

Breaking Down and Building Up Participation: A Comparative Study of Fifteen Participatory Evaluations in Nine Countries

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List of Acronyms

AAR	After Action Review
GFP	Generations For Peace
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OC	Observations Checklists
PE	Participatory Evaluation
PM	Participatory Monitoring
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Generations For Peace and the Research

This report was completed by the non-profit, peace-building organisation, Generations For Peace (GFP). It presents findings based on observations and assessments of fifteen Participatory Evaluations (PEs) in nine countries: Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.¹ The purpose of this report is to improve future evaluation processes as well as to provide a theoretical contribution to the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) field. The data was collected through several field visits during 2014 by the organisation's staff. That year, GFP worked to introduce PM&E across all its programmes. This report focuses solely on the PE component of the process to provide a comparative assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges PEs face in diverse contexts.

As a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) founded in Jordan in 2007, Generations For Peace works to transform conflict at the grassroots level in communities across Africa, Asia and Europe. It is a volunteer-led organisation that empowers local people to bring about positive change at a community level. The organisation runs programmes using the peace-building vehicles of sport, art, advocacy, dialogue, and empowerment. GFP programmes are designed, implemented, and evaluated by volunteers in accordance with its Programming Framework, which provides volunteers with a comprehensive guide.² To train volunteers GFP uses a cascading model to pass on skills: the organisation transfers its knowledge, model, and skills to its volunteers working in societies impacted by conflict who in turn train other volunteers. After a stringent recruitment process, GFP selects volunteers to train as Delegates so that they can go back to their communities and implement programmes. After they have met set requirements and run programmes in their communities, they become certified GFP Pioneers. GFP has trained over 600 'first generation' Delegates at International Camps who have then passed on their knowledge to more than 8,555 volunteers.³ This process enables the organisation to have a truly global outreach at a grassroots level.

To the authors' knowledge this is the first time that a comparative study of an NGO's PEs has been carried out on this scale – both in terms of the number and geographical scope. The report speaks to both an internal (the GFP community, including staff and volunteers) and external audience (the wider field of peace-building and international development field): it provides findings and recommendations that can be utilised internally to improve the GFP method; and, alongside this, it speaks to the broader NGO community by contributing to the literature and drawing conclusions that can be utilised in diverse third-sector settings. While the theory behind the participatory method is well developed, too little is understood of its implementation in a field setting. This report seeks to rectify that situation by providing a thorough examination of PE in practice.

¹ A total of twenty-two PEs were carried out in eleven countries, but only fifteen PEs from nine countries are used in the dataset. Evidence from the remaining PEs held in Nigeria and Jordan did not correspond to the research framework set out in this report.

² Generations For Peace. "Generations For Peace Programming Framework," 2014.

³ All information taken from Generations For Peace. "Introductory Booklet," 2014, 1-6.

1.2 Structure of the Report

The report proceeds in four sections: introduction, literature review, the findings, and, the recommendations and conclusion. The introduction includes a brief summary of GFP's PE approach, the report's main arguments, and the methodology. The next section reviews the existing literature, situates the report within this literature and develops the report's argument, including designing a tool which is then used to assess the GFP PE model in the findings section. The findings section begins with an overall consideration of the GFP model's strengths and weaknesses before going on to look at the specifics of the process. After this, it considers the results produced by the PE process along with areas where change is needed. In the final section, the report finishes with a final presentation of the tool used to assess the PE model, followed by recommendations and a conclusion.

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Report

The purpose of this report, as noted above, is to provide an assessment of GFP's PE model by comparing fifteen separate evaluation experiences in nine countries over the course of a single year. This assessment was guided by one overarching research question: ***How does GFP's PE model perform in diverse contexts?***

This report proceeds to answer this question by exploring the following sub-questions:

1. What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of GFP's PE model?
2. How did individual components of the PE process perform in a field setting?
3. What kind of data did the PE process generate?

To answer the overarching question, the report explores the overall strengths and weaknesses of GFP's PE model, according to a variety of respondents involved in the evaluation process. This provides a sound understanding of how the theoretical advantages and disadvantages of participatory approaches to evaluation play out in a field setting. To make the assessment as practical as possible, the focus is also on finding out how different *components* of the GFP PE model performed in different contexts. These components include separate elements such as the planning of the evaluation process, the evaluation itself, and the writing up and sharing of results. The report also aims to explore the kind of data generated by the PE process, as an integral part of assessing a model is looking into the usefulness of the results it generates.

Not included in the full list of research questions above is a further inquiry. This report examines how a participatory model of evaluation performs in the field, which raises the following question: *how best can a participatory model be assessed?* To address this, this report draws on existing PM&E literature to propose a novel technique – the use of a participatory checklist, presented first in Chapter 2 – to assess a participatory model of evaluation.

The purpose of exploring these questions was twofold: the first was to contribute to organisational learning for GFP. The aim was to discover where the model worked and where improvements were needed. Out of this investigation actionable recommendations emerged that can make a valuable contribution to organisational learning. The second was the report's contribution to the field of PM&E as a whole. As a volunteer-led organisation that works in diverse contexts, GFP generates a wealth of practical data which can be utilised for constant learning and improvement. This report takes advantage of this through providing findings that have broader relevance. Within the PM&E literature practical insights are often lacking, and this unprecedented comparative report contributes to changing that situation by analysing data gathered in nine hugely different contexts. Theoretical discussions provide a grounding and justification for the participatory approach, but advances in the field can only take place through the use of analysed empirical evidence. This report contributes to that effort.

1.4 Participatory Monitoring Evaluation and the GFP model

Monitoring and evaluation forms an integral part of programme interventions in various fields. Monitoring refers to the systematic and routinised collection of information for the purposes of tracking progress. This differs from evaluation – the focus of this report – which denotes the assessment of a completed or partially completed project or programme to critically analyse its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability with the aim of improving future interventions.⁴ Whereas monitoring is an assessment of what is happening on the programme, evaluation takes place afterwards and is focused on understanding what happened and why.⁵ Participation in relation to monitoring and evaluation refers to an approach in which programme stakeholders (those involved with the programme or directly affected by it) are actively involved in developing the assessment and implementing the process. Participation involves the sharing of knowledge alongside capacity building for those involved. It is a process that brings everyone together to collectively discuss what happened and why.

GFP introduced a participatory model of M&E across all its programming for the first time in 2014. As a volunteer-led organisation, PM&E directly suited GFP's mandate; this procedure offered control over the M&E process to those individuals who organised and implemented each programme. Three major elements characterise GFP's model of PM&E: first, GFP volunteers decide on a conflict they want to address and decide how best to bring about the change they desire (by designing their own Theory of Change for each programme); second, volunteers develop their own measurements of success, creating their own indicators to measure the results of their programmes through a process of Participatory Monitoring (PM); and third, volunteers evaluate their programmes themselves, completing a Participatory Evaluation at the conclusion of each programme.

⁴ International Platform on Sport and Development. "What Is Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)?," http://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/monitoring_evaluation/what_is_monitoring_evaluation_m_e/

⁵ Generations For Peace, "Generations For Peace Programming Framework," 2.

To guide volunteers through this process, GFP provides them with a document known as the Programming Framework. This document walks Pioneers and Delegates through every stage of participatory programme design, monitoring, and evaluation. The Programming Framework includes the Monitoring and Evaluation Grid (M&E Grid), a single-page document that GFP volunteers use to consolidate both their programme plans and their M&E information.⁶ Most importantly for this report, this Programming Framework – along with a few supplementary guidance documents – lays out the entire process of carrying out a Participatory Evaluation for GFP volunteers (detailed below).

A short clarification is important here. This report situates GFP's PE process within the larger literature and methodology of PM&E as a whole, and proceeds to examine this PE process through a series of case studies that shed light on the practical implementation of a participatory process. It does not examine the entirety of GFP's PM&E approach, as the approach is composed of several processes that result in unique types of data. The data collected for this report grants insight into the PE process alone.⁷

As detailed in the Programming Framework, the GFP PE process is divided threefold: planning, the PE day itself, and the write up and sharing process. Each stage is described below:

Planning (up to two weeks before the PE): The planning stage involves organising logistics, a venue, and materials along with arranging the attendance of the key groups involved: Pioneers and Delegates, the Target Group of the programmes, the wider Beneficiary Community indirectly affected by the programme, and the programmes' Key Stakeholders.⁸

The PE day itself is divided into an additional three components – the introduction, Focus Groups, and Large Group Discussion:

Introduction (45 minutes): The introduction involves greeting all those present and providing them with an explanation of the purpose and structure of the event. This is followed by a recap of the programme to remind those present of what it aimed to achieve.

Focus Groups (2-3 hours): Following this, all those in attendance are divided into Focus Groups according to the category they represent: Pioneers and Delegates, Target Group members, Beneficiary Community members or Key Stakeholders. The latter may be subdivided along lines relevant to the conflict the programme aimed to address such as

⁶ See Appendix Four.

⁷ Data collected through PM is wide and varied in terms of the indicators used and presented, and is not directly comparable to the kind of qualitative information collected through the PE process. Another element that reduces comparability is the fact that data collected through the monitoring process is used to track ongoing progress, while data collected through the PE process deals with an evaluation at the end of a programme. Finally, the actual process by which data is collected in both cases is very different. For these reasons, the report focuses only on PEs – not on PM – as an example of a participatory process of evaluation piloted by GFP in 2014.

⁸ In GFP terminology the Target Group are those who took part in the programme; the Beneficiary Community are those who do not take part in the programme but were affected by it, for example, by being a parent or a teacher of a Target Group member; and Key Stakeholders are influential community members who have a stake in the programme, such as a community/religious leaders or a school principal. Generations For Peace. "Generations For Peace Programming Framework."

gender, ethnicity or religion; or by their relation to the Target Group – teacher, parent or community/political leader. Each Focus Group is asked the same set of questions and the answers are written or typed in note form. The purpose of the Focus Group is to allow for a detailed exploration of what happened during the programme and why; dividing the participants up by group also allows for an understanding of differentiation in terms of programme effects.

Large Group Discussion (1.5 hours): The final stage of the PE day is the Large Group Discussion, which brings everyone together again and allows community members themselves to present a summary of the main findings of the Focus Group discussions. After this there is a discussion about what has been said and reasons for differences among each of the groups. Ideally, this discussion should look forward to what improvements could be made in the future. The Large Group Discussion allows for everyone involved in the programme to come together to explore what happened and why; it presents a learning opportunity so that people are able to comprehend how others experienced the programme and understood its outcomes and impacts. It aims to allow for a process of social negotiation among the different groups.

Write Up and Sharing (allow one day)⁹: The final part of the PE process is the Write Up and Sharing, which should take place the very next day. For this the Pioneers and Delegates who took part in the programme gather together to summarise the different views of the Focus Groups and the Large Group Discussion and type them up in the evaluation rows of the M&E Grid.¹⁰ This part aims to both complete the programme and prepare the Pioneers and Delegates for their next programme (or set of programmes).¹¹ It condenses the data gathered during the PE so that it can be presented in a concise, easily understandable way, which can then be disseminated to GFP Headquarters and other groups involved with the programme.

1.5 Arguments

1.5.1 Argument: the PM&E Field

The central argument of this report is that in order for participatory processes to be improved and developed the term participation needs to be critically engaged with. The literature on PM&E clearly illustrates that there is lack of agreement on what the concept means. Depending on who is answering the question, participation can mean consultation, full inclusion, or social learning; it can be motivated by pragmatism, political beliefs, or by the simple idea that the more people whose opinions are included the more useful the findings will be (for further discussion of all these points – see the

⁹ All timings taken from Generations For Peace, “Generations For Peace Programming Framework.”

¹⁰ See Appendix Four.

¹¹ Generations For Peace, “Generations For Peace Programming Framework.”

literature review below). This multifarious understanding of what participation means hinders our ability to assess an approach's effectiveness.

Participatory processes, much like the development interventions they evaluate, are not homogenous in terms of their motivations and aims. Different justifications or goals are emphasised depending on values, practicalities, priorities, and needs. However, there is a need for a way to judge and compare these processes in order to increase collective learning. Simultaneously, the diversity of these processes should also be embraced. This difficult balance speaks to the final question proposed in Section 1.3 – how best can a participatory model be assessed?

Rather than providing another definition of what participatory means in M&E, this report proposes the use of a checklist through which participatory processes of evaluation can be thoroughly assessed. It argues that breaking down the concept into different components will enhance shared understanding and increase our ability to judge and compare. The field of PM&E can only advance and learn if there is a way of measuring what participation is so that different projects and programmes can be compared and tested against their aims.

Another advantage of having a checklist rather than a definition is that it removes zero-sum thinking – it works against the idea that a process either is or is not participatory, either right or wrong. Elements of a process can be participatory while other elements can not be. Participation is beneficial for many reasons, but not all participatory processes have to be the same. It should be judged on a case-by-case basis, yet still be comparable – and a checklist allows for exactly that.

The checklist proposed here is presented and developed in stages throughout the report; drawn from the literature, it is first introduced in Chapter 2 (the literature review). Taking into account the findings of the research itself, the checklist is then expanded and developed further to provide a comprehensive tool that not only assesses GFP's PE model, but can also be used by other organisations to assess their own PM&E processes.

1.5.2 Argument: The GFP Process

In order to test this checklist and prove how it can help establish a shared understanding of what participation means, this report – using data from fifteen PEs that took place in nine different countries – assesses the evaluation component of the GFP PM&E model. Having a checklist, informed by the literature, allows for a deeper, more holistic assessment of the model that allows for a consideration of theory alongside practice.

The argument about the GFP model is it achieves much in terms of increased involvement and community engagement, as well as producing simple, actionable results based on diverse perspectives, and enhancing the capacity of volunteers. Yet, however participatory the process is on

paper it encounters many hurdles in the field, as evidenced in the findings. The main challenges it faces are unrepresentative attendance, difficulties with the questions asked, and the demands it places on Pioneers and Delegates in terms of time and capacity. Collectively, these challenges reduce the process's accessibility for Pioneers and Delegates; in order to increase its chances of success, the model needs to be made more accessible.

A PE process is always going to be challenging as it involves bringing diverse groups together to evaluate a programme that they have different levels of engagement with. However, steps can be taken to increase its likelihood of success. The researchers argue that many of the challenges faced by the GFP model arise from the fact that Pioneers and Delegates were not involved in the design of the process, especially the questions asked, which shape the knowledge the process produces. While the principles behind the different components of the GFP model are wholeheartedly participatory, the design of the process itself was not. Handing more control over to Pioneers and Delegates will give them a greater sense of ownership over the procedure. The practical difficulties of making a standardised process more flexible will be compensated by the model's reinvigoration as a process that is malleable and geared to local contexts. In order to achieve this Pioneer and Delegate consultation needs to be incorporated into the process itself to establish a continuous feedback loop to design a model that is responsive to volunteers' needs, as they will have had a stake in its creation.

1.6 Methodology

Field research for this study was completed over a six-month period (April-September) in 2014. In this period, fifteen PEs were examined in nine countries. All of these were "first time" PEs – until this point, none of the countries or programmes researched had carried out a PE using the guidance provided by the Programming Framework. Data for the research was collected from two major categories of respondents: GFP staff members travelling to the field to support each PE, and GFP Pioneers and Delegates involved in implementing each PE. To gather data on how the GFP PE model performed in diverse contexts, three main research tools were used: first, an Observation Checklist (OC) completed by each GFP staff member in the field, *for each PE observed*; second, an After Action Review (AAR) process used by the volunteers to reflect on how each PE went; and third, the final presentation of the results compiled in the M&E Grids for each of the programmes evaluated.

The remainder of this section presents some basic information about the scope of this study, detailing the geographical location and total number of each of the PEs. It then delves into a description of the research tools used, before discussing in more detail their strengths and weaknesses. It concludes with a brief overview of the method of analysis used to present the full set of findings.

To begin with, *Table 1.1* lists the nine countries that were studied through this research process. The table also includes the number of PEs held in each country, their location, date and the number of GFP staff present.

Country	Number of PEs at which data was collected	Location/s	Date	Number of staff travelling to site
Rwanda	4	Rubavu & Ngoma	May 2014	3
Zimbabwe	3	Gweru & Harare	June 2014	2
Kyrgyzstan	2	Karakol & Osh	August-September 2014	2
Georgia	1	Tbilisi	May-June 2014	2
Ghana	1	Kumasi	August 2014	2
Indonesia	1	Jakarta	July 2014	3
Macedonia	1	Tetovo	April 2014	2
Nepal	1	Kathmandu	June-July 2014	2
Sri Lanka	1	Mullaitivu & Kilinochchi districts	September 2014	1

Table 1.1: PE Country, Number of PEs that took place, Location, Date and Number of staff who attended

- Research Tools -

The research tools used to gather data, as mentioned above, were of three types: OCs (filled by staff), AARs (completed by volunteers), and M&E Grids (completed by volunteers). Collectively, the tools were aimed at providing an assessment of both process and results. The specific structure and logic of each tool is detailed below.

1. **Observation Checklists (OCs):** By the end of the specified research period, 20 OCs were submitted by GFP staff members. At each PE, a staff member would fill out a single checklist; as a result, since some PEs were attended by more than one staff member (see *Table 1.1*) the number of checklists (20) exceeds the number of PEs held (15). Each checklist aimed to gather specific information from staff about how PEs performed: GFP volunteers' familiarity with the PE process; details about the process of planning a PE (including role distribution and clarity of procedure); the groups represented at the PE itself; the process of carrying out Focus Groups and the Large Group Discussion; the process of writing up and sharing results; and finally, staff members' own comments on the overall strengths and weaknesses of the PE process in the case(s) they were observing.¹² In all cases, while staff members were prompted to comment on specific components of the PE, they were free to offer as much detail as they chose. Through this tool, it was possible to generate a comprehensive record of staff experiences, as well as their reflections on the model.
2. **AARs:** To collect information from the Pioneers and Delegates – the actual implementers of both the programmes and the PE, according to GFP's volunteer-led M&E model – this research opted to use the After Action Review process.¹³ Fifteen AARs were completed in this research process. First developed by the military, AARs provide a structured, rapid means to

¹² See Appendix One.

¹³ See Appendix Two.

assess a project after it has happened in order to learn, collect, and identify successes and areas for improvement.¹⁴ GFP integrated the method into its PE process in order to provide a simple, time-efficient and effective means of post-event assessment. After the completion of each PE, an AAR brought together all the Pioneers and Delegates involved in the implementation of the PE and asked them to answer four questions in the form of a focus group. These questions enquired as to what went well in the PE, what could be improved, their opinion of the process overall, and what could be improved in the future. Using this tool served two purposes: it provided a representative survey of the views of GFP volunteers, and it helped them reflect collectively on their own PE experience. The added reflexivity this tool offered was part of the reason for choosing it over more traditional data-gathering techniques, such as surveying. It was also participatory in the sense that every Pioneer and Delegate involved in organising and implementing the PE was consulted after it had taken place. However, it must be noted that the AARs lack the detail of the checklists and offer a holistic overview rather than a thorough account of the process.

3. **Final M&E Grids:** The final M&E Grids are the third data source used for this research.¹⁵ These grids present the condensed findings of the PE, typed up by Pioneers and Delegates, and shared among both the volunteers and staff at GFP Headquarters (HQ). This tool (the output of a pre-existing process that was not specifically designed for this research) shows the information collected from the PE, offering the researchers the opportunity to assess how useful this information actually is for programme improvement. The programmatic areas covered by the grids are: what went well and why, what were the most significant changes and what caused them, what unexpected or unwanted changes occurred, how sustainable changes were, and what steps needed to be taken after the PE has taken place.

The research tools above can be summarised as follows (*Table 1.2*):

Tool	Total number	PEs measuring
OCs	19	15
AARs	15	15
Final grids	15	15

Table 1.2: Research Tools and Number of Research Tools

1.6.1 Strengths of the Research Tool and Data Sets

The tools and data sets have several strengths, which are considered below:

¹⁴ Salem-Schatz, Susanne, Diana Ordin, and Brian Mittman. "Guide to the After Action Review," October 2010. http://www.cebma.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-after_action_review.pdf

¹⁵ See Appendix Four.

- **Geographical scope:** The biggest strength of the data sets is their geographical scope. Collectively, they provide observations into the application of the PE process on fifteen occasions in nine distinct national contexts. Whereas other case studies focus on a single programme or a set of programmes in a single country (see literature review), the data used in this report allows for a truly global reach – assessing PEs on three continents.
- **Multiple perspectives:** The OCs and AARs provide multiple perspectives on the same process. The former capture the perspectives of people coming from very different professional backgrounds: namely, researchers/academics and practitioners, many of whom were once volunteers themselves. The latter capture the perspectives of volunteers whose task it is to enact the procedure. In this report, these two different perspectives afforded by the research tools, those of staff and volunteer, will be compared and contrasted to reveal differences in understandings, priorities and awareness. This will be especially useful when looking at the specific challenges faced by a volunteer-led organisation when implementing a PE and how the different groups view and experience the process.
- **Capturing process alongside outcome:** PM&E places great value on both process (the carrying out of the procedure and the learning that entails) alongside outcome (the results, which provide a verdict on the programme). The combination of tools used in this research report allow for a thorough consideration of both.
- **Capturing immediate impressions:** In terms of understanding the process, both the OCs and the AARs record the immediate impressions of the PE from those present. The AARs are particularly effective at providing a rapid means of evaluation that can take place in the minutes or hours after an event has taken place.

1.6.2 Weaknesses of the Research Tools and Data Sets

However, the data sets also contain several limitations that need to be noted:

- **Mixed/diverse data sets:** The mixture of data sets in terms of document format and difference in respondents poses a challenge for comparability. The OCs are observations made by different people, and vary according to what each respondent found important. The AARs, as detailed above, follow a different format to the checklists. Although the data set provides insight into two different perspectives on the PE process, the different formats in which the data was gathered and presented limits the ability to draw direct comparison. The differing nature of the data sets should be kept in mind when reading the findings of this report.
- **Divergent levels of detail:** The OCs (completed by staff) are far more detailed and insightful than the AARs (carried out by volunteers), meaning that perspectives of staff dominate the

findings, particularly on the specifics of the process. Staff were critically evaluating the model as a whole, whereas volunteers were mostly reflecting on their experience of enacting the process. As paid professionals, staff also have greater capacity and time to devote to writing detailed observations.¹⁶ While the AARs are an extremely useful and speedy way to reflect on a process, they lack the detailed critical engagement found in the OCs. Nevertheless, the researchers were able to extract some strong findings from them by treating them as a set of focus groups held with Pioneers and Delegates after the completion of each PE.

- **Number of PEs in each country:** Another imbalance in the datasets is there were more PEs in some countries than others; meaning certain country contexts received increased focus, at the expense of the findings being equally representative of all contexts in which PEs took place. This is particularly the case for Rwanda and Zimbabwe in which there were four and three PEs respectively, which is a contrast to Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Macedonia, Nepal and Sri Lanka in which there was only one. However, as the purpose of this report is to comment on GFP's PE *model* as a whole, rather than on the individual findings from PEs, unevenness in geographical representation does not undermine the validity of the findings about the PE process.
- **Practical Limitations:** Finally, some practical limitations are that in all cases this was the first PE being carried out, which meant that Pioneers and Delegates were unfamiliar with the procedure – in practice, at least. Therefore, the results are not telling of how a PE would look if it were carried out by individuals who have more experience with the process. In order to truly test the functionality and qualities of the model subsequent PEs would have to be evaluated to assess the process over time. A longitudinal study of this sort might be very useful for the PM&E field in the future.

Overall, despite these shortcomings, the data still reveals how the process worked in diverse settings, how easy it was to follow, and the kind of results it yields. The findings they unearth represent a detailed, unprecedented insight into PE in a practical setting.

1.6.3 Method of Analysis

The data from the OCs, AARs and final grids were thematically coded. Content analysis or coding is a method, which takes a volume of text and identifies recurring topics.¹⁷ After studying the data, the researchers identified units of analysis by looking for frequently occurring themes or ideas. In this research, it was achieved through an inductive process: the themes that arose were rooted in the data

¹⁶ As staff are paid professionals, this may raise the concern that they may not be objective in commenting on their own organisation's evaluation procedures. However, the OCs revealed that staff – with their in-depth understanding of the organisation's work – engaged critically with what they witnessed in the field, and provided frank and useful commentary.

¹⁷ Zhang, Yan, and Barbara M. Wildemuth. "Qualitative Analysis of Content." In *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, edited by Barbara M. Wildemuth. Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2009, 2.

itself rather than being informed by literature or any other external influence. This method ensured that the means of analysing the findings were drawn directly from the data collected. This meant that the findings were firmly grounded in the experiences, observations, and opinions of those who implemented and observed the PEs. After reading through each set of data the researchers developed a coding guide based on themes apparent in the text. The data was then read through again to tally the amount of times each theme arose. This method allowed for data collected using varied tools to be directly compared.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The GFP PM&E model aims to hand control over the processes to those who designed and implemented the peace-building programme(s). It includes those who are directly involved with the programme (Pioneers, Delegates and the Target Group) and a sample of those who were affected by it (Beneficiary Community and Key Stakeholders). The model draws heavily on recent developments, which has seen PM&E transform from an externally-led assessment to an inclusive, community-grounded process. In the literature review, particular emphasis is placed on the concept of participation and the lack of a shared understanding of what the term means in an M&E setting. This literature represents a useful starting point when assessing the GFP PM&E model as it unpacks what participatory processes are trying to achieve and highlights the challenges they face. The assessment of GFP's model can be situated alongside previous works, highlighting common findings or areas of difference.

2.1 Introduction

Since the mid-1980s PM&E has become increasingly popular. However, with this growth in use there has also been a proliferation in the number of terms used to describe the method.¹⁸ This literature review will begin by discussing what is meant by PM&E and assessing justifications for its use before going on to address problems encountered when using and applying the method, including how to assess participation. It will finish with a consideration of how the approach works in practice. While PM&E has transformed the evaluation field through its inclusion of a diverse array of actors, its sensitivity to local needs, and its empowerment of participants, there is remarkably little consensus over what is meant by participation, which hinders the literature's ability to assess of the approach and the M&E field's ability to learn from experience. Although this review covers both monitoring and evaluation, priority is given to the latter to reflect the main subject matter of this report.

2.2 The Reaction to Traditional Monitoring and Evaluation

The rise of PM&E came as a reaction against traditional top-down monitoring and evaluation methods. Traditional methods were conducted by an outside expert and involved little participation from the stakeholders themselves, meaning that the assessment was removed from the programme context. Quantitative data was gathered using scientific techniques deemed to provide an objective assessment of the intervention's impact. In addition, traditional methods were conducted primarily for the benefit of external donors and partners rather than the people living in the communities the intervention aimed to help.¹⁹ PM&E arose out of a desire to make the results more valuable,

¹⁸ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review." Institute of Development Studies, 1998. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/Wp70.pdf>, 4.

¹⁹ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 14; Cousins, J. Bradley, and Lorna M. Earl. "The Case for Participatory Evaluation." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 14, no. 4 (21 December 1992): 397–418, 400; Lennie, June. "Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations: Learnings from the Field." *Evaluation Journal of Australasia* 6, no. 1 (2006): 27–35, 27.

responsive and attuned to local contexts. Through being actively engaged with local communities the method produced more relevant insights.²⁰ Moreover, its rise reflected a growing interest in evaluation as a capacity building tool, which ensured that the process was beneficial for participants as well as external partners.²¹ All these changes resulted in a shift of focus from the donors to the participants/programme beneficiaries.²² However, while there is a consensus on the need to alter old methods of assessment, there is confusion over what is meant by PM&E.

2.3 Developing Definitions of PM&E

Despite the rapid growth of participatory methods, a shared definition of PM&E remains elusive. An article from 1992 by J. Bradley Cousins and Lorna M. Earl described Participatory Evaluation as 'applied social research that involves a partnership between trained evaluation personnel and practice-based decision makers, organisational members with programme responsibility or people with a vital interest in the programme'.²³ This definition leaves the exact participatory nature of PM&E ill-defined. Writing almost two decades later Ann E. Cullen, Chris L. S. Coryn, and Jim Rugh wrote that there is remarkably little consensus about what is meant by PM&E. For some it denotes any evaluation in which stakeholders are consulted at some juncture in the process,²⁴ while for others stakeholders need to be consulted at every stage of the process for it to be truly participatory. The aim of participation is also not agreed upon. For some it provides a means of expanding the number of decision makers or gaining more relevant results, for others it provides a way of empowering stakeholders and altering power dynamics.²⁵ Thus, PM&E is not a single method with a sole motivation; rather, the term incorporates various techniques used for many purposes.²⁶ Therefore, a definition alone does not allow us to critically engage with the situation in a way that is sufficient for learning and improvement. The following part of the review assesses the general justifications for using PM&E as well as the challenges encountered when using the approach. This literature will then be used to design the checklist, a tool to judge the GFP PE model.

2.4 The Advantage of PM&E

PM&E is regarded as democratising, empowering and practical. Linda Weaver and J. Bradley Cousins argue that there are three main goals for using the participatory method: it is pragmatic, due to stakeholders' inclusion in the process the results are more useful and relevant; it is political, as

²⁰ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 14.

²¹ Lennie, June. "Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations : Learnings from the Field," 28.

²² An element that is very apparent in the GFP model through its emphasis on programme outcomes (for the Target Group) and impacts (for the Beneficiary Community). As well as through the training and mentoring of Pioneers and Delegates so that they are able to lead the M&E process

²³ Cousins, J. Bradley, and Lorna M. Earl. "The Case for Participatory Evaluation," 397.

²⁴ King, Jean. "Participatory Evaluation." In *Encyclopedia of Evaluation*, edited by Sandra Mathison, 291–94. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2004.

²⁵ Cousins, J. Bradley, and Elizabeth Whitmore. "Framing Participatory Evaluation." *New Directions for Evaluation* 1998, no. 80 (1 December 1998): 5–23.

²⁶ Cullen, Anne E., Chris L. S. Coryn, and Jim Rugh. "The Politics and Consequences of Including Stakeholders in International Development Evaluation." *American Journal of Evaluation* 32, no. 3 (1 September 2011): 345–61, 346.

including stakeholders improves the fairness of the evaluation; and, finally, it is epistemologically beneficial in that stakeholders have a unique perspective and including them improves the validity of results.²⁷ This illustrates how the method is overtly political in that it seeks to expand evaluative power and control of processes to those the intervention was designed to help.

Marisol Estrella and John Gaventa provide a more thorough discussion of the theory behind the method. They argue that there are four principles that underpin PM&E. Firstly, and most importantly, there is the principle of *participation*. This means that PM&E is people-centred and people-controlled, rather than top-down and technocratic.²⁸ The second principle is *learning*: PM&E is both an individual and collective learning process.²⁹ The third principle is *negotiation*. PM&E is regarded as a process of negotiation between different people, interests, needs and values. This aspect of the process is overtly political in that it incorporates themes of equality, power and social transformation to alter power dynamics and reduce inequalities.³⁰ The final principle is *flexibility*. This is crucial to ensure that the process is responsive to local needs. Experimentation and adaptability are integral components of PM&E.³¹ Both these works present PM&E as a method that is more pragmatic, democratic, and reaps greater rewards for both participants and practitioners than traditional methods of M&E. It provides a means of learning, capacity-building and of collecting information that is highly relevant and community-grounded. These principles provide an excellent marker of how to judge a PE on theoretical grounds that can help design the checklist this report will use to assess GFP's PE model.

2.5 Challenges Confronting PM&E – Rigour and Validity

To gain a better understanding of the process it is crucial to address the challenges faced when putting these ideals into practice. One major theme identified by the literature concerns the rigour and validity of the results of participatory methods. June Lennie states that with PM&E scientific ideals of objectivity are put aside in favour of a diverse array of perspectives and views of participants and assessment experts. However, Lennie argues, that rigour need not be abandoned.³² PM&E presents several methodological, theoretical, and ethical issues that have a bearing on the validity of the findings. These include the need to have a representative sample of stakeholders – a challenge that is prominent in the findings of this report, the need to critique the concepts of participation, and to demystify the concept so that participants are encouraged to think in an evaluative manner.³³ Lennie suggests several ways these potential pitfalls can be overcome. These include community participation and actively engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the relevant people are willing to participate in the process. She also emphasises the need to use multiple theories, methods and data

²⁷ We aver, Linda, and J. Bradley Cousins. "Unpacking the Participatory Process." *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation* 1, no. 1 (2004): 19–40, 20.

²⁸ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 17–20.

²⁹ Ibid, 22–23

³⁰ Ibid, 24–25.

³¹ Ibid, 26.

³² Lennie, June. "Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations : Learnings from the Field," 28.

³³ Ibid, 29.

sources, which enables greater creativity.³⁴ Through these changes, she argues, doubts about the rigour and validity of PM&E can be overcome. Taking these steps combines the advantages of participatory methods with the methodological reliability of more traditional techniques.

2.6 Challenge Confronting PM&E – Engaging with Underlying Assumptions

While there is clarity over why participatory methods are important and the principles behind the approach, what this means in practice is less clear. This problem, the focus of this report, is discussed widely in the literature along with suggested ways for improvement. Amanda Gregory argues that the blanket term of participation masks the diversity of the method in practice; while participation may have won ‘the war of words’, its true nature has not been made explicit.³⁵ Discussion of PM&E, Gregory argues, is underdeveloped and overlooks a number of potential pitfalls. She identifies three barriers that hinder participation, which are structural, administrative, and social. These barriers incorporate issues such as power, control, knowledge and prejudice.³⁶ She goes on to discuss the issue of power in more detail, which she describes as the ‘great unmentionable’ of evaluation theory. Gregory, following Foucault, sees power as not just located in an individual or a place, but as being disparate, expressed through language, thoughts and perceptions. For Gregory, to overcome this complex, multifarious barrier to participation, emancipation for participants requires constant vigilance and awareness of power and the impact it has.³⁷ Gregory’s analysis illustrates that the theory behind PM&E is underdeveloped, with insufficient consideration of key challenges. Ideas about power and control will therefore inform the checklist at the end of this review.

The issue of power forms the backbone of a work by Marcus Themessl-Huber and Marcus Grutsch. In their argument, the ‘locus of control’ refers to the persons, groups or coalitions who have an influence on the evaluation process.³⁸ The way in which decisions are made and who makes those decisions will shape the outcome of the evaluation process; for them, who is in control at different stages is of immense importance. The authors note that the PM&E process should be flexible and fluid, therefore the role of participants and evaluation will change as the process runs its course.³⁹ These shifts in power – the authors argue – are integral parts of the evaluation and therefore need to be given greater attention.⁴⁰ Indeed, the findings of this report show that within the GFP process although those directly involved with or affected by the programme are involved with the PE, decision-making power over the form of the process is not granted to them, initially at least. Power and its practical implications should be – therefore – a central consideration when assessing the exact nature of participatory processes.

³⁴ Ibid, 32-33.

³⁵ Gregory, Amanda. “Problematising Participation: A Critical Review of Approaches to Participation in Evaluation Theory.” *Evaluation* 6, no. 2 (2000): 179–99, 179-180.

³⁶ Ibid, 185-188

³⁷ Ibid, 194.

³⁸ Themessl-Huber, Markus T., and Markus A. Grutsch. “The Shifting Locus of Control in Participatory Evaluations.” *Evaluation* 9, no. 1 (1 January 2003): 92–111, 92.

³⁹ Ibid, 95.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 108.

A work by Ann E. Cullen, Chris L. S. Coryn and Jim Rugh discusses the motivations behind the adoption of PM&E as well as implications of its use. After interviewing practising evaluators working in the field of international development their most significant finding was that PM&E practice is defined in vastly different ways. According to most of the evaluators interviewed they largely maintained control of the evaluation. The authors found that throughout their investigation there appeared to be a lack of common understanding about PM&E. Some evaluators within the development field recalled situations in which donors asked for PM&E but gave no indication as to what was meant by this.⁴¹ The authors speculate that 'participatory' may have become a catchphrase that has little meaning in practice. This highlights a key issue that is central to the argument of this report: the lack of clarity surrounding what participation means results in an inability to truly understand the process or assess how effective it is.

Participation – it seems – has become a buzzword adopted by theorists and practitioners in an uncritical manner. Paying lip service to the idea of participation avoids critically engaging with the concept. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to discuss the method's merits and de-merits as well as suggest areas for improvement when the approach itself is ill defined. This report seeks to alter this situation by creating a tool, in the form of a checklist, through which a PE can be judged. Yet, in order to reach that goal there needs to be a greater understanding of exactly what participation means.

2.7 Tools for Understanding Participation

This report is not the first to try and establish a way of conceiving of participation within M&E, however. Claus Rebien's work, inspired by a lack of clarity within the field, suggests the idea of a spectrum through which the level of participation can be judged. He divides this into three: first, is the level of stakeholder inclusion, meaning that in order for a process to be participatory stakeholders must be subjects not objects who play an active rather than passive role; second, as it is not practically possible to include everyone, a representative sample of stakeholders need to be present; and, third, stakeholders must be included in three out of the following five steps – consultations prior to the evaluation, deciding on the terms of reference (how to measure success, for example), data collection, data interpretation, and data usage.⁴² His criteria represent an excellent attempt to break down the concept of participation. Yet, what Rebien's work highlights is that any kind of criteria is necessarily going to be narrow, prioritising some components of the process over others. For example, his criteria mention very little about social negotiation or process flexibility. This report seeks to delve deeper than Rebien's criteria and offer a more comprehensive list that captures all the dynamics and dimensions of participatory processes. Rather than having a simple linear continuum along which a procedure can be judged as participatory or not, this report aims to capture the

⁴¹ Cullen, Anne E., Chris L. S. Coryn, and Jim Rugh. "The Politics and Consequences of Including Stakeholders in International Development Evaluation," 356.

⁴² Rebien, Claus C. "Participatory Evaluation of Development Assistance Dealing with Power and Facilitative Learning." *Evaluation* 2, no. 2 (1 April 1996): 151–71, 160.

divergent ways in which an evaluation can be participatory, which is shaped by different motivations and aims.

Another, more ambitious, attempt to break down the concept of participation and judge processes that claim to enact it, is by the organisation, Interact.⁴³ They begin by saying that all processes are different and depend on the needs of the stakeholders, yet for all processes claiming to be participatory the process itself as well as the outcomes it produces need to be assessed. They present a list of factors that need to be considered when carrying out this assessment: objectives (what are they, how are they communicated, and who set them) and context (both internal and external to the programme). Next, they suggest analysis of the level of involvement, breaking down the level of control given to participants into eight distinct categories, ranging from manipulation to full control. The authors note that appropriate levels of participation differ from project to project, but there always needs to be transparency about participatory processes. The other set of factors included in their list are methods and techniques (how were they agreed upon and communicated to participants), the level of inclusion (who was invited, who actually attended and how representative were those in attendance when compared to the overall demographic), and the level of commitment to the results of the evaluation (to what extent does the evaluation form part of the larger project and to what extent will the results be embedded in future interventions).⁴⁴ The real strength of the Interact list is its comprehensiveness. It considers an abundance of points on which participatory processes can be judged. The work also demonstrates how the concept of can be broken down into different areas to increase understanding and our ability to assess.

However, if Rebien's criteria are too narrow in scope then the list produced by Interact is too expansive. The aim of this report is more modest. It seeks to create and test a tool for assessing a PE model used in the International Development/peace-building sector that can be used and adapted by other development organisations looking to critically assess their processes. Nevertheless, the checklist below is heavily indebted to Interact's model. In order to test this tool, the report uses case studies of fifteen PEs. However, this report is not the first to use case studies to assess PEs. These are briefly outlined and explained in the final part of the literature review.

2.8 Case Studies of PM&E in the Field

The final section of the literature to be discussed provides an assessment, using case studies, of how the aforementioned advantages, shortfalls, and different components of participatory processes play out in a practical setting, an area this report adds to significantly with large-scale comparative findings. Jeremy Adams and Ann Garbutt's paper records an attempt to establish a fully participative PM&E

⁴³ A UK-based advocacy group seeking to increase participatory processes in public life.

⁴⁴ Interact produced a report which had a comprehensive list of points to consider when assessing participatory processes, including its objectives, the level of participant involvement and the methods used among other areas. InterAct. "Evaluating Participatory, Deliberative and Co-Operative Ways of Working." Brighton: InterAct Evaluation, 2001. http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk/Downloads/Interact_Working_Paper.pdf, 5-7.

system based on the experience of working on a civil-society strengthening programme in Central Asia.⁴⁵ In this case, the practitioners sought to develop a system that was consistent with the aims and objectives of the programme.⁴⁶ They ensured that stakeholders valued the purpose and outcome of the evaluation to add an incentive for them to have ownership over the process. The stakeholders were involved in every step through workshops and other methods to prevent external control. In addition, the framework of the PM&E was flexible so that it could be altered to suit participants' needs or changing circumstances. An emphasis was placed on capacity building to ensure that the programme was useful to participants.⁴⁷ Such flexibility is vital for participation, the authors argue: if those involved feel that they can influence the process and improve it for the better then they are much more likely to value it. This principle can be termed engagement through involvement – if you want participants to care about the process give them a stake in its outcome. The findings show that the GFP process lacks the flexibility of the model used in this case; the GFP PM&E framework is decided at a HQ level and then volunteers are mentored on how to enact it. While this is practical in that a standardised process is far easier to manage and assess, it is problematic to insist that the same model be applied to hugely different contexts. Flexibility, therefore, needs to be a key component of how to measure participation in M&E.

In another case study providing practical lessons from the field Elias Zerfu and Sindu V. Kebede look at farmer empowerment programmes in Zanzibar, Tanzania.⁴⁸ They found that the farmers became active and responsible participants in the programme, although their attendance declined as the programme went on.⁴⁹ In their experience PM&E became a successful management tool that enabled them to make constant improvements based on the feedback they received during the evaluation. It also allowed for networking and partnerships to be made with organisations working in similar areas. The programmes were empowering in that they allowed for a collective learning process in which participants gained from the data gathered. The authors also noted that two major challenges arose during the PM&E process that led them to make two recommendations: firstly, that there needs to be a clear and established means of incentivising participants to maintain their involvement in the evaluation; and, secondly, programmes need to develop a capacity to respond and adapt to the feedback received during the PM&E process to maximise the benefits of participatory assessments.⁵⁰ For Zerfu and Kebede PM&E provides an effective management tool that can better ensure a programme achieves its stated aims. They note that there is room for constant improvement in terms of how the method is used, but once the initial investment is made the benefits for both participants and practitioners is far greater than those afforded by traditional evaluation methods.

⁴⁵ Adams, Jerry, and Anne Garbutt. "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia." INTRAC, May 2008. <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/420/Praxis-Paper-21-PME-in-Practice.pdf>, 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13-14.

⁴⁸ Zerfu, Elias, and Sindu W. Kebede. "Filling the Learning Gap in Program Implementation Using Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Lessons from Farmer Field Schools in Zanzibar." International Food Policy Research Institute, March 2013. http://www.wageningenportals.nl/sites/default/files/resource/zerfu_kebede_2013_filling_the_learning_gap_in_program_implementation_using_participatory_me.pdf, 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 12.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 13.

The two case studies reviewed here illustrate that participatory methods provide a diverse array of advantages in vastly different contexts.⁵¹ A real strength of the literature is its growing tendency to share these experiences so that different practitioners, organisations and actors can learn from others' successes, challenges and innovations, which is a trend that this report seeks to contribute to by providing comparative case studies and designing a method to judge participatory evaluations. The overall picture provided by the literature is that PM&E benefits participants and practitioners through its ability to build capacities, empower, and develop networks in local and international contexts. Moreover, the practical literature provides a more concrete assessment of what participation actually entails, which is often missing or confused in the theoretical literature.

2.9 Conclusion

PM&E has drastically altered the evaluation field by increasing inclusion, raising sensitivity to local needs and placing the interests of participants at the centre of the evaluation process. It stems from a broader trend which has seen the focus move away from external donors and experts toward local communities – the people the programmes are designed to help. The theoretical and philosophical justifications for PM&E are multifarious and highly convincing. Indeed – in rhetorical terms at least – the value of the participatory method is widely accepted. The main problem, as highlighted in the literature, is that the exact nature of participation is poorly defined and practically underdeveloped. This results in confusion, ambiguities and uncertainty. To alter this situation, there needs to be a consensus on what is meant by the approach and greater cooperation between those working in the evaluative field. The sharing of case studies and practical examples in the literature represents a positive step in this direction. This report seeks to contribute to this by providing a critical assessment of a PE process based on a unique comparative study of fifteen PEs. It provides a pragmatic assessment of how participatory ideals can be met in the face of numerous challenges and difficulties through looking at a nascent PE model and suggesting ways it could be improved. In doing so, it also creates a way of assessing PEs and the different components that make them participatory.

2.19 The Participatory Checklist

This checklist presented below is indebted to the literature above and represents an amalgamation of what has previously been said on PE. It merges the different strands of argumentation and findings to

⁵¹ Numerous other examples exist in the literature, which the authors did not have space to include in this review. Marisol Estrella *et al* have produced a book addressing themes such as methodological innovations, collective learning and changing institutions. Each of these topics is explored using a range of case studies to convey experiences in the field by a variety of authors: Estrella, Marisol, Jutta Blauert, Dindo Campilan, John Gaventa, Julian Gonsalves, Irene Guijt, D. A. Johnson, and Roger Ricafort, eds. *Learning From Change: Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2000. <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/openebooks/895-3/index.html>; Another detailed work provides two case studies of PM&E in Honduras alongside a thorough theoretical discussion Probst, Kirsten. *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Promising Concept in Participatory Research?: Lessons from Two Case Studies in Honduras*. Weikersheim, Germany: Margraf, 2002; Focusing on the internal evaluation of an educational institution, Amy Grack Nelson and Robby Callahan Schreiber's case study addresses how participation can be useful and beneficial for those who are involved: Nelson, Amy Grack, and Robby Callahan Schreiber. "Participatory Evaluation: A Case Study of Involving Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process." *Visitor Studies* 12, no. 2 (30 September 2009): 199–213.

break down the different components of PEs into categories against which the process can be judged. This tool is designed so that it can be used by others wishing to analyse their own participatory processes. In this report, it is used to analyse the GFP model, which serves as an example of how to use the tool. The tool allows for participatory processes to be assessed to highlight areas of strength and weakness as well as pinpoint areas for improvement. Unlike previous ways of breaking down participation or conceiving of PEs, this tool is interactive, providing a practical tool for analysis that can be adapted to suit the specific PE model under review. This tool is not an attempt to have there be one, irrefutable way to design and carry out a PE. Instead, it aims to encourage people and the organisations they work for to think about participation in a systematic, organised way, so that the different models and approaches used by the developmental field are comparable. This should make collective learning and cooperation easier. In sum, the tool aims to have people working from the same page however diverse their goals may be.

For GFP the checklist was developed to bring all the different components of the PE model together and comprehensively assess them. This report covers a range of different issues based on diverse data sets. The checklist condenses that information and presents a clear judgement formed through it. The tool can serve this function for other organisations as well. It is important to note; however, that this tool is not meant to be directive: it does not provide a single right or wrong way to be participatory, it merely breaks down the different elements of participatory processes into understandable and workable components by providing a systematic means of analysis. The checklist aims to remove zero-sum thinking – it works against the idea that a process either is or is not participatory, either right or wrong. Certain parts of a process can be participatory, while others simply can not be. The checklist allows for them to be judged on an individual case basis, yet still be comparable. Participatory processes, this report argues, should not be judged against one ideal blueprint, as this would undermine the diversity of their motivations and aims.

In terms of when the checklist should be used, this can happen at several different stages. It can serve as a reference when designing a PE; a list of elements to consider, allowing the designers to decide what they want to include. It can also be used after a PE has taken place to reflect on the processes' effectiveness and, thereafter, for continued monitoring of a PE model. Comparing the findings of the first round to the second round, making it able to document changes and potential improvements. In this report, it is used to review a model that has already been put into practice.

In terms of how the checklist should be used, there is a great deal of flexibility. Below are brief explanations of how to use the tool; firstly, when designing a PE and, secondly, when reviewing a PE:

For use when designing a PE: To begin with, it is important to consider why PE is being chosen (**Q1**) and what the goals of it are (**Q1**). This has to be decided before the rest of the list can be completed. Based on the motivations and aims, the rest of the checklist can be designed. The user can then

decide on which points they want their process to be judged, which can then offer them a list of elements to include when designing the process.

For use when reviewing a PE: Likewise here, it is important to identify what reasoning lay behind the selection of a PE (**Q1**) and what the goals of it are (**Q2**). This has to be done before the rest of the list can be completed. Based on the reasoning for using PE and the overall aims of the process, the checklist can then be moulded to suit specific purposes. Some of the elements (questions) may not be relevant to the specific model under review and can, therefore, be taken out; likewise, some specific elements may be missing from the checklist and can be added if they comprise an important component on which the PE model should be judged. As mentioned, for the GFP example, addressed in this report, additional points that are important to the model (as identified by staff and volunteers) but were not covered in the literature are added at the end of the report. This flexibility should allow the process to be judged against its specific aims (identified in **Q1** and **Q2**) rather than the general aims of participation identified in the broader literature.

In the checklist, **Q1** and **Q2** ask about the reasoning behind choosing PE and what the process sets out to achieve – the answer to the question for the GFP model is provided below. It was this section that was used in the example above. The subsequent questions deal with the different areas of PM&E identified in the literature. These are the process, inclusion and representativeness, social negotiation, power, empowerment/benefits, and the results

Question	Description	✓/✗	Organisation-Specific Findings	Action Points
Motivations and Objectives				
What reasoning lay behind the decision to use participatory forms of M&E? (Q1)	<i>The reasons behind choosing participatory methods depend heavily on the overall aims of the programme intervention and will be unique to each organisation, but some of the main reasons and objectives are listed below as guiding examples.</i>			
	<i>Users should add more points to check off based on the specific approach they are evaluating.</i>			
	Checklist:			
	The PE brings practical benefits/reduced workload.	✓	For an organisation with relatively small HQ operations, but with a very large volunteer base, PE was chosen as it reduces staff workloads and hands	

			control over to the volunteers.	
	Politically, PE is preferable as it hands over evaluative control to the community.	✓	PE coincides with GFP mandates of volunteer-led, community-based peace-building programmes as it hands evaluative control over to the community.	
	Epistemologically, PE is beneficial as its inclusiveness allows the process to produce more knowledge.	✓	PE was chosen as it provides a chance for a diverse array of actors in the community to speak about the programme. Collectively, their opinions provide a wealth of detail.	
What are the objectives of the process? (Q2)	Improved organisational learning.	✓	With PE GFP is able to collect more information from a more diverse array of people, which helps to attune programming to local contexts.	
	To make programming more responsive to local needs.		Through hearing from such an array of people the process is able to decipher what their interests and needs are.	
	Building the capacity of those who partake.	✓	Through PE GFP aims to increase its volunteers' skills and allow them to be major beneficiaries of	

			the process.	
The Process				
Who designed the process? (Q3)	The process is aimed at benefiting those who partake in it and thus they should have a say in its design.			
	Participants/implementers co-designed the PE process with staff.			
	<i>OR: The practicality of the option above will largely depend on scale: if the participatory model will be used at many sites across different contexts it would be difficult to involve all those who will implement it in its design.</i>			
	Participants/implementers were consulted in the design of the process (this can take the form of workshops or focus groups and the feedback received needs to shape the eventual form of the process),			
How is the process communicated to those who will enact and participate in it? Is that communication effective? (Q4)	The process needs to be communicated in a clear and simple way to those who will be implementing it.			
	Communication of the process took into account varying levels of capacity and comprehension among the implementers and participants.			
	Diverse mediums were used to communicate the process, such as hand-outs, demonstration videos or trainings.			
	If necessary, further support, such as mentoring, was provided.			
	If necessary, materials were translated into the local language.			
How accessible is the process (is it easy to understand and implement)? (Q5)	<i>Clear and simple communication (see above) will greatly enhance accessibility, but a process also needs to be accessible in itself, meaning that it needs to be easy to follow and easy to implement.</i>			
	An assessment was carried out on what those who will implementing and participating in the PE are able to do.			

	Based on this assessment, the PE was easy to follow and to implement.			
	Based on this assessment, the PE allows for those who implement the process and those who participate to develop new skills or areas of knowledge.			
How flexible is the process (is it predetermined/standardised or is it able to adapt to local needs)? (Q6)	<i>As participatory processes aim to be grounded in the community rather than being external and removed, flexibility is key.</i>			
	The process is flexible so that it can adapt to local conditions and meet local needs.			
	OR <i>But, the more flexible (i.e. how much it changes to suit each context) a process is the less directly comparable the results will be. So, when deciding on the level of flexibility, it needs to be decided which is more important.</i>			
	The PE is predetermined and standardised so that it is able to yield comparative results across contexts/location.			
Inclusion and Representativeness				
Level of intended inclusion (who's invited to the PE)? (Q7)	Participatory processes should invite people from all the groups that were involved with the programme and the groups that were effected, either directly or indirectly by it.			
	All groups who implemented, participated, and were indirectly effected by the programme are invited to the PE.			
Representativeness (how representative of are they of those directly and indirectly effected by the programme)? (Q8)	<i>However, having each member of those groups (see above) attend the PE may not be feasible due to the sheer amount of people. If this is the case, then a representative number need to attend.</i>			
	Each group involved with the PE are represented.			
	Each group involved with the PE is represented in equal or proportionate numbers.			
Whose perspective is valued? (Q9)	<i>The approach should value all perspectives equally and ensure that all individuals present who represent all groups involved (either directly or indirectly) with the programme are given an equal chance to speak and be heard.</i>			

	The PE values each groups perspective equally.			
	Each group is given a platform, a chance to speak and be heard.			
Social Negotiation				
Level of social negotiation (to what extent does the process provide an opportunity for different interests, values, and needs to be negotiated building social cohesion and encouraging cooperation)? (Q10)	<i>As the PE should bring different groups from the community together it should also allow for social negotiation between those groups.</i>			
	The PE allows for different opinions, interests, and values to be shared and discussed.			
	Through this, the PE allows the community to reach compromises and agreements for issues for which they share a mutual concern.			
Power				
Where does decision-making power lie (who is really in charge of the process)? (Q11)	A chief aim of PE is to hand over evaluative control to the community. Therefore, the community itself should hold the decision making power.			
	The programme implementers are in charge of the process.			
	At the PE, the community holds decision making power.			
Empowerment/Benefits				
What capacity building opportunities does the process present for those involved? (Q12)	<i>This depends heavily on what the overall aims of the programmes and the PE is. But, ideally, the process should allow those involved to build their capacity alongside evaluating their programme.</i>			
	The PE develops the capacity of those who implement and partake within it.			
	<u>Thinking point:</u> which types of capacity are developed? Below are just areas of capacity building that are relevant to the PE model analysed in this report, more can be added depending what is being examined.			
	Organisational:			
	Facilitation:			
	Data collection/analysis:			
	Networking:			
Who gains from the participatory process? (Q13)	Everyone in attendance should gain from the process: staff and the organisation, volunteers, and those directly or indirectly effected by the programme.			
	The process benefits everyone (even if it is in different ways).			
	<u>Thinking Point:</u> which groups benefit? It may be useful to look at a			

	<i>breakdown of the main groups.</i>			
	How do staff/the organisation benefit? If so, how?			
	Do volunteers/implementers benefit? If so, how?			
	Do the programme participants benefit? If so, how?			
	Does the larger community benefit? If so, how?			
The Results				
What is measured? (Q14)	The PE should look at what happened and why that happened on the programme. What unanticipated or unconnected changes occurred and what future steps should be taken.			
	Does the PE create knowledge about what happened and why on the programme?			
	Does the PE create knowledge about unanticipated or unconnected changes?			
	Does the PE allow for the planning of future step?			
Who uses the results and how are they used? (Q15)	<i>The results should be made available to all those who were involved and all those effected by the programme. In terms of how they are used, they should contribute to the design of future programmes and to organisational learning.</i>			
	Are the results made available to everyone involved with the PE?			
	Are the results used in such a way that allows them to shape future action?			

Table 2.1: Unfilled in Participatory Checklist

This section has introduced the tool and what it aims to achieve as well as when and how it can be used. The following report serves to demonstrate this last point, using the GFP PE model as an example. At the end of the report more categories are added based on the analysis of the findings below. A final list, complete with answers, will be presented in the last section, which merges the insights of the literature and the revelations of the case studies under review. In the findings section, each point on this list below will be referred back to, whenever the evidence sheds light on that component of the GFP model. This will be referred to in bold text, referencing the question number: **Q1**, **Q2**, **Q3**, and so on.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings collected from fifteen PEs, which took place in nine different countries during 2014. The findings are based on data collected using three tools: OCs (observations recorded by GFP staff), AARs (the reflections of the Pioneers and Delegates who enacted the process), and the final grids (the summaries of the evaluations based on data collected at the PEs).

The analysis of the data is divided into four sections: the first section looks at the overall strengths and weaknesses of the GFP process, using both the OCs and AARs, based on the perspectives of staff and volunteers. The second section looks at the specific components of the GFP model: planning, the PE day (including the Focus Groups and Large Group Discussion) and the Write Up and Sharing, using the OCs that were completed by staff. The researchers took this decision as only the OCs provide the level of detail needed for effective analysis of the individual stages of the process. The third section looks at areas for improvement, using both the OCs and the AARs, as with the first section. The fourth section uses the final grids to assess the quality of the findings the process yields. Collectively, these four sections provide a thorough investigation of the GFP model, accounting for its overall qualities as well as the specifics of the process. It also allows for consideration of future actions which are then developed into recommendations in the final section of the report.

The argument is that while the overall PE model should be kept, several components are in need of change that will result in the process being more accessible to Pioneers and Delegates and effective at achieving its stated aims. All of which will increase the GFP model's participatory credentials and the validity of the results it yields. Areas of particular concern highlighted in the observations are PE attendance, the Focus Groups and the Large Group Discussion. The latter two areas were affected by the questions asked during the PE, which Pioneers and Delegates had no role in designing.

The larger argument is that the participatory processes can be better understood through breaking down the concept of participation into different components in the form of a checklist (which is provided at the end of the literature review). This tool is used here to assess the GFP process in a comprehensive way that leads directly to practical, actionable findings. This pursuit seeks to improve the PM&E field, which is marred by a lack of theoretical clarity and a gulf between theory and practice. Through the use of large-scale case studies (fifteen PEs in total) this chapter builds on the theoretical insights provided by the literature and applies them to judge a process in its practical setting – welding theory with experience.

3.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the GFP PE Model: Staff and Volunteer Perspectives

In this section the perspectives of Pioneers and Delegates are considered alongside those of staff. It serves as both a survey and consultation of volunteers (as implementers of the programmes) and staff

(who oversee and assist with the programmes) that can be used to alter and improve the GFP process. It also serves to give a holistic overview of the model prior to going into the specifics of the process in the following chapter. The findings have broader relevance for PEs across the NGO/third-sector field as they provide two perspectives on a PE process, those of paid staff and those of trained volunteers, which affords unique insights into the challenges and obstacles of implementing PM&E for a volunteer-led organisation. As the literature review demonstrates, the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of PE are much discussed and widely known, from a theoretical standpoint at least. The following section contributes to the literature by giving voice to those who have experienced a PE first hand. Moreover, it uses the checklist, detailed above, to break down the assessment of the process into different parts of participatory processes.

For the OCs (*see Appendix One*) each document in the dataset is classed as one response. The OCs for questions relating to the overall assessment of the process, covered in this section, are treated as surveys in which the unit of analysis is the individual responses rather than the entire PE.

In terms of the data collected from Pioneers and Delegates, the AARs represent a consultation on the PE process that can be collected, reported on (in this paper), and used to improve the process at an organisational level (*see Appendix Two*). The AARs were carried out immediately after the PE had taken place. This speaks to **Q3** (who designed the process?) on the checklist. Even if they had no control over the initial design of the process, following the completion of at least one PE in their own contexts, the Pioneers and Delegates were given the opportunity to vocalise how they think the model should be revised or redesigned for future use. Yet, this consultation does not translate into equality of influence: the fact that Pioneers and Delegates were consulted using the AARs does not mean that they have the same amount of control over the process as staff at HQ. Therefore, the evidence provided by the AARs needs to be assessed to judge whether this consultation can be regarded as adequately participatory or whether, in fact, the design of the process remains largely un-participatory, external and removed from local contexts.

The findings represented in this section are merged from two different data sets: the OCs (*see Appendix One*) and the AARs (*see Appendix Two*). To make the results directly comparable, after reading through the findings the researchers divided answers into three categories and developed codes for the following categories: strengths of the PE process, weaknesses and challenges of the PE process, and what changes are needed to the PE process. Although respondents of the OCs and AARs were given different questions, which harms the consistency of the data, these two approaches were selected with the knowledge that the questions overlapped. And, as envisioned, the two data sets yielded strong findings and areas of agreement in each of the three categories. The findings concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the GFP PE model are detailed below to give an overall assessment based on the experiences of staff and volunteers. The final category, what changes are needed, is addressed at the end of the findings section as it looks ahead towards future improvements.

3.1.1 Strengths of the Process

The most common theme on strengths was that everyone who is involved with the programme is consulted and that this provides diverse perspectives (mentioned in 100 per cent of AARs and in 63 per cent of OCs: see *Chart 3.1*). Both staff and volunteers found this to be the main advantage.⁵² In their descriptions, staff, Pioneers, and Delegates said the process provides a wealth of information by virtue of its inclusiveness and participatory nature. This relates to **Q7** (intended inclusion) and **Q9** (whose perspective is valued?) on the checklist. Linked to this, the next most common advantage cited was that the process reveals the tangible results of the programme (100 per cent of AARs; 58 per cent of OCs; see *Chart 3.1*). On this point, people spoke of how the findings are immediately apparent and that the PE event provides a powerful demonstration of what the programme has achieved. This speaks directly to **Q14** (what is measured?) and **Q16** (how useful are the results?). The results, based on a comprehensive and representative consultation, are available to those who implemented the programme straight away.

⁵² GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

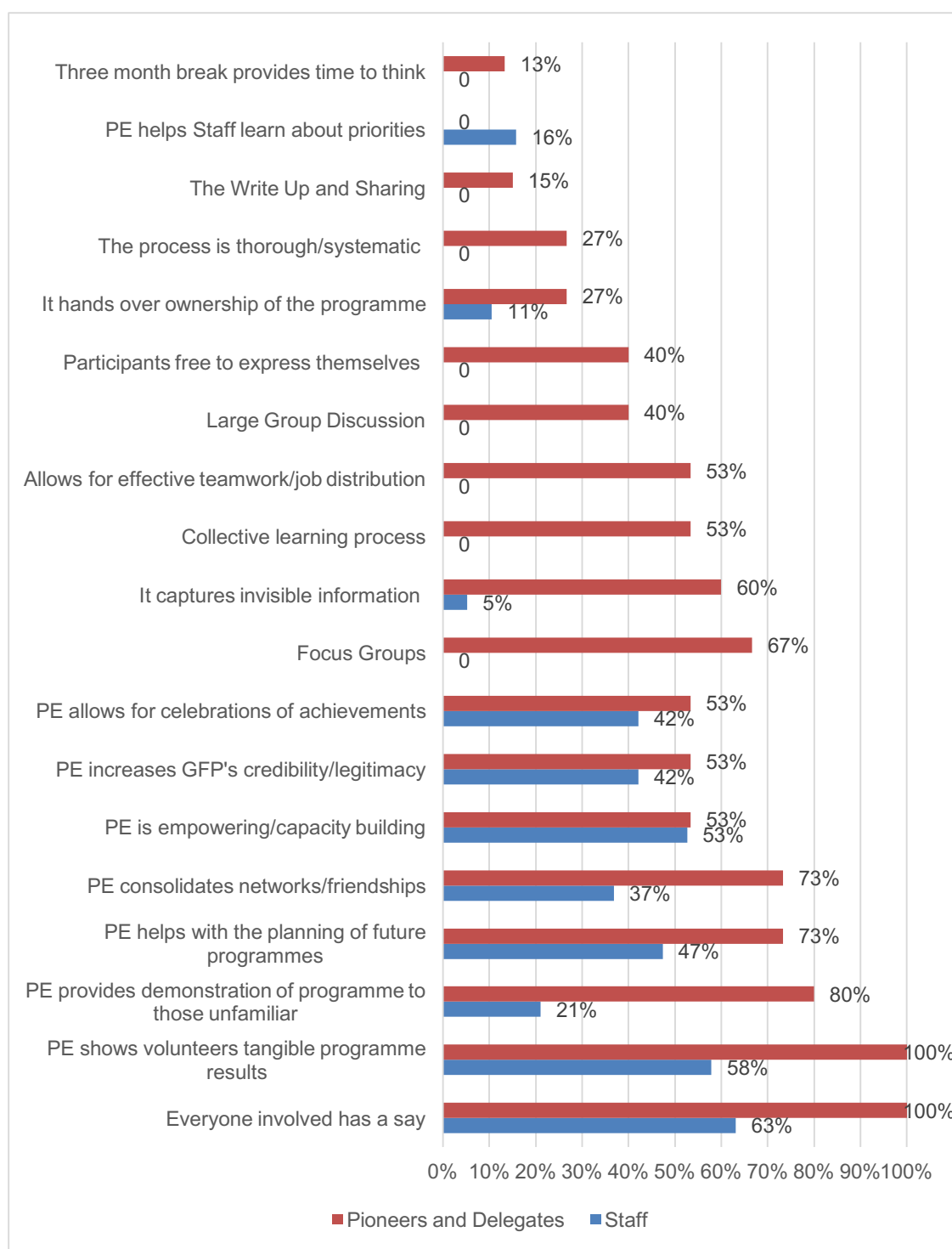


Chart 3.1: Percentage of times coded themes arose from answers to questions concerning the strengths of the PE process. Based on nineteen OCs and fifteen AARs, both collected at fifteen PEs.

Less frequently cited but directly relevant to the two points above is the idea that the process captures invisible information. This was a point raised mostly by Pioneers and Delegates (60 per cent), who spoke of discovering impacts that they had not previously known about (*see Chart 3.1*). As above, this means the process provides useful information in that it raises awareness of previously unknown issues (**Q16**: how useful are the results?). Directly linked to this was a point raised only by Pioneers

and Delegates that the PE represents a collective learning process (*Chart 3.1*).⁵³ Collectively, the four advantages, discussed in this and the previous paragraph, frame the PE as an inclusive and informative process through which everyone who participates gains. This corresponds directly to Weaver and Cousins discussion of the three advantages of PM&E, discussed in the literature review: it is pragmatic, politically sound, and epistemologically beneficial.⁵⁴ This means that the strengths of the GFP model conform to the advantages of PM&E identified in the literature.

The next set of strengths, grouped here as practical advantages, differs slightly from that found in the literature and is symptomatic of the fact that this study is based on the experiences of practitioners/volunteers as opposed to academics. Firstly, there is the point that the process helps with the planning of future programmes (73 per cent of AARs; 47 per cent of OCs: see *Chart 3.1*). Both staff and volunteers felt the PE day provided those present with a plan for the future (**Q16**: how useful are the results?). This also provides an indication of how the results are used (**Q17**: who uses the results and how are they used?). Two interlinked practical points were that, firstly, the process raises awareness of the programme and the communities' understanding of what it was about (AARs, 80 per cent; OCs, 21 per cent), and, that, secondly, the process increases GFP's credibility and legitimacy in the communities where it operates by involving a diverse array of actors (53 per cent; 42 per cent: *Chart 3.1*).⁵⁵ At one of the Zimbabwean PEs, they noted how the PE raised GFP's profile. After the PE the communities' understanding for their programme activities increased exponentially, which they cited as a major strength of the process.⁵⁶ These two points emphasise that through giving people a stake in the evaluation, those present were more likely to understand and respect the work that the organisation does.

Linked to this, another practical advantage was that it helps consolidate networks/friendships and ties within the community, which can help with future programme activities.⁵⁷ This ties back to an idea found in the literature, regarding social negotiation (**Q12**). In the description both staff and volunteers found the process to tighten social bonds, on both a relational level, i.e. between different groups such as teachers and students, and a personal level, i.e. individual friendships.⁵⁸ Interestingly, not all of these practical advantages are covered in the literature. Yet, they are extremely important for the NGO sector, particularly the idea that PE raises the profile of organisations and increases their standing on a community level through informing people about programme activities, involving them in the evaluation, and consolidating relationships at a grassroots level.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Weaver, Linda, and J. Bradley Cousins. "Unpacking the Participatory Process," 20.

⁵⁵ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁵⁶ Pioneers and Delegates, Oriel AAR, Gweru, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The next set of strengths concern the benefits the process brings to those who enact it. Just over half of staff responses and volunteer AARs cited empowerment/capacity building as an advantage of the process (*Chart 3.1*).⁵⁹ This corresponds directly to **Q12** (capacity building) and **Q13** (who gains?). Pioneers and Delegates mentioned increased planning, organisation, and facilitation after delivering the PE; in addition, they frequently mentioned how the process taught them a new means of assessment, which they can apply elsewhere in their work.⁶⁰ This connects back to a core theme of participatory processes, identified in the literature, that the process is beneficial for the participants as well as external partners/staff.⁶¹ A connected comment, mentioned in just over half of the AARs, was that the process allows for teamwork and effective job distribution.⁶² In Macedonia they elaborated on this point to say that organising and enacting the PE helped them to develop their team dynamic.⁶³ The PE then not only strengthens community bonds, it also helps strengthen the volunteer team.

Among the other advantages that emerged from the data was the idea that the PE affords a celebration of achievements and recognition of hard work, which was cited by 42 per cent of staff responses and 53 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates to be an advantage. Again, this point is largely missing from the literature. Staff spoke of Pioneers and Delegates appearing 'visibly proud' of what they had done and volunteers spoke of receiving a confidence boost and being motivated to continue their work.⁶⁴ Linked to this, in terms of providing a confidence boost to the volunteers, was the idea that the PE hands over programme ownership: in the AAR for one of the Zimbabwean PEs they said that it 'felt like the programme was theirs' after conducting the PE.⁶⁵ This last point speaks directly to the fundamental premise of participatory processes – handing over evaluative control.⁶⁶

Another set of strengths, raised only by Pioneers and Delegates, were on the different components of the process. Pioneers and Delegates cited the Focus Groups (67 per cent), the Large Group Discussion (40 per cent), and the Write Up and Sharing (15 per cent) to be advantages (see chart 1).¹ Based on this the Focus Groups were clearly regarded as the strongest component of the PE model. The specifics of the process, along with the perspectives of staff, will be dealt with in the next chapter, however.

From the findings it is clear that PE fulfils several interlinked benefits that could not be achieved through more traditional methods: such as boosting confidence, acknowledging achievements, strengthening community ties (**Q10**), increasing programme validity and GFP's visibility, and

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁶¹ Lennie, June. "Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations : Learnings from the Field," 28.

⁶² Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁶³ Pioneers and Delegates, Tetevo AAR, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014.

⁶⁴ Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014; GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁶⁵ Ibid, Pioneers and Delegates, Midlands State University AAR, Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

⁶⁶ Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

developing the capacity of the organisation's volunteers (Q12; 13). In just one day many benefits arise alongside an inclusive evaluation (Q7) that provides a wealth of information. These findings differ from the literature on PE's advantages in that they give more emphasis to practical benefits, at both an organisational and community level. Notably, PE is construed as an effective way to acknowledge and celebrate achievement, which serves as a motivator for those involved with the programme. As these were the points regarded as key strengths by staff, Pioneers and Delegates, they will be included in the final checklist at the end of the report, which builds on the checklist developed through the literature review to incorporate the perspectives of practitioners and volunteers.

3.1.2 Weaknesses and Challenges of the Process

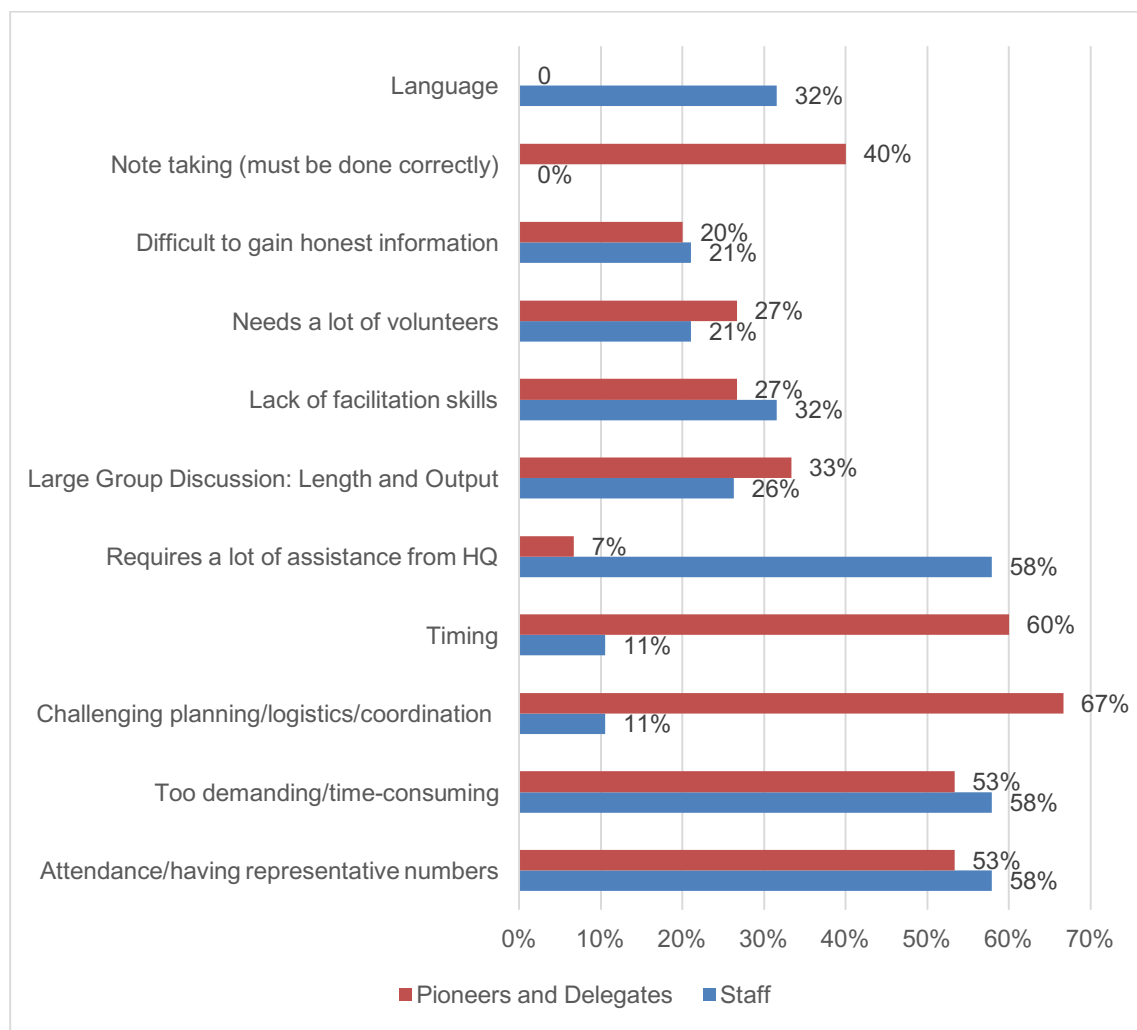


Chart 3.2: Percentage of times coded themes arose from answers to questions concerning the weaknesses/challenges of the PE process. Based on nineteen OCs and fifteen AARs, collected at fifteen PEs.

The joint most common weakness/challenge reported was ensuring attendance and representative numbers, which was highlighted by staff in particular (58 per cent of staff responses; 53 per cent of

AARs: see *Chart 3.2*).⁶⁷ This is problematic for a process that aims to be an equal consultation. The level of intended inclusion (**Q7**) may be high in that the GFP model seeks to include a representative sample of those who were directly or indirectly affected by the programme; yet, a process cannot claim to be participatory if that representative sample does not attend (**Q8**). This is a key weakness of the GFP PE model and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The largest set of weaknesses/challenges by far are the demands the process places on both staff and volunteers. Chief among these was that the process is too demanding and time-consuming for volunteers. Indeed, as unpaid volunteers, asking them to devote three or more days to the evaluation process is an enormous burden. In addition, the extent of the task at hand could impact negatively on the final results. One member of staff observed ‘PE fatigue’ and noted that initial enthusiasm was replaced by weariness as the process wore on.⁶⁸ Linked to this, Pioneers and Delegates (67 per cent) and staff (11 per cent) highlighted the challenge of planning, coordinating, and organising logistics for the PE.⁶⁹ In Nepal they noted the difficulty of managing such a diverse team (of volunteers), of distributing tasks and of communicating progress to one-another. Due to how demanding the process is, it requires a lot of human resources (volunteers), which is not always easy to organise – this was highlighted as a challenge by volunteers (27 per cent) and in staff responses (21 per cent), in almost equal numbers.⁷⁰ The idea that participatory processes are incredibly demanding is largely missing in the literature. Again, this reflects the contrast to the largely academic and theoretical literature against the data used in this report, based on practical experience.

An additional weakness highlighted almost entirely by staff (58 per cent), was the level of assistance and support the process requires from HQ. This appears to contradict a central motivation for PM&E: handing control over to the community.⁷¹ However, as this was the first PE carried out by the Pioneers and Delegates, it is impossible to gauge whether the level of assistance required would subside with subsequent PEs, even if it can be assumed that this would be the case. Finally, on the theme of how demanding the process is, staff and volunteers pointed out that it requires strong facilitation skills, that were often lacking. Key components of the process, such as the Focus Groups or Large Group Discussion, rely on these skills and without them the PE will not reach its full potential. All these weaknesses harm how accessible the process is for volunteers to understand and implement (**Q5**: accessibility). If the process is too demanding, then it reduces the chances that the Pioneers and Delegates will be able to complete it successfully.⁷²

⁶⁷ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁶⁸ Observation Checklist Sixteen, Rubavu PEs (one, two and three) Ngoma PE, Rubavu/Ngoma, Rwanda. May 2014.

⁶⁹ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. “Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review,” 27.

⁷² GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

A point made equally by staff and volunteers (staff responses 21 per cent; volunteers 20 per cent) is that the Large Group Discussion and Focus Groups did not elicit honest information.⁷³ Another weakness/challenge of the process, highlighted more by volunteers than by staff, was the Large Group Discussion, which is assessed in greater detail in the next section. The Pioneers and Delegates who mentioned this felt that the process did not result in an actual discussion and that it is repetitive and unnecessarily long. Staff felt that the facilitation skills needed to manage such a large and diverse group were largely missing and that this element of process placed a huge burden on volunteers (**Q5**: accessibility). In several PEs, it was noted that participants felt they were being monitored and refrained from expressing themselves fully. The presence of community leaders, parents or teachers also prevented the Target Groups from speaking openly.⁷⁴ This demonstrates that however egalitarian the PE aims to be, it does not take place in a vacuum, and the PE room is likely to form a microcosm of the society outside.⁷⁵ This links back to the idea identified by Gregory of remaining vigilant about power during the PE.⁷⁶ This issue is dealt with in greater detail in the next subsection on changes needed to the process.⁷⁷

Three final weaknesses/challenges were language, timings and note taking. Language, mentioned only by staff, was regarded as a problem as it made it difficult to monitor the evaluation. In addition, translation – both verbal and written – was found to be incredibly time consuming for the volunteers. Timings, mentioned mostly by volunteers, were deemed as a challenge due to the amount of PEs that started late or overran. Note taking was highlighted as a challenge due to how integral it was to the process. No audio or video recording tools were used, so taking notes was the only means of storing the information produced by the process (see *Chart 3.2*). In one of the PEs in Zimbabwe they reported that the note takers were too young and did not record vital information from the focus groups.

The analysis of weaknesses/challenges shows that the PE is regarded as an extremely demanding process by both staff and volunteers. The amount of preparation, coordination and skill the process requires places a strain on both groups. In addition, ensuring attendance and representation was regarded as the joint most challenging aspect of the process, without which the findings would not be fully valid. These findings provide insight from those who had direct experience implementing the process, illustrating the hurdles the model encounters in a practical setting. The overall impression is that it places a huge burden on those involved, which reduces the process' accessibility.

⁷³ Ibid; Pioneers and Delegates, Midlands State University AAR, Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ This suggests that responses in Focus Groups taking place within the PE may be influenced by "social desirability bias" – the tendency of individuals to respond in a manner that they believe will please the person/organisation asking questions, or listening to their responses. To overcome this, some recommendations are provided in Chapter 4. In addition, some material dealing with social desirability bias can be found in the following resource: Nederhof, Anton J. "Methods of Coping with Social Desirability Bias: A Review," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 15: 3 (July/September 1985): 263-280.

⁷⁶ Gregory, Amanda. "Problematising Participation: A Critical Review of Approaches to Participation in Evaluation Theory," 194.

⁷⁷ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, Midlands State University AAR, Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

After looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the GFP PE model, a picture emerges of a process that is able to raise the organisation's profile, strengthen community ties (Q10), develop volunteers' capacity (Q12; 13) and produces immediately visible information that is useful for future programming (Q15). Yet, the weaknesses illustrate that in order to achieve these goals, the process places on an enormous burden on the volunteers. Moreover, poor attendance is a frequent problem that undermines the entire process. This section demonstrates that the AARs provide a useful consultation of Pioneers and Delegates (Q3) about the process with clear findings emerging and some strong areas of consensus.

3.2 An Assessment of the Specific Elements of the GFP Model

This section uses the OCs, that were filled out by staff at each of the fifteen PEs under investigation to assess the different components of the process. It proceeds in three parts, following the structure of the model itself: firstly, planning, which considers all the preparations for the event; secondly, the PE day itself, which addresses attendance, the Focus Groups, and the Large Group Discussion; and, thirdly, the Write Up and Sharing, which looks at how the findings are collected, used and disseminated. A recap explanation of each part of the GFP PE model is provided at the start of each section.

The findings here are sourced entirely from the OCs. As the checklists were filled by various staff members on several different field visits, the numbers involved are complex: the number of PEs does not correspond to the number of documents; nor does the numbers of documents correspond to the overall number of observations that took place (i.e. on how many individual occasions a staff members saw a PE) as occasionally the same document was used to report on two PEs. Therefore, for this section, the researchers made the decision to aggregate the data for each PE so there would be a total of fifteen units of analysis, which corresponds to the overall number of PEs under investigation, making the results much easier to comprehend. In areas where there was agreement in the checklists – and there were many – this decision was unproblematic; on areas where there was disagreement the findings presented in this section represent a half way point between the two stances. So, for example, if two staff members observed a PE and one staff member felt that Pioneers and Delegates were 'slightly familiar' and another staff member felt that Pioneers and Delegates were 'very familiar' with the PE process prior to the PE taking place, then these two findings would be aggregated and coded as 'somewhat' familiar.

3.2.1 Planning

What the planning involves: The GFP PE model involves holding an event to evaluate a finished programme with the Target Group, members of the Beneficiary Community, Key Stakeholders, and Pioneers and Delegates; or, in other words, a representative sample of those who were directly and indirectly involved with the programme – due to, for example, their student, child, or member of their

religious congregation being a Target Group member. The planning for this event includes confirming logistical elements: organising a venue, deciding on attendees and ensuring attendance, and arranging any necessary equipment. As well as equipping volunteers with knowledge on the GFP PE model, GFP HQ staff provide information and support through mentoring (over Skype, emails, and other forms of remote communication) and send the necessary materials to a select few volunteers. The planning is analysed here as part of the PE process as without it the rest would not happen. It is vital for the success of a PE, especially for ensuring the sufficient and representative attendance that is needed in order for the process to be deemed participatory (**Q7**; **Q8**).

Findings: In all cases a few key individuals were provided with the materials needed to have a PE, including the Programming Framework (see *Appendix Four*) and the PE Tips document (see *Appendix Three*). However, as the findings reveal, the dissemination of these materials did not – in the majority of cases – result in the familiarity with the planning process or the PE process more generally (see *Chart 3.3*).⁷⁸ Understanding the PE is important because prior familiarity increases the likelihood that the process will be followed correctly. Moreover, a lack of familiarity implies that the premise and purpose of the process may not have been understood. If this purpose is not being effectively communicated (**Q4**), then there is a danger that it will harm the participatory credentials of the process.

This finding shows that the ways used to inform Pioneers and Delegates about the PE process, prior to staff arrival in the field, were not entirely effective. Despite having received the relevant materials, in eleven out of fifteen PEs they seemed unfamiliar or somewhat familiar with the process (*Chart 3.3*).⁷⁹ This follows the argument that in order to be fully participatory the process needs to be made as accessible as possible. Whether it be due to a lack of time or difficulty in understanding, the procedure was not widely understood, initially at least. If GFP diversifies the mediums it uses to communicate the process to its volunteers it would raise participation through broader communication. Thus, in answer to question **Q3** on the checklist (how is the process communicated to participants?) the GFP process is not communicated effectively, meaning the principles behind the process may not have been understood. This corresponds to what Adam and Garbutt's state in their case study from Central Asia. They emphasised the need to ensure that stakeholders understood the purpose and outcome of the evaluation to encourage them to take ownership of the process.⁸⁰ Clearly, from the findings more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring the Pioneers and Delegates understand the underlying premise of PE so that they value the event. However, the researchers cannot comment on whether this lack of familiarity was a result of the shortcomings in the documents provided to the volunteers, or

⁷⁸ For this coding answers were classed as 'yes' if they knew the process and were comfortable with it; somewhat, if they were aware of the process, but still uncertain about certain areas or the premise behind it; and no, if there was no awareness of the process or its premise. GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁷⁹ For this chart the codes were simplified from the original OCs (see *Appendix One*) to 'yes', 'somewhat', and 'no' to make aggregation of the results by each PE easier and to reflect the codes for subsequent charts.

⁸⁰ Adams, Jerry, and Anne Garbutt. "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia," 11.

shortcomings in volunteers' level of engagement prior to the PE. Either way, at the time of staff arrival, the process had not been communicated effectively.

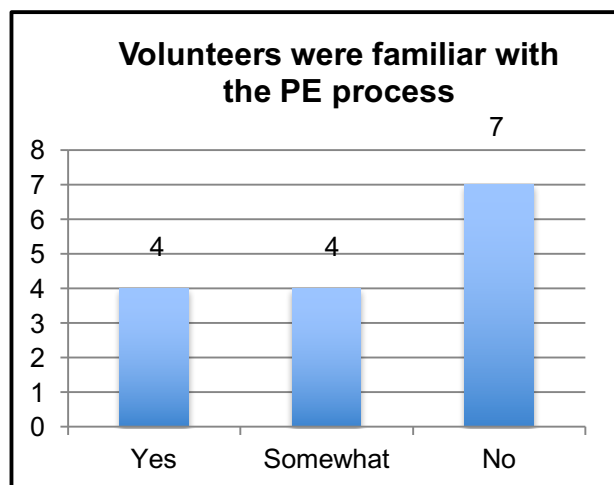


Chart 3.3: Volunteer familiarity with the PE process prior to implementation at all fifteen PEs, as rated by HQ staff members based on nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

It should be noted however, that in all nine countries this knowledge gap was identified prior to staff travel into the field. Through remote discussions with volunteers, it became obvious to GFP Headquarters that further guidance was necessary in order for the successful implementation of PEs. As a result, a detailed presentation was created and given to staff to use in instances where they felt the volunteers were under-equipped. This presentation was essentially a verbal presentation of the PE Tips document and granted Pioneers and Delegates an opportunity to ask any logistical or ideological questions they may have had.

Arguably, as a testament to the effectiveness of these presentations, despite Pioneers and Delegates being unfamiliar with the process prior to staff arrival, preparatory tasks were – in nine of out fifteen PEs – delegated effectively and shared evenly, once the process was understood (*Chart 3.4*).⁸¹ In two extreme cases in Zimbabwe, staff had to take charge of the planning – but this was very much the exception rather than the rule.⁸² For the 'somewhat', in several cases – including Georgia, Indonesia, Macedonia and the Karakol PE in Kyrgyzstan – one Pioneer/Delegate dominated proceedings meaning that the success of the planning process rested heavily on them. One staff member remarked that 'while it is good to have a point person' she doubted whether the 'process would be carried out in ...[their]... absence'.⁸³ This is a difficult area to improve upon as it rests heavily on the individual skillsets and team dynamics. However, in the vast majority of cases, including in those where one individual dominated proceedings, Pioneers and Delegates coped with the workload and

⁸¹ To calculate this finding for each PE the checklists answers were combined. In all cases where two members of staff were present there was agreement. In cases where there was three members of staff if a majority of staff members (two or more) gave an answer then it counted as that answer in the final tally. GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁸² Observation Checklist Nineteen, MSU/Oriel/Prince Edward AARs, Gweru/Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014; Observation Checklist Eighteen, MSU/Oriel/Prince Edward AARs, Gweru/Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

⁸³ Observation Checklist Eleven, Tetevo PE, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014.

were able to distribute it evenly. This suggests that once the procedure is understood, planning it does not present great difficulties.



Chart 3.4: Effectiveness of task distribution/sharing among volunteers during planning for the fifteen PEs, as rated by staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

The effective delegation of tasks and the sharing of workloads in most cases resulted in logistical arrangements being ready and prepared for the PE day. In seven out of fifteen PEs staff found that they were prepared – everything was ready - and in five out of fifteen staff found that they were somewhat prepared, meaning that most but not all elements were in place (see *Chart 3.5*).⁸⁴ The three that were not ready on the day were in Zimbabwe, where, as already mentioned, staff had to guide the logistics. This area is important as it feeds directly into the argument that in order to be participatory a process needs to be accessible (**Q5**). If it is hard to understand and to enact it decreases the likelihood that it will succeed in fulfilling its stated aims. The multiple advantages of PE, highlighted in the literature, cannot be attained if the process is not made easily comprehensible.⁸⁵

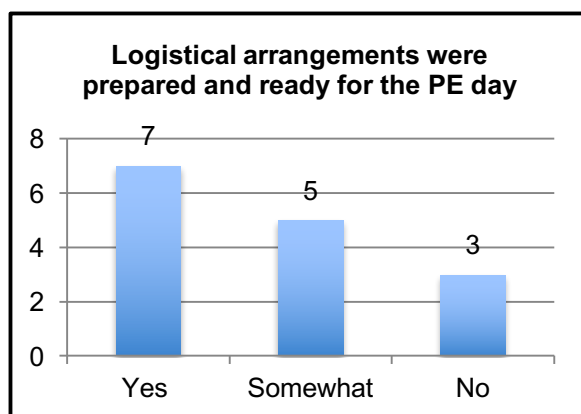


Chart 3.5: Preparation of logistical arrangements in time for the PE day, as rated by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

⁸⁴ To calculate this finding for each PE the checklists answers were combined. In all cases where two members of staff were present there was agreement. In cases where there was three members of staff if a majority of staff members (two or more) gave an answer then it counted as that answer in the final tally. GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁸⁵ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 27.

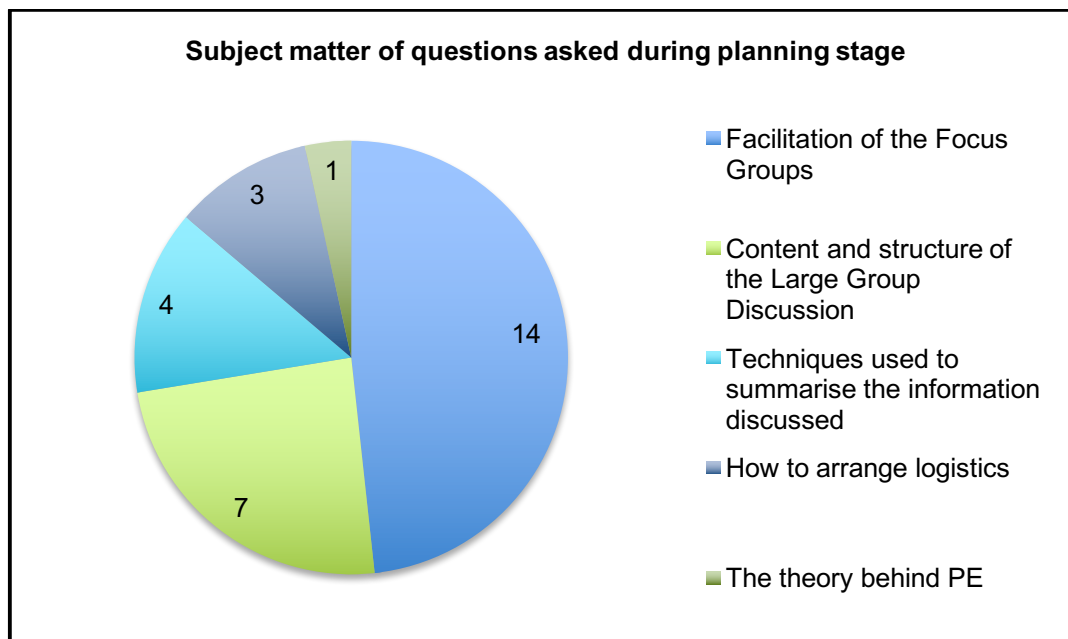


Chart 3.6: The number of times questions (coded by theme) were raised at each PE. Data taken from nineteen OCs filled out by HQ staff. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

Despite a general understanding observed by staff there were, however, certain areas where Pioneers and Delegates were unclear. Staff wrote down the questions they were asked during the planning stage, the questions were coded and every time a theme arose is presented in *Chart 3.6*. The area where there was the greatest amount of uncertainty was facilitation of the Focus Groups, with questions being asked about this issue at fourteen out of fifteen PEs. Next, were questions about the Large Group Discussion, with questions being asked at seven out of fifteen PEs (see *Chart 3.6*). Collectively these two areas make up three-quarters of the questions asked.

Overall, the planning of the PEs appears to have been generally successful. Even though many Pioneers and Delegates were not familiar with the process once the planning started, in the majority of cases, tasks were delegated effectively and logistical arrangements were prepared and ready for the day. Some of the problems that were highlighted during the planning stage – such as one individuals dominating proceedings – arise more from individual traits or group dynamics than faults in the GFP process. Nevertheless, this problem can be reduced by ensuring familiarity with the process through diversifying the ways that the PE process is mentored. In sum, while the PE process does not appear to be too difficult for Pioneers and Delegates to organise, more steps can be taken to ensure its accessibility (**Q5**). In addition, the tasks and challenges that arise in the planning contribute to the capacity-building (**Q12**) credentials of the process, which includes the development of organisational, planning, and team-work skills.

3.2.2 The PE Day

After the planning has taken place comes the PE day itself. This begins with the **Introduction (45 minutes)** followed by the **Focus Groups (2-3 hours)** in which all those present are divided up into groups based on the demographic they are from – Target Group, Beneficiary Community Member, Key Stakeholders and Pioneers and Delegates. Each group is asked the same set of questions, which aims to reveal differentiation in terms of programme effects. Following this there is the **Large Group Discussion (1.5 hours)** in which the findings of the Focus Groups are discussed and collectively those in attendance look toward the future. This part of the process aims to allow for social negotiation (**Q10**).

The key areas this section focuses on are attendance, the Focus Groups, and the Large Group Discussion, as these are the core participatory elements of the GFP PE model. It is on this day that all groups affected directly or indirectly by the programme get to voice their opinions, which will shape future interventions: if it is done correctly it validates the GFP model as a participatory process; if it is not, it means that alterations are needed in order for the model to reach its potential and fulfil its stated aims. Again, the checklist will be used here to provide a comprehensive judgement of the GFP PE model.

The findings show that it is here that the most problems are found with the PE process. In many cases the Focus Groups and Large Group Discussion did not go as planned. This is because this part of the process requires the most skill and the most preparation (**Q5**: How accessible is the process?). While the principles behind the design of both of these activities are soundly participatory, in accordance with areas identified in the literature, in practice they often did not live up to this ideal. The questions asked in these discussions were a particular challenge. Therefore, significant revision is needed to these components of the PE procedure to make them accessible, achievable and flexible (**Q6**). Another major issue was attendance – both in terms of numbers and representativeness. As Lennie points out, a vital prerequisite of participatory processes is having a representative sample (**Q8**) of those impacted by the programme so that the process is inclusive (**Q7**) and everyone's perspective is valued (**Q9**). The failure to meet these criteria seriously harms an event's ability to be participatory.

3.2.2.1 Attendance

As discussed in the literature review, attendance and having the correct balance of groups is vital for the success of a PE.⁸⁶ This thinking has informed the GFP process. As the PE Tips document (see *Appendix Three*), disseminated to Pioneers and Delegates prior to the PE taking place, states: 'it is not about how many people you gather, but about how many people you represent in your evaluation'. Yet, the findings reveal that achieving this is one of the most challenging elements of the process. This issue is complicated by the fact that in several PEs more people attended than were expected but this

⁸⁶ Lennie, June. "Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations : Learnings from the Field," 28.

did not translate into representativeness, with certain groups missing or very underrepresented. These two components of attendance – numbers and representativeness – are discussed below.

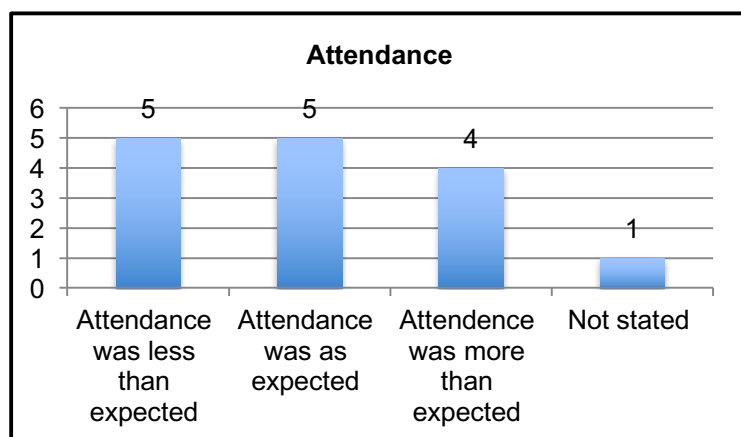


Chart 3.7: Attendance at each of the fifteen PEs, as recorded by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one observation checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

For attendance, the PEs are roughly divided into three with one third having less people attend than expected, one third having roughly as many as expected, and one third having more than expected, in attendance (see *Chart 3.7*).⁸⁷ Overall this result is positive in that in two-thirds of the PE attendance was as or more than expected. However, high attendance did not necessarily translate into representative attendance.

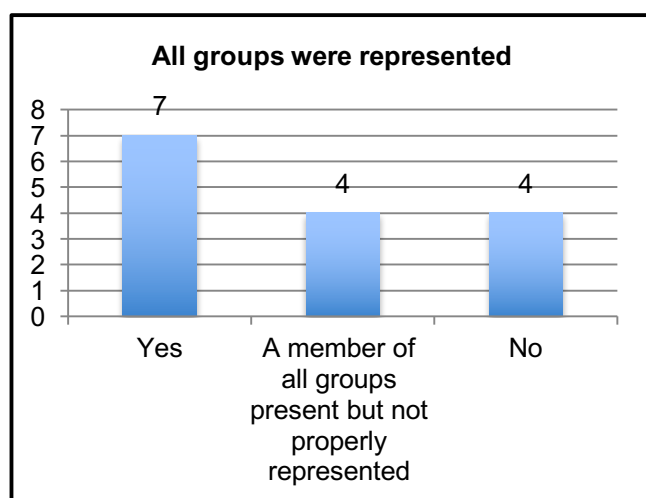


Chart 3.8: The representative attendance at the PE of all groups (Pioneers and Delegates, Target Group, Beneficiary Community, and Key Stakeholders), as recorded by staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

Although attendance was as expected or more in ten out of fifteen PEs, all groups were represented in only seven out of fifteen PEs (see *Chart 3.8*).⁸⁸ In four cases one group was entirely missing and in four cases groups were so underrepresented that it rendered their presence futile: for example, having

⁸⁷ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

⁸⁸ PEs were classed as representative, if, either a staff member stated that or if their descriptions met certain criteria that both sides of the conflict divide (i.e. ethnic) were represented for each group and that the two or more members of each group were present. Although this criteria is very low, in terms of analysis, it was able to make the distinction between absent groups, one-sided groups, and mixed groups that allow for an exchange of different interest/values. Age and gender was not analysed as staff did not provide that level of detail.

only one stakeholder present⁸⁹ or having only teachers from one ethnic group attend, in a PE for a programme that addressed ethnic conflict.⁹⁰ The groups least likely to attend – or attend in adequate numbers – were the Beneficiary Community (including parents and teachers), at three PEs, and Key Stakeholders, at five PEs. Ensuring their attendance appears to be a major challenge in the PE process; without their presence not all relevant groups can be consulted about the programme (Q8).

Nevertheless, there were several reasons for the lack of attendance among certain groups, which should be noted so that these situations can be avoided in future. In Indonesia the PE took place during Ramadan; in Macedonia it took place over the Easter holidays.⁹¹ In Nepal the PE took place during an exam period and on a traditional paddy-planting day.⁹² Alongside this, in Nepal, volunteer disorganisation resulted in insufficient invitations being sent out. Thus, even if certain people would have attended they may not have known the event was happening.⁹³ Finally, in Kyrgyzstan volunteers spoke of a cultural norm that parents do not pay interest in what their children do at school making them unlikely to attend on the PE day, despite being invited.⁹⁴ With the exception of Kyrgyzstan, these problems could be avoided in future through increased organisation and choosing a date that suits all groups that can be decided through prior consultation.

As discussed in the literature review, one of the key advantages of PE is actively engaging with and involving the community in the process rather than it being carried out by an external evaluator.⁹⁵ However, this ideal cannot be achieved if key groups do not attend on the day itself; the process cannot be participatory if people are unable or unwilling to show up. Attendance and representativeness are vital for PE and this is an issue on which the GFP process clearly falls short. There is a gulf apparent here between what was intended and what actually happened. In terms of the level of intended inclusion (Q7) the process does aim to be participatory. Yet, this intention did not translate in representativeness in eight out of fifteen of the PEs under investigation meaning that in answer to Q8 on the checklist the process is not participatory in the majority of cases. This means that the GFP model fell short on an integral area for participatory processes. However, in seven out of fifteen, each group did attend in representative numbers, which demonstrates that it is possible; what needs to be improved, however, is the steps taken to ensure this happens every time.⁹⁶

There are several ways in which attendance could be improved and made more representative. As already mentioned, the date on which the PE is held is important. It needs to avoid holidays, exam periods and other times of year in which people – especially parents, teachers and community leaders – are likely to have prior engagements. In order to increase the likelihood of their attendance,

⁸⁹ Observation Checklist Eighteen, MSU/Oriel/Prince Edward AARs, Gweru/Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

⁹⁰ Observation Checklist Eleven, Tetevo PE, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014.

⁹¹ Ibid; Observation Checklist Six, Jakarta PE, Jakarta, Indonesia. July 2014.

⁹² Observation Checklist Twelve, Kathmandu PE, Kathmandu, Nepal. June-July 2014.

⁹³ Observation Checklist Thirteen, Kathmandu PE, Kathmandu, Nepal. June-July 2014.

⁹⁴ Observation Checklist Eight, Karakol/Osh PE, Karakol/Osh, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

⁹⁵ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 14.

⁹⁶ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

Beneficiary Community members and Key Stakeholders should be involved with the programme throughout. Deciding who will attend the PE needs to be done well in advance so that those invited can be informed and updated about the process as it is on going. The more involved they are the more likely they will attend. Finally, GFP's Local Partner Organisations (LPOs) can be used to place pressure on people to attend as they have the human and media resources needed to promote and advertise the event. Alongside this, Pioneers and Delegates should be encouraged to use their networks and contacts in their communities to ensure representative numbers are in attendance.

3.2.2.2 The Focus Groups

During the planning stage it was the Focus Groups that Pioneers and Delegates asked the most questions about, which implies that this is a challenging area to implement. Observations reveal that while the Focus Groups were largely successful in extracting information from those who participated in them, two major issues harmed them: mixed facilitation skills among those leading the Focus Groups and difficulties in understanding the questions asked. This issue feeds into the argument that the GFP process needs to be made more accessible in order to become more participatory – clearly, facilitation and Focus Groups are a challenging part of the process. Moreover, the questions themselves, which dictate the knowledge produced, were not completely understood. Both these points undermine the accessibility of the model (Q5) for Pioneers, Delegates, and other participants. These findings are a reminder that relying on volunteers, rather than paid, qualified staff, as participatory activities throughout the development sector often do, means the process needs to be simplified to reflect their resources (time) and varied capacity (ability to facilitate). Moreover, in terms of the questions asked, handing them greater control over process will make it more attuned to local contexts, also increasing its accessibility.

In terms of designing the Focus Groups, staff observed that in all PEs they were divided based by groups rather than selected at random, and the reason for this was fully understood.⁹⁷ This is important as it means the process is able to capture how programme impact differed by group; it is participatory in that the perspectives of each group are valued equally (Q9), meaning each group is given the same space, time, and questions to voice their opinion and what mattered to them. In theory, this is a key strength of the GFP model. However, the lack of representativeness at many of the PEs, highlighted above, harms the process's ability to give equal attention to each constituent group.

⁹⁷ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

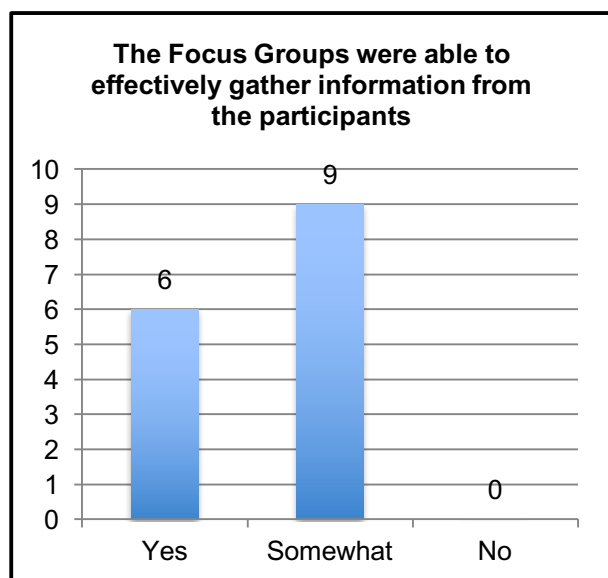


Chart 3.9: Whether the Focus Groups were able to effectively gather information from the participants, as rated by staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one observation checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

With regard to how effective the Focus Groups were at extracting information from the participants, which was designated in the coding by observations such as detailed answers, the amount of notes taken, differences in opinion, thorough discussions and contributions from all present, all staff found that they were effective or somewhat effective (see *Chart 3.9*). Observations were placed in the effective category if no problems were identified. Observations were placed in the 'somewhat' category if the experience was generally successful but one or more problems were identified that prevented the extraction of information. In Georgia, for example, the staff member noted that the effectiveness of the Focus Group depended heavily on the abilities of the facilitator; while the Focus Groups with the Target Group successfully drew out information due to an 'energetic and skilled' facilitator, the Focus Groups for the Beneficiary Community struggled to pull out information due to an 'introverted' facilitator.⁹⁸ In Kyrgyzstan, the volunteers admitted to a staff member that two Delegates did not feel comfortable facilitating the Focus Groups. Their lack of confidence was shown by the fact that the Focus Groups ended in ten minutes with very sparse notes collected.⁹⁹

Due to their reliance on facilitation, the success of the Focus Group does depend on individual personalities and skillsets. The need for this skillset reduces the process's accessibility (**Q5**). However, the development of these skills (acquired through training and practice during the implementation of the process) represents a capacity-building opportunity (**Q12**) for the volunteers. Thus, what emerges here is a trade-off in terms of designing participatory processes: the more skills that are required the greater the chances of the process being inaccessible for Pioneers and Delegates, yet on the other hand it also affords more capacity-building opportunities meaning that volunteers gain more from the process (**Q13**). When deciding and developing participatory process these two competing benefits need to be assessed to see which is the most valued, which ties back to the underlying aims of the process.

⁹⁸ Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014.

⁹⁹ Observation Checklist Eight, Karakol/Osh PE, Karakal/Osh, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

From the findings, the main problem affecting the Focus Groups was the difficulty in understanding the questions (see *Appendix Four*, which alongside weak facilitation harmed their ability to extract information. In only one PE did the staff find that the questions appeared clear and were widely understood. For the fourteen other PEs they were either not clear (the questions were frequently not understood or skipped) or somewhat clear (those present asked lots of clarification questions, but understood the general meaning) (see *Chart 3.10*).¹⁰⁰ The questions were often not liked by Pioneers and Delegates. In Ghana, for example, one member of staff found that PE participants felt that the questions asked were redundant and that the terminology was overly complex.¹⁰¹ Staff found that certain terms – such as ‘Conflict Context’, ‘Theory of Change’ and ‘Cost Effective’ (see *Appendix Four*) – were particularly difficult for people to follow.¹⁰² From the data, it is clear that the Focus Groups questions were the most challenging part of this activity, which resulted in delays and confusion.

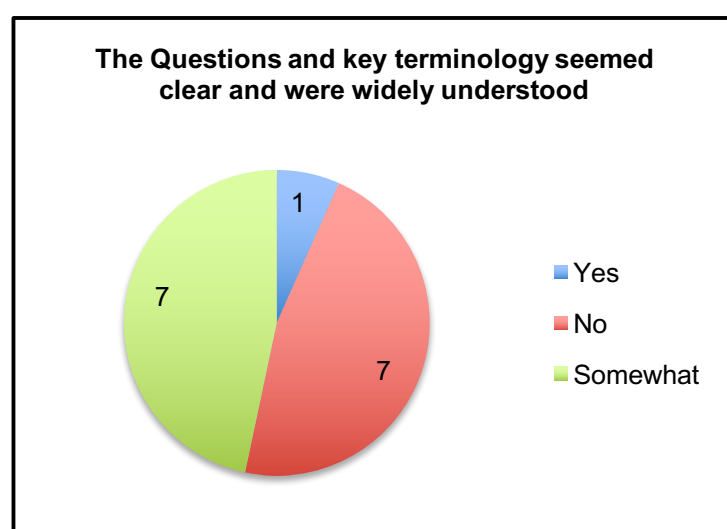


Chart 3.10: Level of comprehension among PE participants regarding the PE questions, as rated by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one observation checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

This problem was further exacerbated due to the Beneficiary Community being unable to answer some of the questions or feeling that they were not relevant. In Nepal, a staff member found that the Beneficiary Community declined to answer questions as they knew little about the programme.¹⁰³ Likewise in Georgia, the Beneficiary Community Focus Groups were hampered by them being unable to answer the questions as they did not know enough about the programme.¹⁰⁴ This highlights the need to keep the Beneficiary Community informed throughout the programme. It also links back to Gregory's idea of remaining vigilant throughout the PE process of where power and control lies: if one group completely lacks knowledge about the programme, their participation cannot be equal to those with far superior awareness.¹⁰⁵ This highlights the problems with consulting all groups in the same way

¹⁰⁰ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹⁰¹ Observation Checklist Four, Kumasi PE, Kumasi, Ghana. August 2014.

¹⁰² GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹⁰³ Observation Checklist Twelve, Kathmandu PE, Kathmandu, Nepal. June-July 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory, Amanda. "Problematising Participation: A Critical Review of Approaches to Participation in Evaluation Theory," 124.

using the same questions: this is advantageous in that it is inclusive and equal (every group gets an equal opportunity to contribute using the same platform), but it is disadvantageous in that it does not acknowledge how different relationships to the programme will result in different experiences and levels of awareness.

The problem with the questions goes behind overly complex language to reveal a deeper flaw in the model. The fact that people felt the questions did not resonate with them, the researchers argue, is a product of them being developed in a non-participatory way. The questions – along with the entire model – were designed at HQ and then given to the Pioneers and Delegates to follow. This refers back to **Q3** (who designed the process?) and **Q11** (where does decision making power lie?) on the checklist. The questions are crucial in that they decide what the evaluation is seeking to discover. If those participating cannot decide what they want to find out then this harms the model's participatory credentials as it follows an agenda dictated from above, rather than one agreed upon from below. The fixed questions undermine the flexibility of the process (**Q6**), including its ability to adapt, and respond to local needs.¹⁰⁶ A solution to problem of the questions is discussed in subsequent sections.

Another area that Pioneers and Delegates found challenging was the writing up of the summaries of what had been said in the Focus Groups. In the Programming Framework the idea is to summarise what had been said in the Focus Group so that it could be shared in the proceeding Large Group Discussion.¹⁰⁷ However, staff observed uncertainty over how the summaries were composed, what points needed to be emphasised, and who should present them.¹⁰⁸ They observed disagreements over what to write down and doubts over whether the notes reflected what had been said.¹⁰⁹ Overall, in four PEs significant difficulties were observed with the summary writing, including uncertainty over the process and too much time needed to complete them.¹¹⁰ Here, greater clarity is needed over the process, particularly how to agree on what to write down. Without such clarity there is a danger that Pioneers and Delegates – who know the process best and therefore possess knowledge that others involved in the PE lack – will dominate proceedings harming the participatory nature of the Focus Group. It is vital that the main points to be raised in the Larger Group Discussion can be agreed upon by consensus rather than by diktat.

In sum, the observations of staff reveal that the Focus Groups had mixed success at extracting information from all groups who attended the PE. The findings show that there are a number of issues that prevent them from reaching their full potential. While the facilitation in the PE process means that it is able to develop capacity (**Q11**), the challenge of facilitation prevents the process from being

¹⁰⁶ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 26.

¹⁰⁷ Generations For Peace. "Generations For Peace Programming Framework."

¹⁰⁸ Observation Checklist One, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Observation Checklist Seven, Jakarta PE, Jakarta, Indonesia. July 2014.

¹¹⁰ Ibid; Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014; Observation Checklist Four, Kumasi PE, Kumasi, Ghana. August 2014; Observation Checklist Eighteen, MSU/Oriel/Prince Edward AARs, Gweru/Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

accessible (Q5). Firstly, Pioneers and Delegates need to receive more guidance and training on facilitation skills. The findings show that the success of individual Focus Groups rests heavily on individual skillsets and personalities. With more preparation and training, GFP could increase both facilitation abilities of its volunteers and the fruitfulness of the Focus Groups. Secondly, the questions used in the Focus Groups were found to be challenging in fourteen out of fifteen PEs. Clearly, this results in confusion and harms the effectiveness of the process. Simpler language would increase the PE model's accessibility (Q5) and yield more fruitful answers. Moreover, Pioneers and Delegates should be able to decide on the questions themselves to enhance their relevance to and resonance with participants (Q6: flexibility). The researchers believe that if these changes were enacted the Focus Group discussion would be a real strong point of the process, providing detailed information from participatory discussions that consult each group (Q9: whose perspective is valued?); however, in the PEs observed, they too frequently fell short of this ideal.

3.2.2.3 Large Group Discussion

The success of the Focus Groups has a direct knock-on effect on the next stage of the PE day. The Large Group Discussion, which involves all those present coming together to present the findings of the Focus Groups and discuss them collectively, is the part of the process that faces the most problems, the findings reveal. Simply put, it fails to fully live up to its name. The Large Group Discussion has two main aims, which are the sharing of the findings of Focus Groups followed by an all-group discussion that should involve the exchange of thoughts, perspectives and interests among all those present at the PE. This latter aim is designed to allow for the sharing of different experiences and the negotiation of different interests among the groups present at the PE: Pioneers and Delegates, the Target Group, the Beneficiary Community and Key Stakeholders (Q10: Social Negotiation). In the first aim the Large Group mostly succeeded, while in the second it largely did not. As with the Focus Groups, the principle behind this activity is highly participatory in theory but in a practical setting it encounters several hurdles.

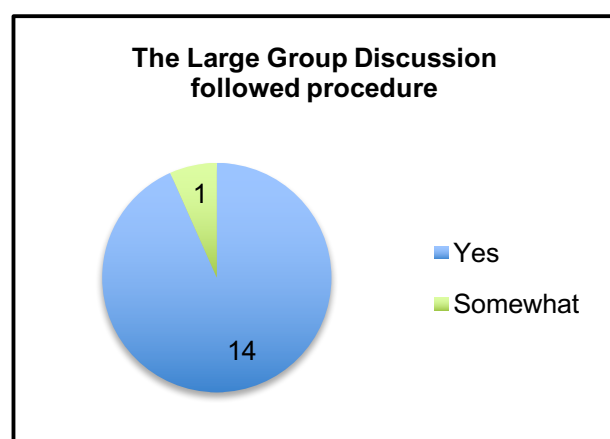


Chart 3.11: Whether the Large Group Discussion followed procedure, as judged by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

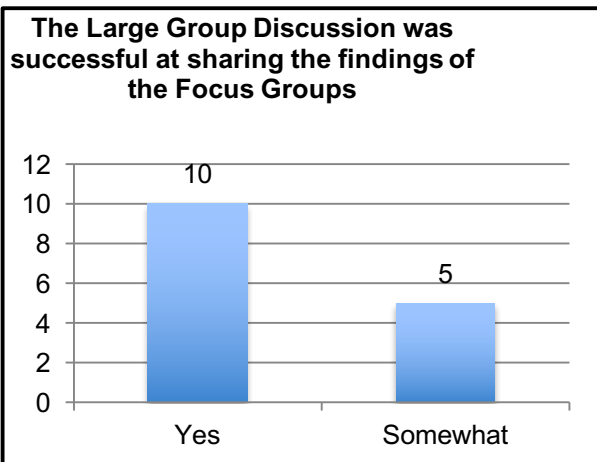


Chart 3.12: HQ staff judgement on whether the Large Group Discussion was effective at sharing the findings of the Focus Groups, taken from nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one observation checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

In all but one of the PEs staff observed that the Large Group Discussion followed procedure as stated in the Programming Framework (*Chart 3.11*). Moreover, in all fifteen PEs staff stated that the Large Group Discussion had been successful or partially successful at sharing the findings of the Focus Groups (*Chart 3.12*). The activity appears to be successful at sharing the summaries of the Focus Group with everyone present. This means that each constituent group has the opportunity to share their reflections, raising collective awareness of different interests. This speaks directly to **Q10** (social negotiation) on the checklist in that the Large Group Discussion allows different community members to have a voice, and for that voice to be heard. However, for the process to achieve this element (as broken down by the checklist) of participatory processes it also has to allow for those interests to be negotiated, in turn fostering cohesion and community cooperation.¹¹¹ On this part, in the majority of cases, the fifteen PEs under investigation fell into difficulties.

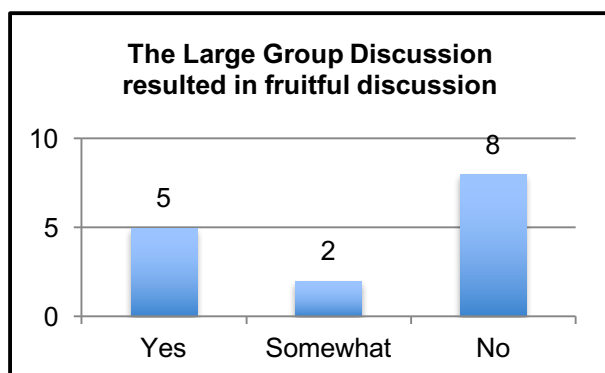


Chart 3.13: Whether the Large Group Discussion resulted in fruitful discussion, as judged by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

Although the procedure always seems to have been followed, this did not result in energetic discussion that successfully debated and discussed the points raised in the Focus Group. In five out of fifteen PEs the Large Group Discussion resulted in a meaningful exchange among the group, while in eight out of fifteen there was no meaningful discussion. In the remaining two, some discussion was observed (see *Chart 3.13*). Staff noted that in cases where there was no discussion the activity

¹¹¹ Estrella, Marisol, and John Gaventa. "Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Literature Review," 24-25.

consisted of people listening passively rather than exchanging ideas and thoughts.¹¹² In one of the Rwandan PEs, a staff member described proceedings: 'one Delegate read out the questions and took notes while [the] Pioneers and Delegates who had been note-takers [in the Focus Groups] read out their summarised answers for each question'.¹¹³ This example illustrates a lack of participation from the other groups involved. This more closely resembles a series of presentations rather than a collective, participatory group discussion that allows for negotiation. It seems that in this instance participants went from being subjects to objects – passive absorbers of knowledge rather than active agents in its creation.¹¹⁴ As with the Focus Groups, when the procedure does not work as intended there is a danger that Pioneers and Delegates will dominate proceedings, altering the dynamic to one of teacher-student, which harms the egalitarian nature of the PE event. This connects back to Themessl-Huber and Grutsh's point that participatory processes can easily slide back into being non-participatory if it is not working as intended.¹¹⁵ This is apparent in the Large Group Discussions for several of the PEs under investigation.

Interestingly, rowdiness or disruption during the Large Group Discussion was only reported in two of the PEs. In Ghana, staff noted that the Large Group Discussion was very rowdy, resulting in it being a challenge for the Pioneers and Delegates to facilitate.¹¹⁶ In Macedonia there was frustration with the Macedonian-majority volunteers expressed by the ethnic-Albanian Beneficiary Community. One Macedonian man stood up and said, 'if you want this programme to be about bridging groups – use both languages! We do not understand Macedonian.'¹¹⁷ This case highlights where linguistic differences form an integral part of conflict in a community the Large Group Discussion is vulnerable to disagreements, as one language is likely to be favoured. Nevertheless, rowdiness and disruption was not a problem in the vast majority of PEs. An antithetical eventuality that was observed far more frequently was the participants losing interest, revealed by them starting to hold their own conversations or play with their phones. In four PEs, staff observed that towards the end of the Large Group Discussion the participants appeared tired and weary of the process.¹¹⁸ Issues of timing are discussed later in the report, but for now it can be said that the length of the Large Group Discussion alongside the fact that it happens at the end of the PE day contributes to its ineffectualness.

The principles behind the Large Group Discussion are participatory, in that it gives space for equal involvement and social negotiation (**Q10**), is inclusive (**Q7**), values all perspectives (**Q9**), and gives everybody equal power to shape the discussion and the results (**Q11**). However, in practice this part of

¹¹² GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹¹³ Observation Checklist Sixteen, Rubavu PEs (one, two and three) Ngoma PE, Rubavu/Ngoma, Rwanda. May 2014.

¹¹⁴ This connects with Rubien's idea about what makes a process participatory in that participants need to go from being objects to subjects that can influence the content and direction of the evaluation rather than merely observe it. Rebien, Claus C. "Participatory Evaluation of Development Assistance Dealing with Power and Facilitative Learning," 160.

¹¹⁵ Themessl-Huber, Markus T., and Markus A. Grutsh. "The Shifting Locus of Control in Participatory Evaluations," 92.

¹¹⁶ Observation Checklist Fifteen, Rubavu PEs (one, two and three) Ngoma PE, Rubavu/Ngoma, Rwanda. May 2014.

¹¹⁷ Observation Checklist Ten, Tetevo PE, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014.

¹¹⁸ Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014; Observation Checklist Three, Kumasi PE, Kumasi, Ghana. August 2014; Observation Checklist Eleven, Tetevo PE, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014; Observation Checklist Sixteen, Rubavu PEs (one, two and three) Ngoma PE, Rubavu/Ngoma, Rwanda. May 2014.

the GFP model falls short of this ideal, substantially. The process appears to be generally successful at sharing the findings, but unable to move from this to a group discussion in the majority of cases. This means that the part of the model that allows for whole-group participation is not working. Out of the two key components of the PE day, the Focus Groups come out stronger, with the Large Group Discussion being most in need of revision. This component should remain as it has the potential to achieve several goals of PM&E and is vital for an inclusive consultation, but the procedure itself needs to change.

PE day timings: In eight out of fifteen PEs timings were highlighted as an issue. Given the length of the PE process and the fact that they were often taking place in hired venues this resulted in problems. A frequent issue was punctuality: in Nepal and one of the Zimbabwean PEs Target Groups, members of the Beneficiary Community, and Key Stakeholders arrived up to an hour late, which disrupted the Focus Group sessions. Another major issue was overlong Focus Groups or Large Group Discussions. In Macedonia, one of the Kyrgyz PEs, and one of the Zimbabwean PEs the Large Group Discussions had to be finished prematurely. Running out of time can prevent full participation.¹¹⁹ Certainly, as Pioneers and Delegates become more familiar with the process they will become more adept at timing it well, but in the PEs observed, issues of timing undermined the process. It must be noted that ideas about punctuality vary hugely from culture to culture and that having a PE that starts on time with everyone sat and ready is just not feasible in certain contexts. However, to minimise the damage caused by poor timings, points could be added to the PE Tips document on how to be concise. In addition, Pioneers and Delegates can be advised to hire venues for longer to avoid having to finish prematurely if the PE overruns.

3.2.3 The Write Up and Sharing

The final part of the PE process is the Write Up and Sharing day in which Pioneers and Delegates gather together to summarise the findings of the Focus Groups and Large Group Discussion in the evaluation grid. This part of the PE aims to complete the programme cycle by condensing the evaluation results and then sharing them with HQ; yet, it is also forward thinking in that it leads to consideration of the next programme cycle and the changes that are needed. The Write Up and Sharing should be understood as a simultaneous closure and opening of one programme cycle to the next. This part of the process is vital because it allows for the findings produced by the PE to be organised and then disseminated. Unless the findings of the PE are made available for people to see and shared with those who have the ability to bring about change the process cannot be regarded as fully participatory (**Q16:** who uses the results and how are they used?). The reasons for change should arise from knowledge that has been collectively produced and the Write Up and Sharing represents the organisation and dissemination of that knowledge.

¹¹⁹ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

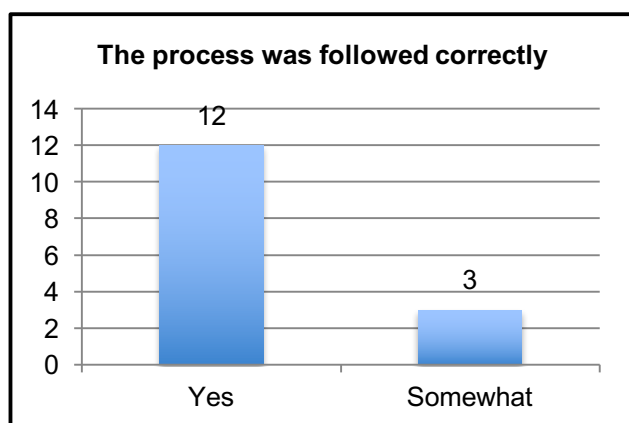


Chart 3.14: The purpose of the Write Up and Sharing was understood by Pioneers and Delegates, as judged by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

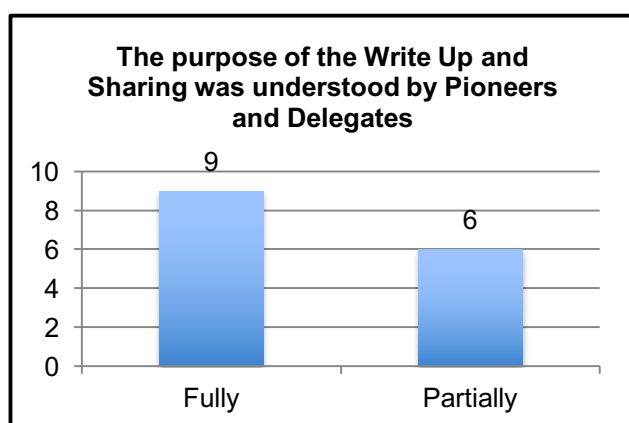


Chart 3.15: The Write Up and Sharing Process was followed correctly, as judged by staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

Staff found that in all PEs the purpose of the Write Up and Sharing was either fully or partially understood (see *Chart 3.14*). PEs were categorised in the latter category when the general rationale/procedure was understood but there were areas of uncertainty/questions were asked. This illustrates that the rationale behind the process is easy to comprehend. If the purpose is widely understood, it increases the chance that individuals will value this part of the process. Likewise, staff found that the process was followed correctly in twelve out of fifteen PEs; in the remaining three it was followed somewhat correctly (*Chart 3.15*). In the latter cases, this was due to a poor grasp of the process, heavy reliance on staff, and low attendance among the Pioneers and Delegates. Collectively, these findings indicate that the process is easy to grasp and that the procedure is not too challenging to follow.

In terms of effectiveness, staff found that at all PEs the Write Up and Sharing facilitated discussion of the findings: with 12 PEs being categorised as ‘yes’ and three PEs as ‘somewhat’ (*Chart 3.16*). A PE fell into the ‘somewhat’ category if discussion of key findings among volunteers were mentioned by staff. In one of the Kyrgyz PEs, a staff member noted that the Pioneers and Delegates appeared visibly exhausted and the process seem lengthy and tedious, meaning that the discussion was minimal.¹²⁰ A PE fell into the ‘yes’ category if a detailed discussion of all findings were observed. In

¹²⁰ Observation Checklist Eight, Karakol/Osh PE, Karakal/Osh, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

both Ghana and Sri Lanka, for example, a lengthy discussion about each of the findings was observed by staff followed by a consideration of the future programme cycle.¹²¹ Clearly, this is a key strength of the GFP PE model. Participatory processes aim to produce simple, clear and practical information that can be used to decide on future action – the discussions elicited during the summarising of the findings demonstrate that they have practical use, including deciding on future steps (Q16).

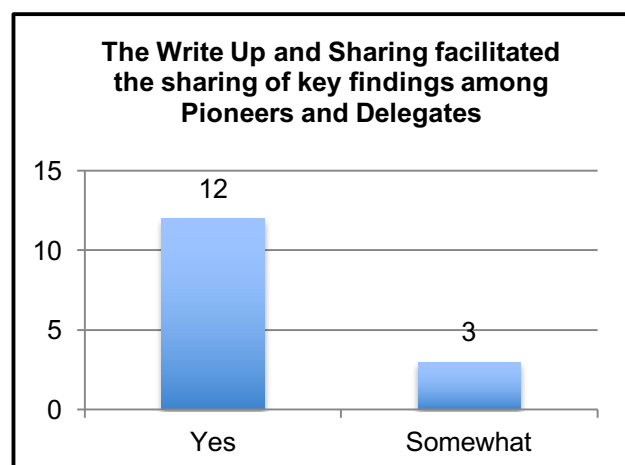


Chart 3.16: The Write Up and Sharing facilitated the sharing of key findings among Pioneers and Delegates. As judged by HQ staff in nineteen OCs. In cases where there was more than one checklist per PE the results were aggregated.

The data shows that the Write Up and Sharing was often the most successful part of the process. Its purpose was near-universally understood and the procedure was almost always followed correctly. The evidence shows that it provides an effective means of consolidating information, facilitating discussion, and disseminating it to relevant parties. However, more could be done to emphasise the discussion element of process. This would increase its participatory nature by taking advantage of the opportunity to have a thorough consideration of the programme’s merits and demerits together with a consideration of changes needed in the future.

3.3 Quality of the Data Collected

The penultimate section of the findings chapter will briefly consider the outputs of the GFP PE model. One of the main aims of the PE process is to collect, condense, and present findings which can then be shared with HQ and other involved parties. These findings should show how the programme went as well as reveal areas for improvement and future action. As the final product of the PE, these findings, their presentation, and their utility form a crucial element of the PE processes’ effectualness. Even if the other components of the process were flawless, if the data provided is not useful the process will not achieve what it set out to.

The findings of this section are based on the filled out grids (*see Appendix Four*) for each of the fifteen PEs under investigation. The grids provide Pioneers and Delegates with a template that is used to fill

¹²¹ Observation Checklist Four, Kumasi PE, Kumasi, Ghana. August 2014; Observation Checklist Seventeen, Mullaitivu & Kilinochchi districts PE, Mullaitivu & Kilinochchi districts, Sri Lanka. September 2014.

in the condensed findings of the PE, answering questions on: understanding what happened and why; the most significant change; unexpected, unwanted or unconnected changes; looking forward, and action points (**Q14**: what is recorded?). The information is assessed here to look at the quality and utility by looking at five areas: presentation and clarity, relevance to programmes, level of detail, representation of all groups, and actionable information for programme improvement. Each of the fifteen grids were comparatively analysed and then categorised to assess the data they provide on each of these themes. If the data and its presentation meets all of these requirements then it means that the PE process has produced clear information based on a representative consultation that is applicable to community contexts, which is a core aim of participatory processes.

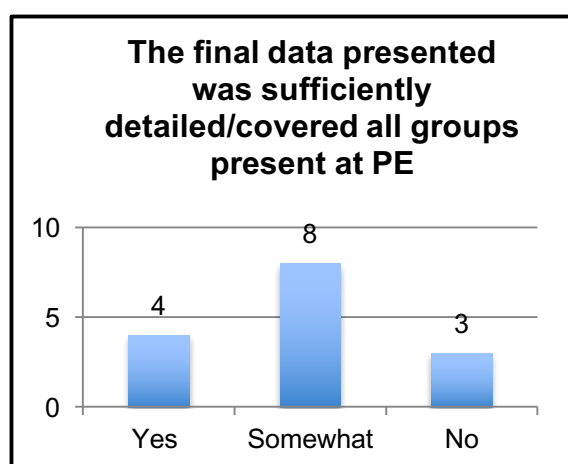


Chart 3.17: The final data presented in the grids was sufficiently detailed/covered all groups present at PE. Based on analysis of fifteen grids from all fifteen PEs.

Analysis reveals that with all grids Pioneers and Delegates understood how to present the data. This meant that in all cases the information was typed up in the grid using concise wording and separated into the relevant boxes. Likewise, all grids presented findings that were relevant to the programmes and future action. Information presented always concerned what had happened on the current programmes and why that happened alongside a consideration of what could be done differently in the future.¹²² In terms of whether the data was sufficiently detailed and covered the findings from all groups (present at the PE) the researchers found that in only four grids was this fully the case, in eight grids it was somewhat the case and in three it was not the case (see *Chart 3.17*). Frequent problems included a lack of details, often amounting to one word answers, such as, ‘is the programme sustainable? – ‘yes,’ or, unclear answers, such as ‘should the programme be replicated or scaled-up?’ – ‘to be continued’.¹²³ In other cases it was not clear which group the comment had come from and contributions of certain groups were largely missing, as was the case for Pioneers and Delegates in Ghana and one of the Kyrgyz PE grids.¹²⁴ In some cases answers were left blank due to the questions

¹²² Pioneers and Delegates, All Grids, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹²³ Pioneers and Delegates, Rubavu One PE Final Grid, Rubavu, Rwanda. May 2014.

¹²⁴ Pioneers and Delegates, Ghana PE Final Grid, Kumasi, Ghana. August 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, Karakol PE Final Grid, Karakol, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

not being understood by the different groups. This was very apparent in Georgia and highlights once again the problem with the questions.¹²⁵

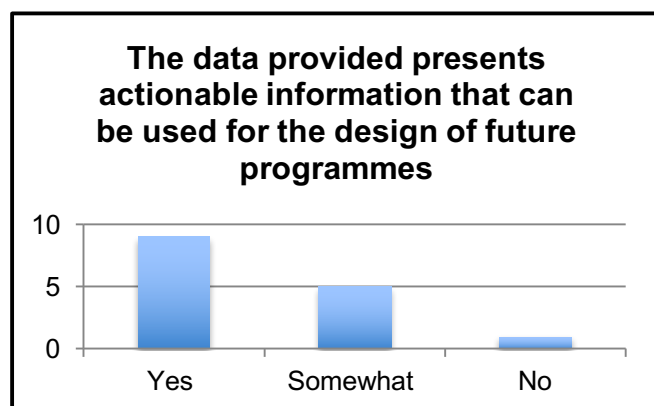


Chart 3.18: The data in the grids presented actionable information that can be used for the design of future programmes. Based on analysis of fifteen grids from all fifteen PEs.

In terms of whether the data produced provides actionable information that can be used in the design of future programmes, the researchers found that in the majority of cases it did, but the grids were still marred by several problems (see *Chart 3.18*). To be actionable, the information needs to serve as a recommendation or suggestion that can be practically applied, based on the instructions provided, to future programming as a means of improvement. The grids fell into the ‘somewhat’ category if more detail or specifics were needed. The answer to the questions was almost always there but the ‘why’ and ‘how’ was often missing. There was another tendency to fall on clichés or platitudes rather than having specific points. For example, ‘is the programme sustainable?’ - ‘yes, because youth are the future of the nation’.¹²⁶ From analysis of the grids, it is clear that the language and specificity of points must be improved in order to increase the utility of the findings. In addition, more quotes must be used to fully capture what was said meaning that the voice of the participant ends up in the grid rather than the Pioneer Delegate’s interpretation of what was said.

In conclusion, the grids provide an effective means of summarising the findings of the PE that Pioneers and Delegates find easy to follow. The problem arises from a lack of detail and specificity and a tendency to be vague or rely on clichés that do not provide actionable information. To rectify this situation Pioneers and Delegates need to be encouraged to write precisely and be specific. But, what is also needed is improvements in the process of how the data is collected, especially having questions on which every group is able to provide an answer. However, overall, as a way of presenting the data, the grid is largely successful.

Analysis of the data in this entire section reveals that the GFP PE model achieves a great deal in terms of bringing the groups directly and indirectly affected by the programme together (**Q7**), granting them a voice (**Q9**), and recording the findings down in way that can be shared with all relevant parties (**Q16**). Moreover, this process offers capacity-building opportunities for Pioneers and Delegates,

¹²⁵ Pioneers and Delegates, Georgia PE Final Grid, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014.

¹²⁶ Pioneers and Delegates, Rubavu Three PE Final Grid, Rubavu, Rwanda. May 2014.

including organisation and facilitation skills (**Q12** and **Q13**). These strengths are demonstrated by both the observations of staff in the checklists and the reflections of volunteers in the AARs.

However, each of the fifteen case studies examined in this report reveal weaknesses in the process. Chief among these are problems with attendance, the challenge of the Focus Groups and the Large Group Discussion. The latter two issues are complicated by pre-set questions that people found over-complex, irrelevant and repetitive (**Q3**: who designed the process, **Q6**: flexibility, and **Q11**: where does decision making power lie?). These three challenges, alongside other more minor hurdles (such as timing), prevent the GFP model from consistently achieving what it sets out to do. The model needs to be made more accessible (**Q5**) to Pioneers and Delegates so that it is easier to implement and resonates to a greater extent with those who participate in it. To understand clearly what needs to change there is no place better to look than the opinions and reflections of those who observed and enacted the process, and it is to here that the report's attention will now turn.

3.4 What Changes are Needed to the PE Process?

This final section of the findings chapter unearths actionable recommendations to change the process based on the experiences of staff and volunteers. It uses the twenty OCs and fifteen AARs, from each of the PEs, to survey both groups on how the GFP PE model should change. As with the section on strengths and weaknesses, each OC is treated as one unit of analysis as the reflections at the end of the checklist (*see Appendix One*) were informed by the PE the staff had just observed rather than general, abstract considerations about the process. This decision was made by the researchers to capture the full range of ideas written by staff. The data presented here is based in two different question sets from the OCs and the AARs (*see Appendix Two*), which explains why the coding does not always overlap. However, as with the strengths and weaknesses section above, they were grouped together so that the perspectives of staff and volunteers could be compared.

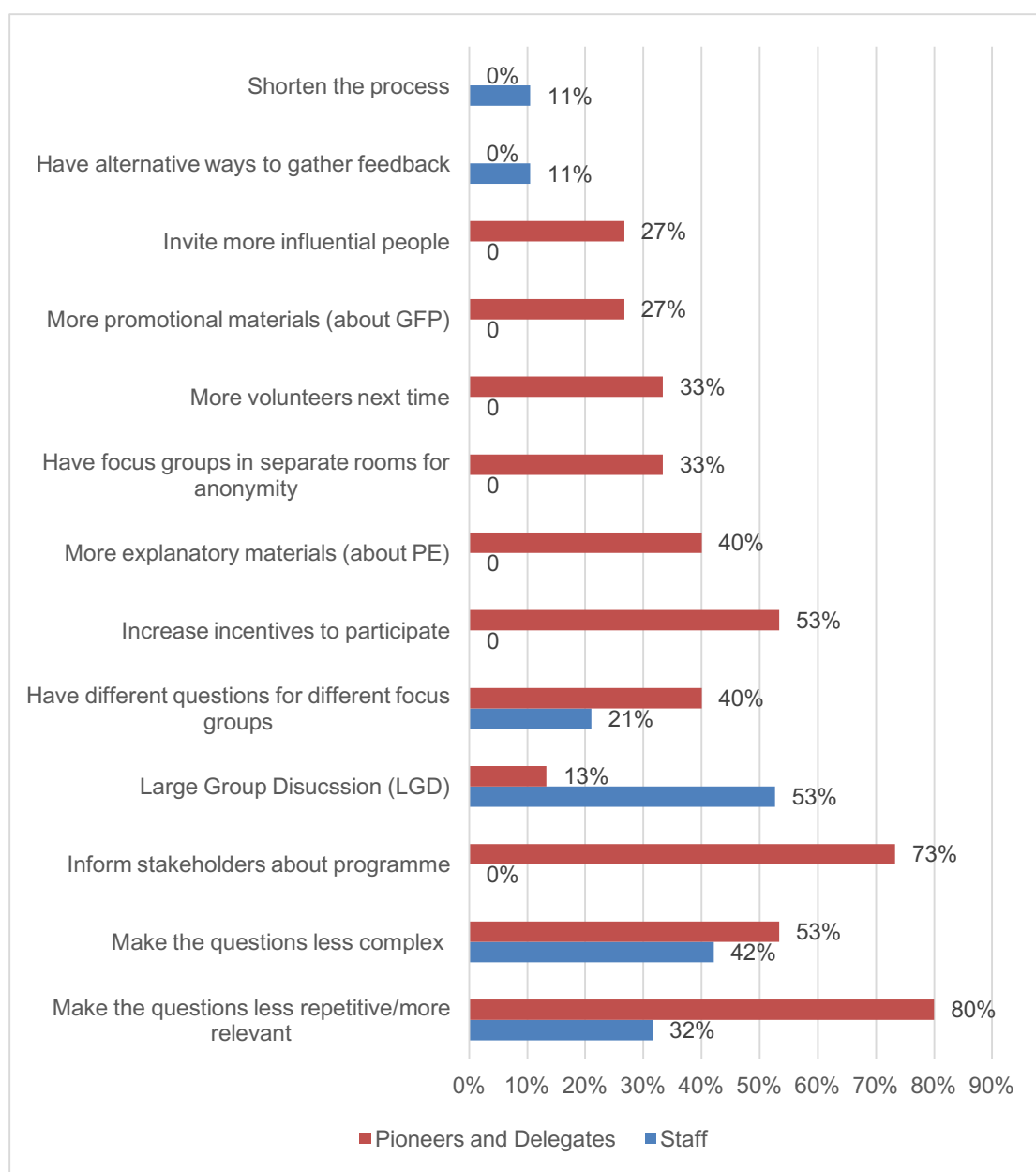


Chart 3.19: Percentage of times coded themes arose from answers to questions concerning what changes are needed to the PE process. Based on nineteen OCs and fifteen AARs, collected at fifteen PEs.

In terms of volunteer consultation, it is here that Pioneers and Delegates feedback will have the most influence, as what they wrote down will inform the recommendations and conclusions of this report. In this regard, the report forms part of the answer to **Q16** on the checklist, ‘who uses the results and how will they be used?’ It represents GFP listening to what the volunteers have said, which will in turn lead to the volunteers being able to influence the process (**Q3**). As mentioned in the strengths and weaknesses section the AARs represent a consultation of volunteers and an opportunity for them to participate in the design of the process. If the AARs are effective at providing information then they can be regarded as having some control over the process (**Q11**), meaning that power is spread out among the key constituent groups of the PE – staff and volunteers. Whether or not these suggestions are acted upon, cannot, of course, be commented on at this juncture.

In terms of effectiveness, however, the combined data of the OCs and AARs present strong findings and areas of consensus on where change is needed. Chief among these are alterations to questions, changes to PE day process, and steps to increase participation. These points echo the findings of the previous sections, based on staff observations of the individual components of the process. Each of these suggestions will be considered in turn alongside a discussion, and how they relate to issues identified in the literature.

In terms of what changes were needed, the questions (asked in the Focus Groups and repeated in the Large Group Discussion) dominated respondent's answers, with three distinct themes emerging. First, the most popular recommendation overall, mentioned at 80 per cent of AARs and in 32 per cent of staff responses (see *Chart 3.19*), was to make the questions more relevant and less repetitive. Respondents felt that the number of questions could be significantly reduced or at least that they should not be repeated in the Large Group Discussion. In one of the Kyrgyz PEs they noted how the questions did not engage participants, who quickly became bored and left spaces blank.¹²⁷ This was coupled by a perception that the questions did not resonate with those who had to answer them: in Macedonia they expressed that they were too general and did not relate to the conflict their programme had addressed.¹²⁸ The second theme was that they are over-complex, which was mentioned in 42 per cent of staff responses and 53 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates' responses (see *Chart 3.19*). In one of the Zimbabwean PEs, for example, respondents found certain terminology such as 'Programme Logic' very difficult to follow.¹²⁹ The third theme was that there should be different questions for different focus groups. This ties in with the idea of relevance, as in many cases the Beneficiary Community or Key Stakeholders were not able to answer certain questions as they did not concern them or they had no direct experience of what the question was asking them about.¹³⁰

These three themes reveal that the questions need significant revision to make the process more accessible (**Q5**) and relevant. The questions asked dictate the quality and content of the information produced, so improving them will bring significant benefits to the overall model. This goes back to the lack of influence Pioneers and Delegates had over designing the process. Having rigid, pre-set questions harms the flexibility of the process (**Q6**) and its ability to adapt to different contexts. As Adams and Garbutt argue, flexibility is vital for participatory processes. If participants feel they can influence the process and improve it for the better they are more likely to value it.¹³¹ Although set questions are preferable for making the results comparable, the findings demonstrate that Pioneers and Delegates need to have greater control over the questions asked at the PE in order to make the entire process more relevant, accessible and locally-grounded – which is, after all, a key component of what makes a process participatory.

¹²⁷ Pioneers and Delegates, Karakol AAR, Karakol, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

¹²⁸ Pioneers and Delegates, Tetevo AAR, Tetevo, Macedonia. April 2014

¹²⁹ Pioneers and Delegates, Midlands State University AAR, Harare, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

¹³⁰ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹³¹ Adams, Jerry, and Anne Garbutt. "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia," 3.

Among Pioneers and Delegates, the second most common theme (mentioned at 73 per cent of AARs) was the need to inform stakeholders (including, in GFP terminology, the Beneficiary Community and Key Stakeholders) about the programme throughout its duration to increase the likelihood that they will attend the PE.¹³² In the Georgian AAR they elaborated on this point to say they could send weekly newsletters complete with pictures to keep them engaged and interested in the programme.¹³³ This was echoed in the Nepali AAR in which they attributed poor attendance to a general lack of the communication prior to the PE.¹³⁴ This strong findings reflects what is said in the literature. Lennie argues that in order to ensure community engagement the community should be involved throughout the process.¹³⁵ For GFP updating potential attendees will involve the community in the programme beyond the Target Group. Moreover, once they turn up at the PE, it will mean they have more to contribute. The researchers believe that this is the key to ensuring more representative attendance at the PEs as it targets the groups who did not show up the most – the Beneficiary Community and Key Stakeholders.

Among staff, the most common response overall (53 per cent) was that the Large Group Discussion is ineffectual, does not produce enough findings, is overlong, and – as mentioned – does not result in an actual discussion (**Q10**: social negotiation).¹³⁶ This was also mentioned by 13 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates. On this issue, although respondents were very clear about the need for change, they were less forthcoming about what specific alterations were needed. Two members of staff did provide suggestions, however. These included reducing the numbers of questions used and decreasing the responses discussed to just one key point for each question.¹³⁷ The thinking behind these points was that if you reduce the amount of time spent presenting the findings it will increase the chances of the audience staying engaged and of an actual discussion taking place. Social negotiation is a vital component of what makes processes participatory, but the element of the GFP model that gives space for this is not succeeding.

Among volunteers, the most common recommendation was to have more incentives for participation. Clearly, this reflects a disappointment with the level of participation/the representativeness of attendees at the PEs. Incentives included ‘rewards’ for participation such as t-shirts, pens, or certificates; or perks such as sit-down meals or fun activities. This would serve the dual function of encouraging people to attend alongside raising the organisation’s profile at a community level.¹³⁸ Although this would result in a slightly increased budget, these recommendations would not be too

¹³² Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹³³ Pioneers and Delegates, Tbilisi AAR, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014.

¹³⁴ Pioneers and Delegates, Kathmandu AAR, Kathmandu, Nepal. June-July 2014.

¹³⁵ Lennie, June. “Increasing the Rigour and Trustworthiness of Participatory Evaluations : Learnings from the Field,” 28.

¹³⁶ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹³⁷ Observation Checklist Two, Tbilisi PE, Tbilisi, Georgia. May-June 2014; Observation Checklist Sixteen, Rubavu PEs (one, two and three) Ngoma PE, Rubavu/Ngoma, Rwanda. May 2014.

¹³⁸ Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

difficult to act upon for GFP. This validates what is said in the literature about the need to be flexible (Q6) and adaptive to local needs in order to make participants value and respect a process.¹³⁹ The process may benefit Pioneers and Delegates as they acquire new skills, but it also needs to benefit those who attend. Making it more celebratory, including more merchandise or a meal would provide this incentive and increase attendance.

Two connected themes that emerged from the AARs concerned more support from HQ through the provision of materials. Firstly, in 40 per cent of AARs Pioneers and Delegates require more explanatory materials about the PE process.¹⁴⁰ At one of the Zimbabwean PEs, they asked for a specific example (case study) of how to carry out a PE so that they can better understand the process.¹⁴¹ This connects back to the problem of communicating the process to volunteers (Q4), which the section on planning found to be largely unsuccessful. However, as noted above, the researchers are unable to comment on whether this was caused by weak learning materials or a lack of volunteer engagement with those materials. Nevertheless, GFP can still increase and diversify the type of resources used to explain the process. Linked to this, at 27 per cent of the AARs, Pioneers and Delegates spoke of the need to have promotional materials to hand out at the PE to raise awareness of GFP and the programmes they run (see *Chart 3.19*).¹⁴² This ties back to the advantage of the PE model raised by volunteers in that it promotes GFP in the community and raises awareness of the work that they do.

Two more connected themes that arose concern how the PE room itself can reflect the power structures of the society outside and therefore certain groups may not feel able to speak out. At 33 per cent of AARs, the need to hold Focus Groups in separate rooms so that the comments could be anonymous was suggested.¹⁴³ At both Kyrgyz PEs, for example, Pioneers and Delegates were concerned that the students were not able to express themselves freely.¹⁴⁴ A connected point, mentioned by 11 per cent of staff, was to have alternate ways of collecting feedback, such as an anonymous comments box (see *Chart 3.19*). Both these suggestions link back to the idea that emerged in the weaknesses/challenges section that the process does not elicit honest information. Although this idea is not participatory in the truest sense of the word (in that it is not open or transparent) it may encourage people to fully express themselves in contexts where they feel unable to do so publicly, which can be deemed as encouraging participation as it allows them to overcome the power structure that hinders their participation in the first place. This connects back to the idea

¹³⁹ Adams, Jerry, and Anne Garbutt. "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia," 3.

¹⁴⁰ Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Pioneers and Delegates, Karakol AAR, Karakol, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, Osh AAR, Osh, Kyrgyzstan. August-September 2014.

raised in the literature, of the need to remain vigilant of power and control throughout the PE process.¹⁴⁵

Other themes that emerged were the need to have more volunteers to reduce the workload (mentioned by 33 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates), the need to invite more influential people to raise the profile of the event (mentioned by 27 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates), and the need to shorten the overall process (mentioned by 11 per cent of staff).¹⁴⁶ The first and third of these remaining themes connect to the idea that the process is too demanding and time-consuming, which was a major theme in the weaknesses/challenges section. The second theme, on the need to invite more influential people to the PE, links back to the need for increased attendance – the more influential the participants the more important the event appears.

These findings coincide with the main findings of the section the process in that they largely relate to three key areas: the questions (asked at the Focus Groups), the Large Group Discussion, and increasing attendance through engagement and incentives. Changing the first two of these would make the process accessible (**Q5**), more fruitful, and more responsive to local needs. Improving attendance would increase how representative (**Q8**) the process is, which would greatly enhance the GFP PE model's participatory credentials. Other changes that emerged from the data concerned making the process easier to follow (more explanatory materials), maximising its utility (promoting materials), and enhancing the egalitarian nature of the event (alternate feedback and anonymity). All of these points have recurred again and again, in different manifestations, throughout the analysis of the findings. Collectively, they provide a powerfully clear agenda for change so that the GFP PE process can adapt, improve, and get closer to achieving its stated aims.

Part of this agenda came from the AARs, which served as a consultation of Pioneers and Delegates about how they had found the process and where they thought it could be improved. Early on in this report it was identified that a weakness of the GFP model was that it was designed in a very un-participatory way. The problems arising from this are no more apparent than with the questions, which failed to resonate or connect with participants. These AARs seek to rectify that situation by giving some control over process design to Pioneers and Delegates, in that they influence the form it takes in the future. After analysing the results, some strong action points emerged that can lead to change and improvement. However, if Pioneers and Delegates are going to maintain a level of control over the process, these AARs need to remain as a continuous feedback loop valued and utilised by HQ for constant learning and improvement. The AARs need to be incorporated into PE model itself.

¹⁴⁵ Gregory, Amanda. "Problematising Participation: A Critical Review of Approaches to Participation in Evaluation Theory," 194.

¹⁴⁶ GFP Staff, All OCs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014; Pioneers and Delegates, All AARs, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. April-September 2014.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the report by providing a final, filled-out participatory checklist based on the analysis of the GFP process. It then goes on to provide recommendations that have dual applicability – both to GFP and the broader PM&E field. It finishes with a conclusion that recaps the report's main findings and arguments.

- The Final Checklist -

In order to assess PEs, a checklist was chosen over a definition as it is more analytically useful; participatory processes are enormously diverse in terms of their motivations, aims and outcomes, and therefore its facets are more accurately captured through a list of components than a single written definition. This checklist is a tool that can be used to help design a PE, review it, or both. It can also be used for subsequent reviews. The checklist was developed so that it could be moulded to assess a specific PE process. The user can remove or add elements to the list depending on what they think is relevant to the PE that they are reviewing.

In this report, the first checklist, introduced at the end of the introductory session, was developed through a thorough scan of the existing literature and then used during the findings section to provide a comprehensive assessment of the GFP process. Specifically, the checklist was used in capturing the different elements of the process, where they succeed, and where they need to be improved. The final checklist consists of questions about each component; a checklist of the different points to consider within that component, based on the reading of the literature and what is preferable for the PE under review; a verdict on the GFP process, taken from the analysis of the findings from the fifteen case studies under review; and, a consideration of what future steps should be taken to help the GFP model achieve its goals. For the last component, more detail is provided in the recommendations section. This completed checklist provides a wealth of information on the GFP process that is broken down into different components, but it also serves as an example of how other organisations can use it to examine their own processes. As mentioned, at the end of the introductory chapter, this list is not rigid. It is designed to be malleable, so that it can be altered to suit different purposes, which reflects the diversity of international development interventions, whether they be peace-building ones or otherwise. What this tool does allow people to do is to think about interventions in a systematic way that are easily comparable. Below the GFP model is used as an example of how the tool can be used.

This checklist provides answers to each of the questions based on the analysis of the GFP process, which has been covered in the findings section above. The final part of the checklist incorporates new elements taken from the reflections of staff and volunteers, which allows for a merger of theoretical and practical interests as the different components of a PE should, ideally, address both.

Question	Description	✓/✗	Organisation-Specific Findings	Action Points
Motivations and Objectives				
What reasoning lay behind the decision to use participatory forms of M&E? (Q1)	<p><i>The reasons behind choosing participatory methods depend heavily on the overall aims of the programme intervention and will be unique to each organisation, but some of the main reasons and objectives are listed below as guiding examples.</i></p> <p><i>Users should add more points to check off based on the specific approach they are evaluating.</i></p>			
	The PE brings practical benefits/reduced workload.	✓	For an organisation with relatively small HQ operations, but with a very large volunteer base, PE was chosen as it reduces staff workloads and hands control over to the volunteers.	With practice for the volunteers the workload for staff will be reduced; so it needs to be ensured that volunteers are familiar with the process.
	Politically, PE is preferable as it hands over evaluative control to the community.	✓	PE coincides with GFP's mandates of volunteer-led, community-based peace-building programmes as it hands evaluative control over to the community.	Where possible, future PEs should be adjusted in accordance with community feedback so that community members truly contribute to the design of the process.
	Epistemologically, PE is beneficial as its inclusiveness allows the process to produce more knowledge.	✓	PE was chosen as it provides a chance for a diverse array of actors in the community to speak about the programme. Collectively, their opinions provide a wealth of detail.	Ensure that there is representative attendance to make sure that this advantage is achieved.

What are the objectives of the process? (Q2)	Improved organisational learning.	✓	With PE GFP is able to collect more information from a more diverse array of people which helps to attune programming to local contexts.	GFP should always refer to the findings prior to the next cycle of programmes to ensure that the organisation makes use of the information gathered.
	To make programming more responsive to local needs.	✓	Through hearing from such an array of people the process is able to decipher what their interests and needs are.	Ensure that this information is acted upon in future programme designs and other kinds of community engagement.
	Building the capacity of those who partake.	✓	Through PE GFP aims to increase its volunteer's skills and allow them to be major beneficiaries of the process.	Volunteers should be equipped with stronger facilitation skills so that their capacity continues to develop.

The Process				
Who designed the process? (Q3)	The process is aimed at benefiting those who partake in it and thus they should have a say in its design.			
	Participants/implementers co-designed the PE process with staff.	x	Neither the participants nor the implementers had any say over its design.	See box below.
	<i>OR: The practicality of the option above will largely depend on scale: if the participatory model will be used at many sites across different contexts it would be difficult to involve all those who will implement it in its design.</i>			
	Participants/implementers were consulted in the design of the process (this can take the form of workshops or focus groups and the feedback received needs to shape the eventual form of the process).	x	The participants/implementers were not consulted prior to the PE but were consulted afterwards. Their feedback forms the findings of this report.	The feedback of volunteers, based on this consultation, needs to be used in the redesign of the PE process. Giving them entire control over the process is not deemed practically feasible, but this consultation will mean that they have a degree of influence and a stake in the model's design. This feedback loop also needs to be maintained at subsequent PEs. See recommendations below.

How is the process communicated to those who will enact and participate in it? Is that communication effective? (Q4)	The process needs to be communicated in a clear and simple way to those who will be implementing it:.			
	Communication of the process took into account varying levels of capacity and comprehension among the implementers and participants.	✗	No, currently all materials were standardised.	Diversify the materials used. Including translation.
	Diverse mediums were used to communicate the process, such as hand-outs, demonstration videos or trainings.	✓	Yes, hand outs were used along with field visits, which involved trainings. However, the latter is not sustainable for future PEs.	The remote mediums of communication need to be diversified to include online videos and other materials. <i>See recommendation in section below.</i>
	If necessary, further support, such as mentoring, was provided.	✓	Yes, further support was provided, including field visits to each of the PE sites.	Continue to provide support to PEs, although in future do so remotely.
	If necessary, materials were translated into the local language.	✗	This did not happen for preparation materials, which means that the learning materials could not be used by everyone.	In future, translate key materials, especially in contexts where English is not widely spoken

How accessible is the process (is it easy to understand and implement)? (Q5)	Clear and simple communication (see above) will greatly enhance accessibility, but a process also needs to be accessible in itself, meaning that it needs to be easy to follow and easy to implement.			
	An assessment was carried out on what those who will implement and participate in the PE are able to do.	✗	Although staff may have known about volunteer capacities and the characteristics/traits of the participants, no formal assessment was carried out.	In future, a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) could be carried out with the volunteers to find out what skills they have. See recommendation below.
	Based on this assessment, the PE was easy to follow and to implement.	✗	The researchers believe that without staff support on the ground the volunteers would not have been able to implement a successful PE. Moreover, the process is incredibly demanding in terms of time/resources and required advanced skills that not every implementer possessed. The inaccessibility of the model undermined Pioneers and Delegates' ability to implement it correctly which had a negative impact on the outcome of the process.	To make PEs more accessible, volunteers need to be consulted in the process's design (which this report forms part of), invest more in increasing volunteer capacity, and improve/diversify ways of training people in the approach. For all of these points, see the recommendations below.
	Based on this assessment, the PE allows for those who implement the process and those who participate to develop new skills or areas of knowledge.	✓	Certainly, the PE was a learning process for all involved. For the Pioneers and Delegates it developed their capacity; for the participants/community it raised awareness about the programme.	Refine capacity-building elements. See capacity building section below.

How flexible is the process (is it predetermined/standardised or is it able to adapt to local needs)? (Q6)	<i>As participatory processes aim to be grounded in the community rather than being external and removed, flexibility is key.</i>			
	The process is flexible so that it can adapt to local conditions and meet local needs.	✗	No, currently the process is not flexible. It is a standardised model that is applied in the same way every where. However, this standardisation brings enormous benefits to an organisation that works in so many diverse contexts.	Make the process more attuned to local contexts by consulting the volunteers in its design and provide more leeway for them to decide on what questions to ask and how to ask them. See <i>recommendations below</i> .
	OR <i>But, the more flexible (i.e. how much it changes to suit each context) a process is the less directly comparable the results will be. So, when deciding on the level of flexibility, it needs to be decided which is more important.</i>			
	The PE is predetermined and standardised so that it is able to yield comparative results across contexts/locations.	✓	Yes, currently the model is entirely standardised so that it yields data that is directly comparable across sites and can be taught in a formulaic way.	The standardised process brings enormous benefits to the organisation but steps can be taken to make it more flexible without sacrificing its generalisability, as mentioned in the box above. For more details, see <i>recommendation below</i> .
Inclusion and Representativeness				
Level of intended inclusion (who's invited to the PE)? (Q7)	Participatory processes should invite people from all the groups that were involved with the programme and the groups that were effected, either directly or indirectly by it.			
	All groups who implemented, participated, and were indirectly effected by the programme are invited to the PE.	✓	Yes. The PE aims to be completely inclusive by involving all groups.	None deemed necessary.

Representativeness (how representative of are they of those directly and indirectly effected by the programme)? (Q8)	<i>However, having each member those groups (see above) attend the PE may not be feasible due to the sheer amount of people. If this is the case, then a representative number need to attend.</i>			
	Each group involved with the PE is represented.	✗	No, several PEs had groups that were not represented or were underrepresented, which undermined the inclusive credentials of the approach.	To improve attendance attendees need to be more involved with the programme from the start, local networks need to be mobilised to ensure attendance, and people need to have a greater incentive to attend. <i>See recommendations below for more information.</i>
	Each group involved with the PE is represented in equal or proportionate numbers:	✗	No, for the GFP model the Target Group and Beneficiary Community should be present in equal numbers, with balanced numbers of stakeholders, and this was not the case in many of the PEs.	<i>As above.</i>
Whose perspective is valued? (Q9)	<i>The approach should value all perspectives equally and ensure that all individuals present who represent all groups involved (either directly or indirectly) with the programme are given an equal chance to speak and be heard.</i>			
	The PE values each groups perspective equally.	✓	The PE is designed to do so and gives an equal or proportionate space to each group involved. However, the lack of attendance or unrepresentative attendance at some PEs undermined this element.	Improve attendance. <i>See above.</i>
	Each group is given a platform, a chance to speak and be heard.	✓	Yes, the Focus Groups give each group a chance to voice their concerns and the Large Group Discussion gives them a chance to be heard by others.	Make changes to both the Focus Groups (including further training and alterations to the questions) and the Large Group Discussion. <i>See recommendations below.</i>

Social Negotiation				
Level of social negotiation (to what extent does the process provide an opportunity for different interests, values, and needs to be negotiated building social cohesion and encouraging cooperation)? (Q10)	<i>As the PE should bring different groups from the community together it should also allow for social negotiation between those groups.</i>			
	The PE allows for different opinions, interests, and values to be shared and discussed.	✗	Although the model does aim for this, currently the data shows that it is not being achieved. The Large Group Discussion does not result in sufficient negotiation.	The Large Group Discussion needs to change. The questions should be reduced and more space for discussion allowed. See <i>recommendation below</i> .
	Through this, the PE allows the community to reach compromises and agreements for issues for which they share a mutual concern.	✗	Likewise, although the PE does aim to achieve this. The difficulties encountered during the Large Group Discussion prevented it from doing so.	See <i>above</i> . An improved Large Group Discussion is integral to achieving this.
Power				
Where does decision-making power lie (who is really in charge of the process)? (Q11)	A chief aim of PE is to hand over evaluative control to the community. Therefore, the community itself should hold the decision making power.			
	The programme implementers are in charge of the process.	✓	Although, in the cases under review, staff provided close supervisions, the programme implementers – Pioneers and Delegates – are in charge of the process.	In future PEs, complete control can be handed over to the Pioneers and Delegates.
	At the PE, the community hold decision making power.	✓	Technically, yes. Although the Pioneers and Delegates held control and the weaknesses of the Large Group Discussion prevented the decision making power of the group from being realised.	Improving the Large Group Discussion would enhance this element of the process.

Empowerment/Benefits				
What capacity building opportunities does the process present for those involved? (Q12)	<i>This depends heavily on what the overall aims of the programmes and the PE is. But, ideally, the process should allow those involved to build their capacity alongside evaluating their programme.</i>			
	The PE develops the capacity of those who implement and partake within it.	✓	Yes, significantly. See below for further details.	For all these capacity building elements, capacity building potential could be expanded to the other groups involved in the PE.
	Thinking point: <i>which types of capacity are developed?</i> ¹⁴⁷ <i>Below are just areas of capacity building that are relevant to the PE model analysed in this report, more can be added depending what is being examined.</i>			
	Organisational.	✓	Yes, through arranging the PE (finding a venue/transportation and inviting attendees) Pioneers and Delegates develop organisational skills.	None.
	Facilitation.	✓	Through hosting the PE, holding focus groups and the Large Group Discussion Pioneers and Delegates develop facilitation skills.	However, the findings reveal that facilitation skills need to be improved in trainings and learning materials facilitation needs to become a focus for future PEs.
	Data collection/analysis.	✓	Through gathering data from the participants and themselves, then condensing that information and sharing it with HQ, Pioneers and Delegates develop these skills.	None.
	Networking.	✓	Through contacting people, inviting them to attend, interacting with them and making connections the Pioneers and Delegates develop networking skills. Moreover, all those who participate expand their networks and enhance their community ties.	None.

¹⁴⁷ Other potential skills developed by the process include public speaking, public relations, and translation.

Who gains from the participatory process? (Q13)	Everyone in attendance should gain from the process: staff and the organisation, volunteers, and those directly or indirectly effected by the programme.			
	The process benefits everyone (even if it is in different ways).	✓	Yes, the process benefits everyone. But, it benefits some groups far more so than others.	N/A
	<i>Thinking Point: which groups benefit? It may be useful to look at a breakdown of the main groups.</i>			
	Do staff/the organisation benefit? If so, how?	✓	Staff gain as they are provided with comprehensive information about the programme with their (in theory) minimal involvement. Although in the cases under review their involvement was heavy, however presumably this will decrease as the volunteers become more familiar with the process.	Staff need to continue to provide support with PE but their workloads should reduce significantly as volunteers become more familiar with the process.
	Do volunteers/implementers benefit? If so, how?	✓	Pioneers and Delegates gain as they get to evaluate their programme, see the tangible results, and acquire new skills.	Refine capacity building elements of the process, especially facilitation skills.
	Do the programme participants benefit? If so, how?	✓	The Target Group gain somewhat as they get to see the results of their programme, reconnect with people, and partake in a fun event. However, the benefits reaped by them are minimal.	Allow them to gain more. Provide more of an incentive. See <i>recommendations below</i> .
	Does the larger community benefit? If so, how?	✓	The wider community gain somewhat as they get the see the results of their programme, make social connections/have valuable interactions, and partake in a fun event. However, the benefits reaped by them are minimal.	Allow them to gain more. Provide more of an incentive to attended. See <i>recommendations below</i> .

The Results				
What is measured? (Q14)	The PE should look at what happened and why that happened on the programme. What unanticipated or unconnected changes occurred and what future steps should be taken.			
	Does the PE create knowledge about what happened and why on the programme?	✓	Yes, this is the primary aim of the PE and a lot of time is devoted to finding this out.	None needed.
	Does the PE create knowledge about unanticipated or unconnected changes?	✓	Yes, questions cover these areas and the findings show that changes were revealed that had not been expected.	None needed.
	Does the PE allow for the planning of future steps?	✓	Yes, this question was asked and the Write Up and Sharing allowed for consideration of the next steps to be taken	In the educational materials more emphasis can be placed on how the PE both closes one programme cycle and opens another, which should encourage planning for future programmes.
Who uses the results and how are they used? (Q15)	<i>The results should be made available to all those who were involved and all those effected by the programme. In terms of how they are used, they should contribute to the design of future programmes and to organisational learning</i>			
	Are the results made available to everyone involved with the PE?	✓	Based on the findings of the PEs, reports will be published and made available to all the relevant parties online. The also were also shared the PE	Ensure that every interested party is able to access the reports from their PE.
	Are the results used in such a way that allows them to shape future action?	✓	The analysis of the AARs and the staff observations of the Write Up and Sharing illustrate that the results have an immediate use that go into thinking about the next programme cycle. The results are also shared with HQ and key staff members use them to improve future programming. The results were also used to write this report, which is aimed at improving the GFP process and the data it yields.	Keep on using the results in the implementation of the next and all subsequent programmes. The knowledge produced by the process needs to be carefully managed to ensure it is available to all and utilised to the maximum.

Additional Questions based on the findings¹⁴⁸

Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Community Engagement

Does the process increase the organisation's credibility and legitimacy in the community? (Q16)	<i>Given that a PE hands evaluative control over to the community it should also serve the dual function of increasing the organisation's credibility and legitimacy within that community.</i>			
	Does the PE increase the organisation's credibility and legitimacy in the community where it takes place?	✓	From the findings, just over half of Pioneers and Delegates and just under half of staff responses felt this was the case, so based on this it can be concluded that the PE does so.	Mention this as an advantage in the educational materials.
	Does the PE foster trust within the community towards the organisation and the activities it has?	✓	Linked to the point above, through inviting the community, valuing their opinion, and raising awareness of activities, the researchers feel the PEs achieved this.	Mention this as an advantage in the educational materials.
	Does the PE increase networks and support on the ground?	✓	Yes, from the findings, over 70 per cent of Pioneers and Delegates and just under 40 per cent of staff responses mentioned this. As it brings everyone together, the process expands networks.	Mention this as an advantage in the educational materials

¹⁴⁸ The additional points listed below demonstrate how the list can be adapted to assess a specific approach. These components are very important to the GFP model (as identified by staff and volunteers), but they may not be so important when assessing models used by other organisations.

Does it raise awareness of programme activities? (Q17)	Does the PE raise awareness of the programme within the community?	✓	Yes, the PE serves as an advocacy event that allows people to find out more about what GFP does, which volunteers noted increased interest.	Mention this as an advantage in the educational materials. Emphasising that the PE is an opportunity to tell the community about the programme volunteers have worked on and promote future work that they will do.
	Does the PE raise awareness of the goals of developmental work more broadly?		Currently, no.	The PE could do more to introduce GFP and what community-based peace-building aims to achieve.
Celebration and rewards				
Does the PE allow for the celebration of achievements? (Q18)	<i>As well as being inclusive and egalitarian, a PE can also be an opportunity to reward people and congratulate them for the work that they do. Having a celebratory component to the event can also make it more enjoyable for those who attend and increase the likelihood that they will value the process.</i>			
	Does the PE allow for a celebration of achievement?	✓	Yes, volunteers highlighted this as a key advantage. The PE represents a rewarding experience for those who had worked hard to make the programme happen.	However, this element of the process could be strengthened by incorporating more fun activities into the process. See <i>recommendations below</i> .

Does everyone who participates gain, in terms of material or other incentives? (Q19)	<i>Likewise, in terms of increasing the likelihood that people will value the process, some form of memento or personal gain would endear people to towards the process and future programme activities. This could be material, such as a pen, a t-shirt or hat, or it could be immaterial such as making the event fun and celebratory (see above) or allowing the community to have conversations about issues of mutual concern that they would not have otherwise had.</i>			
	Does the PE provide material rewards (such as merchandise) to participants?	✓	Not always.	Merchandise such as pens, hats or t-shirts should be handed out. The findings of this report show that people value such tokens. See <i>recommendation below.</i>
	Does the PE provide experiential rewards (is it enjoyable/entertaining or socially valuable)?	✓	In some cases, but not always.	This could be improved by making the PE more celebratory through meals or games and having entertainment, such as a dance floor. See <i>recommendation below.</i>
Social control/inequalities				
Does the process seek to overcome social control and inequalities within the PE space, allowing for each participant to speak honestly and openly? (Q20)	<i>A major part of participatory processes is to be inclusive and value opinions equally. But the PE itself cannot be removed from the community in which it takes place: the PE room can form a microcosm of the society outside with the same power structures and mechanisms of social control presents. Steps need to be taken to reduce this burden to allow people to speak openly and honestly.</i>			
	As far as can be observed, does the PE allow everyone to express themselves freely?	✗	Currently, no. Both staff and volunteers highlighted this as a major weakness.	The PE cannot overcome the inequalities and power structures of the society in which it takes place. But, a way to encourage openness would be to have an anonymous feedback box where people can place comments they do not feel comfortable saying out loud. See <i>recommendations below.</i>
	Are alternative outlets to give feedback provided?	✗	Currently, no.	

Table 4.1: The Completed Participatory Checklist

This final checklist has broken down the different elements of participatory processes. It has then assessed the GFP model, the main subject of this report, on each of these elements. The main strength of the checklist is its comprehensiveness. Through a list, based on a thorough reading of the existing literature and the observations and experiences of staff and volunteers, this report has been able to provide a holistic assessment of the GFP model. This has addressed which elements can be

considered participatory and which elements cannot. Alongside this – and what represents the real versatility of the tool – it has also allowed for a consideration of which elements need to be participatory and which elements do not. This has taken into account the practical implications of being participatory in such instances. In the GFP case, for example, having a standardised approach with some contextual leeway (volunteer consultation) is more feasible than an entirely flexible one that moulds itself to different contexts, as the latter would be too challenging to manage and the results yielded would not be comparable. Participatory processes are chosen for many reasons and this tool allows practitioners to judge the process against its own aims and the practical situation it operates in.

Thorough assessments are vital as they allow for constant improvement. Lessons learnt and best practices are crucial to the field as they ensure that no effort and no experience is wasted. Though documenting and assessing their processes, organisations are able to continually learn. In GFP's case, this means that the organisation is able to hear from the groups most relevant to the organisation: the staff, the volunteers and the programme beneficiaries. The checklist, laid out above, ensures that very little is missed. It can also serve as a reference point for future PEs based on past experience, ensuring that the knowledge gained from that experience is applied to future ones.

For the present PE model, the tool above reveals that a lot was achieved for a first round of PEs: volunteers were trained and fifteen different programmes were assessed to understand what happened and why. Yet, the model is new, largely untested, and, naturally, improvements and changes are required. Through using the checklist tool, exactly what is needed in order to allow for the process to live up fully to its stated aims and objectives is clearly presented in the form of action points. In the subsequent section the findings of the table above are developed into recommendations. These form actionable pieces of the information that can improve the GFP model and serve as guidance for other PE models.

- Recommendations -

As mentioned, the action points above briefly described what changes are required, and this section expands on them to provide practical, detailed recommendations that are applicable to both the PM&E field and the GFP model. In addition, the content of these recommendations goes beyond the information in the checklist above to speak to the report's overall argument – among other matters. The recommendations begin by discussing the broader themes, before zooming in on specific components of the GFP process.

- Main Recommendations -

- **Theoretical clarity over the concept of participation:** As demonstrated in the literature, there is confusion over what the term participation means in PM&E due to the multiplicity of aims and motivations behind approaches and a gulf between theory and practice.

- **The checklist:** In order to increase accountability, learning and improvement this report proposes the use of a checklist for organisations working in the international development/peace-building field to assess their PE processes.¹⁴⁹ The checklist should allow for a critical reflection on why participatory processes were chosen, what they aim to do, how they go about it, where they succeed, where they do not succeed, and where changes are needed. The checklist provided in this report serves as an example, that can be adapted and built upon by other users. It demonstrates that participatory processes need to be assessed in a systematic way to give the concept substance in a practical setting. However, whilst offering a means of systematic assessment, the checklist is deliberately flexible so that organisations can alter it to reflect their varying mandates, approaches and desired outcomes.
- **Increase the accessibility of participatory processes (built on Action Points from Q3, Q4, Q5, Q11, Q12 and Q13):** A key finding of this report, based on the investigation of fifteen GFP PEs, is that the benefits of a PE process must be recognised by volunteers and participants in order for it to be successful. In particular, while such an approach renders much comprehensive data to the organisation or group collecting, a PE is demanding on time and human resources and so must be seen as worthwhile by the community. In order to ensure this, PEs need to be made more accessible and attuned to local needs. This report's suggestions for increasing process accessibility are detailed below:
 - **Give those who implement the PE a stake in its design:** If a process is inflexible, designed remotely and imposed on the participants then it will increase the chances that it is inaccessible to them. A PE should resonate with the participants rather than seeming removed from their context.¹⁵⁰ A participatory approach should imbue a sense of ownership and in order for this to occur, it is necessary that the community is consulted in its design. In sum, whether this be through surveys, focus groups or questionnaires, a PE should be designed *together with* the community and not *for* a community. This does not mean that the process cannot still be standardised, however. It just means incorporating a feedback loop into the process so that it can be adapted to suit the needs of those implementing the process; this should be done alongside additional elements, such as questions, being added to explore matters the implementers feel is important.
 - **Let volunteers decide what they want to discover:** The process will yield more informative results if the people from the community decide what needs to be asked. The questions asked during a PE shape the knowledge produced which in turns dictates what steps should be taken after the PE. Therefore, the community that will be responsible for taking action after the

¹⁴⁹ This can also be applied to PM&E in general; the focus on PE alone merely reflects the parochialism of this report.

¹⁵⁰ This echoes what Adams and Garbutt found in their case study – if people are able to shape and alter the process they will value it more. Adams, Jerry, and Anne Garbutt. "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Practice: Lessons Learnt from Central Asia," 3.

PE should have a stake in the type of information they want to unearth. This can take several forms: there could be a pre-set list of questions and implementers can create additional ones covering issues they wish to address; they could be given areas they have to cover then design the questions based around those topics; or, they could come up with the questions and their themes entirely by themselves. What options an organisation chooses will be decided by practical concerns and the importance of generalisability.

- **Invest more in volunteers:** If the PE is going to be demanding on the volunteers in terms of the skills it requires of them, then more investment needs to be made in order to ensure that they have those skills and are able to implement the process effectively. In the case of the GFP process, the findings revealed that more needs to be invested in the facilitation skills of Pioneers and Delegates. If volunteers are to facilitate discussions, they should first and foremost know how to do so. In the same vein, if investing in volunteers is unfeasible, creating processes that speak to existing volunteer skillsets is advisable.
 - **Assess their needs:** to discover what volunteers and other attends can and cannot do carry out an LNA to assess their abilities and base trainings or materials on that assessment. A formal assessment like this will lead to a more efficient evaluation process as it can be geared to the abilities of those who will be in charge.
- **Diversify the mediums used to inform and mentor the principles/purpose of PE:** It is vital that the PE procedure and its underlying premise is understood by those who implement it. This not only ensures consistency amongst implementers in terms of how a PE is carried out logistically, it also encourages ideological 'buy-in'. In the example of GFP, once Pioneers and Delegates understood the rationale behind a PE, they were better able to visualise the benefits and as a consequence were more motivated by the approach. As has surfaced through the GFP example, a way to improve the understanding of a PE process and its underlying premise would be to diversify the mediums used to inform volunteers about the approach. This may include the use of podcasts, videos, webinars, and animations to instruct people about the process.
- **Ensure Representative Attendance (built on Action Points from Q7, Q8, Q9, Q16, Q17, Q18 and Q19):** At a PE representative attendance is vital to ensure that it is an equal community consultation that values all perspectives. The findings of this report reveal that a lack of representative attendance was a situation experienced at many of the GFP PEs under review in this report. In order to ensure representation attendance a PE needs to be more

grounded in the community and provide rewards for those who participate in it. Suggestions for overcoming the attendance problem are detailed below:

- **Involve potential attendees from the beginning:** Involving attendees (particularly non-programme participants) with the programme throughout its duration will keep them engaged and informed. This could be done through setting up an e-mailing list or handing out leaflets/newsletters updating them on the progress of programme activities. This will also mean that non-programme participants will have more to contribute at the PE itself; ultimately, the more they know about the programme the more valuable their participation will be.
- **Use local contacts and networks to advertise/promote the PE:** Local networks, contacts, and local partner organisations can be used by NGOs to encourage people to attend the PE through word of mouth and other mediums, such as letters, emails and flyers. NGOs need to mobilise all their resources to ensure that PEs are consistently well-attended with representative numbers. Moreover, the findings of this report demonstrate that PEs can consolidate/strengthen local networks which can in turn be utilised to improve attendance as programme activities continue.
- **Provide more incentives for people to attend:** A finding from this report, based on the perspectives of volunteers, was that participants at a PE should gain more from partaking in the process. Whilst the data accumulated from a PE should contribute to bettering programming in a participant's community, this long term benefit does not satisfy local participants; rather, they want immediate returns. These can be material rewards such as pens, hats, or t-shirts; or other incentives such as a meal or other social event attached to the PE. These incentives will increase attendance and enhance the PE's ability to foster social cohesion.
 - **Make the processes more 'celebratory' by including other activities alongside the evaluation:** PEs should be fun for those who participate in them. PEs should allow for a celebration of achievements and acknowledgement of hard work. They should take advantage of the fact that often divided communities have come together, by setting a more celebratory mood through games or performances, which can happen alongside the PE. Such activities would help make the event more enjoyable and increase the likelihood of people attending in the future.

- GFP Specific Recommendations -

- Follow-up Research -

- **Carry out further research to assess the success of PEs when guided remotely:** This report has only looked at the first PEs being carried out using the GFP process. Whilst it provides much insight into the effectiveness of the model across different contexts, it does not speak to the long-term applicability of such an approach. In order to properly assess the model a subsequent study should be carried out looking at how effective the process is once Pioneers and Delegates are familiar with it and when assistance from HQ is limited to remote mentoring. The study could provide a verdict on the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the GFP PE model, which is missing in this report.

- The GFP Model -

- **Make the process more flexible by incorporating volunteer consultation into the PE Process (Action Points From Q3, Q4, Q5, and Q11):** This report has argued that many of the issues with the GFP model arise from the fact that volunteers had minimal say in its design. Whilst this may have been necessary for the first version of GFP's PE model, this will have to change in order to ensure a more participatory and sustainable approach in the future. To ensure this, there needs to be a routinised way of consulting volunteers at end of every PE. This is already served well by the AARs/AARs, but this needs to be included as part of the model (currently it is separate to the official PE process) so that it is made explicitly clear to volunteers that their consultation is required and that their recommendations are integral to altering the process. This will likely provide the Pioneers and Delegates with an increased sense of ownership over the PE process – which is vital to their successful implementation of a PE.
 - **Add a question about participation to the PE AAR (once this has been incorporated into the process):** Once the consultative process has been routinised within the PE, the following question should be added to the PE question set, 'In your opinion, to what extent was this evaluation participatory?' The evaluation process itself needs to be constantly monitored. Asking this question will allow the participatory nature of PE to be periodically scrutinised by volunteers.
- **The questions (Q3, Q4, and Q5):** The effects of insufficient volunteer consultation were felt most acutely with the question set, which is in need of significant revision:
 - **Avoid complex terminology:** The phrasing of the complex questions and key terminology such as 'Conflict Context', 'Theory of Change', and 'cost effective' needs to change to increase the accessibility of the PE process. During the GFP PEs, it was a constant struggle to ensure that questions were asked correctly. The questions

were worded and ordered so as to unearth specific answers (as with any structured question set), however with the need for translation in 11 out of 15 PEs and due to the varying levels of facilitation skills amongst GFP volunteers, this order and wording was almost impossible to ensure. Moreover, with most of GFP's volunteers being non-native English speakers, their ability to translate technical terms into their own languages was weak at best. Thus, whether the questions asked in the nine countries were in line with the original set of English questions is uncertain. Language barriers and technical terminology surely contributed to how often the inaccessibility of questions was brought up by volunteers as a challenge during the PEs. Therefore, the researchers would recommend that for future PEs, **volunteers should be consulted** on the type of questions that should be crafted for their specific contexts. The perspective of non-native English speakers would be advantageous in this task. Moreover, words need to be easy to translate into the various languages GFP PEs are conducted in.

- **Have different questions for different focus groups:** The findings from the fifteen GFP PEs revealed that certain questions are not relevant to certain groups due to different experiences with the programme. Currently, the same set of questions is asked for the GFP volunteers, programme Target Group, programme Beneficiary Community, and Key Stakeholders. The researchers suggest that prior to the PE Pioneers and Delegates should go through the Focus Group questions for each group that will attend the PE and decide which questions are relevant to ask. This will save time and result in a more fluid process.
- **Let volunteers design their own questions:** The questions dictate the knowledge produced by the PE process, shaping the outcome. The researchers argue that it is on this area that input from Pioneers and Delegates is most important. GFP can set topics that need to be covered, and perhaps some specific questions that are of interest to the organisation, but Pioneers and Delegates should be the ones who design the majority of the questions. Moreover, they should be allowed to add additional questions that they feel are important.
- **Large Group Discussion (Action Points from Q9, Q10, Q18, and Q19): Reduce the amount of questions asked/allow more space for discussion:** The Large Group Discussion was often found to be overlong and repetitive. A way to alter this situation would be to reduce the number of questions asked and diversify the questions from those asked in the Focus Groups. This would allow more time for discussion and social negotiation. As well, as a result of the large number of questions, the Large Group Discussion was often rigid and resulted in a presentation of Focus Group responses rather than an opportunity to discuss.
 - **Hold an energiser/fun activity between the Focus Groups and Large Group Discussion:** Weariness was frequently observed in the PE discussion. In order to increase concentration and levels of engagement it is necessary to have an energiser

or other fun activity prior to it taking place. In some contexts, games were played and in others certificates were handed out to those who participated in GFP programming. Breaking up the day would be beneficial for future PEs.

- **At the PE, have a box in which people can put comments they do not feel comfortable making in front of the entire group (Action Points from Q20):** Both staff and volunteers found at some of the PEs that participants were unwilling to speak openly due to the presence of other groups. To counter this, it would be good to have a suggestions box in which those who feel uncomfortable speaking can place comments. Although this is un-participatory in the sense that it is not transparent, it will increase participation by giving those present more opportunities to express themselves.
- **Clarify the procedure for the writing up of summaries from the Focus Groups (Action Points from Q4 and Q5):** In the observations many staff observed that there was uncertainty over the writing up of summaries. This process needs to be clarified: how the summaries are composed, what points need to be emphasised, and who should present them. In addition, if there are disagreements over which points to present it should be decided by consensus; this can be established by people raising their hands for which points they would like to include.
- **Additional Recommendations:**
 - 1. Avoid holidays, exam periods, or other busy times when deciding on a date for the PE
 - 2. Suggest that venues are hired for longer than needed to avoid having to cut short the PE due to it running over time;
 - 3. Emphasise the capacity building element of process to increase Pioneers and Delegates' enthusiasm for the process;
 - 4. Encourage the use of networks provided by LPOs to increase and ensure representative attendance;
 - 5. At the Focus Groups, encourage the use of white/blackboards/flipcharts so that participants can see what has been said, which can serve as a reference point;
 - 6. When filling out the grids, encourage the use of precise and specific language that avoids vague phrasing/platitudes and is conducive to collecting actionable information.

- Conclusion -

This report has looked at fifteen case studies of PEs that took place during 2014 in nine different countries to evaluate programmes for the Jordan-based, peace-building organisation, GFP. The findings are based on OCs used by staff who were present at all the PEs, AARs carried out by Pioneers and Delegates just after the PE had taken place, and the grids used to record the information produced by the PE process. The data from all these sources was then thematically coded so that the report was able to comment on the specifics of the process and the information it produces as well as

its overall strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This report is unique in terms of the number and geographical scope of the case studies it has used to draw its conclusion, which have a dual relevance, for both GFP and for the broader PM&E field.

The argument of this report has been twofold: one concerning the PM&E field and the other concerning the GFP PE model. The literature on PM&E illustrates that while there is broad agreement that participatory processes are beneficial there is little consensus on exactly what they consist of or what participation means in a practical setting. This report sought to rectify this situation by merging theory with practice by designing a checklist informed by the literature to critically examine the GFP PE model. The checklist is both a means of conceiving of participation as well as being a tool to assess participatory processes. It is favoured over a definition as it allows an all-encompassing assessment that captures the motivations and aims behind a process while testing its various components. The checklist formed the basis of the report's argument showing a greater need for critical engagement with the concept of participation and what it means within the field to improve its ability to share, learn, and improve. It serves as a tool that can be used by other NGOs to examine their own PM&E procedures.

It has allowed for a thorough examination of the GFP model. While the model achieves a great deal in terms of handing evaluative power to the volunteers, providing an inclusive consultation of those touched by the programme, building the capacity of volunteers, and providing simple, actionable findings that will lead to improved programming in the future, it also encountered many challenges in the field. These included a lack of facilitation skills among the volunteers; the Large Group Discussion consisting of a presentation rather than a negotiation; the questions being overly complex and seeming irrelevant; and, an inability to achieve representative attendance, which jeopardised the participatory credentials of the entire process. Actionable solutions to these problems are considered above. To conclude, a more theoretical critique of the GFP model is provided here, alongside a consideration of the interplay between theory and practicalities.

This report argued that the PE process was inaccessible to the volunteers in terms of the demands it placed on them, the skills it required of them, and the challenges that arose from implementing a process that they themselves did not influence. Carrying out a PE will always be a demanding process; however, steps can be taken to reduce that burden. If the process is made more accessible it will be easier to implement and increase the chances that it yields useful results. First and foremost, volunteers need to be given a stake in the process's design. If the purpose of the PE is to allow them to evaluate their own programme, decide what to measure, and the steps that need to be taken, then they should have a role to play in its creation. If volunteers are actively consulted in the design of the process then it will seem more relevant, beneficial to them, and enhance their sense of control over the process which will in turn will foster their enthusiasm for it. Moreover, as members of the community in which the PE takes place, it is they who know what to ask and what to look for, far better than the organisation's staff. In participatory terms, the GFP model has climbed the stairs but missed

the first step. The principles behind its different components, such as the Focus Groups and Large Group Discussion, are wholeheartedly participatory, whatever practical challenges they may encounter in the field. What is missing is a sense of ownership among the Pioneers and Delegates – a feeling that they helped design this process to evaluate their programme. The fifteen PEs under review in this report were the first attempts to apply the model.

However, the fifteen PEs under review in this report were the first attempts to apply the model and certain caveats are needed here. This report has argued throughout that the term participation needs to be critically engaged with. As a field, there needs to be more of a discussion on what participation means to enhance the field's ability to learn and share. But this critical engagement extends beyond just this to also think about when participation is appropriate. Rather than just seeing participatory elements as unambiguously positive and un-participatory ones as unambiguously negative, consideration needs to be made of when different methods are appropriate. Based on the example of GFP, it can be expected that the organisation contains evaluative knowledge and expertise that were not shared, on the whole, by the organisation's volunteers. So, therefore, it made sense that GFP design a process and hand it too them, initially at least, rather than having them design their own process. In addition, maintaining certain un-participatory elements are also important. As stated above, the report has argued that the greater consultation is needed in order to give more ownership over the process to the volunteers. But at no stage has this argument gone so far as to say that they should take complete charge over process design, which, if the concept of participation was taken to its logical conclusion they would do. There needs to be a balance. GFP staff need to maintain control over the process to ensure that it produces measurable and generalisable results based on a manageable framework, in order to improve programmes globally; but, the volunteers should also have an input to ensure that the process works for them. The researchers believe that incorporating a continuous feedback loop into the PE process will achieve this for GFP. It will create a process that achieves the best results for all the groups involved. Critically engaging with the concept of participation also means knowing when (and this will depend on many factors) to not be participatory. The checklist, designed in this report, caters to that need. It allows the user to judge a process on each element of participation while also considering where participation is needed and where it is not needed or, indeed, not appropriate.

To summarise, both the arguments covered in this conclusion, on the PM&E field and the GFP process, demonstrate the need for the PM&E procedures to be more reactive to what happens in the field. The theoretical justifications for participation are highly convincing, but agreeing with them alone will not make an individual or organisation able to implement participatory processes. As a field, PM&E needs to clarify what is meant by participation so that is able to grow and improve; as an organisation GFP needs to expand the participatory credentials of its PE process by tapping into the wealth of knowledge produced by its volunteers. In both these pursuits this report represents a positive step.

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Pioneers and Delegates, Prince PE Final Grid, Gweru, Zimbabwe. June 2014.

Appendix One – Observation Checklists

Participatory Evaluation: Observation Checklist

Please complete one checklist per Participatory Evaluation (PE). In the event that multiple PEs are being hosted on the same day, please specify which PE you are referencing to distinguish between them.

Please note that these notes are essential to our bettering the PE process in the future. Detailed and comprehensive notes would be incredibly useful both for us at HQ and for future programmes on the ground. Please write as much as you can – you are not limited to this sheet of paper: typed responses, notebooks, scrap paper etc. are all welcome.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

All staff members are asked to consider the following prior to travel:

*Note: Staff members will have different familiarity with the programme(s) and volunteers prior to entering the field. Please complete this section based on your personal knowledge of the programme.

1. Based on your interactions with Delegates and Pioneers to date, and your preparations from the HQ side:

- a. How familiar do you think the Delegates and Pioneers are with PE?

<i>Not at all familiar</i>	<i>Slightly familiar</i>	<i>Moderately familiar</i>	<i>Very familiar</i>	<i>Extremely familiar</i>
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- b. i. How successful do you think the PE will be?

<i>Not at all successful</i>	<i>Slightly successful</i>	<i>Moderately successful</i>	<i>Very successful</i>	<i>Completely successful</i>
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- ii. Explain why you think this.

DURING PLANNING PHASE

All staff members are asked to look out for the following during the planning of the PE:

- a) i. How familiar were the Delegates and Pioneers with the Participatory Evaluation process when you first met them?

<i>Not at all familiar</i>	<i>Slightly familiar</i>	<i>Moderately familiar</i>	<i>Very familiar</i>	<i>Extremely familiar</i>
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- ii. Explain why you think this.

- b) Detail how the Delegates and Pioneers planned their Participatory Evaluation. (E.g. *Muhammad called the Stakeholders, Jennifer booked the venue, no one remembered to translate the PE questions*)
- c) What type of questions did the Delegates and Pioneers have for you during the Planning process?
- d) What role did you play during the Planning process?

DURING THE PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

All staff members are asked to look out for the following during the conducting of the PE:

1. How many people actually showed up to the PE? Were all groups represented? List any reasons for why or why not.
2. Discuss in as much detail as possible how the Focus Groups were carried out (including the process of creating summaries of the Focus Group discussion). (*Tip: Think about how the Focus Group was organised, how the questions were understood, etc.*).
3. Discuss in as much detail as possible how the Large Group Discussion was carried out. (*Tip: Think about how the Large Group Discussion was facilitated, how responsive people were, etc.*).
4. What role did you play on the day of the Participatory Evaluation?

AFTER THE WRITE UP AND SHARING DAY

All staff members are asked to look out for the following during the Write Up and Sharing of the PE results:

1. Discuss in as much detail as possible how the Write Up and Sharing Day was conducted. (*Tip: Think about how Pioneers and Delegates distributed the workload, how they shared the information collected, etc.*).
2. i. How well did the Delegates and Pioneers understand the purpose of the Write Up and Sharing Day?

<i>Did not understand at all</i>	<i>Understood the purpose slightly</i>	<i>Understood the purpose moderately well</i>	<i>Understood the purpose very well</i>	<i>Understood the purpose completely</i>
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- ii. Please give examples to explain why you think this.
3. Did the Delegates complete the Write Up and Sharing? If yes, how successfully? If no, why not?

AFTER THE PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

All staff members are asked to look out for the following after the PE process is complete:

1. In your opinion, what are the three main benefits to hosting a PE?
2. In your opinion, what are the three main disadvantages to hosting a PE?
3. Can you list three main challenges you observed while viewing the planning and implementation of a PE?
4. If you were to change the PE process, what changes would you make? Why?
5. Could the Participatory Evaluation have succeeded if you worked with the Delegates and Pioneers remotely?

Thank you for completing this document. Your notes are crucial to the bettering of future PEs. And, hopefully, this document has focused your own thoughts on the Participatory Evaluation Process. Please submit your notes to GFPI when complete.

Appendix Two – Debriefs

Participatory Evaluation: Debrief Template for the PE Process

This verbal debrief is the preferred method of asking these questions. If you are unable to conduct this debrief then please distribute the attached questionnaire to all Delegates and Pioneers after the Write Up and Sharing Day.

After each Participatory Evaluation is complete (i.e. at the end of the Write Up and Sharing Day), please use this template to guide a debrief with all Pioneers and Delegates who carried out the PE.

This debrief can be conducted by a member of the HQ Team; it can also be useful for this to be conducted by one of the Pioneers and Delegates involved in the PE.

Debrief Questions:

What went well and why?

(Encourage people to think about successes and how these successes can be ensured in the future)

What can be improved and how?

(Encourage people to think about what can be done better, and to come up with specific recommendations for improvements)

Did you find that Participatory Evaluation was a useful process for evaluating your Generations For Peace Programmes? Why or why not?

Please take detailed notes from this discussion. These notes will be very important in understanding what Pioneers and Delegates felt were their greatest successes and weaknesses, as well as whether they found Participatory Evaluation to be a useful process. Please submit all notes to GFPI when complete.

Appendix Three – the PE Tips Document

Tips For Conducting A Participatory Evaluation

Participatory Evaluation is an approach that brings together **everyone** who is involved in your GFP programme, and asks them to come to an understanding of what happened and why.

In this case, “everyone” in a programme refers to:

- GFP Pioneers and Delegates
- Representatives of Key Stakeholders
- People from your Target Group
- People from the wider Beneficiary Community

By the time you do a Participatory Evaluation, you will have already monitored your programme – you will know how many people attended, how many sessions you held, and you will have measured your indicators. This evaluation will help you understand what this means (for example, if your indicator has changed, what does this mean? Is this good or bad? And why did this happen?)

This guide provides some tips for conducting a Participatory Evaluation (PE). It is intended as an additional resource to the guidance that you already have in the Programming Framework.

A Participatory Evaluation consists of:

1. Focus Groups [Day 1]
2. Big Group Discussion [Day 1]
3. Write-up and Sharing [Day 2 – Pioneers and Delegates only]

Prior to the Participatory Evaluation:

- Invite people from the list above to your Participatory Evaluation
 - *Numbers:* Aim to collect as many people as possible. However, due to scheduling or budget constraints, you may not be able to gather everyone – you might need to gather a *sample* of people instead. In this case, try to bring together about half of the total number of people in each group.
 - For example, if your Target Group has 50 students, try to bring about 25 of them to the Participatory Evaluation.
 - For smaller groups, such as your Delegates and Pioneers, and your Key Stakeholders, you should try to gather *everyone* at the PE.
 - *Representation:* It is not about how many people you gather, but about how many people you *represent* in your evaluation. The idea is for every group to have a voice. Try to gather an equal number from each “group” in your programme.
 - For example, if your Target Group has 60 people (30 men and 30 women), you might invite 30 to your PE. But if all the people who show up are women, you might not get a good sense of what the men thought of your programme. Ideally you would have 15 men and 15 women, to make up a total of 30.
- Choose a neutral venue, where the majority of people invited are likely to be comfortable
- If required, translate the questions you want to ask
- Plan your Focus Groups by filling in the following table:

Table A: Planning Focus Groups and Big Group Discussion

Group invited	Total number attending	No. of people per Focus Group	No. of Focus Groups	No. of Pioneers and Delegates required	Name of person asking questions	Name of person taking notes
GFP Pioneers and Delegates	<i>Example: 20 Delegates are attending</i>	<i>You decide you want no more than 10 people in one Focus Group</i>	<i>You will need 2 Focus Groups for 20 Delegates</i>	<i>4 Pioneers will be required for 2 Focus Groups (2 each)</i>	Group 1: D. Suppiah Group 2: S. Ibn Garba	Group 1: M. Al-Khawaldeh Group 2: One of the Pioneers and Delegates in the Focus Group
Target Group	<i>Example: 30</i>	10	3	6	Group 1: S. Yusuf Group 2: N. Hussein Group 3: L. Hattab	Group 1: A. Al-Nsairat Group 2: M. Almagedi Group 3: S. Abdul Wahed
Beneficiary Community						
Key Stakeholders/ partners						
Big Group Discussion						
Includes all groups invited.				2	S. Ibn Garba	M. Al-Khawaldeh

A blank version of this table is included at the end of this document, to help you plan for your PE.

- If you do not have enough people to both ask questions and take notes, you can assign one neutral person in each Focus Group to take notes. If there is no such person, take notes yourself.
- Now that you know how many people you will have in each Focus Group, you can then think about *who* – within the Beneficiary Community, for example – should be in one Focus Group.
 - Which people will have similar experiences? Will one person's voice drown out another's? Plan to group people in ways that you feel will allow everyone an opportunity to express him or herself.

On the Day of the Participatory Evaluation Itself [Day 1]:

- Conduct the Focus Group with GFP Pioneers and Delegates *first*, before any of your other guests arrive. This will give you:
 - An idea of how a Focus Group is conducted (a very useful trial run)
 - More manpower to do other Focus Groups when your other guests arrive
 - More time to discuss programme-related issues in detail (and less time pressure than when you have over 50 people waiting for you outside!)
- When everyone arrives, make sure you explain clearly what the results of the PE will be used for and who they will be shared with. Explain that by staying and participating in this process, they consent that the information they provide will be used for these purposes
- You will have informed everyone of the agenda for the day before they arrive. You can now remind them of it. Also consider circulating a printed agenda, or posting it outside the door

For each Focus Group, here are two options for taking notes:

- **Option One:** Take with you 2-3 pens and 5 sheets of paper (possibly flipcharts). On these sheets of paper, write the following questions:

1. Understanding what happened and why What worked well and why? What didn't work well and why not? What evidence is there to show outcomes/impacts? Page 1	2. Most Significant Changes What do people consider the most important changes over the last year? What do they believe caused these changes? Why are these changes considered the most important? Page 2	3. Unexpected, unwanted, and unconnected changes Were there any unexpected or unintended outcomes/impacts? Have there been any negative outcomes/impacts? What else was happening that could have caused the changes? Page 3
4. Looking Forward Are the changes sustainable? Is the programme cost-effective? Should this programme be replicated or scaled up? Page 4	5. Action Points What changes should we make to the Conflict Context? What changes should we make to the Theory of Change? What changes should we make to our Programme Logic or Activities? Page 5	Tip 1: Having these questions written out makes it easy for someone to take notes while the questions are being asked. You do not lose time writing out the questions during the Focus Group. Tip 2: Knowing what questions are on the list prevents people from skipping questions, in case they are in a hurry.

- **Option Two:** Bring a blank notebook to each Focus Group. This means that if you have 10 Focus Groups at your PE, you will need 10 notebooks. In this notebook, write *each* question on a new page before your Focus Group starts. This will help you take notes quickly.

Important:

1. Stick to time! The Focus Groups should not be more than an hour.
 2. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.
 3. Do not skip any questions. If people cannot answer a question, note down that they could not answer. But do not skip the question.
 4. Ask the same questions as those given in the Programming Framework. This is important because it makes it easier to compare answers that people give.
- At the end of each Focus Group, give your participants 10 minutes to decide what were the most important points they covered, and ask them to note down a summary to present at the Big Group Discussion later
 - Either take a clear photograph of each of these documents, or ask the community's permission to take this documentation with you at the end of the day
 - Once the summaries are ready, bring everyone back together for the Big Group Discussion
 - Ask the first of the questions discussed in the Focus Groups – for example, “What worked well and why?” Wait for each group to present their answers, and then see if anyone else wants to add any comments. You can use this technique to cover all the questions asked, facilitating discussion on points of agreement or disagreement
 - This is very important; it allows you to *share* the results of the Focus Groups with everyone involved
 - More details on the **Big Group Discussion** can be found in the Programming Framework.

After the PE [Day 2]:

- Inform all the Pioneers and Delegates who were involved in conducting the programme you are evaluating that they need to be present for a Write Up and Sharing Day after the PE itself. This gives everyone a chance to discuss and reflect on the results of the previous day's PE
- When the Pioneers and Delegates have arrived, bring together all your notes and/or photographs
- You must now figure out the common points made by each group you invited (Target Group, Beneficiary Community, Key Stakeholders, and GFP Pioneers and Delegates). To do this, you can proceed in the following way:
 - If you have done 3 Focus Groups for the Target Group, you will have three sets of notes/notebooks. Form a group and read through all three sets of answers. Take a fresh page and write down the *most common points* in each answer the Target Group has given. In this way, you will turn three sets of notes into *one* document that lists the most important points the Target Group made in response to each question
 - Do this for all the groups who attended your PE
- Note common points for each question in the corresponding box in a soft copy of the M&E Grid
- For the last box ("Action Points"), discuss with your fellow Pioneers and Delegates, based on the results obtained from the PE, what changes you want to make to your Conflict Context, Theory of Change, Programme Logic and Activities, and processes of M&E (monitoring and evaluation) and learning. This discussion will help you complete your planning for the next round of programmes, on the basis of evidence collected from the previous programme
- Enter the results of these discussions into the last box about Action Points
- Your Grid is now complete, and is ready to send to GFP HQ!

Table A: Planning Focus Groups and Big Group Discussion

Group invited	Total number attending	No. of people per Focus Group	No. of Focus Groups	No. of Pioneers and Delegates required	Name of person asking questions	Name of person taking notes
GFP Pioneers and Delegates						
Target Group						
Beneficiary Community						
Key Stakeholders/ partners						
Big Group Discussion						
Includes all groups invited.						

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Appendix Four – The M&E Grid Template (Basis of the Final Grids)

AFTER	EVALUATION <i>Understanding what happened and why, then learning and planning improvements</i>	<p>(1) Understanding what happened and why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worked well and why? • What didn't work well and why not? • What evidence is there to show outcomes/ impacts? 	<p>(2) Most Significant Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do people in the Target Group and Beneficiary Community, consider the most important changes over the last year, and why? <i>(note their first response, then prompt to consider personal, relational, structural, cultural dimensions)</i> • What do they believe caused these changes? • Why are these changes considered the most important? 	<p>(3) Unexpected, unwanted, and unconnected changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there any unexpected or unintended outcomes/ impacts? • Have there been any negative outcomes/impact? • What else was happening that could have caused the changes? 	<p>(4) Looking Forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the changes sustainable? (will the changes be lasting or will things return to the way they were) • Is the programme cost-effective? (consider time, effort, and resources put in) • Should this programme be replicated or scaled-up? (should it be continued, or increased in size, or taken to a new place, or not?) 	<p>(5) Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes should we make to update our understanding of the Conflict Context? • What changes should we make to our Theory of Change? • What changes should we make to our Programme Logic or Activities? • <i>For Pioneers/Delegates:</i> What changes should we make to improve our indicators and our processes for M&E and Learning?