally in front of a witness*. The researcher will tick the box on behalf of the caregiver according to their response.

*The witness could be a caregiver's friend, family member, care worker, or someone independent of the research team.

Full name of my child

Emergency Contact Details (Caregiver Name and Phone Number)

Signature of caregiver giving consent and date

Signature of person obtaining consent (*the researcher*) and date

Thank you for taking the time to support this research. If you have any questions, please feel free to email the University of Edinburgh researchers Laura Wright laura.wright@ed.ac.uk and Laura Lee leelauramay@gmail.com.

ⁱ Adapted from: Vanessa Currie, Laura M. Lee, Laura Wright (IICRD) 2019. [YouCreate Art-kit: Participatory Action Research for young change makers](#). Terre des hommes

ⁱⁱ This tool was adapted from the 'Artistic Response' activity (p. 60): Ananda Breed and Chaste Uwihoreye, (2021). **Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) – Psychosocial Module**. University of Lincoln.

ⁱⁱⁱ The tool was originally developed by Right to Play Lebanon and adapted by the Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) in: Laura M. Lee, Philip Cook (IICRD) 2017. **Sport for Protection of Forcibly Displaced Youth**, For: Terre des hommes, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Olympic Committee

^{iv} This tool was developed by [Laura Lee](#) and adapted for this project.