

Messengers of Peace (MoP) Mid-term Evaluation Report

October 2015

Executive Summary

The Messengers of Peace (MoP) Initiative is soon entering its sixth year of existence. Since it commenced, it has achieved impressive results in terms of social impact: it has inspired hundreds of thousands of Scouts to take action in their local communities, who have done over **625 million service hours**. They have reached some 1.6 million beneficiaries through financially supported projects and a much greater number through the non-funded projects. And the numbers continue to grow.

It has **inspired behavioural change**, greater tolerance, and stronger understanding as well as respect among Scouts. Furthermore, it has supported more than a third of National Scout Organisations (NSOs) in strengthening their project management capacities, communication skills, and even building a better image of Scouting in some countries.

This report presents the results of a **nine-month evaluation project**, conducted by the World Scout Bureau with the support of the World Scout Foundation, using a range of different research methods (from interviews and surveys, to case studies, focus groups and report analysis). It aimed at understanding not only the impact MoP has achieved over the years, but also the ways in which it can be further enhanced – by examining the management structures and functioning of each element of the Initiative (the Support Fund, the educational aspect, and the MoP network). As a result, the following conclusions and recommendations can be underlined:

- Due to the fact that the MoP Initiative and its goals have evolved over time, as well as the messaging structured around them, confusion exists among various stakeholders as to what MoP actually is, how its components are defined and interrelated, and what its purpose is. It has therefore been recommended that a **clear definition of MoP** and its components should be provided in the near future, as well as a new set of key performance indicators which would reflect the current state of the Initiative and provide greater clarity of purpose for the future years.
- The greatest impact was achieved on **personal level**, as the message of peace (even though with different meanings in different parts of the world) resonated particularly well with Scouts in general. This is especially visible in conflict and post-conflict areas, where MoP helped communities in increasing tolerance and respect. This kind of impact MoP had on individuals resulted in a strong engagement on community level in many places. However, it has been recognized that more effort needs to be focused on ensuring a strong link and **sense of ownership and responsibility** among community members towards the service projects done by Scouts.
- On a national level, MoP-supported projects have helped in many cases in strengthening the capacities of NSOs for **serving their local communities** by improving their skills in project management, communication, as well as building strong trust bonds between different levels of leadership within the organisation. Through this, MoP has contributed to more and better organised community service being done around the world. Furthermore, MoP has helped improve the image of Scouting in some countries, as well as increase youth involvement in decision-making processes. These successes inspired a recommendation for ensuring opportunities for **exchange between NSO leadership** (who have and have not implemented MoP projects) about the best practices they developed, as well as lessons learned from projects. Although capacities have been increased, it has been recognized that further work is necessary in the area of project management, and in particular, impact evaluation.
- There is a recognizable element of inspiration for action that the MoP network provides to Scouts, although it is evident that it has not reached its full potential. In order to enhance it, a stronger emphasis on **localising the network** is necessary, as well as ensuring greater involvement of NSO leadership in collecting information about service projects in their countries,

and in promoting them nationally and internationally. A further analysis of the **functionalities of the online platform for the MoP network** (through scout.org) is necessary, along with an adaptation of those to better fulfil the needs of young people across the globe (recognizing the specific cultural and linguistic contexts, as well as internet accessibility issues).

- In terms of management of the MoP Support Fund, improvement has been recognized in the past year, however, a further need for changes is seen as necessary in ensuring that **more power in decision-making** about projects is given to regional World Scout Bureau staff and Regional Decision Committee (RDC) members. Furthermore, in order to cut down on the waiting time between the acceptance of a project and the first disbursement of funding (identified as the main complaint about the current process) it is recommended to have **2 or more set deadlines** for project applications, in order to better focus the work of staff and RDC members, as well as give a predictable timeline to NSOs for when they can expect funding to begin.
- The educational aspect of MoP is currently being re-defined, with a strong focus being put on outlining an adaptable framework, which can be implemented as part of the Youth Programme or independently. Recognizing that there **cannot be a "one-size-fits-all" solution**, the recommendation here is to allow the MoP Initiative to maintain a flexible format, without strict guidelines, but with a clear purpose and goal, and be adaptable across such a vastly diverse movement
- It has been recognized that the current management structure of the Initiative lacks in **quality internal communication**, among both WSB staff members and volunteers at national and regional level. In order to enhance this, a need for a clear description of various roles (including the ones on national level) in managing the MoP Initiative has been seen as necessary.

Overall, the benefit of the Messengers of Peace Initiative to the world has been enormous. With an investment made so far of **over 15 million USD** in projects, administrative and communication costs (of the total 24.75 million USD), Scouting has created a genuine interest among membership for peace and promoting it, as well as developed project management structures of capacities unseen before in world Scouting.

MoP is the largest Initiative the World Scout Bureau has ever managed. It has been instrumental in the success of many of the major world Scouting projects (including the World Scout Educational Congress and the Global Support Assessment Tool), as well as substantial national level undertakings in terms of capacity strengthening.

As it enters its second stage of existence (MoP has initially been conceptualised as a 10-year initiative), it is important to take on board the learnings of this evaluation, and reflect upon them in order to improve the work of the Initiative in the future, and reach and inspire even more Scouts (and non-Scouts) to take action.