



Report on the

Systematic Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Learning to Live Together Programme in El Salvador

A review of six implementing schools in Apopa, Mejicanos, and Soyapango, San Salvador

This review was conducted by Ornella Barros for Arigatou International Geneva in 2015.

Acknowledgments

Arigatou International extends its gratitude to all the facilitators and people who have collaborated directly or indirectly to introduce and implement the Learning to Live Together Programme in El Salvador. Special thanks goes to Ms. Evelyn Lorena López for her support as the contact person for following up on the systematic implementation, and to all the children who shared their experiences with the programme during the Monitoring and Evaluation visit. This process would not have been possible without the support of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) El Salvador and particularly without the institutional backing of Centro Bartolomé de las Casas and its Director, Mr. Larry José Madrigal. We are grateful for the continuous support that they have given to this initiative, and humbled by the opportunity to share this learning journey with all of you.

Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction.....	5
I. Methodology.....	7
A. Context of implementation	7
B. Target group.....	9
C. Instruments	10
1. Focus groups.....	10
2. Semi-structured interviews	10
3. Most Significant Change (MSC) stories.....	10
D. Data collection.....	11
E. Limitations.....	12
II. Findings.....	13
A. Training program	13
1. The LTLT educational framework and its contribution to program implementation with children.....	13
2. Training workshops and customization of the LTLT Programme for children in El Salvador	15
3. Training impact on facilitators' practices	16
4. The training program and Communities of Practice	18
5. 'Photovoice': Three pictures of programme impact on facilitators	19
B. Implementation	21
1. Successes and challenges encountered by facilitators during implementation.....	21
2. Use and customization of the LTLT in the implementation processes	23
3. Impact of the LTLT programme on contexts affected by violence.....	25
C. Children's learning processes	26
1. LTLT Programme benefits and observable impact on children.....	26
2. LTLT and children's interest in undertaking further responsibilities or developing initiatives together with others	29
3. Implementing partners' support for children's learning processes and initiatives..	30
4. Children's Most Significant Change (MSC) stories.....	31
III. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	36
IV. Annexes	38
Annex 1: M&E Framework	38
Annex 2: M&E Learning Indicators.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Introduction

In 2008, Arigatou International launched *Learning to Live Together—An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme*¹ for Ethics Education (LTLT). Since 2008 more than 1,300 individuals in over 30 countries have taken part in training workshops on the use of the LTLT manual. Evidence of the programme’s success has grown throughout the years, as has the number of countries involved and children reached in several parts of the world. Today, the LTLT manual is available in 10 languages and has reached more than 12,000 children. Based on the global scale of implementation during the last seven years, Arigatou International Geneva decided to undertake a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process of the LTLT Programme. With this purpose, during periods of six to ten months, systematic implementation² and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts were conducted through implementing partners in five countries: El Salvador, Greece, India, Kenya, and Romania.

The Learning to Live Together (LTLT) Programme was first introduced in El Salvador through the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), when the country was selected to test the LTLT contents and methodologies before its official launch in 2008. Through the support of GNRC El Salvador, the LTLT Programme has been incorporated in formal and non-formal educational settings, reaching an important number of beneficiaries and training facilitators in the use of the manual. In 2014 GNRC El Salvador, under the leadership of Centro Bartolomé de las Casas,³ decided to embark on a nine-month systematic implementation of LTLT with the institutional commitment of the GNRC members.

1 For the purpose of this document, the word “Programme” is used only when referring to the Learning to Live Together Programme. When referring to any LTLT implementation, this document uses the word “program”.

2 An LTLT programme implementation that comprises between one to four sessions a month for a period between four to 12 months, involving the same children throughout the process.

3 Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC) is a non-governmental organization established in 2000. In the beginning, the CBC started with the aim of providing educational support to different communities on topics related to theology and the Bible, working with faith communities and ecumenical networks. Today, its scope has been expanded to the fields of peace education, youth, gender, masculinities, community resilience and adaptation to climate change, and the development of ludic methodologies—particularly cooperative games—focused on the recovery of historical memory and post-conflict restoration. CBC has a presence in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and Spain.

The M&E process had two purposes: (1) to document implementation and gain a better understanding of how facilitators used the LTLT manual in order to help identify best practices and the necessary adjustments to scale up programme implementation; and (2) to assess the program's impact on children. Three outcome areas were considered when assessing the program's impact on children: first, the extent to which children increased their capacity to make ethical decisions; second, the program's contribution to children's capacity to nurture their spirituality; and third, the extent to which participants developed a stronger ability to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others. These outcomes were evaluated through the identification of changes in children's behavior, relationships, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

This country report outlines the M&E findings of the LTLT systematic implementation that was carried out between March 2014 and January 2015, with children and youth from six different public and private schools in El Salvador. Section I of this report includes an overview of the methodology used for the study; Section II outlines the findings in relation to the indicators designed for the impact assessment; and Section III concludes with the main recommendations for improving the implementation of the LTLT programme in El Salvador.



I. Methodology

This process was designed based on the Learning to Live Together Programme M&E framework (see annex 1). This framework includes the different variables that help measure the contribution of the LTLT Programme to the overall goals of the ethics education initiative. These overall goals are for children to learn to live in solidarity with people of different religions, cultures, and ethnicity; to empower them to nurture their spirituality; and to enhance their innate ability to make positive contributions to their communities based on values that promote respect for their own culture and beliefs and for those of others.

The LTLT Programme aims to positively impact children and youth; therefore, this M&E process looked into three areas of impact on children: 1) increased capacity to make ethical decisions, 2) increased capacity to nurture their spirituality, and 3) stronger ability to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others. These three areas were analyzed in the light of indicators related to process, inputs, beneficiaries, context, outputs, outcomes, and learning experienced by children (see annex 2). This report is primarily based on qualitative data and a participatory and self-reporting process; however, it also uses quantitative data to highlight the impact of the programme on children, participants' post-learning satisfaction rating, and the number of beneficiaries reached by its implementation.

The following section describes the methodology used to monitor the LTLT systematic implementation in El Salvador; including details of implementation, target group, instruments applied, data collection process, and limitations taken into account for the M&E process.

A. CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION

The urban belt of northern San Salvador is a collection of overcrowded working class neighborhoods with few public services, which were built in ancient pre-Hispanic settlements of the sixteenth century. Apopa ("Place of water and

steam"), Soyapango ("place of Palm river") and Mejicanos ("Mexican people") were important places for trade, agricultural production and cheap labor for the Spanish city of San Salvador. Built between ravines, volcanic



ash and ancient river basins, the communities are very vulnerable to climatic events and, because of the geography, are easily controlled at all points of entry and exit. Although they are places of residence for many migrants from the countryside, the three municipalities maintain a living cultural tradition and sense of belonging, now being jeopardized by the territorial control of violent gangs.

The young population of the urban belt is the highest percentage in the country and is vulnerable to gang involvement and exposure to violence. Young people face significant challenges to their positive integration into community life. Their neighborhoods cope with difficulties such as high unemployment rates, crises in water supply and unsafe public transport. In particular, the youth have an unemployment rate twice that of adults: 30% neither study nor work.

Apopa (northern San Salvador) is very relevant to the concerns of the GNRC because it is in the top ten municipalities with high rates of social violence.

Nevertheless, the Catholic Sisters of Ángel Guardián have created an ecumenical, significant and safe space to live, learn together and prevent violence from gangs, Casa de la Juventud, with many different courses, training programs and cultural activities, implementing ethics education in five local schools.

Mejicanos (North San Salvador) is an overpopulated and urban municipality surrounding San Salvador with young people in highly vulnerable living situations, growing up in the middle of violence and gangs fighting for territorial control in their neighborhoods. Mejicanos is the historical place of birth of the Christian Base Communities who left a strong legacy of struggle and social movements. A local consortium of NGOs has organized a huge entity named “Urban Matters” to build an urban park in the middle of an abandoned dump, where there are currently some houses and schools, including a permanent program in ethics education, recreational activities and youth entrepreneurship.

Soyapango is the most populated municipality (East San Salvador), after the capital city. Soyapango is a half-industrial, half-residential town. With the highest rates of violence, homicides and crime, broad areas are under the control of gangs. The Juan Calvino School is partially owned by Iglesia Reformada Calvinista and the Ministry of Education. Teachers and students are working with children and families on prevention of violence and peace education in one of the most isolated and violent neighborhoods in the area.

B. TARGET GROUP

The systematic LTLT implementation in El Salvador involved 10 facilitators and 636 children from 9 to 17 years old, attending program sessions in six different implementing places distributed in three geographical locations: Mejicanos, Soya-pango, and Apopa, all in close proximity to San Salvador. Programs were implemented in public and private schools over a periods between three to eight months. In Mejicanos, the program was implemented with children in the 4th grade from the public school, San Simón, in cooperation with the project Urban Matters.⁴ In Soyapango, the programme was implemented with children in the 3rd grade from the private school Juan Calvino. In Apopa, the LTLT programme was implemented through existing processes undertaken by Casa de la Juventud Ángel de la Guarda (“Youth House”) in four public schools from the

4 A CORDAID initiative that aims to foster the development of urban areas in high risk through innovation and action. See: <https://www.cordaid.org/en/topics/urban-matters/>

area of Popotlán with students in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades.

In the elementary schools—San Simón School and Juan Calvino School—the head teachers are in charge of all subjects. Therefore, the class hour used for program implementation varied from time to time depending on the school calendar and activities underway in each subject. In the case of secondary schools, Casa de la Juventud implemented the program during the “Orientación”⁵ hour that students have once a week. Facilitators from San Simón School conducted two sessions a month of 45 minutes, over a period of eight months. In Juan Calvino School, teachers conducted three sessions a month of 45 minutes, over a period of six months. In Popotlán, the program covered 24 classes from four schools, having implemented one session a month of 60 to 90 minutes per group over a period of three months (see table 1).

Location	Program duration	Number of sessions	Duration of sessions
Juan Calvino School	Six months	18	45 minutes
San Simón School	Eight months	16	45 minutes
Popotlán	Three months	3 per group	60 to 90 minutes

Table 1

5 “Orientación” hour is a curricular time that head teachers have once a week with the students, in which teachers introduce different topics or issues they consider important to address. In El Salvador, head teachers are allowed to decide the content and methodologies used during the “orientación” hour.

Children's religious affiliations represented a variety of Christian denominations, particularly Catholicism, Adventism, Baptism, Calvinism, Pentecostal and Jehovah's Witnesses.

C. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments developed for the M&E are based on the M&E framework (see annex 1) designed for this purpose. In El Salvador, the instruments applied were: focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and the Most Significant Change methodology of collecting stories. Reports provided by the contact person regarding progress of implementation were also taken into consideration in the report.

1. Focus groups

Two focus groups were conducted with children: one of them with 4th grade children from San Simón School; the other with 5th grade children from Juan Calvino School. Through user-friendly and participatory monitoring tools, children shared their impressions of the LTLT sessions; the activities they enjoyed the most; the main things they learned; and the changes that they as a group had experienced since they started participating in LTLT activities.

Additionally, four focus groups were conducted with facilitators. Two of the focus groups were conducted with facilitators implementing the program in San Simón School and Juan Calvino School, respectively. Another was conducted with facilitators implementing the program through Casa de la Juventud in the area of Popotlán; and one more with facilitators who were part

of the Ethics Education Communities of Practice (CoP) and have implemented the LTLT Programme in various educational settings. Facilitators shared about their experiences with the manual, the successes and challenges they encountered during the process, the adjustments made for the Salvadorian context, and the additional resources they used to complement the delivery of the LTLT Programme sessions.

2. Semi-structured interviews

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted: one with the contact person from GNRC El Salvador, who supported data collection and the Communities of Practice; and one with the Executive Director of Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, an implementing partner and GNRC member that supported the systematic LTLT implementation in the country. The interviews explored their experience with LTLT implementation, successes, lessons learned, and future opportunities they see for the program. In addition, follow-up questions were sent to participants for additional data clarification and to complement information gained in the interviews.

3. Most Significant Change (MSC) stories

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a globally recognized technique for understanding the impact of a project/program. The basis of MSC lies in the collection of stories from the people that a project was intended to benefit. Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level,



and the systematic and careful selection of the most significant of these stories.⁶

MSC was selected as a technique well-suited to the M&E process undertaken by Arigatou International Geneva. As a technique that complements conventional sources of data collection, it is not used in isolation. The MSC approach to evaluation is primarily participatory and collects stories about the impact of the programme on children, supplementing other data to provide a more holistic, qualitative and richer picture of the learning outcomes from the beneficiaries' perspectives.⁷ Because MSC is non-threatening (does not have a right or wrong answer and recognizes two sets of opposing outcomes: expected/unexpected), it offers genuine input from the participants' points of view,⁸ elucidating the broader influence of the LTLT Programme in children.

In El Salvador, the contact person interviewed four children who participated in the program, inviting them to share their MSC stories. Out of these four, a panel, composed of ethics education staff members from Arigatou International Geneva, selected one story that best reflected the most significant changes experienced by children participating in the LTLT programme in El Salvador.

D. DATA COLLECTION

The focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted during a visit made by the M&E Coordinator and the Director of Arigatou International Geneva from 30 October to 1 November 2014. The focus groups with children used a participatory methodology through which children shared information about the LTLT activities they enjoyed most, what they had learned, and their feedback about the implementation process.

E. LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this process had to do with the context issues that affect the

⁶ Dart and Davies (2003)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

communities where the programs took place. As underlined by the principal of San Simón School: *"There are two things to take into consideration: the first one is the dropout school tendency in 6th grade due to the recruitment of children by the gangs present in the areas. The second one is that some families are relocating to other neighborhoods, either because of their interest to seek a better place to live or because of the violence in the community. These factors absolutely threatened the sustainability of this kind of processes."*⁹ These circumstances challenged the implementation and sustainability, especially given the uncertainty about whether children involved in the program would continue or not. In addition, the existence of invisible borders¹⁰ in most of the implementation communities represented a significant limitation, both for facilitators trying to get to workshop

⁹ Montreal, school principal San Simón school, woman, 1 November 2014

¹⁰ Invisible borders are delimited public spaces in areas dominated by criminal groups such as gangs. The creation of these borders aims to establish control over territorial spaces. They are characterized by gang-violence, micro trafficking of drugs and illegal arm use. Individuals and/or groups are denied access or transit to specific areas limited by 'invisible borders'. If the border is crossed, the person or group can be harmed or killed. A gang responds primarily to two needs: the sense of belonging to a group and personal status. Territorial gangs are primarily made up of young people with no economic or social prospects, for whom gang membership opens up the perspective of a more enjoyable or more exciting life, even if it is shorter, and provides a sense of purpose. The decision to join a gang may be perfectly logical when other economic and social prospects are limited. Poverty and marginalization are at one and the same time the causes and the consequences of gangs, and a culture of violence in the youth environment may be an aggravating factor in terms of their emergence. See:

<https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/irrc-878-bangerter.pdf>

locations and for children trying to attend the sessions. Such was the case at Casa de la Juventud, where some children would have had to cross banned-areas of the neighborhood in order to reach the location.

In terms of data collection, most participants were not used to the kind of M&E forms proposed for this process; they preferred more participatory and oral techniques. Thus, the implementation lacked completion of baselines, session information forms, and children's feedback. Information was provided through narrative periodic reports submitted by the contact person of the process. The process depended highly on participant self-reports.

With regard to ethical research considerations, informed consent was obtained from all participants and parties mentioned in this document. In the case of children, parents and/or caregivers consent was obtained. All the materials—stories, quotes, photos, and videos—involving children are in accordance with the UNICEF guidelines for ethical reporting on children and young people under the age of 18. No one is mentioned by name, whether children, youth or teachers, in order to avoid incidents that could endanger their safety.¹¹ Although some of the contextual and personal realities that affect children will be described in this report, the study is respectful of children's identities, vulnerabilities and the particular conditions that affect them.

¹¹ See:

http://www.unicef.org/uganda/Guidelines_for_Reporting_on_Children1.pdf

II. Findings

The following section offers an analysis of the results obtained on the indicators used to measure the quality, extent, and benefits of the programme with respect to: the training that was provided to educators on the use of the LTLT manual; the implementation of the program following the training; and children's experience with the program and the benefits they gained.

A. TRAINING PROGRAM

The LTLT training programs for educators who work with children and youth are composed of workshops at two training levels: basic training and advanced training. In El Salvador, educators involved in the systematic LTLT implementation participated in a basic training conducted in January 2014. This allowed them to learn how to design and implement a program using the LTLT educational framework, learning process, and methodologies. The following section assesses the contribution of the LTLT educational framework to program implementation; the training program role in the customization of LTLT contents; its impact on educators' teaching practices; the training program and Communities of Practice; and *Photovoice*¹² as an assessment of the programs' impact on facilitators.

12 A participatory action research method that allows participants to document, describe, assess, and begin to change critical aspects of their community.

1. THE LTLT EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION WITH CHILDREN

Integrating the LTLT theoretical content into teaching practices demands a good understanding of its framework, and goes beyond the activities and methodologies offered in the manual. In El Salvador, the LTLT learning process was implicitly used in the three implementing locations, which facilitated children's engagement in the activities. Teachers highlighted that they internalized the educational framework¹³

13 The ethics education framework has been at the core of our programme since the launch of the *Learning to Live Together* manual in 2008. This includes the key conceptual elements that provide the rationale and foundation of the manual, the values that support the foundation, and the educational approach that defines the way *Learning to Live Together* is planned and implemented to ensure a high-quality, enriching interfaith and intercultural ethics education experience. The Ethics Education framework promotes a new and dynamic way of thinking about ethics in a global and plural society. Education about ethics is something all religions and societies can do independently; what is unique about this initiative is that it is done inter-religiously and inter-culturally. The Ethics Education

mostly by actually implementing it. As stated by facilitators from San Simón School: *“The content and the activities were good, but the training was too short considering that, besides understanding the framework, it was necessary to think about the implementation itself; but in the end, the educational framework got clarified during the process.”*¹⁴ For facilitators, though the training equipped them with relevant tools for successful implementation, *“It is in the practice that one can understand the educational framework. It is through the activities and the complementary workshops with the other implementing groups that we managed to understand all the pieces of the puzzle.”*¹⁵

Teachers also highlighted the added value that the LTLT educational approach¹⁶ has for the Salvadorian

Programme does not promote a new religion, but rather, acknowledges and affirms diversity.

14 Montreal, facilitator San Simón School, man, 1 November 2014

15 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

16 The educational approach describes the methods and required elements for designing, planning, delivering and monitoring Learning to Live Together programs to ensure quality and transformative learning experiences for children and youth. The educational approach is built on learning opportunities and practices that allow ethical reflections which foster, above all, interconnectedness, and lead to critical thinking, the development of imagination, critical consciousness, and self-driven learning. This approach requires the development of safe learning environments, the use of participatory and collaborative learning methods, and sensitivity to the context where the programs take place. Ultimately the approach aims to provide the opportunity for children and youth to act collectively to achieve common goals, building on their individual strengths, appreciating the diversity around them, and nurturing their spirituality. This educational approach demands facilitators who are aware of the influence of their

context: *“In many cases, higher education does not provide the tools to work in contexts like this one. What they learn at the university is mainly related to technical matters of teaching. Then, when teachers face this kind of realities,*

“With the training it was not very difficult to design the plan and choose the methodologies.”

*they don't know how to deal with it. That's why LTLT becomes an important tool for teachers to learn a different approach to education.”*¹⁷ In relation to the key concepts of the educational framework, facilitators underlined that the training helped them establish

“It is through the activities and the complementary workshops with the other implementing groups that we managed to understand all the pieces of the puzzle.”

relevant links to values, children, and spirituality—three aspects that they consider to be pillars of the LTLT Programme. They emphasized the work they did with the first module of the manual, and the need to continue

actions, behaviors and attitudes on children and strive to become role models.

17 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

working with children on values such as respect and empathy.

According to the contact person, it was easier for facilitators previously engaged in LTLT implementation to understand and apply the educational framework taught during the training: *The fact that three out of the four facilitators have already participated in LTLT activities, helped a lot in understanding the process, the LTLT content, and the educational approach itself.*¹⁸

2. TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND CUSTOMIZATION OF THE LTLT PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN IN EL SALVADOR

Facilitators and teachers from the three locations reported high satisfaction with the contributions of the training to the customization of the program: *“With the training it was not very difficult to design the plan and choose the methodologies. We were able to assess the relevance of the sessions in relation to the reality of the context, and the group of beneficiaries.”*¹⁹ Additionally, during the Basic Training, facilitators were asked to design their programs in accordance with children’s contexts and needs. They mapped the reality of children in the locations where they work and reflected on the expected changes and outcomes they would like to see happening. After the training, facilitators put into practice what they learned by finalizing the design of their programs and ensuring a customized implementation. As one of

18 San Salvador, Evelyn Lorena López, interview 2 November 2014

19 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

the facilitators illustrated: *“[...] in order to achieve the objective of the implementation, first we reflected about the context, and then we chose three kiosks²⁰ that we considered best to work on the topics with youth, namely: ‘Acknowledge myself in relation to others,’ ‘Reconciliation walk,’ and ‘Non-violent alternatives’ [...] and then we chose the activities and the age group.”*²¹

In El Salvador, a context highly affected by violence, facilitators pointed out that one of the strengths of the basic training workshop was that it provided them with the needed flexibility to use the LTLT

“The main change for me was in the way I see the children, being more aware of their complex realities and the way they deal with it.”

approach in the different contexts of implementation. According to a teacher from Juan Calvino School, *“The moment in which we could better understand the*

20 Learning to Live Together has two Learning Modules: Understanding Self and Others and, Transforming the World Together. These two modules are linked and complement each other. The modules consist of a number of kiosks that have been developed to allow the participants to embark on a learning journey, where different paths equip them to respond to ethical challenges and help them discover how they can become agents of change. The learning path chosen by facilitators should allow participants to make the connections between successive kiosks. This approach will help the participants to nurture the values promoted in each module and relate the exercise to their own lives. See: *Learning to Live Together* manual, p. 21.

21 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

adaptation of the manual to children's realities was during the session of 'La Cartografía de la Violencia' ('Violence Mapping')."²² The teacher reported that the LTLT approach used to develop this session allowed her to get interesting and critical inputs about children's realities and contexts. Furthermore, facilitators also underlined learning about "creative customization of contents"²³ at the workshop, as well as the "concrete facilitation tools that it offered."²⁴

3. TRAINING IMPACT ON FACILITATORS' PRACTICES

Facilitators reported that the training made a significant contribution to their practice, allowing them to acquire new facilitation skills and knowledge about the customization of the LTLT Programme. The main impact is related to the level of conscientization;²⁵ nurturing spirituality; and changes in the way they interact with children.

- **Conscientization:** Conscientization or critical consciousness is one of the elements of the LTLT educational approach. It refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. This perspective aims to equip facilitators with the capacity to establish links between methodologies, concepts, and discussions, and children's own

realities and social context. In El Salvador, the training helped to develop facilitators' critical consciousness, as stated by one of the teachers from Juan Calvino School: "The main change for me was in the way I see the children, being more aware of their complex realities and the way they deal with it."²⁶

According to another teacher from Juan Calvino School, "The training we had helped me to critically think about our society and our environment, inside and outside home."²⁷ One of the facilitators from Casa de la Juventud pointed out that, after the training, "The way I see my environment is different. I am more and more aware of what surrounds me and it helped me to be more curious and critical. I no longer retain the first version of everything I hear."²⁸ It can be suggested that the training provides facilitators with spaces to develop their critical consciousness, in a way that allows them to better understand children's realities and to challenge their own views.

- **Spirituality and interfaith learning:** The creation of Communities of Practice, which resulted from the basic training workshop, led to greater spiritual and interfaith learning between facilitators. According to them, spirituality was not something present in their professional practice. However, according to facilitators, the workshop was different from previous trainings in that regard: "Although we used ludic methodologies

22 Soyapango, facilitators Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

23 GNRC El Salvador, participants' feedback, Basic Training Workshop, January 2014.

24 Ibid.

25 See: Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, Continuum; and Freire, P. (1972) *Cultural Action for Freedom*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

26 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

27 Ibid.

28 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

in the past, it was not until we had the training that we realized the importance of working with the children's spirituality and our own."²⁹

“Empathy was something that we learnt and changed in us. It helped us to be more open to other ideas and religions; something that we didn't think possible in the past.”

According to one of the facilitators from San Simón School, *“Empathy was something that we learnt and changed in us. It helped us to be more open to other ideas and religions; something that we didn't think possible in the past. I learnt not to think in terms of the religion I practice, but learn from what others have to share with me, regardless of the religion they practice.”*³⁰ In this sense, the training workshop enhanced facilitators' capacity to value and embrace the spiritual and religious diversity in their group. Beyond that, it also encouraged them to put this into practice in their daily lives and to help children discover their potential for spirituality: *“We learnt how to create spaces for children's spirituality in an interfaith way; either through ludic*

29 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

30 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

activities or bringing it up at particular moments during a session.”³¹

• **Interaction with children:** The findings suggest that the basic training workshop positively influenced facilitators' interaction with children. This was particularly reflected in the added value that ethics education brought to their communication and mediation skills: *“With the program I understood the importance and contribution that the ethics education gives to my work; it helped me to connect better with children's needs.”*³² According to one facilitator from Casa de la Juventud, *“It strengthened my knowledge in conflict resolution, which allowed me to mediate without taking a side in a conflict.”*³³ Facilitators highlighted examples of how the knowledge and skills acquired in the training workshop improved their approach and interaction with children. It also provided them with a holistic approach to children's education, where cognitive learning is supplemented by an inner journey to strengthen who they are and is then reflected out to the world around them. As underlined by one of the teachers from Juan Calvino School: *“I also realized that sometimes we are too attached to the idea that all that children need is to learn how to read, write, etc. We often forget to apply techniques that help them to think about a better society in which they have a very*

31 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

32 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

33 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

important role because the change starts with ourselves."³⁴

4. THE TRAINING PROGRAM AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Following the LTLT Basic Training Workshop in January of 2014, a Community of Practice was created in El Salvador. Most of the CoP participants are facilitators who attended the training and who currently implement the LTLT Programme in various educational settings. However, there are also facilitators who did not take part in the training, but have become involved with the LTLT during the implementation process. The CoP aims to create a space for teachers and facilitators to develop their facilitation skills; exchange knowledge and experiences with implementation; identify successes and opportunities for improvement; and enhance their experiences with intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

Between February and December 2014, six CoP sessions took place. Three of them were focused on sharing about the progress of the implementation; the other three focused on methodologies and cooperative games. According to one of the teachers from Juan Calvino School, "Exchanging knowledge with others is something that helps a lot in this field."³⁵ In this respect, facilitators stressed the significant contributions that the CoP made in strengthening professional bonds between them, particularly relating to the common

challenges that they face when implementing the programme: "The CoP has been something very useful for us, because many of the challenges we face here [have] also come up in other implementation settings. It is very

"It strengthened my knowledge in conflict resolution, which allowed me to mediate without taking a side in a conflict."

*enriching for us to meet with other facilitators, because we can learn from them and get ideas to solve some of the issues we face here."*³⁶

The space that the CoP created to exchange implementation experiences also contributed to the improvement of facilitators' skills in communicating and interacting with children and community members. As underlined by facilitators from Casa de la Juventud and San Simón School: "What we have learnt at the CoP and what we have shared with other facilitators have significantly helped me to improve my experience with the children of my community, as well as my facilitation and communication skills with teachers and principals."³⁷ The CoP has been useful in improving their practice as facilitators and their interaction with children. It has provided added value to the implementation process by offering facilitators an open-ended platform for

34 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

35 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

36 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

37 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

learning and dialogue, in which they support and inspire each other with innovative ideas, best practices, and common challenges: *"This process has allowed us to recognize the valuable*

"It is very enriching for us to meet with other facilitators, because we can learn from them and get ideas to solve some of the issues we face here."

*lives of those who are facilitating the implementation of the LTLT manual, their experiences, their ideas, challenges, the spirituality they share with us and that we strengthen during our meetings."*³⁸

5. 'PHOTOVOICE': THREE PICTURES OF PROGRAMME IMPACT ON FACILITATORS

Photovoice is a participatory action research method that allows participants to document, describe, assess, and begin to change critical aspects of their community.³⁹ Through the process, participants use photography to create a striking visual record of the community's strengths and weaknesses in relation to a

particular issue, engage in critical discussion of the issue, document that discussion, and plan action steps.⁴⁰ This method was used in El Salvador with the aim of assessing facilitators' views about the impact that the training program and the LTLT implementation had on their personal and professional lives.

Facilitators attending the Communities of Practice were asked to take three photos that would represent: (a) how they see their communities, (b) the impact of the training program and implementation on their lives (c) what impressed them the most about the process.⁴¹ Facilitators had a session to introduce the pictures from their implementing locations and the meaning behind them. At the end, facilitators decided the three photographs that they considered represented them as a group based on the three areas described above.



The picture selected by the group to illustrate how they saw their community was taken by two facilitators who faced significant challenges with carrying out

38 San Salvador, Evelyn Lorena López, LTLT Communities of Practice in El Salvador. Available at: <https://ethicseducationforchildren.org/en/knowledge-center/stories-of-implementation/818-learning-to-live-together-communities-of-practice-in-el-salvador?highlight=WyJlbClslNhbHZhZG9yIiwZiWwgc2FsdmFkb3liXQ==> [Accessed: 6 November, 2015]

39 As applied by CBC with local allies, following the methodology developed with Drishti in a Climate Change Adaptation and resilience pilot project. See: http://www.drishti.ca/images/pdfs/climateresilience/community_field_guide.pdf

40 See: Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment (Wang et al., 1999).

41 See: Photovoice report, 4 September 2015

the implementation due to the invisible borders that have been imposed in their community by the gang "18". Facilitators chose this photograph because, according to them, it represents the contextual reality in which they live in the communities, and the power of the gangs reflected in the entrance walls of the neighborhood, where it is risky even to dare taking this kind of picture.⁴² The picture reflects sensitivity to the conflict situation in El Salvador and awareness of the contextual reality in the communities, and it represents facilitators' commitment to continue creating safe spaces for children and to challenge violence in the community.



The picture that facilitators selected to illustrate the impact of the training program and implementation on their lives was taken by one of the facilitators who considered rewarding the work that children from different Christian affiliations did together throughout the program, as well as how active they were in interacting with each other and contributing to the sessions. The group of facilitators picked this photograph because, according to them, it

42 Ibid.

represents the emotions and learning experiences they went through during the implementation process.⁴³ The use of interconnectedness and participatory and collaborative methodologies allowed children to get to know the self, one another, explore each other's views, experience moments together, challenge one's ideas about the other, and create connections and relationships. The inspiration that this picture represented to facilitators suggests the training program's contribution to improving facilitators' pedagogical approach and the creation of safe learning environments for children.

The picture selected by the group to illustrate what impressed them the most about the process was taken by one of the facilitators who wanted to represent the excitement of the girl when she got to express through painting t-shirts⁴⁴ her desire for peace.⁴⁵ The group selected this photo because, according to them, it reflects the enthusiasm that the program created in children in all implementing locations.⁴⁶ This picture reflects facilitators' achievements in nurturing



43 Ibid.

44 *Learning to Live Together* manual, p. 109

45 See: Photovoice report, 4 September 2015

46 Ibid.

children's imagination and their capacity to re-envision themselves, their relations with others and their communities, especially in contexts such as El Salvador where the immediate reality of these children is challenging in terms of the violence that affects their communities.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

The LTLT systematic implementation process in El Salvador is the result of the commitment of institutions and individuals over a one-year period. The following section describes the successes and challenges encountered during the implementation, as well as the use and customization of LTLT in the implementation process, and its impact on the context.

1. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY FACILITATORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Facilitators agreed that the main successes of the implementation process were related to children's empowerment, improved interaction between children and teachers, and the interest that the programs created in the school community.

In terms of **children's empowerment**, facilitators reported that the program not only successfully use participatory learning as a way to strengthen children's capacity to make ethical decisions, but that participation itself was a result of the process. As underlined by teachers from San Simón School, *"Participation is one of the main successes we had, because at first they — the students — were not willing to do*

*anything. Then, through the LTLT methodologies, children got more and more interested in joining us in this process."*⁴⁷

Facilitators from Casa de la Juventud also reported relevant successes in developing children's engagement and empowerment through the process: *"Many times we were impressed by the group, because they started getting into the facilitator's role by taking a leadership role in the session; they were even providing advice to the classmates on how to solve conflicts."* In addition, facilitators stressed the progression of children's participation and interest from session to session, which was achieved by providing them with the opportunity to connect with the methodologies, content, facilitators, and classmates: *"In the first session, the connection with the group was a real challenge. However, by the end of the process, the youth were truly interested in the sessions, and their participation was exceptional."*⁴⁸

"In the first session, the connection with the group was a real challenge. However, by the end of the process, the youth were truly interested in the sessions, and their participation was exceptional."

47 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

48 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

A second success that was highlighted by facilitators was the improvement in **interaction between teachers and children**. According to them, the LTLT sessions significantly reinforced respectful relations within the group and with teachers: *"The LTLT sessions helped improved the interaction between the group and the teacher. I think it contributed to more respectful relations between them."*⁴⁹ This result, most probably, led to a third success: the **interest of the school community in the program**. Facilitators from San Simón School illustrated this aspect, pointing out that children who were not participating in the sessions tried to join the activities conducted with 4th graders.

"They were so impressed by the fact that children were so engaged with our sessions, that they want the same for their lessons."

*"A success that we have noticed during the process is that children from other grades have become interested in the activities we have done with the 4th grade. Last time we were singing with the two-implementation groups, other children started approaching us and tried to join us singing. It was very valuable for us because it means that the message is being spread in the school."*⁵⁰ Likewise,

49 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

50 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

facilitators from Casa de la Juventud reported teachers' interest in LTLT methodologies and activities used to engage children in the program: *"It has been the case that sometimes teachers ask us how to gain the attention from the group. They were so impressed by the fact that children were so engaged with our sessions, that they want the same for their lessons."*⁵¹

Concerning challenges that were encountered, facilitators in El Salvador faced particular difficulties managing time to implement LTLT activities in formal educational settings, as well as contextual issues that affect children, and constraints imposed by the school calendar. As stated by facilitators from San Simón School, *"The activities of the manual are mainly designed for one and a half or two hours, or even longer. Here, we had to adapt the activities to 45 minutes, which is already a challenge, because the school cannot provide us with extra-time for the sessions."*⁵² In order to counteract the time constraints, facilitators opted to prepare beforehand some of the materials that were used for the activities. According to facilitators from Casa de la Juventud, *"Due to time limitations, we had to adapt all the activities to the one and a half hour assigned for the sessions. Although we managed to make it work, time was a challenge along the way. In addition to that, the classrooms assigned for*

51 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

52 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

implementation were not always appropriate."⁵³

Contextual issues also affected the implementation, especially due to the existence of invisible borders⁵⁴ in communities with strong presence of *maras*, or gangs. In the case of Popotlán, the area in which Casa de la Juventud implemented the program, facilitators

“My favorite activity was the song because its message is very meaningful and it says the importance of respect.”

explained the constraint imposed upon their community: *“The LTLT implementation took place in four schools of the community. However, integration is very limited due to the invisible borders established by gangs. In previous years, the students used to come to the youth house to attend the activities, but now we are the ones visiting the schools separately, because of the restrictions imposed in the community.”*⁵⁵

53 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, man, 1 November 2014

54 Invisible borders are delimited public spaces in areas dominated by criminal groups such as gangs. These space limitations aim at establishing domination in territorial spaces. They are characterized by gang-violence, micro trafficking of drugs and illegal arm use. Individuals and/or groups are denied access or transit to specific areas limited by ‘invisible borders’. If the border is crossed, the person or group can be harmed or killed.

55 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

Another challenge is related to the time incompatibility between the sessions and the school calendars. According to facilitators from Casa de la Juventud, *“Sometimes, it was also the case in which other school activities clashed with LTLT sessions. Therefore, children participating in the program sometimes missed the sessions to attend the other activities.”*⁵⁶ A similar situation happened in San Simón School, where facilitators reported that not having implemented the program with the regularity they would have expected at the beginning affected the process: *“We had some inconsistency in conducting the sessions, due to internal issues at school. We noticed that the lack of continuity, sometimes, affected the children's process.”*⁵⁷

2. USE AND CUSTOMIZATION OF THE LTLT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

In El Salvador, facilitators were able to customize the activities offered in the LTLT manual. According to facilitators, the manual and its flexibility played an important role in children's interest in the contents and objectives of the sessions: *“At the beginning of the process, children resisted participating, but today they are genuinely interested in the process. I think that the methodology has significantly contributed to this change.”*⁵⁸

56 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

57 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

58 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

Although the activities and the methodologies were successfully customized, facilitators pointed out that this was an ongoing process. Future improvements might still take place depending on the context, topics, and children's needs. As stated by teachers from Juan Calvino School, *"We have decided to implement the most ludic activities included in the manual, and so far it has been a success. We still need to continue improving the methodological adaptation, but I think we are in the right path."* All facilitators agreed on the added value and the effectiveness that the LTLT manual offers when working on ethics education with children: *"The methodology is an added value of LTLT, compared to other projects that we have implemented in the school. It is a concrete tool to work on specific values."*⁵⁹

"At the beginning of the process, children resisted participating, but today they are genuinely interested in the process."

Facilitators from Casa de la Juventud and Juan Calvino School reported having used LTLT kiosks for the development of their programs. Facilitators from Casa de la Juventud addressed the program through the kiosks: "Acknowledge myself in relation to others," "Reconciliation walk," and "Non-violent

59 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

alternatives."⁶⁰ In Juan Calvino School, teachers reported having used the kiosks: "Acknowledge myself in relation to others," "Putting myself in another's shoes," and "Building bridges of trust."⁶¹ Facilitators from Simón School did not mention any specific kiosk used for implementation. Although the main resource of the implementation was the LTLT manual, facilitators reported the use of additional activities and methodologies such as *"la telaraña cooperativa"* (cooperative web spider) and *"construyendo puentes"* (building bridges).⁶² One of the facilitators of the program in El Salvador composed a song about *Learning to Live Together* called *"A Vivir Juntos."*⁶³ The use of the song in program activities in San Simón School, as well as in other places where LTLT was implemented, was highly appreciated by children, one of whom said: *"My favorite activity was the song because its message is very meaningful and it talks about the importance of respect."*⁶⁴

The information provided suggests that facilitators achieved the objectives of enhancing children's capacities to respect one another, to be aware of the issues and conflicts that affect their communities, and to be active players in their development.⁶⁵

As stated by one of the children from Popotlán, *"There was a topic about the*

60 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

61 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

62 Ibid.

63 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xs8RrP4q2sE&feature=youtu.be>

64 Montreal, San Simón school, boy, 1 November 2014

65 Program's objectives, 14 April 2014.

community and how we would like to see the community and the kind of places we would like to see. And I really liked this activity, because I would really like to have a place with more trees, with more nature around us, but we do not often think about that.”⁶⁶

Another child from Juan Calvino School highlighted how the activities allowed her to connect with the similarities shared with her classmates: “There was an activity about a star where we wrote down what we like the most, our names, if we go to church, the kind of music we like, and then we had to look in the stars for things we had in common; and I realized that we have similarities in things that I did not even know.”⁶⁷

3. IMPACT OF THE LTLT PROGRAMME ON CONTEXTS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

The contexts where the LTLT Programme was implemented in El Salvador are significantly affected by violence, highly influenced by gangs, and divided by invisible borders: “This is a semi-urban area composed by several communities. Most of our students come from these communities, where the areas are controlled by “maras” (gangs). In this particular context, most of the families are not nuclear. Children either live with relatives, grandparents, or even family friends because their parents have left the country, are involved in prostitution, or are in gangs. Therefore, children are used to living in such environments. For

66 Popotlán, Licenciado Renato Noyola School, girl, 10 September 2015

67 Soyapango, Juan Calvino school, girl, 31 October 2014

instance, here they hear gunshots, the police stigmatize them, and all those attitudes they see within the family and in the community are reflected in their behavior at school.”⁶⁸

“Many times, we normalize the situations and the violence we live in the community; but we cannot forget that this is a risky normalization.”

Despite the daunting challenge that these contexts represent when implementing ethics education programs, the workshops served to challenge the normalization of violence and the unbalanced power relations that children are exposed to in the community and which are then brought into the school. As reported by facilitators from San Simón School, “Many times, we normalize the situations and the violence we live with in the community; but we cannot forget that this is a risky normalization. I think that with the LTLT Programme we have successfully tried to explore with children the difference between what is ‘normal’ and what we tend to ‘normalize’ in the environment they live in.”⁶⁹

In addition, facilitators underlined that through the development of children’s

68 Montreal, school principal San Simón school, woman, 1 November 2014

69 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

critical thinking and the nurturing of their spirituality, the program helped to change violent behaviors and attitudes that the context has imbued in children: *“Through LTLT workshops what we do is to encourage them to share with others what is positive in their lives, and not what damages people around them.”*⁷⁰

Findings suggest that the added value of the LTLT Programme in relation to the Salvadoran context lies in its potential to provide children with skills and to nurture

“Through LTLT workshops what we do is to encourage them to share with others what is positive in their lives, and not what damages people around them.”

ethical values that help them envision opportunities for change in their communities, where they can become active players. As stated by one of the teachers from Juan Calvino School, *“Sometimes it is difficult to believe that they can change their attitudes, but these children proved to themselves that they can change attitudes that are unhelpful for their development. This process gave them self-confidence about transforming themselves and their environments.”*⁷¹

70 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

71 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

The programs’ results have influenced the communities, especially by encouraging school principals to involve parents and caregivers in the process. For instance, in Juan Calvino School, teachers started working with families of some of the children who participated in the program to reflect with them about the outcomes of the program in children, conducting a few LTLT sessions with the families.⁷²

C. CHILDREN’S LEARNING PROCESSES

Children are the main beneficiaries of the LTLT implementation, as well as the main reason to continue improving the program. This section outlines the benefits and observable impact of LTLT on children by presenting the way in which they put into practice the learning they acquired during the program and the support received from the school. The impact on children was evaluated in terms of improvement in their relations with others, concrete actions taken to transform their communities together with others, their capacity to make decisions based on ethical values, and their spiritual growth.

1. LTLT PROGRAMME BENEFITS AND OBSERVABLE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

The impact of the LTLT implementation at the project goal level is measured in three areas: the development of children’s critical thinking, which equips them to make ethical decisions; their

72 San Salvador, Evelyn Lorena López, 7 November 2015

relations with others; and nurturing of their spirituality.

- **Development of children's critical thinking:** Findings suggest that the implementation in El Salvador helped to create spaces for children to listen and understand others' perspectives, as well as to challenge their own stereotypes and views. According to facilitators from Juan Calvino School, "One of the students has been here since first grade,

"The LTLT implementation has provided important spaces for them [children] to integrate and share with each other."

*and has always showed violent attitudes towards the other students of the class; especially against girls. However, during the last month we all have noticed a positive change in his attitudes; and his disposition and attitude in the workshops have been exceptional. Now, he is not only interested in the topics, but also participates in an active and critical way."*⁷³ The program also offered children the opportunity to freely express their ideas and opinions; according to facilitators from San Simón School, "We noticed that the activities really encouraged [the children] to express their thoughts and opinions, and this is very valuable for us."⁷⁴ According to the contact person, the program also helped

73 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

74 Montreal, facilitator San Simón school, man, 1 November 2014

children to see issues from different angles and to think about how their decisions affect others: "Facilitators have underlined how the program helped children to reflect on their decisions and to think about the consequences before doing something or assuming certain attitudes."⁷⁵

The lack of baselines makes it difficult to establish the extent to which the program led to changes in the development of children's critical thinking beyond the creation of the spaces to express their opinions or challenge their own views and stereotypes.

- **Children's relations with others:** Teachers from Juan Calvino School underlined that, "although we still need to continue working on it, the LTLT implementation has provided important spaces for [the children] to integrate and share with each other."⁷⁶ Facilitators from other implementing locations agreed that, in this area, the main impact was seen in the interaction between boys and girls. According to the principal from San Simón School, "One of the most observable changes experienced by [the children] is related to teamwork skills. Before, it was only during physical education that children were working together because there was always something fun. But, with the LTLT workshops and the spaces it created for them to express themselves, it seems to

75 San Salvador, Evelyn Lorena López, 7 November 2015

76 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014



me that the group has opened up to integration between boys and girls, as well as to teamwork."⁷⁷ One of the participants from Casa de la Juventud reported, "We [children] have been together for three years but we were very divided in the class; however, the sessions we had helped us to be more integrated. For instance, before, when we had to prepare presentations in front of the class it was always very difficult to agree on the contents, but now we work together and support each other."⁷⁸

Through the promotion of mutual respect and empathy, and by challenging gender stereotypes, the program contributed to the improvement of children's relations with others in the classroom and the playground. According to a child from Juan Calvino School, the program allowed him to develop empathy, which he put in practice in how he relates to his sister: "I learnt the importance of putting myself in another's shoes. For instance,

before I remember I used to fight a lot with my sister, but after the sessions it was different because we were not fighting as much as before. I was thinking about that the other night, that we have not fought recently, because before we used to insult each other and since we were alone because my mother was not at home it was worse and worse."⁷⁹

- **Nurturing children's spirituality:** Facilitators stressed that the program had a relevant impact on the nurturing of children's spirituality by providing them with moments of reflection that helped develop their innate potential for spirituality. According to the contact person, "For good or for bad, religions and beliefs are very important in our context. I think that, unlike other programs, LTLT has provided children with a very important space for connecting with their beliefs and to nurture their spirituality towards reconciliation; something much needed in our society."⁸⁰ In this respect, one of

77 Montreal, school principal San Simón school, woman, 1 November 2014

78 Popotlán, José María Villaseca School, girl, 10 September 2015

79 Soyapango, Juan Calvino School, boy, 10 September 2015

80 San Salvador, Evelyn Lorena López, interview 2 November 2014

the facilitators from Casa de la Juventud provided an example of change: "It was very interesting when one of the most undisciplined boys of the group, who showed resistance at the beginning of the process, became the most focused one on his reflection once we started the activity 'My life tree.'⁸¹⁸² The program also influenced children's openness to dealing with difficult situations and to developing empathy towards others; it equipped children with skills for their spiritual growth that allowed them to transform classroom conflicts into solidarity and reconciliation: "A very rewarding moment of observable change was in one of the sessions we used the methodology 'Stories for the soul,'⁸³ with some modifications for our context. When we finished and asked the group if anyone identified with the story, one of

"The methodology and the progress of the group in the process made them listen to his experience with respect rather than judgment."

the kids felt comfortable to raise his hand and to share that he helps his family with the corn harvest. Usually, we see that the group makes fun of children who help their families with the farm. However, in this case, the methodology and the progress of the group in the process

81 Learning to Live Together manual, p. 65

82 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, woman, 1 November 2014

83 Learning to Live Together manual, p. 73

made them listen to his experience with respect rather than judgment."⁸⁴

"...it is necessary to build teachers' capacities to use the LTLT Programme as an approach."

2. LTLT AND CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN UNDERTAKING FURTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OR DEVELOPING INITIATIVES TOGETHER WITH OTHERS

There were no documented child-led actions as a result of the program implementation. In the case of Casa de la Juventud, the limited number of sessions was not sufficient to make the transition to action, although it was expected that, after the M&E process ended, participants would continue being involved in activities that could lead to action. However, security issues related to gangs in conflict for territorial control made it difficult to continue activities in the area.⁸⁵ Since emphasis was not given during the basic training workshop nor during the CoP sessions to encouraging facilitators to design sessions that could help motivate children to initiate actions or initiatives, neither Juan Calvino School nor San Simón School reported about any child-led actions taking place in the institutions.

84 Popotlán, facilitator Casa de la Juventud, man, 1 November 2014

85 E. López, contact person, interview 28 August 2015.



3. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING PROCESSES AND INITIATIVES

The LTLT implementation in El Salvador reached a significant number of children from different communities, schools, and ages, to a great extent due to the institutional support that was provided to the systematic implementation. In El Salvador, the institutional backing came from the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC), and the schools where the program was implemented.

According to facilitators, the institutional support represented in the contact person contributed to the successful implementation of the LTLT Programme, especially in terms of networking, advice on improving contents, outcome follow-up, and logistics: *"Lorena⁸⁶ has been a great support for what we are doing here. For instance, when we do not understand a methodology we can contact her and ask for explanation.*

86 Lorena is the contact person for the M&E process in El Salvador

Besides, she and the CBC also support us with the Communities of Practice."⁸⁷

Institutions involved in the systematic LTLT implementation underlined the significant outcomes achieved with the process. The principal from San Simón School expressed interest in continuing program efforts; especially, taking into consideration the high dropout rate in secondary school, and *"the urgent need to continue implementing the LTLT from an early age, so the values they learn in the process prevent them from getting involved in gangs and delinquency."⁸⁸*

Likewise, the Principal from Juan Calvino School stressed her interest in continuing to implement the LTLT Programme, as well as in offering a sustainable and continuous implementation of the program for LTLT participants while they remain at the school. Casa de la Juventud also shared this commitment to the program; however, they recognized the need to scale down the implementation and to prioritize

87 Soyapango, facilitator Juan Calvino school, woman, 31 October 2014

88 Montreal, school principal San Simón school, woman, 1 November 2014

program quality. They want to continue following up with the groups that participated this year, while focusing on smaller groups and aiming to cover more

“There is the urgent need to continue implementing the LTLT from an early age, so the values they learn in the process prevent them from gangs and delinquency.”

sessions.

Although institutional backing was fully provided throughout the process, according to Mr. Madrigal,⁸⁹ the systematic implementation delivered hints on how to improve the process at this level: *“The ideal scenario is to have the LTLT Programme in the schools. However, to do so, it needs to be in the curricula. I am not referring to this as part of the ethics and moral subject, but as an approach used in all subjects regardless if this is math or social science. Therefore, it is necessary to build teachers’ capacities to use the LTLT Programme as an approach, which requires agreements with the Ministry of Education; something that we tried once without success because of several reasons —e.g. approaching the wrong contact, difficulties the contact had understanding that ethics education is not the same as religious education, and seeing that ethics education can have a place in secular educational systems —*

89 Director of Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC)

though we will explore how to approach them again with documentation on the programs’ impact and added value.”⁹⁰

In addition to the challenges related to how to position the LTLT Programme in formal educational settings, Mr. Madrigal underlined the importance of reaching out to the community beyond the spaces of implementation: *“If we want this program to work in a long-term perspective, it needs to transcend territorially to the community. In El Salvador, we have a physical need because there are not safe public spaces. Public spaces here are either taken by the gangs or by other people, so they are not safe for children or for the community in general.”⁹¹* According to him, additional factors such as the variety of spaces and people influencing children’s ethics education, and the different types of family structures — that in El Salvador are not necessarily nuclear families — should serve to encourage religious leaders to assume a supportive role in this kind of processes.⁹²

4. CHILDREN’S MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC) STORIES

In El Salvador the collection of the four MSC stories involved children who participated in the systematic LTLT implementation from Juan Calvino School, San Simón School, and from schools benefited by Casa de la Juventud in Popotlán. A panel composed of Arigatou International Geneva staff selected the story that best

90 San Salvador, Mr. Larry José Madrigal, interview 2 November 2014

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

represented the most significant changes in children due to the LTLT Programme. The criteria for story selection was to identify to what extent the LTLT programs developed children's capacity to make ethical decisions, to nurture their spirituality, and to transform their communities together. In this sense, the MSC stories intended to collect the most significant changes either in terms of attitudes, behaviors, skills, or knowledge that children had experienced throughout and due to the LTLT Programme.

“If we want this program to work in a long-term perspective, it needs to transcend territorially to the community.”

Three domains of change were identified in the selection of the stories: children's capacity to make ethical decisions, their capacity to nurture their spirituality, and their ability to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others. All of these are closely connected to the Learning to Live Together goals and approach.

Children's capacity to make ethical decisions is measured based on how and if they consider the implications of their actions on themselves, others, their community or nature. It also measures their capacity to identify non-violent alternatives and solutions to problems around them. Most significant changes

measured in this domain are those related to the development of children's critical thinking. Critical thinking goes beyond the capacity to argue against or in favor of a belief or idea; it entails the capacity to be open to multiple narratives, understand others' arguments, find alternatives and challenge one's own views and perspectives on the world without fear of compromising one's identity. Critical thinking is an on-going process of personal transformation and is at the core of the LTLT educational approach, as it enables children and youth to reflect about their dilemmas, their decisions, how they affect them and others, and to comprehend the world by themselves.⁹³

Children's capacity to nurture their spirituality is measured in children's capacity to handle their emotions when their rights are trampled upon and to empathize with others, and in their attitude of reconciliation towards others when problems arise. Most significant changes measured in this domain are those that reflect the development of empathy — the capacity to enter the experience of another and to understand and feel their joys and sorrows, elation and anguish. Empathy combines two important capacities in human beings: to analyze and to sympathize, to use both our heads and our hearts. Analyzing is collecting facts about a problem, observing the conditions, identifying root causes, and proposing solutions. Sympathizing is feeling for another person, feeling the pain of someone who

93 See: LTLT educational Approach

is suffering or feeling the anger of a person in rage.⁹⁴

Children’s ability to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others is measured in their capacity to relate with people of different cultures and faiths, work together with them, and identify and respond to violence and injustices that affect them, others and the surrounding community. It is through learning, with space for free critical thinking, that each child and young person will be able to build and practice a positive relationship with herself or himself, the other, the environment and with that which people refer to as God, Ultimate Reality, or Divine Presence. This building of positive relationships will enrich their innate spirituality, opening up avenues for growth, mutual understanding and respect for people of different religions and civilizations. This

will in turn enable children and young people to be partners in building with others a world based on values and practices that safeguard human dignity and promote solidarity, individual and collective responsibility, and reconciliation.⁹⁵

It is important to take into consideration that all these elements are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, all domains complement each other. However, for the purpose of the MSC technique, it was necessary to define categories that would allow the analysis of the changes experienced by participants and their connection to the LTLT programme outcomes and goals.

Table 2 describes the analysis of the stories, taking into account the three stories selected and the most significant changes identified in each domain.

Story number	Story Title	MSC
Domain: Capacity to make ethical decisions		
S1	“I think that before exploding it is better to dialogue”	Development of inner dialogue and acknowledgement of herself and others.
Domain: Capacity to nurture their spirituality		
S1	“I think that before exploding it is better to dialogue”	Enhancing her capacity to deal with her emotions, self-reflection and her openness in relating with others.
Domain: Ability to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others		
S1	“I think that before exploding it is better to dialogue”	

Table 2: Most Significant Change story analysis

94 Learning to Live Together manual, p. 12.

95 See: LTLT educational Approach

Story 1

“I think that before exploding it is better to build dialogue”

Storyteller: Laura (pseudonym to protect child identity)

Location: Padre José María Villaseca School

Gender: Female

Age: 18

Religious Affiliation: Christian

We had an activity where there were three stages: a first stage when we had to become furious without exploding; then, we had to count to ten in order to calm down, and finally there was the stage of controlling the anger. Some people exploded but I think that before exploding it is better to dialogue with these people.

During another activity, the students of the grade came together and used a ‘mirror’ to look into the characteristics and positive qualities of each of us. This also helped a lot because sometimes we do not even know ourselves. Sometimes, there are persons that do not know or recognize the qualities of others but when they see it written, they think: ‘Oh yes, it is true; this person has these qualities’. It is also useful to avoid fighting with others.

We also participated in an activity on conflicts among students. I remember that it was also related to self-control. For example, if a person treats you badly, you should not follow him, but rather calm down and tell him: ‘Analyze if you are right or wrong’.

Another example was related to the activity of the tree. I felt many things because I had faced many personal issues and I feel that this activity helped me to look into elements of my life and my feelings. I saw that many (classmates) expressed themselves; there were many things we did not know shared by others; therefore I was emotional as everyone was opening himself/herself up; there was trust to express their feelings.

Before, when I had an issue, I would start arguing, but nowadays I feel that I am more calm and if for example my mother starts arguing with me, I let her finish talking and then I tell her ‘mom, you are right’ and then I do not argue as before. I feel that this helped me a lot.

With my friends as well, we experienced many changes. We were a group of friends and they changed significantly. They used to be very shy, they did not talk; we were friends but only discussing about school or other activities. We never talked about our problems, maybe because we feared to be rejected. But when we started participating in the activities, we were told to listen and understand others. This helped us a lot.

We had been together for three years, but there were different groups. The workshops helped us become more united. As an example, when we had group presentations, everybody was supportive. Conversely, it was not the case before when we would fight and argue. Now we discuss and agree, and I think that we even have better results than before.

Laura's story was selected because it reflects the process she went through that enabled her to learn how to deal with her dilemmas, past experiences, manage emotions and respond to difficult situations in ways that are more peaceful and assertive. By nurturing her spirituality and strengthening her self-reflection, she started to develop her critical thinking as well as her capacity to make ethical decisions. According to the panel members, the story embodies a process of internalization of the importance of solving conflicts, of getting to know oneself, and how others perceive one. There is reflection on the need to manage and deal with emotions at different levels: with her mom, with her friends, with her classmates, etc., and concrete ideas on how to deal with those.

The panel underlined that Laura's story reflects how the program helped her to know herself better and improve her communication/listening skills, which in turn enabled her to improve how she relates to others and herself. Although there is not a great deal of direct

evidence of critical thinking, one can see how she is embracing other possibilities, alternatives, and how she recognizes the importance of changing one's view if one sees that there is a mistake. This seems to be an internalization — an inner dialogue — that helps with becoming more critical in how to deal with issues and improve relations with others.

Panel members agreed that because of Laura's age, her learning was better articulated than other stories received and more clearly presented the learning from the experiences during the activities of the LTLT. As she mentioned, the group had been together for three years but it was only through the activities of the LTLT that she started to notice changes within the group and better ways to deal with conflicts. Therefore, in a reality affected by violence, Laura's story is a good example of how LTLT can be instrumental in addressing and transforming violence affecting children.⁹⁶

96 MSC selection

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

The systematic implementation of the Learning to Live Together Programme in El Salvador has delivered positive outcomes, particularly in relation to its impact on children and facilitators, and to a lesser extent on communities. Findings suggest that the training workshops helped to build teachers' capacities and skills in implementing context-sensitive programs with children, especially improving their interaction with children by providing them with spaces to develop their communication and mediation skills. Findings suggested that the training also provided facilitators with spaces to develop their critical consciousness, in a way that allowed them to better understand children's realities and to challenge their own views about the context. In addition, a relevant contribution was identified in how the CoP increased facilitators' capacity to value and embrace the spiritual and religious diversity in their group. Beyond that, evidence indicated that both the training workshops and the CoP encouraged facilitators to help children discover their inner potential for spirituality and to develop respectful relations with others.

At the level of program implementation, evidence suggested that the customization responded to children's context and needs. The use of interconnectedness and participatory and collaborative methodologies allowed children to get to know themselves and one another, explore each other's views, experience moments together, challenge one's ideas about the other, and create connections and relationships. Through the development of children's critical thinking, their capacity to overcome stereotypes and go beyond their prejudices, and their capacity to empathize with the needs of others, the programs served to challenge the normalization of violence and the unbalanced power relations that children are exposed to in the community and which are then brought into the school. Furthermore, findings suggested that, by developing children's ability to nurture their spirituality — as they learned how to deal with challenges, conflicts and dilemmas, to handle emotions, and to respond in a non-violent way when problems arise — the programs allowed significant improvements in children's relations with others, decreased violent behaviors and attitudes that the context has imbued in children, and increased cooperation in the classroom.

The following recommendations are made in order to enhance program quality, impact, and sustainability in the future:

- Organize an advanced training workshop for facilitators who implemented the programs during 2014, so they can deepen knowledge about the LTLT educational framework and about how to further customize the program for the particular needs and challenges faced by facilitators and children in El Salvador.
- Organize a session with parents/caregivers of children who benefited from the programs as an opportunity to obtain their views on the impact they have seen in children after the sessions, or even to involve parents in ethics education training. It would be desirable to explore with them if they would like their children to continue being part of this kind of processes, what topics they would prioritize to work on with their children, and how relevant they find this program to their context.
- Further customize the implementation of the LTLT to the context of youth violence and document the educational strategies used that can help to reduce urban violence in El Salvador.
- Encourage child-led actions as a way to create space for children to put into practice the learning acquired during the program sessions and to help include other children in the LTLT experience.
- Strengthen Communities of Practice with teachers from other schools, so they can exchange relevant information about the program implementation, acquire new ideas to improve their sessions, and draw inspiration from their colleagues' experiences in implementing LTLT.
- For implementation in formal educational settings, encourage training for teachers who work directly with the targeted group. Impact and quality proved to be higher when facilitators were part of the school community.
- Ensure process monitoring by applying baselines and user-friendly monitoring tools in future program implementations. Consequently, both children and teachers will be able to see their progress, assess their goals, and celebrate their achievements.
- Create opportunities for children to meet up with children from other schools and implementing locations who have participated or are participating in the LTLT Programme, to exchange experiences and ideas for actions to transform their communities together, particularly to promote non-violent alternatives in their schools and create a culture of Learning to Live Together.
- Allocate resources to continue supporting the Communities of Practice, as well as upcoming children's initiatives.

IV. Annexes

Annex 1: M&E framework

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL GENEVA Monitoring & Evaluation Framework Learning to Live Together Programme			
	Summary	Indicators	Means of Verification
Overall Goal	Children learn to live in solidarity with people of different religions, cultures, and ethnicity; are empowered to nurture their spirituality and to make positive contributions to their communities based on values that promote respect for their own culture and beliefs and for those of others.	% of children who have experienced changes in the way they see themselves and relate to others by promoting and applying mutual understanding and respect in their relations with others, at school, in the community, and within the family	Most Significant Change stories (MSC), "photovoice", and observation log by facilitators, baselines
Project Goal	Children are equipped to make ethical decisions, to nurture their spirituality, and to make positive contributions to transform their communities together with others.	% of children who have developed their critical thinking; experienced changes in their relations with others; and nurtured their spirituality through LTLT programs	Baselines filled in by children at the beginning and at the end of the program implementation. MSC Stories
		# of ways in which the LTLT has provided more tools to develop skills of intercultural understanding and critical thinking in children	Facilitators' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator through focus groups and skype calls between November 2014 and June 2015
		# of children who benefited from the systematic implementation of LTLT programs.	Form II-Program Information Form, collected by project focal point at the beginning of the program
		# of actions/initiatives promoted by children after being part of an LTLT program	Child-led actions' descriptions and pictures shared via email by project focal points between June-September 2015
Outputs	Institutional partnerships with local institutions/implementing partners working with children and youth	# of partners actively supporting the implementation of LTLT programs	Memorandum of Understanding signed between Arigatou International and implementing partners, informal agreements
	Facilitators within each institution are able to implement Learning to Live Together (LTLT) programs that promote intercultural and interfaith learning	# of facilitators trained to implement LTLT programs in a systematic and monitored way	Form II-Program Information form, and form III-Session Information form collected by project focal points at the beginning and throughout the program implementation

		# of facilitators who experienced personal and professional changes after using the LTLT program	Interviews conducted by the M&E coordinator between November 2014 and June 2015	
	Communities of Practice (CoP) among facilitators at the local level serve as basis for follow up, feedback and mutual support	# of CoP created during the systematic implementation of LTLT programs	Focal points' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator via email and skype calls between November 2014 and June 2015	
		# of facilitators attending CoP meetings	Focal points' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator via email and skype calls between November 2014 and June 2015	
		Types of skills, knowledge and new tools acquired by facilitators through their participation in CoP	Facilitators' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator through focus groups between November 2014 and June 2015	
	Children actively participate in periodical programs/activities of Learning to Live Together	% of children involved in the systematic implementation of LTLT programs who have attended all sessions	Baselines filled in by children at the beginning and at the end of program implementation	
		% of participants from diverse groups distributed by country, age, gender, ethnicity, and religion	Form II-Program Information Form, and form III-Session Information Form, collected by project focal points at the beginning and throughout the program implementation	
		% of children giving a high post-learning experience satisfaction rating	Form IV-Children's Feedback, collected by facilitators three times—beginning, middle, and end—during program implementation	
	Activities	Communication and meetings with organizations to establish formal partnerships	# of organizations contacted and # of meetings held to collaborate with the systematic implementation of LTLT programs	Minutes of meetings and calls
			# of organizations supporting actions/initiatives organized by children	Interviews conducted by the M&E coordinator between November 2014 and June 2015
Basic training workshops are organized for facilitators		# of basic training workshops carried out before systematic implementation starts and to provide ongoing support	LTLT training reports	

		# of manuals distributed for workshops	Shipping excel sheet/TNT registration
Systematic implementation of LTLT programs are developed with appropriate resources		# of sessions and activities run for each LTLT implementation during a set period of time	Form II-Program Information Form, and form III-Session Information Form, collected by project focal points at the beginning and throughout the program implementation
		Ways in which the LTLT is being customized, content implemented and Ethics Education framework used	Form II-Program Information Form, and form III-Session Information Form collected by project focal points at the beginning and throughout the program implementation
		Types of resources allocated for implementation by implementing partners	Focus Groups' review with focal points and facilitators
		# and types of additional resources/similar programs references used for implementation	Form III-Session Information Form., filled in by facilitators three times—beginning, middle, and end—during program implementation
CoP meetings are planned to exchange and share implementation experiences		# of CoP sessions held	Focal points' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator via email and skype calls between November 2014 and June 2015
		Type of venues used for CoP that facilitated a proper environment for the sessions	Form IV-Children's Feedback, collected by facilitators three times—beginning, middle, and end—during program implementation
		Frequency and time per session sufficient to achieve set objectives	Facilitators' inputs collected by the M&E coordinator through focus groups and skype calls between November 2014 and June 2015
Sessions conducted for children based on LTLT		# of sessions held with children	Form II-Program Information Form, collected by project focal point at the beginning of the program
		% of children highly satisfied with the sessions, methodology used, and content	Form IV-Children's Feedback, collected by facilitators three times—beginning, middle, and end—during program implementation

Annex 2: M&E Learning indicators

Changes	Description	Indicators
Knowledge (K)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased knowledge about themselves, others and their own beliefs and culture 2. Reduced negative views about people of other cultures and beliefs 3. Increased knowledge and understanding about violence and injustices that affect their schools and communities and their causes 4. Increased knowledge about non-violent alternatives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. % of children participating in the program who express having gained knowledge about themselves, their beliefs and cultures B. % of children participating in the program who express a better view/understanding of people of other cultures and beliefs C. % of children participating in the program who can identify concrete types of violence and injustices in their schools and communities and their causes D. % of children participating in the program who can identify concrete non-violent alternatives or solutions to situations that affect them.
Attitudes (A)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased willingness to share with others, learn from one another and work with others 2. Reduced prejudices about people who are different from them 3. Increased empathy/understanding for the needs of others in their school and community 4. Increased capacity to approach problems with an attitude of reconciliation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> E. % of children participating in the program who express a disposition to relate to others who were not their friends before or who are different to them F. % of children participating in the program who express that they have established relations and interactions (friendship) with people of other cultures, ethnic groups, faiths, who they were afraid of or did not trust before G. % of children participating in the program who understand better the views of others and express concern for the needs of others H. % of children participating in the program who express/

		demonstrate their willingness to reconcile with others
Skills (S)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased capacity to relate and work with people of different cultural and religious backgrounds 2. Increased capacity to make well-grounded decisions based on ethical reflections and critical thinking 3. Increased capacity to deal non-violently with and propose solutions to conflicts or situations that affect them directly or their community 4. Increased capacity to deal with their emotions when their rights are trampled upon 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I.1. % of children participating in the program who demonstrate establishing new relations with people of different cultures or beliefs whom with they did not relate to before I.2. % of children participating in the program who are involved in joint activities with others whom they didn't relate to before J. % of children participating in the program who share concrete examples of how decisions they have made take into consideration the needs of others and/or think critically about the implications of those decisions on others and society K. % of children participating in the program who demonstrate and initiate non-violent alternatives solutions to deal with conflicts around them L. % of children participating in the program who demonstrate positive ways they have dealt with their emotions