

PARTICIPANTS' REVIEW 2014

REPORT

June 2016

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Introduction

The UNOY Participants Review is a tool to monitor and evaluate the impact of UNOY activities. This Review aims to evaluate short and medium term effects of UNOY activities on the participants. It consists of a questionnaire, follow-up interviews and a report.

The ultimate aim of this tool is to accumulate information which will then be used to improve the methods and strategies employed in UNOY activities. Additionally, the findings may also be used for advocacy purposes (to show how the activities have had a significant impact on participants and how).

This report is an analysis of responses to a questionnaire which was sent out to former participants of activities run by UNOY during 2014, and a series of interviews conducted to several participants. The questionnaire was sent out in March 2016 and included both multiple choice and open questions. The questionnaire was sent to 115 people, out of which a total of 43 people responded. This is a relatively small sample, hence the conclusions of the report are only indicative. It is also important to note that the majority of respondents were involved in the capacity development program run by UNOY, as opposed to advocacy related activities.¹

UNOY thanks all the participants who have filled in the questionnaire and encourages more participants to respond to similar questionnaires in the future. We also want to say a special thank you to those participants who offered their time to conduct a follow-up interview. The responses allow UNOY to significantly improve its activities and analyse the impact made more thoroughly.

¹ Author's suggestion: In the future, two separate questionnaires should be formulated: one addressed to participants of capacity-building projects and one addressed to participants of advocacy projects. Given the different nature of the activities, it is not effective to formulate the same set of questions.

Methodology

The Participants Review consists of a questionnaire, follow-up interviews and a report. The questionnaire, addressed to all participants of UNOY activities that took place on a specific year, gathers a variety of information concerning short and medium term outcomes and suggestions to improve. The short term (learning) outcomes are the changes in skills, attitudes and knowledge, gained during the activity. The medium term (action) outcomes are changes in behaviour and demonstrate the actions which the participants take after the activity. The long term outcomes of the activities are not part of the evaluation because not enough time has passed yet.

Once we have received all answers to the questionnaire, we conduct a series of follow-up interviews to those participants willing to collaborate. The purpose of conducting interviews with former participants is to uncover issues related to the activities and their impact that might not be captured in the questionnaire or content analysis. The qualitative information gathered from the interviews is very useful in gathering more in depth information about the outcomes of the activities, obtaining detailed examples and rich narratives and further understanding the meanings of experiences and the sentiments underlying expressed opinions in the survey.

Five follow-up interviews were conducted, involving participants from the Young Peacebuilders' Forum, Storytelling in Youth Peace Advocacy, and Mobilising YOUTH: Social Entrepreneurship for Peace. Analysing their answers to the initial survey, different questions were asked to each participant, acquiring an insight into their unique experiences. We also took the opportunity to collect the most significant change (MSC) stories of the participants which were interviewed. Finally, using all the information gathered, the Report was compiled by the International Secretariat.

Activities 2014

Below is a list of the activities that took place throughout 2014, and the number of respondents for each activity:

Capacity building program	Number of respondents	Advocacy program	Number of respondents
Mobilising YOUTH: Social Entrepreneurship for Peace	20	Youth Advocacy Team	2
Young Peacebuilders Forum 2014	16	The Editorial Team of the 25 Stories for Peace Publication	2
Storytelling in Youth Peace Advocacy	11		

Please note that some respondents participated in more than one UNOY activity.

For more information on the activities please see the Annual Report 2014.

Statistics Overview

- ★ **88%** considerably increased their **knowledge** on peacebuilding.
 - Main content areas: social entrepreneurship, networking and storytelling.
 - All activities gave participants the opportunity to broaden their knowledge on the infrastructure of peacebuilding.

- ★ **86%** considerably increased their **skills**.
 - Main skills: social entrepreneurship skills, project management skills, networking, communication skills and self-confidence.

- ★ **76%** acknowledged that their **attitudes** had considerably changed due to their participation in the activity.
 - Meeting a wide range of people from all over the world clearly had a change in their attitudes, increasing participants' multicultural awareness.

- ★ **98%** shared their experience and resources after the activity.
 - The majority shared it with friends and the organization they are affiliated with.

- ★ **80%** applied a lot or to some extent the learning they had acquired during the activity.
 - **74%** also declared that an organization had also made use of such learning.

- ★ **84%** are still in touch with people they met during the project.
 - **66%** at the international level.

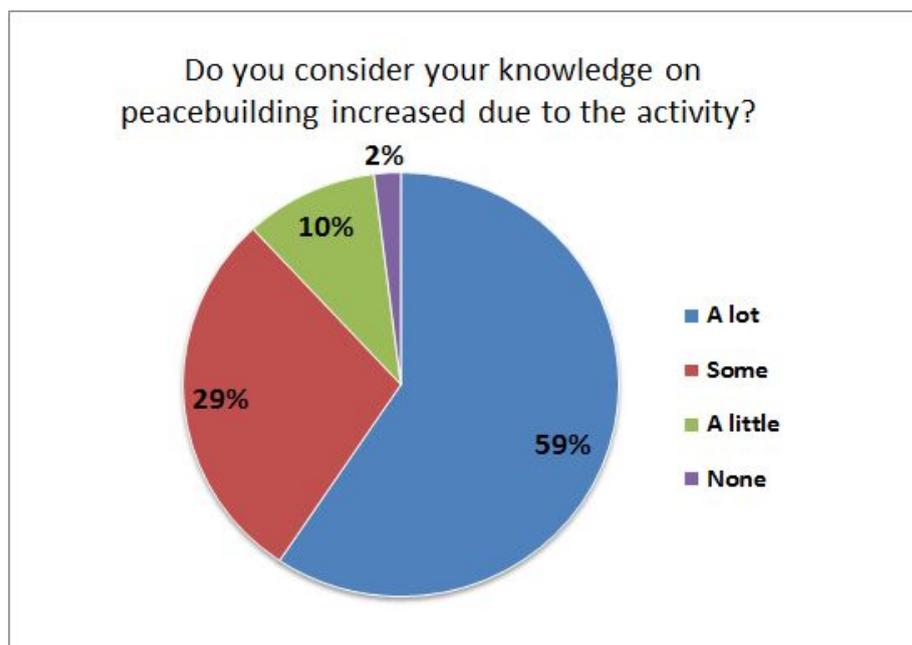
- ★ **52%** reported that their participation had been equally useful in work/volunteering and personal life.

- ★ **63%** are currently active within the youth/peacebuilding field.

Short-term outcomes

Knowledge on peacebuilding

Participants were asked to evaluate how much knowledge on peacebuilding they gained from attending the activity. Almost 90% of the respondents reported that their knowledge had increased “A lot” or “Some”, while only 2% reported that they had not gained any knowledge at all.



Concerning the content areas which they specifically gained knowledge on, respondents provided a big range of areas. Overall, the most common area indicated by respondents was knowledge on **social entrepreneurship** (19%), followed by **networking** (17%) and **storytelling** (12%). The results suggest that participants simply indicated the theme of the activity they participated in: social entrepreneurship for Mobilising YOUth, storytelling for the activity on Storytelling in Youth Peace Advocacy, and networking for all activities but especially for the Young Peacebuilding Forum. Only 2 respondents indicated that they could not remember. The low number of respondents who acknowledged that they do not remember exactly what they learnt from the activity suggests that the activities had a significant impact on most of the respondents.

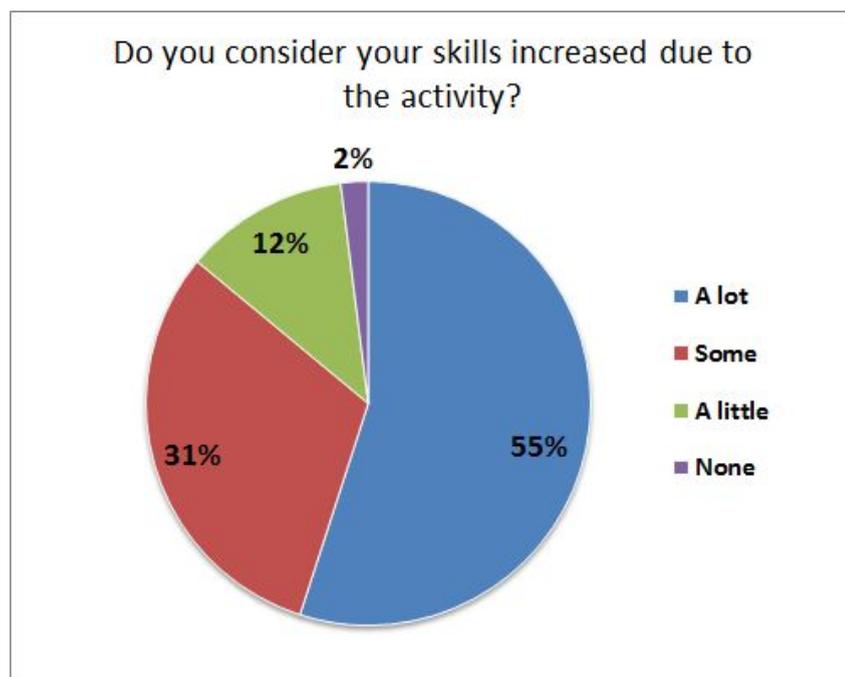
The follow-up interviews allowed us to acquire a much better understanding into what exactly the participants learnt on peacebuilding. For example, an Israeli participant of the activity on storytelling, explained how she learnt that theatre is a tool to create dialogue. Words sometimes are not enough, we need to express ourselves with our body. This is especially important for intercultural dialogue. Speaking foreign languages

may be intimidating, so theatre can be used as a tool of expression and dealing with our emotions. Israelis and Palestinians, for instance, do not have a common language, so they usually communicate in English and if they are not fluent or comfortable when speaking in a foreign language, it is helpful for them to express themselves with body language and theatre.

Another participant, from the Young Peacebuilders' Forum, explained how the Forum helped her understand the broader infrastructure of peace. She described how her work used to be very focused on CVE/PVE² in Pakistan, and by attending the Forum she realised how peace is not only about CVE/PVE; *"peacebuilding can happen in a daily basis and not only in conflict affected areas, but all over the world, in a variety of ways"*. Similarly, another participant from Mobilising YOUth described how she also acquired a broader understanding of the infrastructure of peace. She explained how she never thought of the links between peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship and how businesses can have an impact on peacebuilding: *"I acquired a practical insight on how business projects can contribute to peacebuilding. If economic activities boom in a country then it reduces violent conflicts, contributing to peace."* Attending the training increased her knowledge on the strong interrelation between economic development and peacebuilding.

Skills

Concerning the skills that participants gained from attending the activities, **86%** of respondents reported that their skills increased "A lot" and "Some", while only 2% recorded that they had not increased any of their skills.

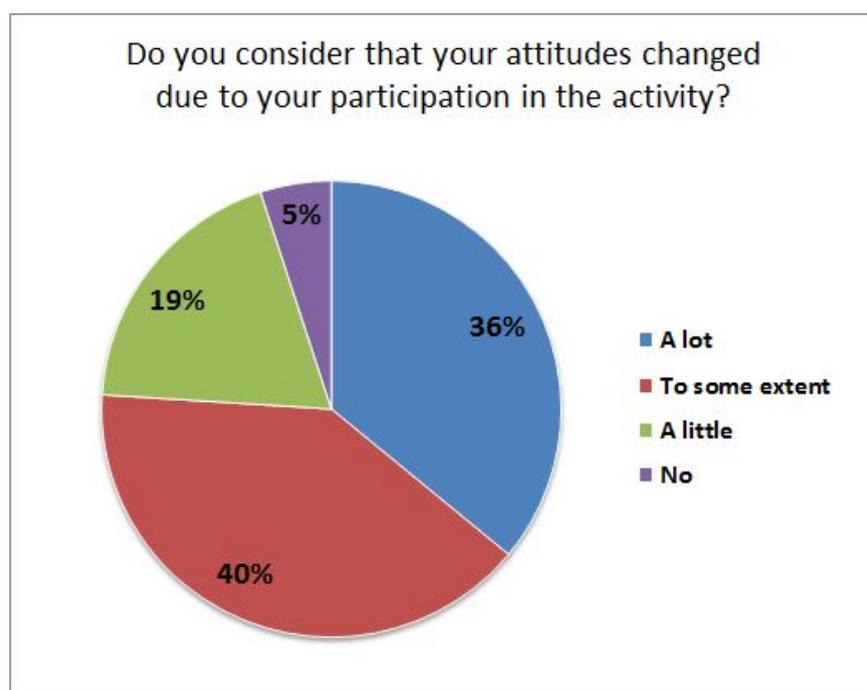


² CVE: Countering Violent Extremism; PVE: Preventing Violent Extremism.

Participants were also asked to specify which skills had increased due to the activity. The survey found that 17% of respondents had increased their **social entrepreneurship skills and project management skills**, 14% had increased their **networking and communication skills** and 12% had boosted their **self-confidence**. On top of these, many other skills were mentioned, including advocacy (7%), storytelling (7%), team building (7%) and listening (5%).³

Attitudes

The survey found that **76%** of respondents acknowledged that their attitudes had considerably changed due to their participation in the activity, whereas 24% reported that the activity had little or no impact on their attitudes.



Respondents provided us with very insightful and different ways their participation had changed their attitudes. While some participants' attitudes developed at the professional level, many others had a significant change at their personal level; as one of the participants reported, his participation made him "*grow as an individual*".

Professionally, respondents became more interested in peacebuilding issues, social entrepreneurship, and the global youth agenda in general. Concerning their personal development, participants reported that they became more optimistic, motivated, open-minded, humble, self-confident, as well as more skeptical and critical. One of the participants even recognized that his participation made him "*change from a*

³ It is important to note that the majority of respondents provided similar answers when specifying knowledge content areas and skills. In fact, the majority of respondents focused on outlining skills they gained, such as: research, listening, writing and dialogue skills. This indicates the difficulty of making a clear distinction between the knowledge and the skills one gains.

self-centered person to a person who now puts more time in volunteering and rendering services to others."

Meeting a wide range of people from all over the world clearly had a change in their attitudes:

"I believe my attitudes were influenced by all different people I have met and got involved with."

"I was amazed by the people I met during the project and their ideas. That made me realize I wasn't the only one trying to change the world. It gave me motivation to pursue my ideas and goals and be more self-confident and active."

"There is always something inspirational in meeting young activists and people committed to good causes and peace. This always helps to improve ourselves."

The change of attitude of one of the participants was particularly noticeable. A participant of the Young Peacebuilders Forum, kindly outlined during the follow-up interview, how before attending the Forum he had a very narrow view of peacebuilding, only focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina. During all his years working as a peacebuilder, he had only focused on his country, not aware that in many other places people are faced with similar struggles. Before the Forum he had never had the chance to talk with people from other countries facing similar issues. By meeting people from very different places at the Forum, his attitude towards peacebuilding completely changed into a much wider conception of peacebuilding. *"It is not only about Bosnia and Herzegovina. It made me realize that in a way I had been selfish before, just thinking about my country."*

Another remarkable impact on one of our participants' attitude concerned a participant from Israel. She arrived at the training with a very positive feeling but was shocked to experience how it was very hard for some participants to welcome her due to her ethnic origin. *"I felt that as an Israeli, sharing my stories was not welcomed by participants. It was very frustrating and made me feel rejected....This situation had an impact on my attitude: it made me realize how I should not take for granted that people want to hear my stories and that made me more careful and diplomatic."*

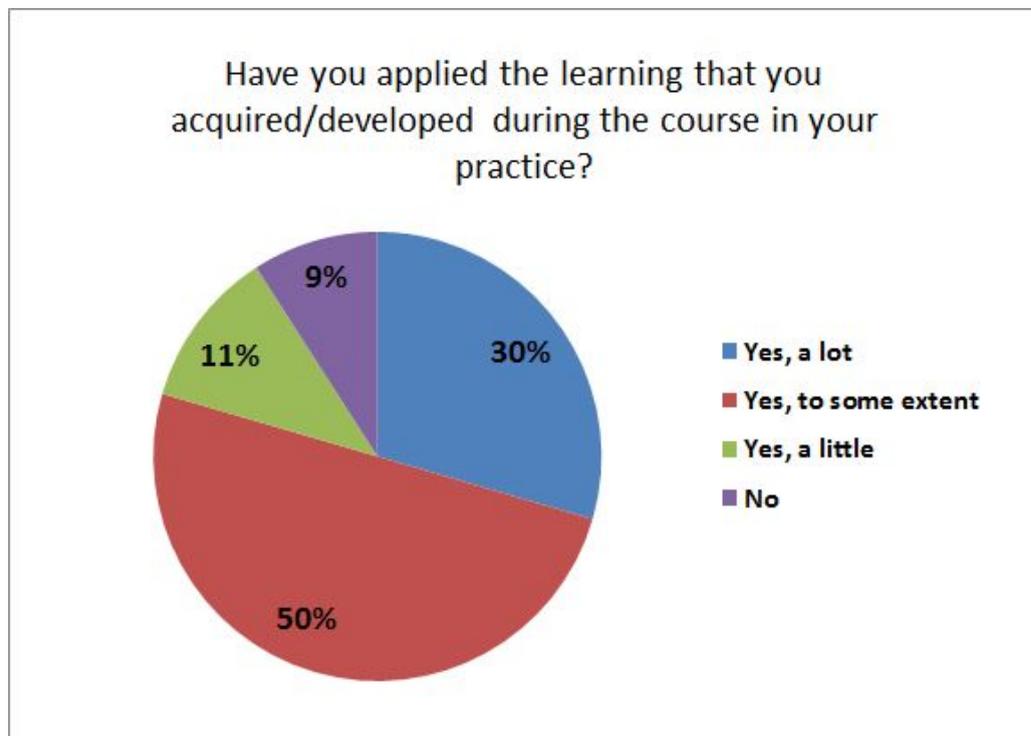
Medium-term outcomes

Sharing experience

An overwhelming **98%** of respondents shared their experience and resources after the activity. The majority of participants shared it with their **friends** (77%) and the **organization** they are affiliated to (75%). Over half shared it with their **families** (57%) and almost half of them also shared it with **youth groups and other CSOs**. A smaller percentage (29%) of respondents shared it with local authorities and local governments.

Using what we learn

Knowing whether participants make use of what they learn and experience after the activity has ended is vital to understand the impact of our activities. Up to **80%** of respondents reported that they had applied “a lot” or “to some extent” the learning they had acquired during the activity.



The majority of respondents outlined different ways of how they applied the learning they acquired in their daily work. Besides sharing their learnings with others, several participants mentioned how they used their learning to improve their writing skills, while several others used it to start their own projects and businesses.

Besides using their learning in their personal or professional life, **74%** respondents declared that an organization had also made use of such learning. Several respondents described how organizations had used their learning in projects and workshops. One participant, for example, mentioned that *"[his] civic association made a presentation about activities on what [he] did and learned during the UNOY activity"*, while another participant *"was invited by a local radio after the training to share [his] experience"*. Another participant fully described how *"from one side [his] organisation used the contacts, to establish and follow up the partnership with different members of UNOY. Also as [his] organisation was not part of UNOY, [they] started the process for membership... Additionally in many events, trainings and initiatives where [his] organisation is involved, the outcomes of the forum but also from UNOY were used for providing better content, and advocacy"*.

Although many organizations used the learnings of participants, a small number of respondents reported that no organisation had actually made use of what they had learned. One participant even mentioned that they *"have not yet found the best way of doing so"*.



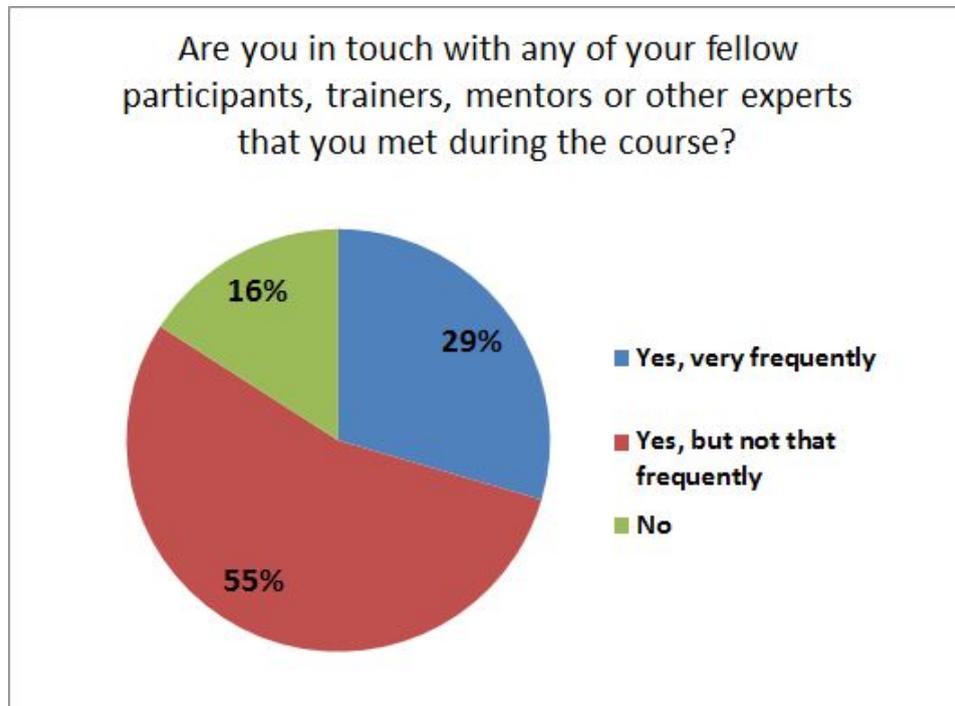
I have applied my knowledge on peace building and entrepreneurship to improve the lives of youths through a mentorship program.



PARTICIPANT FROM
MOBILSING YOUTH

Networking

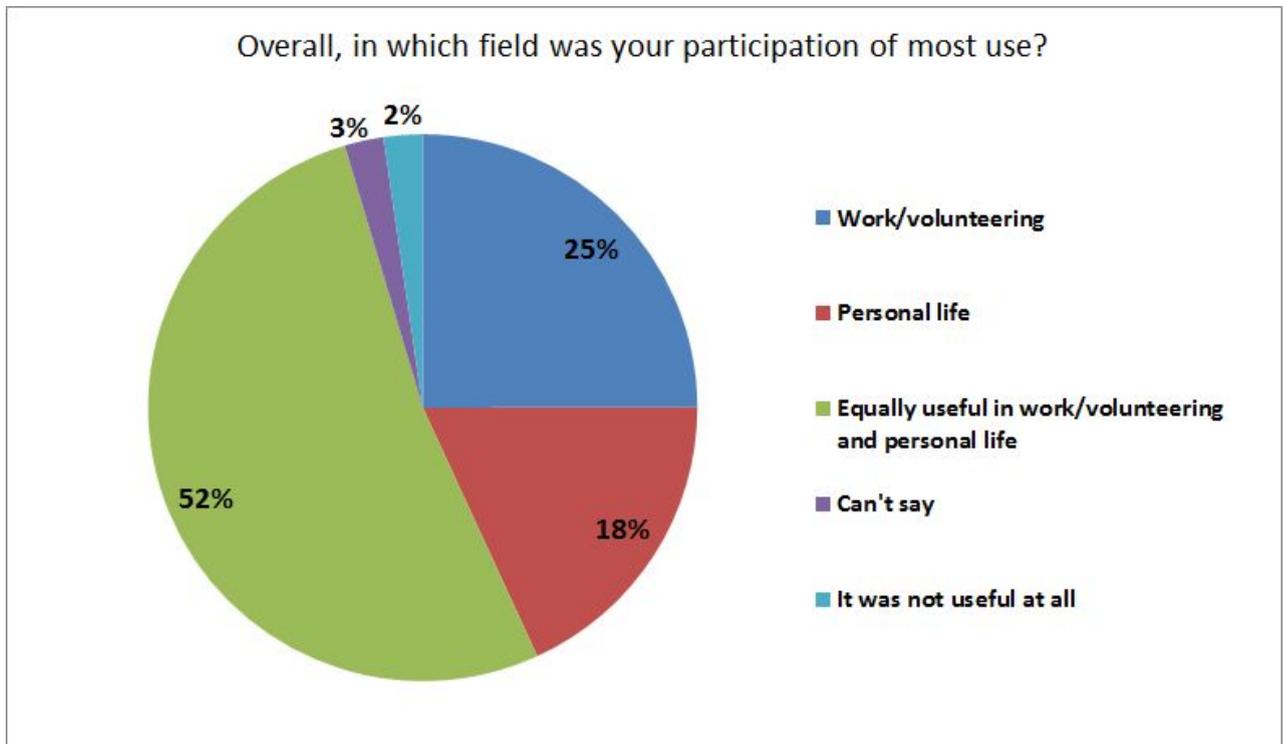
Participating in UNOY activities is not only a great opportunity to expand one's knowledge, skills and attitudes but also for networking. **84%** of respondents reported that they are still in touch with people they met during the project. 66% of the respondents also indicated that they increased their contacts at the international level, hence largely expanding their connections throughout the world.



Participants keep in touch mainly through social media, particularly through **Facebook**. Some respondents keep sharing their experiences, others have met again in other events and others have worked closely together in other projects.

Overall impact

Participants were asked to reflect in which field has their participation in the activity have been of most use. From the data collected, it is clear that respondents' participation have enriched to some level their personal or professional lives or both. **52%** of respondents, for example, reported that their participation had been **equally useful in work/volunteering and personal life**.



One of the participants, for example, explained how she became more diplomatic when interacting with people, including her family. She became more tolerant and patient, which helped her in her personal life. Meanwhile, another participant described how he acquired new ways to conduct trainings and workshops which he uses in his daily work.

Participants were also asked whether they are currently active within the youth/peacebuilding field. **63%** of respondents reported that they were indeed still active within the field. The majority of them were linked with youth/peace organisations, organising workshops, seminars, trainings and other activities. Among other things, some participants work as trainers, some as project coordinators, and one of the participants is in the process of setting up his own NGO involving youth and peacebuilding.

Most Significant Change

As part of the impact evaluation, we took this opportunity to collect the most significant change (MSC) stories of the participants. In the questionnaire and in the follow-up interviews, participants were asked the following question: ***“Looking back over the last year, what do you think was the most significant change in your work or personal life as a result of taking part in the UNOY activity?”***

Changes might have been great or small, positive or negative. MSC is not just about collecting and reporting stories but about learning from these stories, analysing the similarities and differences in what different individuals value and how UNOY activities have a significant impact on our participants.

Significant changes

Meeting a large number of new people from very different places, has clearly had a significant impact on the majority of the participants. The participants' increased multicultural awareness has led them to acquire a greater understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation of the experiences and lifestyles of different groups of people, ultimately changing their perception of people and life.

A few participants reported more concrete changes as a result of taking part in the UNOY activity. Such changes include starting a business, writing a novel, writing stories to inspire young people, and facilitating and organising trainings and seminars on different topics related to peacebuilding. One of the participants even explained during the follow-up interview how as a result of attending the training she did not follow her business project idea, but decided instead to merge her ideas and knowledge into an already established business. The training made her realise how difficult it is to start your own business by thinking of very important questions she had not thought of before: Is my idea really pursuable? Do I have the means? How can I make it happen in another way more pursuable?

Overall, we received many replies on inspirational changes on participants. To see an overview of some inspirational quotes please check Appendix A.

Most Significant Change

Among the significant changes on our participants' work and personal lives as a result of taking part in a UNOY activity, the following story was chosen as the most significant change.

Sally's story

"I took a decision which was not easy but I decided to pursue what I wanted to do, and I changed my job..."

During a follow-up interview, Sally described how the reflective process they undertook the first day at the storytelling training course had an important impact on her personal and professional life. To commence the training, participants had to reflect on their lives and do a roadmap of their life to present it briefly to the other participants. She further described how this was a self-reflection activity which was quite challenging, but it made her realize many things about herself, formulating her vision of who she is and where she wanted to be. Moreover, the self-reflection process made her realise what she really wanted and she later decided to change jobs; she moved from doing administrative work at the UN to work on research and groundwork back in Egypt.

"Sometimes I do question myself if I did the right thing but I realized that I needed to pursue what made me happy..."

Recommendations

UNOY is very happy to have received so many positive comments from our participants concerning the activities. One of the respondents reported: *"I have been to many training courses and I have to say that this one was the best. It was very well organized, very professional and gave me a lot of motivation to dig deeper in this topic..."*

Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement, and UNOY strives to continuously strengthen their work. In order to do so, UNOY asked the participants to provide us with recommendations on how to improve the activities based on their experience. As outlined below, we received many very constructive suggestions which we will definitely take into account when planning our future activities!

- ★ Allow more time for exchange between participants
- ★ Help participants stay up to date with other UNOY Peacebuilders activities
- ★ Include more spaces in the activities for UNOY Peacebuilders members to be able to share about their own work
- ★ Use videos as a way to reach out to more stakeholders
- ★ Activities should be longer, allowing more time to consolidate what is being learnt
- ★ Consider how to reach the youth who have limited access to the internet
- ★ Make it easier for young people who are not active in youth peacebuilding organisations to stay in touch with UNOY Peacebuilders
- ★ Organize an event to bring together all UNOY Peacebuilders members to foster partnership and knowledge
- ★ Create a platform where participants can share ideas or ask questions to professionals within the field to receive constructive feedback and initiate partnerships with professionals that have more experience within this field
- ★ Introduce activities interlinked with other fields such as art
- ★ Work more with young people who are living in conflict zones and developing countries because they are the people most in need
- ★ Organize activities involving the private sector as well
- ★ Gather participants' feedback on short term and medium term outcomes at an earlier stage

Conclusion

Overall, the high majority of participants who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with the UNOY activity they attended in 2014, acknowledging that their knowledge and skills considerably increased. Generally, participants' experienced an eye-opening process by which they acquired a wider understanding of peacebuilding. A significant extent of participants also saw a change in their attitudes as a result of attending the training, impacting to some extent their personal and/or professional lives.

We are also very happy to see how the overwhelming majority shared their experience and resources with other people and how they considerably applied their learning after the activity. It is clear that respondents' participation have enriched to some level their personal or professional lives or both, leading to some significant changes in the courses of their life.

We thank everyone who collaborated with us by responding to the questionnaire and those who also offered their time to conduct a follow-up interview. All your feedback and recommendations will be taken into account to keep undertaking and improving our activities!

Appendix A:

Inspirational quotes from our participants

- ★ *"I felt very inspired by the ideas of all the other entrepreneurs, I think this course is one of the things that encouraged me to actually start my own business, believe in myself and focus on the good"*
- ★ *"I have been using every opportunity to take part in training courses, seminars, etc. to improve my knowledge and skills about social entrepreneurship. I'm also writing stories to our e-newspaper to inspire young people to dream big and find solutions to society's problems."*
- ★ *"I am more conscious of the needs of my community and I'm more invested in helping out"*
- ★ *"UNOY activities have taught me a lot of lessons in believing in myself, standing up for the things I believe in and giving back to society in an innovative way."*
- ★ *"My knowledge and awareness of global citizenship is the most significant change as the result of taking part in the UNOY activity. I never knew about the concept of "Thinking Global and Acting Local""*
- ★ *"The forum strengthened me in my believe in what I am doing and led me to learn even more about peacebuilding and building my capacities. I have become even more active and I am regularly facilitating and organising trainings and seminars on different topics related to peacebuilding in my University."*

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