



Civil Society Dialogue Network

Training seminar on the EU and Peacebuilding, 9-10 July 2015

EVALUATION FEEDBACK FORMS (Total: 20 forms)

1) Content of the training seminar:

Session 1 – Thursday morning: Basic facts about the EU

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
6	12	2		

Comments (what worked well, what did not):

What worked well:

- Experts moving around the different groups: 4 (useful way of asking precise questions related to individual experience: 1)
- Materials sent before the training useful: 4 (Power analysis very helpful: 2, Power analysis will be used in future work: 1)
- Useful and clear presentations: 4
- Good level, bearing in mind different backgrounds of participants: 2
- Everything useful: 1
- Great facilitations, great resource persons, great group: 1
- Different speaker per EU institution: 1
- Excellent introduction into seminar programme: 1
- Repetition good way of reminding of basic facts: 1
- Complexity of subject was well simplified: 1

What worked less well:

- Theory too basic, too long: 4
- Give more concrete examples of interplay between institutions and member states: 1
- Repetitive in parts of the reading/power analysis: 1
- Organigramme would have been necessary for EU institutions: 1
- Focus on a few actors in depth (rest to be researched or looked up in background material) or more general information on influencing strategies and which ones effective with which actor: 1

**Session 2 – Thursday afternoon: How the EU operates in conflict-affected countries
(no rating nor comment: 1)**

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
13	4	2		

Comments (what worked well, what did not):

What worked well:

- Andrew Sherriff’s presentation: 5 (excellent information on how & what of engaging EU delegations: 1; good speaker, do’s and don’ts overview interesting, good examples and details: 1; very open and practical presentation: 1, interesting analysis: 1; insights on how to deal with the EU in conflict-affected countries: 1)
- Very frank and open: 2 (about what works and what doesn’t work: 1; about very sensitive issues with regard to the EU’s role and peacebuilding: 1)
- Useful considerations for others in my organisation: 1
- Informative, behind the scenes: 1
- Good practical insight from perspective of field operations: 1
- Very specific and clear session: 1
- Particularly useful because of participant’s lack of information on conflict side of things: 1

What worked less well:

- Focus on fewer actors and more on experiences (general overview easy to find online or in background material): 1

Session 3 – Thursday afternoon: Discussion with EU officials

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
9	10	1		

Comments (what worked well, what did not):

What worked well:

- EU actors speaking directly and openly: 9 (hear what they want to get/hear/receive and be lobbied on: 1; on limitations and possibilities of engaging different EU instruments and funding streams: 1; about where advocacy opportunities lie: 1; EU officials not arrogant, very practical: 1)
- Useful tips and information: 5
- Insight into how their institutions work: 4
- Very good speakers: 2
- Opportunity to speak with EU officials: 1
- Representative from EP, whose perspective is most of the time neglected: 1
- Very interesting: 1

What worked less well :

- Too short: 2
- More comments on what they would like to achieve/work towards, how they see the contribution of civil society – more broadly than from a lobby/funding perspective: 1
- Suggestion: CSO representatives as experts to ‘correct’ or complement EU officials to further enrich sessions: 1
- Not a lot of new advice: 1
- EP presentation: 2 (Replace EP representative with representative from DG DEVCO - more relevant for advocacy: 1)
- Suggestion of round-table format as in the previous session: 1

Session 4 – Friday morning: Case studies of past advocacy strategies towards the EU

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
12	8			

Comments (what worked well, what did not):

What worked well:

- Very interesting: 3 (importance of understanding political capital of actors and incremental change of policy: 1; field feedback: 1)
- Selection of case studies: 3 (three very different case studies: 1; clear examples of advocacy work: 2)
- Very inspirational session: 3 (how to implement in our work: 1)
- Sara’s presentation excellent: 2 (practical insights on what works and what not: 1)
- Good preparation for the practice-oriented second day: 1
- Useful insights: 1
- Good and informative: 1
- Structure for all case studies (context, objectives, targets, means, timeline): 1
- Great illustration of the elements presented on day 1: 1
- Helpful to understand how EU advocacy works: 1
- Most compelling session: 1
- One of the best ways to enhance participants’ comprehension of advocacy functions: 1
- Very well briefed speakers: 1

What worked less well:

- Only case studies from Brussels-based organisations: 3 (Difficult to replicate this model of engagement for organisations that are not present in Brussels: 1)
- Expected at least one case related to conflict area: 1
- Nothing new, reinforced general multilateral advocacy models: 1
- PowerPoint would have been nice: 1
- Maybe better to have one more case study in depth than two more superficial: 1

- Missing more information on which influencing strategies have proven to be most effective: 1

Session 5 – Friday afternoon: Group exercise on devising an advocacy strategy

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
10	7	2		1

Comments (what worked well, what did not):

What worked well:

- Useful exercise: 5 (deepened understanding: 1)
- Very good team work: 3 (opportunity to learn from other team members: 1)
- Good refresher of what we had learned before: 2
- Well prepared: 1
- Good to bring in unexpected elements: 1
- Focus on strategies rather than organigrammes: 1
- Most important part of the training seminar: 1
- Starting process on devising advocacy strategy and coming across challenges at the same time: 1
- Exercise has helped to realise that one needs excellent knowledge on the context, actors, opportunities etc.: 1
- Exercise helped to extract lessons: 1
- Interesting: 1
- Good to identify knowledge gaps on working with EU institutions: 1
- Fun: 1
- Feedback from resource person in the end excellent: 1

What worked less well :

- Case studies too vague, too broad: 8 (More specific or real case scenario would have been more difficult to handle: 1; More context description could be useful: 1; 'conflict expertise' too broad, more focused problem needed: 1; struggled to grapple with peacebuilding/conflict prevention task, more focused more effective: 1; more parameters to make topic more 'handable': 1)
- More real-life problems: 2 (suggestion to have simulations on real-life problems/conflicts with whole day dedicated and a written strategy submitted: 1; need to take into account constraints: time, personnel, money)
- Identifying objective from case study took too much time, better to present selection of objectives for group to choose from, to focus on target actors and strategies: 1
- Could be extended to 2-hour session: 1
- Quite easy to devise strategy and maybe not enough of a challenging exercise: 1
- Situation in the briefing too complicated for someone just learning about EU advocacy: 1
- Other, more confident members of the group took over, left out of discussion: 1
- More like 'how to do advocacy' exercise than 'how to tailor advocacy in EU context' task: 1

**2) How would you rate the quality of the background documents that were distributed in advance of the training seminar?
(no rating: 3)**

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
9	7	1		

Comments and recommendations:

Comments:

- Power analysis very useful: 7 (good overview: 1; best thing about the seminar: 1)
- Will use power analysis in the future: 4
- Interested to get access to other EPLO material on actors in the EU: 1
- Will share background documents with colleagues, especially the power analysis: 1
- Very updated: 1
- Simple, easy to read: 1
- Nothing to complain about: 1

Recommendations:

- Example of how EPLO plans its advocacy strategies would be a welcome addition: 1
- Background documents should include a case study and more detailed information of the EU's peacebuilding and conflict prevention: 1
- Power analysis would be more easily digestible if more analytical: 1
- Little updates needed, basic facts document should be proofread: 1

**3) How would you rate the overall facilitation of the training seminar and the quality of the presentations?
(no rating: 2)**

excellent	good	average	poor	very poor
12	5	1		

Comments:

- Well-articulated and informative presentations: 3
- Difficulties with acoustics: 2
- Compliments to EPLO staff: 2 (very approachable: 1; excellent facilitation: 1)
- Excellent knowledge of facilitators: 2 (genuine desire to see the development of participants' EU knowledge: 1, very knowledgeable and at everyone's disposal: 1)
- Very responsive and good facilitation: 1
- Maybe 1 or 2 resource persons enough to present, some resource persons seemed more at ease facilitating smaller groups than others: 1
- Excellent presentations: 1
- Almost always on time: 1
- Well structured: 1

- All presentations clear, concise, relevant and fun: 1
- Pre-reading could be included in presentations to help build connections between factual information in pre-reading and practical explanations in the presentations: 1
- Learned a lot: 1

4) Usefulness of the seminar:

Did you find the seminar useful? (no answer: 2)

- Useful: 16
- Useful to gain insight into work of EU institutions on conflict prevention and peacebuilding: 3 (Useful for getting an inside understanding of the dynamics of EU peacebuilding: 1; Useful to understand dynamics and political context in Brussels and challenges faced by EU in terms of peacebuilding: 1)
- Useful for networking with similar organisations: 3
- Applicable to daily work: 2
- Enhancing knowledge: 1
- A bit too much time spent on basics of EU institutions and decision-making: 1
- Day 2 particularly useful for learning to think systematically of advocacy: 1
- Opportunity to test theoretical framework in practice: 1
- Group exercise not useful: 1
- Looking for context and architecture rather than advocacy models/skills: 1 (more practical context/incentives on key actors, Member States, HR/VP to help in future advocacy entry points)
- Particularly useful for people starting on EU advocacy: 1

How much did you learn at the seminar? Please give examples. (no answer: 3)

- Learned how to do advocacy: 7 (Learned about practical and real way to move an agenda forward: 1; Learned about how to best approach EU officials: 1)
- Learned about relation Member State politics and the EU: 3 (Learned how EU MS policies can be reflected/promoted on the ground: 1; learned about attitude of certain member states: 1)
- Better understanding of policy-making process: 3
- Understanding of institutional structures: 2 (CSFP, CSDP, EEAS structures and relationship with EC: 1, EEAS structure: 1; role of EP in conflict prevention/peacebuilding: 1; mediation unit: 1)
- Learned from others' mistakes: 1
- Learned about importance of networks and alliances: 1
- Learned about civil society's perspective on certain institutional and policy developments (e.g. in relation to EUSRs): 1
- Learned about EU dynamics and how to match it with CSO pace: 1
- Learned about EU mandates, opportunities and limitations: 1
- Networking: 1
- Knowledgeable about institutional framework already: 1
- Learned about EU jargon: 1

- How to engage with EPLO member organisations: 1
- Awareness of possible allies in Brussels and member state: 1

Will you apply what you learned in your work? Please give examples.

- Yes: 9
- Probably: 4
- Will initiate work with co-workers: 2
- Maybe develop some common actions in cooperation with EPLO and other organisations: 2
- Will require more reading and research first: 1
- When writing more targeted op-eds or blogs: 1
- Will help structure and uniform targeted research and interviews: 1
- Will discuss with team to establish more focused relationships with mediation unit, geographic desks, EEAS, PermReps: 1
- Will engage EEAS and country-specific advocacy priority: 1
- Develop strategies and publications and studying strategy for East and Central Africa Programme for EU and UK: 1
- Currently developing an advocacy campaign: 1
- Include it in strategies: 1
- Work not advocacy-focused but useful to have better outline of the actors involved, e.g. role of EP: 1
- Train colleagues: 1
- Use in H2020 project: 1
- Identifying strategic opportunities for geographic programme teams: 1

5) Please give your suggestions for improving the training seminar or further comments:

Suggestions for improvement:

- More time: 3 (Exercise should be the most important part, maybe have a whole day for the exercise, to have real-world conflicts and to have strategies formulated in written form: 1; Additional time for more “hands on” work to have more time to develop and go through different advocacy steps: 1; more time to network: 1; more time for practical experience: 1)
- More examples of non-Brussels based organisations: 2
- More material and presentation on case studies, especially for previous cases where EU was involved in conflict areas, to simplify advocacy strategy: 1
- Having a speaker from the Council Secretariat, Member State or even a Delegation: 1
- Add project training and planning in EPLO toolbox: 1
- Is group work the most effective?: 1
- Narrow down to mapping component and speak more in detail about interests, influencing etc: 1

Further comments:

- Congratulations to EPLO team: 2

- Perfect size of group and sufficient breaks for networking: 1
- Ice-breaking exercise on Thursday morning and dinner were excellent: 1
- Fine concept, well designed: 1