

# PARTICIPANTS' REVIEW 2015

REPORT

October 2017



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# 1. Introduction

This Participants Review is a tool to monitor and evaluate the impact of activities that were organized by the International Secretariat of UNOY Peacebuilders. This review evaluates medium term effects and impact of these activities. It consists of a questionnaire that is distributed among individuals who have taken part in the activities.

The overall aim of the annual Participants Review is to gather data and information on participants' experiences, which will be analyzed and used to improve future methods and strategies of UNOY Peacebuilders activities. Moreover, the findings will also be useful for advocacy purposes as they illustrate what exactly made the activities have a lasting impact on the participants and how this was achieved.

This report is the final product of the analysis of the questionnaire, which was sent to participants of activities organized by the International Secretariat of UNOY Peacebuilders in 2015. The questionnaire was sent out in September 2017 and was made up of both multiple choice and open ended questions. The questionnaire was sent to 85 people, of which 36 responded (42% response rate). Another important note is that 50% of the respondents took part in the Young Peacebuilders Forum.

We realize that these findings are thus not entirely representative of all the participants, and therefore the conclusions should be treated with caution.

We would like to thank all the participants who took the time to fill in the questionnaire, and we do encourage future participants to respond to similar questionnaires in the future. These responses allow UNOY Peacebuilders to continuously adapt and improve organized activities to the needs of the participants.

## 2. Methodology

This Participants' Review aims to research the medium-term effects of some of the activities that were organized in 2015 by the International Secretariat of UNOY Peacebuilders. Under medium-term effects fall, for example, changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills as well as what kind of impact the ex-participants have had on their broader environment.

Three activities from 2015 were considered appropriate for this Review, namely the Young Peacebuilders Forum, the Training of Trainers and the Advocacy Training. Each of these activities aimed to equip participants with new capabilities. This sets them apart from some other activities organised by UNOY Peacebuilders which were not deemed suitable for the Participants Review, such as advocacy missions that followed from these trainings in order to put those capabilities to use.

The Review took place through an online questionnaire consisting of 11 questions. The questionnaire was sent to all the participants through email on September 13. When the questionnaire closed on October 9, 36 of the 85 approached people had filled out the questionnaire, which means that there was a 42% response rate.

After closing the online questionnaire, we analyzed the responses received by both statistical analysis and textual analysis. To add to the analysis, we have also selected key quotes from participants for inclusion in this report. The quotes have been slightly edited for language purposes, however they are not taken out of context or changed in terms of content.

The whole process of this review was undertaken by the International Secretariat in the Hague.

## 3. Activities 2015

Below is a table that contains the analyzed activities of 2015, and the number of respondents for each activity.

Please note that some respondents participated in more than one activity, which is why the total number of the table below is 40 instead of 36.

Activity	Number of respondents
Advocacy Training on Conflict Transformation and Human Security	9
Understanding and Working with Conflict - Training of Trainers	13
Ensuring Quality in Youth Peace Work - Young Peacebuilders Forum	18

For more information on the activities please see UNOY Peacebuilders' Annual Report 2015.

## 4. Key Statistics

- ★ 97% of the respondents increased their knowledge on peacebuilding. The most significant content areas include theoretical knowledge, advocacy and conflict transformation
- ★ 100% of the respondents increased their skills. The most frequently increased skills were facilitation, teamwork and advocacy skills.
- ★ 100% of the respondents acknowledged that their attitudes had changed due to their participation in the activity. The diversity and openness of the activities has had a positive impact.
- ★ 100% of the respondents shared their learning experience after the activity. The majority of the participants shared it with the organization they are affiliated with, other civil society groups and/or youth groups.
- ★ 83% of the respondents indicated that they applied their learning.
- ★ 86% of the respondents declared that an organization made use of their acquired capabilities.
- ★ 94% of the respondents are still in touch with people they met during the project, and 28% said they are frequently in touch.
- ★ 83% of the respondents are currently active in the field of youth, peace and security

## 5. Knowledge, skills & attitudes

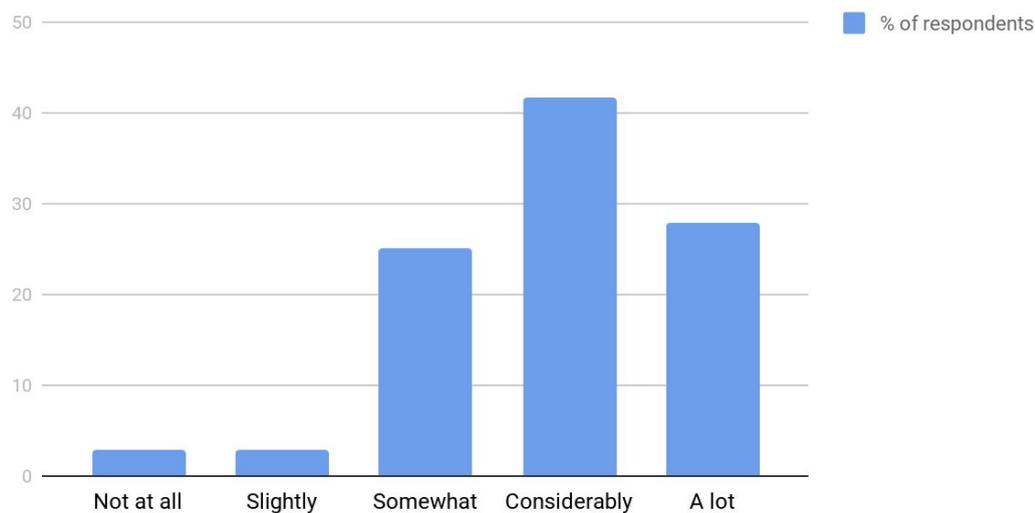
In order to analyze the medium-term impact of the activities, UNOY Peacebuilders makes use of the distinction between knowledge, skills and attitudes. In the questionnaire, this distinction was clarified as following: by "knowledge", we are referring to what you know and understand; by "skills", we are referring to your ability to do something based on practice; by "attitudes", we are referring to your feelings or values.

### Knowledge

Participants were asked to evaluate to what extent their knowledge on peacebuilding increased due to attending the activity. This was done on a scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 stood for "not at all" and 5 for "a lot".

Only 1 respondent indicated that his/her knowledge did not increase at all (2.9%), which leaves about 97% of the respondents to have increased their knowledge. Almost 70% of the respondents checked the 4 and 5 on the scale, meaning that their knowledge increased rather much.

To what extent did your knowledge on peacebuilding increase due to the activity?



Participants were also given the opportunity to highlight on what content areas they considered their knowledge to be increases. From these answers, it became clear that most of the respondents increased their knowledge on the theoretical background of peacebuilding (34.2%). In other words, a considerable amount of respondents learned about basic concepts, methodologies and peace initiatives. This knowledge was not

solely acquired through the trainers and facilitators of the activities, but also through the sharing of (personal) stories among participants.

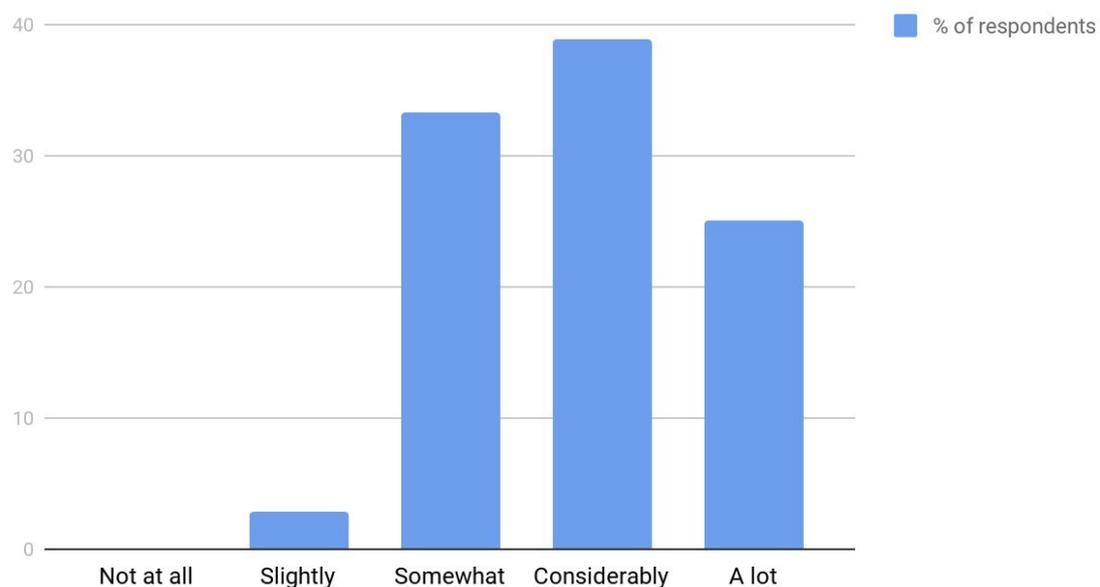
Following this content area, respondents indicated to have increased their knowledge on advocacy (18.4%) and conflict transformation (16.7%).

These content areas are in line with the activities and their themes, and it thus seems that the activities have had their intended impact in terms of knowledge.

## Skills

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they found that their skills increased as a result from the activity they participated in. This was done on the same scale as before, with a range from 1 to 5 where 1 stood for “not at all” and 5 stood for “a lot”. All of the respondents indicated that their skills increased, of which 63.9% selected either the option ‘considerably’ or the option ‘a lot’.

To what extent did your skills increase due to the activity?



Participants were also asked to provide more information on which skills they acquired or developed due to the activity.<sup>1</sup>

The skill that was mentioned most often by the respondents was **facilitation of an activity** (26.3%). Respondents described this as for example being comfortable with coordinating participants, being able to plan and execute accordingly and being capable of motivating participants. The skill that was mentioned most often after this, was the ability to **work in teams** (21%). What was very helpful for developing this skill was the

<sup>1</sup> The answers to this question were often quite similar to the answers to the question on knowledge. This indicates that it remains difficult for respondents to distinguish between knowledge and skills, despite the provided clarification.

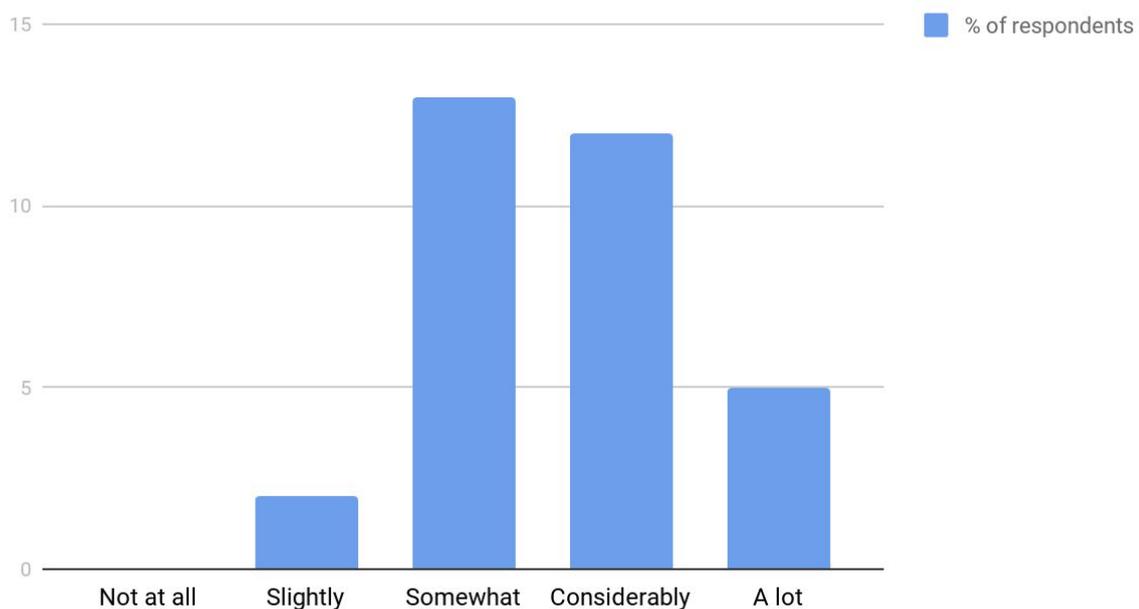
diversity of the participants and the personal stories that were shared among them. Respondents also expressed that they for example appreciated developing the skill to give and receive constructive feedback from their team members during the activity.

The third most mentioned skill among respondents was **advocacy** (15.8%), which admittedly covers a rather wide range of concepts that fall under it. Respondents narrowed this down by for example mentioning that the process leading up to a resolution was something they acquired skills for, as well as how to appeal to authorities when voices are not being heard.

## Attitudes

Another aspect of the medium-term impact that the participants' review aims to lay out, is that of attitudes. The questionnaire therefore asked the question whether respondents felt that their attitudes had changed due to the activity. All of the respondents indicated to have had some change in their attitudes, where - again - 1 stood for 'not at all' and 5 stood for 'a lot'.

To what extent did your attitudes change due to the activity?



What follows from the graph above, is that more respondents have chosen the 'somewhat' option that falls in the middle. In other words, respondents' attitudes have changed (slightly) less than their knowledge and skills. This could be due to various factors, such as for example the fact that a change in attitude is often more gradual than a change in knowledge or skill and can thus happen less noticeable over time. Moreover, it can simply also be the case that the activities have not had such a far-reaching impact or that not enough time has past to draw conclusions.

Attitudes differ (even) more from individual to individual than knowledge and skills do, and therefore this section will highlight some of the responses to the questionnaire rather than providing percentages. Only two respondents did not provide any

explanation as to how their attitudes changed. Several respondents expressed similar feelings, such as that they reconsidered their prejudices, realized not to generalize, to embrace diversity and to act more **empathic and open toward each other**. One respondent highlighted that at the time of the Young Peacebuilders Forum, there was quite some friction between Russia and Ukraine following the annexation of the Crimea. Nonetheless, during the forum a friendship evolved between Russian and Ukrainian participants, which resulted into *“long-lasting friendship and projects, aimed to reunited Russian, Ukrainian and German youth to work against hate between Russians and Ukrainians at the local level”*. Moreover, some respondents mentioned to feel more **inspired, motivated and connected** to peacebuilding initiatives. One of the respondents highlighted that *“once a team is shaped in a way that it should be, and everybody listens to each other and contributes at the same time, the work implemented is more useful and fruitful for both trainers and participants”*.

It seems that for many participants, the activities have been **eye-opening and uplifting**, which is a remarkable outcome. From all three of the aspects (knowledge, skills and attitudes) it seems safe to conclude that attitudes are often the most difficult to influence and change, as they are not build up by solely one experience or aspect. They are the product of one’s environment, lifelong experiences, and so forth. The outcomes of this questionnaire provide a positive outlook and can be deemed successful.

## 6. Sharing and Applying

### Sharing

In terms of sharing, the results of the questionnaire show that all of the respondents has shared (part of) their learning with other individuals or groups. When taking into account the following numbers, please note that respondents had the option to select multiple answers.

Almost all of those who shared their capabilities did so with the **organization they are affiliated with** (91.7%), which is the most logical option for those who were present on behalf of a (member) organisation. This was followed by **other civil society organizations** (72.2%) and **youth groups** (69.4%). Other categories included - but were not limited to - friends, local government, family or local authorities.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to indicate whether any organisation made use of their capabilities. Only 5 of the respondents answered that this was either not the case or that they do not know, meaning that a large majority of the respondents (86.1%) did put their capabilities to use for an organisation.

### Applying

When asked *how* respondents applied their learning, some interesting and positive answers were given. One respondent, who took part in the Advocacy Training on Conflict Transformation and Human Security highlights that he trained co workers of his organization. This is very positive, as UNOY Peacebuilders aims to reach participants who are in a multiplier position in order to spread the developed capabilities as much as possible. This testimony is a perfect example of this multiplier effect. This same respondent also indicates that the success rate of his advocacy efforts is now *“a percentage of over 80 as opposed to 11 before I undertook this training”*.

Another respondent mentions that the experience at the Training of Trainers has given him *“the opportunity to influence decision making and to shape policies in a way that actual practitioners gain better and quality oriented opportunities to work on this topic”*. This too is of course one of the aims of UNOY Peacebuilders' activities - to help participants develop their capacities in order to bring about change themselves.

There were only 4 respondents who responded to the question with answers that were inconclusive or vague, which means that **88.8% of the respondents has actually applied their acquired or developed capabilities.**

## 7. Challenges and Successes

In order to find out what common challenges and successes are among participants of UNOY Peacebuilders' activities, we dedicated several questions in the questionnaire to finding this out. One of the objectives of the strategic plan 2016-2020 of UNOY Peacebuilders is to strengthen the network and have members work together. With this questionnaire, we also asked respondents if they were still in touch with other participants and (if yes) in what way.

Only 2 respondents (5.6%) answered that they were not in touch with any other participants. 24 (66.6%) respondents indicated that they were still in touch - but not frequently, and 10 (27.7%) respondents answered that they were frequently in touch with fellow participants. In other words, **94.4% of the respondents was still in touch with other participants**, which is an overwhelming majority and very much contributes to achieving the earlier mentioned objective.

When asked in what way they were in touch with other participants, 3 respondents (8.3%) did not answer, 8 (22.2%) indicated that they worked together on projects, 11 (30.6%) answered that they exchanged knowledge and/or expertise, and 14 (38.9%) said they followed each other through social media or met up during other activities.

Thus, the active sharing of knowledge and organizing of events makes up a total of 52.8% of the respondents. This is quite a high number and shows that UNOY Peacebuilders is well on its way of reaching the objective of a strong and cohesive network.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to reflect on the two years that passed since the activities, and to share whether they thought that partaking in the activity has had an effect on the broader society through them. Respondents were quite hesitant to answer the question, which is understandable as it requires them to speak for others. Several respondents answered that they found it difficult to measure whether this was the case, or that they found not enough time since the activities has passed. One of the respondents did provide a positive outlook, by stating the following:

*"I see that my participation has helped me to start building skills that I apply in practice - the more time passes, the more experienced I become. Eventually I will do something with direct impact and it will be thanks to UNOY because that is where it all started."*

Other respondents did already highlight stories of impact. For example, one of the respondents provided the following statement:

*"This year I was a coordinator of the big all-Ukrainian project "School of Success" for teenagers from different regions of Ukraine. Half of the participants spoke Ukrainian and the other half spoke Russian, which is why I set up a lot of activities at the beginning of the program, aimed to prevent prejudices among participants. I used a lot of games I played at*

*the Young Peacebuilders Forum and they gave me great results in the end. "School of Success" was a very public project and local citizens, parents, teachers and local authorities followed our Facebook page and watched the live broadcast. Because of this, we covered more than 21 000 people with peace-based lectures and activities."*

This is a perfect example of what UNOY Peacebuilders tries to achieve with its activities, and it is therefore that we conclude that this is a success story.

Respondents also got the chance to share any success stories or challenges they overcame. Several respondents mentioned personal success stories about **overcoming prejudices and becoming more open minded toward others**. Moreover, multiple answers underlined that participants gained more confidence and we therefore driven to organize more activities themselves. One of the success stories of the respondents was the following:

*"I was in Palestine for a workshop with Palestinian youth and some Europeans and people from the US, and I remembered how to connect all of us through music, as the children were a little passive because they didn't speak English very well. The main idea was to try to share something we had in common to connect. First we went with music, and then we went on with teaching each other's words and phrases. Communication is the first step towards understanding and mutual sympathy."*

From the answers, it seems that many participants have made good use of the gained capabilities and were successful in applying them in different contexts.

The fact that the **vast majority (83%) of the respondents is still active within the youth, peace and security field** very much contributes to this. This reinforces the idea that these trainings and other activities are most successful if they are offered to those who are actually working in the field rather than making it an open application possibility.

## 8. Recommendations

In general, the responses to the questionnaire were rather positive and uplifting. Nonetheless, we believe that there is always room for improvement, which is why we asked respondents to take a moment to reflect and share any recommendations with UNOY Peacebuilders that could help advance future activities.

Below we have selected the most common or interesting suggestions, which we will surely take into account in the future. It is important to stress that there were different opinions on the selection of participants: several respondents argued that the activities should be equally open to non-members and members of UNOY Peacebuilders, whereas some others stated that the selection should be stricter in order to reach the most effective outcomes.

- ★ Create more opportunities for participants to stay in touch with each other after the activity
- ★ Bring in more first-hand knowledge and experience during activities
- ★ Add more days to the Young Peacebuilders Forum in order to give every participant the chance to play a big role
- ★ Make use of video recapping to let participants evaluate themselves
- ★ Schedule more time for personal interaction between the participants
- ★ Link the different UNOY activities more clearly to each other
- ★ Bring in policy-makers and responsible authorities to open up the dialogue
- ★ Dedicate more time to activities on UNSCR 2250 in order to raise awareness
- ★ Organize an activity where participants carry out some form of community service that is connected to the topic
- ★ Let participants shape the Young Peacebuilders Forum, have them bring in their own expertise and experience
- ★ The Training of Trainers should be accessible for more member organizations from different regions

## 9. Conclusion

The results from this questionnaire have generally been very positive. When measuring the impact in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, UNOY Peacebuilders can conclude that the results are very promising. It does seem to be the case that the attitudes had a smaller increase or change, compared to knowledge and skills.

Throughout all the questions, many of the respondents states that the diversity of the participants has very much helped them with diminishing their prejudices or ideas about others. Moreover, the majority of the participants very much appreciates the network as a whole and the new colleagues and friends they have gained through it. Following from this last point, the recommendation that was made most often is that UNOY Peacebuilders would be an even more cohesive network if there would be more possibilities for (former) participants to meet up and/or work together.

Moreover, UNOY Peacebuilders very much values the idea that certain people can act from a multiplier position. The results of this survey point out that all of the respondents were able to share their acquired/developed capabilities with some group or individual. Although some did so to a lesser extent than others, we are very pleased to note the sharing of knowledge and skills after the activities.

We have collected very helpful and interesting responses and we will surely take these into account when planning activities in the future. The best way to keep improving our activities is through feedback and recommendations, which is why we greatly value these answers. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide us with their insights!

**Author:**

Vera Houwaart  
Project and Evaluation Officer

**For more information, contact:**

Sölvi Karlsson  
Leading coordinator  
[solvi.karlsson@unoy.org](mailto:solvi.karlsson@unoy.org)

**United Network of Young Peacebuilders**

Laan van Meerdervoort 70  
2517AN Den Haag, Netherlands

+31 7 03647799