

Toolkit for

Online-Exchange



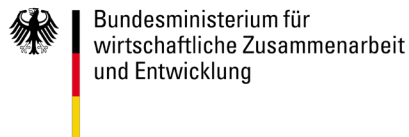
masifunde
Learner Development

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Gefördert von



im Auftrag des



im Rahmen von



masifunde

Learner Development

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Foreword

Masifunde works towards equal opportunities in education for children and young people in Germany and South Africa. Disadvantaged children in South Africa are being empowered through holistic (after-) school programmes. Both of our education programmes in South Africa and Germany encourage young people to broaden their horizon and to reflect on their lives as part of a multicultural society and in a globalised world.

For many years Masifunde has been shedding light on the realities, the differences and the similarities, of young people of the same age in different countries. German and South African learners develop a greater cultural and social sensitivity through connecting with different perspectives.

A major factor in building this sensitivity are the Learn4Life!-Groups that exist in both Germany and South Africa. Learn for life and share it with others – that is the objective of the Learn4Life!-Groups in Germany and South Africa, who give young people access to topics like democracy, environment, social equality, racism, migration and many more in order to empower them to become active citizens and changemakers for a just and equal global society. The L4L! facilitators create weekly sessions with interactive methods that also include excursions and exchange with other groups in South Africa and Germany. Masifunde believes that through personal experience and bonds on an individual level, learners can develop an

understanding for issues of Global Learning that is richer than book knowledge alone. Through the exchange, we can reflect on our role in the global society and take a step towards understanding what is the very entangled relationships between different parts of the world.

In the spring of 2018, Masifunde set out to take the next big step to professionalise this exchange. An encounter between the South African and the German team members took place in Mainz, Germany. Ten highly motivated people from the Masifunde Teams came together to create this toolkit and to create a professional, sustainable and purposeful online youth exchange programme to connect young people from both countries. Over the course of the seminar, the team developed an action plan to implement, run and evaluate youth exchange that is applicable for Masifunde and also for other organisations that are interested in building their own international exchange programme. They were joined by guests, who all contributed their piece of knowledge and experience to the process. What we achieved was the merging of yearslong experiences from different countries, backgrounds and professional setups in youth group facilitation and exchange with new ideas and fresh approaches born from our eight-day exchange.

This document serves as a best practice example – as a toolkit – for other organisations on their way to their own youth exchange. Masifunde believes in learning

through meaningful connections and long-lasting experiences and invites the reader to use this toolkit to their needs and specifications. To use what is deemed suitable and to tweak and change steps to make them work for their organisation.

This toolkit breaks the creation of a youth exchange programme down into four phases, covering the process of planning, preparing, implementing and evaluating the programme. Each step is broken down into a general, more theoretical approach as well as a tangible, concrete example of how Masifunde went about it. Helpful tools and methods, as well as resources for further research, are included as well.

The Masifunde – Global Encounter Team wishes the reader all the very best for creating a youth exchange programme that will form meaningful bonds between potential changemakers and encourage them to work towards more justice in the world. One step at a time.



Our seminar participants were:

Fundile Makhosi, Nonela Peter, Siphosethu Sola, Linda Zali, Zolisa Mcaciso, Thekla Rafelt, Jana Reiswich, Frederick Rieuwerts, Gunar Geitel

With our seminar team:

Jacob Birkenhäger, Franziska Uhlen, Johanna Schubert, Jennifer Schmieder

And our guests:

Nomfusi Msizi, Felix Rimbakowski, Rosa Ackva, Robin Loh



Table of content and checklist

Work your way through the chapters of this toolkit to create your exchange. Feel free to use it as your personal checklist of milestones on the way to your new programme. Check each box to mark your progress.

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Phase One

PRE-PLANNING ON A STRUCTURAL LEVEL

First things first: There are usually many people involved in creating exchange and (since this is the purpose of online exchange) commonly these people are far apart and don't get to see each other very often. So the first task really is to sit all those involved in the planning of an online exchange programme down together at a table for pre-planning.

An actual table would be ideal, but a digital one will do just fine. In this phase, all people with a direct involvement in the project lay the structural foundation for the upcoming work. Depending on the structure of the organisation, involving other departments / institutions / the board / etc in this phase can be helpful, too.


The Masifunde Way

Masifunde brought representatives of the two international teams together at a seminar. The seminar participants had previously discussed exchange with those responsible on a more structural level and will also carry the new information back and share it with the bigger team and other departments.

DETERMINE THE REASONS FOR AND AGAINST EXCHANGE


Everyone gets on the same page. The word exchange probably means something different to everyone, based on their own personal experiences. So make sure to share these experiences and different understandings with one another to all get on the same level and extend the angular field.

WHAT DOES EXCHANGE MEANS?

 Make a list of what exchange is, and which potentials and chances it has for you.

Next, try to think of what might be reasons against exchange. It might feel wrong to think that negatively that early on in the process. We will turn it around again and look at the positives. But by bringing our fears and reservations to the table right from the start, we know what we are up against and will be able to counteract our fears by incorporating them into our planning. It also helps to bring the planning team closer together – after all, we are all worried about *something*.

REASONS AGAINST EXCHANGE

 Flip the whole thing on its head!

To create the best exchange possible, come up with the worse exchange possible.

The Masifunde Way

OUR REASONS FOR EXCHANGE WERE:

- *enriching the perspectives of learners*
- *learning in peer-groups*
- *being active*
- *improving language skills*
- *getting to know other cultures*

OUR REASONS AGAINST EXCHANGE WERE:

- *the risk of cyber bullying*
- *too many technical problems*
- *no interest or response from the other party*
- *exposing learners to potentially harmful contexts*
- *creating the beginning of private conversations between the learners with problematic content*
- *cultural insensitivity and misunderstandings*
- *unprepared facilitators and the lack of motivation to put the extra effort in*
- *no personal bond between facilitators or learners*
- *strong language barrier*
- *no impact*

There you have it: A list of things you want in an exchange and a list of things to avoid. Finding solutions and preventive measures for the items on your second list will help you through the rest of the planning process. Your first list guides you towards achieving your personal goals. At the end of the planning phases, you can come back and double check if you planned for all these eventualities and have a way to handle them (which will free your hands for when the unplanned eventualities occur!).

DETERMINE WHERE THE ORGANISATION CURRENTLY STANDS

Before we continue to plan the future, let's have a look at the past. More specifically, the past of your organisation with regards to exchange programmes. It is important to know exactly the foundation we are going to build our exchange programme on.



You might want to ask yourself:

Were there any previous exchange programmes? What were they like? What worked out? What didn't?

What have you learned from previous experiences?

The Masifunde Way

In the weeks leading up to the seminar, a survey for the Masifunde learners and facilitators was developed and distributed to the groups. The South African groups had a focus on previous exchanges, whereas the German groups focussed more on expectations for a new programme (since they were not yet involved in previous attempts of online exchange).

The relevant results of this survey revealed a general interest in exchange amongst the learners, such as the positive feedback towards skype calls and the receiving of letters. Much like our first step, we asked them for things that would make exchange a not very pleasurable experience. Things mentioned were:

- *When the actual exchange is done, the participants tend to get sidetracked*
- *Exchange is set up in a way that doesn't allow for everybody to participate (such as too big groups, not everybody was informed when what is happening, small screens, not enough resources for all and the like)*
- *Exchange does not get personal enough and stays superficial*
- *Language barrier is too strong*
- *Availability of the partner group doesn't match the time of own group*

The learner's expectations for a successful exchange were:

- *to have a well-structured and well-established learner group before the exchange begins*
- *for the facilitators to frame the exchange in a serious light and to give it the character of an official and serious part of learning*
- *to have big groups broken down to get everyone involved*
- *to keep everyone busy in the exchange sessions, even if there are groupwork parts and not everyone gets to use the technical equipment at the same time*
- *that cyber mobbing is prevented*
- *that the exchange is placed reasonably within the term and the curriculum*

The results corresponded with our expectations and worries and were very helpful guidelines for the following planning steps.



Now it is your turn to find out where you currently stand with things. This can be via a survey, a group conversation, a session with the learners revolving around the upcoming exchange or other tools that are suitable for your organisation.

DETERMINE THE STRUCTURAL SET UP OF THE INVOLVED ORGANISATIONS

Since multiple partners with different setups are going to be involved in the exchange, an assessment of the structural circumstances in all involved organisations will help to find out how exchange will be embedded into these already existing structures. This, in turn, will ensure that the planning doesn't create a programme that is impossible for one or more partners to achieve.

The Masifunde Way

In the case of Masifunde both exchange parties are from the same organisation but in different countries. The organisation might carry the same name, but the structures of Masifunde South Africa and Masifunde Germany are vastly different. We assessed the similarities and differences through a presentation on the company's structure and by then writing up a side by side comparison.

To come up with your own comparison of the partners involved, here are some guiding questions to get you started:

Organisation

What is the organisation doing?
 Who is the target group?
 What priority does the exchange programme have?
 What are the lines of communication like?
 What resources are available?
 Is there an office or HQ?
 What departments are involved?
 Is the project funded by third parties?
 Do the third parties have specific requirements for the implementation and content?

Facilitators

Who are the facilitators?
 How are the time capacities of the facilitators?

Learners

Who are the groups that are going to be involved in exchange?
 How often do the groups meet?
 How big are the groups?
 Which age groups are involved?
 What are the physical and mental abilities of the participants and facilitators?

Logistics

Which time zones do the organisations operate in?
 Which interlanguage / language is going to be used?
 How does the content of the group sessions get planned normally and when?
 Do the groups or organisations have previous experience with exchange?
 Are there already some forms of exchange in place?

ORGANISATION A	ORGANISATION B



Come up with a comparison of the involved organisations by using the guiding questions (which you can always add to or tweak according to your needs) and establish similarities and differences.

Think about which implications these might have for the exchange programme.

DETERMINE COMMON VALUES FOR EXCHANGE

Now we are far enough to know who we are, where we stand, and what we want. Time to give these thoughts an adequate shape, to create a mission statement. This will help guide organisation just in case something is not working out. The mission statement will be the vision and goal that helps to keep things on track.

Specific problems call for specific solutions. Methods and strategies need to be planned according to each and every individual group and situation. Nevertheless, there are general values, like our mindset and approach towards the programme, that define how we want to work together.

Think about everything we have analysed before; the strengths and weaknesses of our organisation, the risks involved in exchange and the chances it offers. With all of that in mind, what are the overall goals and values of your exchange programme and how would you like to work together to achieve that. Come up with them as if they were facts that are already happening in the present. Avoid formulations like “we try”, “we would like to” or anything that suggests uncertainty. You want to write down what you are doing to honour your values. Imagine you are five years into the future of your very successful and stable exchange programme and you are telling someone how you are doing it.

OUR VISION IS THAT ...



Write down your vision like facts you are already doing.

Avoid formulations that suggest uncertainty.

The Masifunde Way

OUR VISION IS THAT...

- ... We value exchange and take time to implement it*
- ... We encourage open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity in our learners*
- ... We are building constructive relationships between our learners*
- ... We are creating a safe environment for our learners to exchange in*
- ... We embrace diversity and make sure to always have an inclusive environment*
- ... Before starting the exchange with the learners, we the facilitators, plan and agree and on expectations and a common goal*
- ... Together we move forward through exchange*

ACCOUNT FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS


This last step of the pre-planning might feel like an afterthought, but it can become a crucial factor. Identify other stakeholders and actors in the expanded context could have an impact or influence on the exchange programme. Keep them in mind during the planning and implementation phase of the exchange.



Examples of such stakeholders and actors can be:

- Friends / peer group*
- Parents and families*
- Child Protection Bodies*
- Wider community*
- Teachers / school representatives / partner schools*
- Funders*
- Government / ministries*
- Other organisations / NGOs*
- The rest of the team / the board*

STAKEHOLDERS	INTEREST	IMPACT

 *Make a list with your specific stakeholders that might have an interest in your programme or an influence.*

Give each a rating for both interest and influence between 1 and 3 to see how important they are for you.



Phase Two

FACILITATOR COOPERATION

Once the structural foundation is laid out, the actual exchange is ready to get started. The exchange between the facilitators, that is. Long before the learners get to embark on their exchange journey, the facilitators need to be in a stable and reliable exchange to make it work. Personal relationships and clear lines of communication are our means to create that productive reliability.



Attention:

For an exchange between members of a fairly vulnerable target group like children and youth, the intense and thorough exchange between the facilitators is crucial. Really take your time here and always remember who you are doing this for.

PAIR FACILITATORS OF THE GROUPS THAT ARE EMBARKING ON THE EXCHANGE

The facilitators of the groups that are to be paired for the exchange programme need to be put in contact beforehand. A fixed pairing between them sets the scene for a professional working relationship.

The Masifunde Way

We decided to have this connection going before the actual term planning takes place. This period is dedicated to a personal introduction and to figure out each other's general schedule, office days and availability. During this time the facilitators can establish a shared goal and the desired impact for their exchange.

PREPARING THE FACILITATORS

The facilitators should feel comfortable with what they are doing at all times. They also should act within the lines of the company's rules and regulations, policies and agreements. Make sure that the facilitators are aware of any of those policies, have attended the respective workshops (if applicable) or have access to the respective documents (if applicable).

Also, the facilitators should develop a knowledge and understanding of relevant topics like media sensitivity, use of media, group dynamics, cultural sensitivity and the like. For some organisations that could mean that facilitators attend certain in-house trainings, for other organisations that would mean getting third party input into the organisation.

The Masifunde Way

For Masifunde employees that means to be fully familiar with the Child Protection Policy of the company. Masifunde additionally wants to research possible workshops given by third parties covering media sensitivity and cyber bullying to expand the knowledge on that within the team.

Alternatively, an input for the learners given by a third party which the facilitators also attend would be possible, too.

GUIDELINE FOR FACILITATOR COMMUNICATION

Now, remember that digital meeting table from phase one? We're back at it again. There will be the need for effective and reliable communication between the facilitators in charge. And since in most cases they cannot physically meet, there is the urgency for clear lines and structures of communication to keep the information flowing.

This communication guideline must suit the needs of the facilitators in the (often times stressful and busy) real-life working environment. So, think carefully which rules for communication you'd like to establish. They need to be all-encompassing enough to keep the conversation going and to be reliable but also tailored enough to be realistic and functional in your specific environment.

Agreements you would want to reach might include:

- Establishing lines of communication
- Agreeing on means of communication
- Agreeing on business hours and time frames for replies
- Allowing for personal introductions and regular life updates to put a backstory to each facilitator
- Determine personal capacities for not only the exchange, but also for maintaining a good relationship with the other facilitator, for documenting the exchange programme and for acquiring new skills (video / web / technical) if needed

To keep these guidelines going and to have someone who knows about each pair's progress, a new coordination role can be created. An exchange coordinator to oversee the process.

The Masifunde Way

Masifunde chose to do so and introduced the Exchange Coordinator to the process. This role will be responsible for carrying information about the exchange into company meetings, to keep everyone connected, to document results and to hold people accountable.

To make the communication suitable for a real-life working environment the organisations and / or facilitators should identify their needs and capacities for communication and agree on the guidelines accordingly. Every organisation has to think carefully about what they need to fit an additional task into their routines best.



As a starting point for picking these tools, have a look at the following options and double check what the implications of each tool are and how they could serve your team:

- Email
- Closed Facebook groups
- Online “offices” like Yammer (or similar; workspace, Monday, etc.)
- Whatsapp conversations
- Conference calls
- Video calls (Skype, Google Hangouts or the like)
- Google Drive, Dropbox, Onedrive, Vimeo
- Post when needed for physical items
- Meetings when possible

The Masifunde Way

Communication Tools

Masifunde agreed on a combination of Whatsapp, email and Yammer, and, for bigger video files, Vimeo. Meetings should be encouraged whenever possible (in settings for exactly this purpose but also in other contexts like conferences or professional exchange programmes that coincidentally brings the respective people together)

Communication Guidelines

Masifunde agreed on a default communication guideline as explained by the steps below. The paired facilitators have the option to change this guideline in coordination with the exchange coordinator who approves of the changes in writing.

An Example of communication guidelines could be the following:

1. Exchange coordinator pairs the facilitators.
2. Kick off Skype meeting between the paired facilitators which should include time for a personal introduction and a section to agree on goals and the desired impact, indicators of success, expectations and the way forward as well as a section to agree on means of communication, general availability and office days. The agreements and relevant points should be noted in the minutes of the meeting and exchange via email.
3. Begin a bilateral chat between the facilitators (unless they have agreed on something else), a conversation is to be had at least weekly.
4. The default setting for responses, unless stated otherwise, is: No business hours on Sundays unless there is an event, messages can be sent anytime, an answer is to be expected within the next 24 hours, Emails or texts are to be acknowledged, even if they get answered later.
5. A summary of the chat conversations and bilateral Emails, as well as additional info (like successes, setbacks, thoughts, pictures etc.) are to be posted on Yammer at least once a month or at the time they are relevant.
6. A monthly summary in Email form is to be sent to the Exchange Coordinator, the coordinator investigates should the facilitators fail to send said Email.
7. The exchange coordinator oversees the activities between the facilitators and is therefore able to connect different pairs to benefit from their respective experiences.

PLAN THE TIMING FOR THE EXCHANGE

This is the stage where we find a place for the online exchange where it sits comfortably and purposefully within the group sessions. This will avoid the feeling of being in a rush and support its place and purpose in the curriculum.

Besides the timing throughout the school year or term (or whatever the structuring unit may be for you), timing is also important when it comes to accommodating differently structured years and holiday periods and also plays a role when the exchange groups operate in different time zones.



To develop a suitable timeframe for exchange you and your partners might want to:

- Exchange details about the school calendar, school breaks, holidays and events way in advance
- Give each other an overview of each other's working schedule (full time or part time worker / office days or out of office days / blocked days and available days as well as general working hours)
- Keep each other updated on events and dates, on unforeseen events and on changes in the personal schedule
- Be transparent about timing issues and communicate the need for rescheduling or a Plan B as soon as the need arises

A possible route to achieving a timing that works out in the long run (and the one we have chosen for Masifunde) might look like this:

1. The facilitators determine the position of exchange sessions and exchange preparation sessions before a new term / school year starts. They are prepared to move away from these units with the new programme all together should it turn out that planning in sync with them does not serve the exchange well.
2. Part of the facilitator exchange are always going to be updates on the school calendar, public holidays, school breaks and events.
3. The facilitators structure the term and make sure that there are three exchange events spaced out evenly at the beginning, middle and end of the term.
4. Communication on timing and unforeseen events will always be proactive to limit surprises, planning difficulties and frustration. The time difference needs to be part of the planning process.
5. We pick methods that allow for both direct and live exchange as well as indirect and delayed exchange.
6. To make direct exchange happen as often as possible, both groups are motivated to move lessons or to create extra social events to accommodate the other group's availability. Both groups have the responsibility to try and arrange that, ideally in turn. The facilitators will set this up in a way that makes the event a special and treasured occasion and that also serves as a learning opportunity for global cooperations.
7. The facilitators will keep the timing transparent for the learners and inform them when exchange is going to take place and what the logistics are; e.g. time zones, run times for letters, different seasons and holidays, frequency and timing of the lessons of the other group etc.
8. In-between programmes are created to keep the exchange alive even over periods of relative inactivity such as long school breaks. A platform for personal exchange when the session-based exchange is on hold will be provided for the learners.

COORDINATE CURRICULUM AND PLAN CONTENT OF EXCHANGE

After appropriate places for exchange sessions are found, we need to decide what it actually is that we want to be discussing during exchange. Sure enough, bonding with other young people can be quite rewarding on its own and might be sufficient in some scenarios, but many organisations find themselves wanting to work on some actual content and a learning experiences through exchange. Both are valid and there are ways to incorporate both work time and personal bonding time.

Some organisations might have a clear picture in mind of what they will be working due to what their main focus or agenda is. Other organisations might be completely free in the selection of their topics. Whatever the situation may be, a good starting point to set the content are always the learners.

Topics can be developed from personal life situations like being a student, a sibling, a child, a pet owner, a sports person, an artist and so on. Other sources for possible topics can be the respective curriculums of the groups, current trends or developments in society, topics discussed in school with their peer groups or parents. The aim is to link these personal starting points back to the bigger picture of international connections, transcultural learning and active citizenship. And, of course, to whichever focus might be the area of work of the involved organisations.

The Masifunde Way

At Masifunde that means that the topics for exchange come from the learners. The facilitators help them to develop them and guide them through the process. The topics do not necessarily have to be the same as the topics of the curriculum as two different groups with probably different curriculums are working together. However, a link to the group's goals and topics should be provided by the facilitators so that exchange is part of the learning rather than a standalone feature in the programme.


To develop content that is captivating and of interest, you might want to:


- Use the life situation of the learners as a starting point
- Use guiding questions to develop this into more abstract topics
- Be prepared to find yourself dealing with topics outside the regular curriculum
- Create an incentive or goal for the learners
- Evoke a sense of ownership for the learners to create a reason to commit (to what essentially is an extra effort)

PLAN TOOLS AND METHODS

Next, the facilitators have to plan the tools and methods for every segment. We differentiate between “tools” as the means of communication that the exchange gets carried out over (e.g. Skype, Whatsapp, mail, ...) and “methods” as the means to work on the content of exchange (group work, interview, different games, ...). For successful exchange you want to deliver your content with an appropriate method that goes well with the tool.

METHODS	TOOLS

 Create a list of methods that you would like to be using and try to find appropriate tools for delivering them.

 **You want to bear in mind:**
 If it is a direct or indirect exchange what method goes well with the tool you pick your group size, abilities and set up logistics, technical components and resources level of engagement

The Masifunde Way

Masifunde is going to pick tools and methods that allow for direct, real-time exchange and also tools and methods that allow for indirect, delayed exchange. This will enable the facilitators to spread out exchange evenly without being too dependent on the other group’s availability.

As a guide and inspiration have a look at this list of tools with their respective advantages and disadvantages. This list doesn't cover them all, of course. Take it in whatever direction you want.



Skype*



Good for face to face interaction and therefore open for many interactive methods and group activities

Very personal

Interactions can be recorded



Group size needs to be controlled, smaller groups only

Noise needs to be controlled interaction needs to be guided: who gets to talk when

Takes practice

Prone to technical problems

Very resource heavy (time / internet / computer / speakers / screen / phones / ...)



Videos



They can be stored and downloaded and therefore viewed offline

They can be recorded in a "controlled" environment and practised for

A result can be achieved that everyone is happy with

Option to add subtitles, title cards, voice-overs, to hold up signs in different languages



Facilitators might need to pick up new video skills

Large quantity of data produced



Whatsapp**



Allows for quick exchange

Whatsapp web can be used to cater to a larger group setting

Group work can be done

Facilitators can easily monitor the chats

Chats can be archived



Tasks need to be allocated (typing, taking pictures, ...)

Learning curve to efficiently communicate in written form

It might take the learners long to agree on what to type

* As well as other chat tools like Hangout and Telko.

** As well as other chat tools like Telegram, Viber and Messenger.



Letters



Private conversations, pen pals can be paired

Very individual and personal

Physical objects can be send

Improve writing skills and creative skills



Take a very long time

Cannot be monitored

Can get lost

Not suitable for something that needs an imminent response



Blog



Many methods are suitable to create content

Many ideas lend themselves to be converted into possible blog posts

Lessons or excursions could be documented in form of a blog post



A lot of work on the facilitator's side: distribute responsibilities, gather articles, proofread, help with layout and publishing

New skills may be required for the facilitators



Facebook



Good hybrid of different means of communication

Intuitive and easy to learn



Age restriction: 14 years

It "forces" the learners onto Facebook which might upset parents

Big distraction

Introduces them to an environment where there is easy access to contents that cannot be controlled



Phase Three

PREPARING THE LEARNERS

As the facilitators prepare for the exchange, they also need to prepare the learners. You will find processes from Phase two and Phase three in close relation to each other.

In the previous phases, we have tackled the structural problems and the content of exchange. In this phase, we will have a closer look at learner centred concerns and how to create the best, safest and most productive environment for our learners. We have the responsibility of working with a vulnerable target group and therefore need to pay close attention to their well-being; physically and mentally. Exchange should therefore also be treated with care.



To focus on the opportunities/chances of an exchange we have to bear risks in minds such as:

- *Sensitive or problematic conversations unmonitored between individual learners*
- *Exchange of inappropriate pictures and videos / nudity / sexualised behaviour*
- *Abusive language and cyber bullying*
- *Learners asking for money or being asked for money*
- *Individual invitations between learners*
- *Cultural insensitivity*
- *Private information being shared*
- *No interest and no impact*

This, of course, doesn't mean that the above will happen, but to minimise the likelihood of any of it occurring as well as limiting the impact these occurrences might have, take the following action steps:

1. Own it: Goal setting

The facilitators set the objectives and goals of exchange with the learners and come up with topics to work on. Facilitators provide a comprehensible planning process for the learners to understand what the exchange is about and what is happening when, who the other group is, what logistics are going to be important and how the exchange is going to be part of the group sessions. Here, the facilitators have the chance to start framing the exchange as a serious part of the programme in which the learners participate from the early stages. This inspires responsibility and ownership and deals with mutual expectations and visions right from the beginning.

2. Learn about it: Reflect on sensitive and problematic topics

The exchange between groups always starts with a preparation phase during which the learners (and facilitators) receive a media sensitivity workshop where topics like language and cyber bullying get addressed as well as sexualised behaviour and the distribution of inappropriate content. The workshop is aimed to raise awareness for the consequences of this behaviour rather than “just” banning it. The learners will understand how inappropriate online behaviour affects them and their environment and how they can have a serious impact on their future lives, their safety or educational and career path. The goal is empowerment through new and immediately applicable knowledge.

A similar input needs to refresh transcultural sensitivity and address issues in conversations with people of many different backgrounds. The participants will learn how to reduce unintended offences and how to deal with different backgrounds, upbringings and social systems.

3. Talk about it: Dedicate sessions specifically to these issues

The facilitators create a safe space where issues like the above can be addressed. Time for that will be created in the preparation period but also during the active exchange, so that after making their own experiences, the learners have room to reflect and talk about questions, irritations and experiences.

4. Shape it: Develop a code of conduct

Once the groups had the time to talk about the sensitive issues, they develop a Code of Conduct together. With guidance from the facilitators, the learners will be able to create self-regulations and come up with rules that they can all understand and get behind. This will be an opportunity to apply their new knowledge, which they have gained through their initial workshop. Like this, they will be taking action themselves based on the feeling of ownership and empowerment.

These four steps are how Masifunde goes about it. That doesn't mean that with these steps problematic developments will never happen. But through these steps, we are aware of potential stumbling stones as well as of measures to minimise risk and impact.

RISK ASSESSMENT

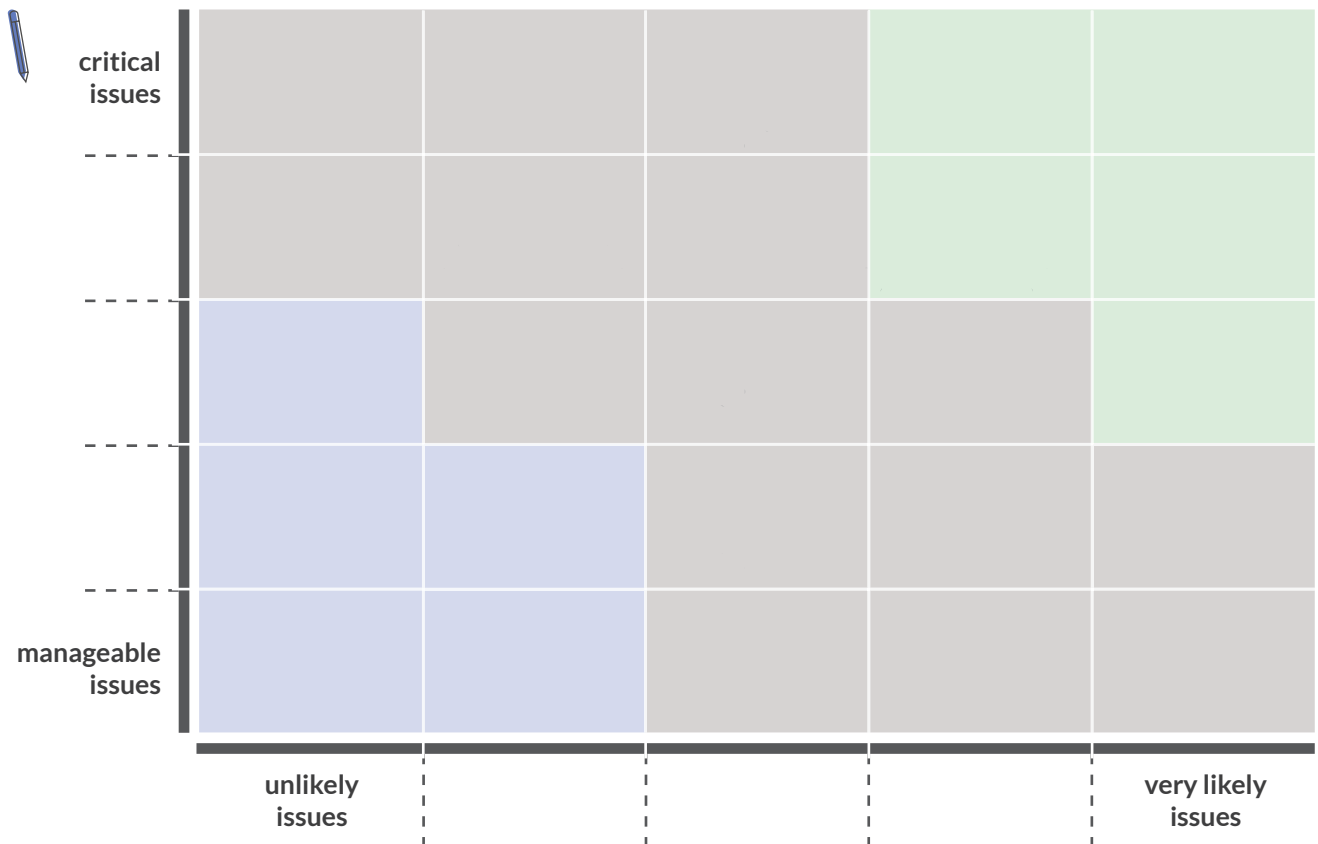
In line with that, let this be our last word to conclude the preparation phase: Risk assessment. It is always easier to fight against something you know rather than the unknown. If you develop habits and patterns for foreseeable issues early on, you will have a lot more brain capacity and decision-making energy for unforeseen events, big or small.



Try to think in categories:

- What are the potential issues?
- How likely are they?
- What impact would they have?

Not only will you get the picture clearer for everyone involved with these questions, you will also be able to go about problems in a very analytical way. Picture it like this: The vertical axis displays severity of the event, the horizontal axis the likelihood. *Now fill in the grid:*



Identifying your issues will enable you to come up with a protocol for each of these scenarios. This will help to get a team (especially a bigger one that doesn't meet regularly) to react roughly the same when faced with the same issues. A great advantage when it comes to problem-solving and also quality management and evaluation.

At this point, before the actual implementation, don't forget to check back in with your list of concerns from the beginning and see whether or not you planned countermeasures for all of them.



Phase Four

ACTIVE EXCHANGE

DIFFERENT KINDS OF EXCHANGE

Now that all the pre-planning and preparation is done, facilitators and learners can move on to the actual exchange. But as we have discussed previously, exchange can appear in different shapes or forms, each covering a different learning experience and a different focus.

Different forms of exchange can be:

1. Planned and guided exchange sessions to work on content and topics. These are the sessions that get planned by the facilitators, who pick the tools and the methods to work on the content that they agreed on. The planning tools from the previous phases come into play here and lessons might need to be moved or events need to be created for the real-time exchange.
2. Ongoing, free exchange on a casual level for personal bonding. The learners are given a platform for them to be in touch on an informal level and to connect about their day to day topics. The facilitators can develop guiding questions, prompts or challenges with the learners to encourage exchange on this platform.
3. Holiday or in-between programmes for extended breaks in the session-based exchange. A mixture between one and two where learners create tasks / prompts / challenges for the respective time window with the facilitators and then contribute to those on their personal exchange platform. The facilitators check back in with the learners after the break with guiding questions for reflection. The facilitators will monitor and prepare the creation of the holiday challenges due to the probably vastly different holiday experiences. Great cultural sensitivity is to be encouraged here to avoid negative feelings.

The different forms of exchange can be mixed and matched, appropriate forms of exchange can be picked as an ongoing exchange or as a framework for periods of temporal exchange in between.

The Masifunde Way

Masifunde will use all three forms of exchange to ensure the best possible use of time during the year. The formal exchange will be happening in the group sessions. For the personal exchange the learners will be given a private facebook group. For the exchange during the holidays, we will have a trial period in the first shorter holidays (not in the German or South African summer break).

Once the active exchange is going, topics and events should always be linked back to the bigger picture of transcultural sensitivity, international connections and active citizenship. If possible, the exchange moves in waves along the chosen topics: From the personal level to content-based work and learning achievements and then finally to transcultural learning on a global scale – and back. This enables the facilitators to put the three fields in relation and reflecting on the role that an individual has within these three poles.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The learners and facilitators will have embarked on their exchange journey at this point and will from then on operate within the guidelines they have set for themselves. To ensure that these guidelines are living and organically evolving documents, there should be time windows to discuss experiences with exchange that highlighted cultural differences or even irritations. These talks should happen regularly and as an opportunity for everyone to double check if the playing field that was prepared is still holding up to needs and expectations; this is especially important for the Code of Conduct to keep it a relevant and binding tool.

These checks should happen regularly, but there should also be an option for the learners to report back if they experienced an issue (also anonymously). Depending on how pressing this is, this can either be dealt with immediately or in the next session that is scheduled for reflection.

The Masifunde Way

The formal exchange will be monitored by the facilitators. The informal exchange comes with the option to always (anonymously if so desired) report violations of the Code of Conduct to the facilitator. Both the observations and the reports get reflected on in a session that the facilitator creates at regular intervals. As a consequence of violation, the Code of Conduct needs to be reviewed alongside the common values we embarked on the journey by both the team outside of the session as well as with the learners as part of the session. The facilitators can repeat parts of the respective workshops on cultural sensitivity or media sensitivity if they feel the need to. Offences on purpose or repeated offences must be analysed with the exchange coordinator to see where they stem from and if they can be met with empowerment of the respective learner to inspire personal growth. If this is not at all possible or fails, the respective learner will have to face consequences that might exclude them from incentives that come with the programme. This can only be a case by case decision.

EVALUATE

What follows after the implementation of the approach developed above is hopefully a successful and satisfying exchange experience. To make sure that it is and that it stays that way, the next big move is the evaluation. An evaluation of the exchange will help to ensure a good quality and constant improvement of the programme.

To produce valid results, an evaluation system should cover facilitators and learners and should provide an insight into expectations met and missed as well as into aspects that participants liked best.



When setting up the evaluation, try:

to allow enough time to prepare and conduct the evaluation

to have focus groups for the facilitators to discuss

to allow capacity to gather, structure and prepare the results for analysis

and to repeat it regularly with different exchange groups

The Masifunde Way

Masifunde will evaluate the programme twice in the first year, as part of a test phase. Once for a closer look at the first implementation and the kick off about 3 to 4 months after the start of the preparation phase. Then, once again about a year after the start to talk about the first longer-term experiences with it.

The test phase of the Masifunde exchange will be carried out through three exchange pairs; three groups in South Africa paired with one German group each.

THE WAY FORWARD

Congratulations! You made it all the way through the pre-planning, the preparation and the implementation and, once everything is in place, should have your own exchange programme up and running very soon! Masifunde believes that personal and long-lasting learning experiences for young people are the way to create real change in the world and we are beyond happy that you and your learners are on their way of becoming part of this idea. And just like this, we multiply the values that mean so much to us.

Good luck with your programme and your exchange. We at Masifunde would be pleased to hear from you and they journey of your group, so feel free to contact us at any time.

And now, without further ado: **Let's exchange!** 