



DDP-YD/ETD (2024) 2

Strasbourg, 5 January 2024

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Report of the study session held by

YMCA Europe

in cooperation with the

European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

At the

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

October 15 – 21, 2023

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

Executive Summary

The study session “Give Peace a Chance ” was implemented by YMCA Europe from 15 to 21 October 2023 at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

The major aim of the activity was to develop competences and enhance the local capacities for peace in Europe via empowering the young people to act as advocates and multipliers of peace and reconciliation in their respective communities - through raising the awareness and sharing the experience and know-how of YMCA Europe and the Council of Europe in peace education and conflict transformation work.

To do so, specific objectives were identified to be achieved within the study session:

- Participants acquire the basics of peace building and conflict transformation methods and tools with a particular focus on how to apply them into youth work at a local level;
- Participants are aware of YMCA Europe and Council of Europe work in peace education and promotion of dialogue;
- Participants are empowered to take initiative to promote peace & dialogue within their sending organisations and / or own communities.

The overall learning flow and major learning points for participants were set forth as the following:

- To get to know and learn more about each other;
- To create the safe space and build trust for effective work and communication;
- To learn about Council of Europe & YMCA Europe (Roots for Peace project especially considered) Conflict Transformation Work and the tools employed to this end;
- To learn more about Peace Work Guidebook – a compilation of conflict transformation & peace building tools and best practices accumulated during 15 years of experience within Roots for Peace project activities;
- To learn about Do No Harm Methodology – as a method for effective conflict context analysis and one of the major tools employed within Roots for Peace project activities;
- To learn about Reflecting on Peace Practices – another primary tool for impact orientation in conflict transformation work and Roots for Peace project in particular;
- To learn about opportunities offered by Council of Europe and YMCA Europe in the field of peace work & conflict transformation;
- To learn about Advocacy Work of Council of Europe & YMCA Europe in the field of peace work & conflict transformation;
- To learn about various digital outlets of YMCA Europe (Roots for Peace project) promoting peace & dialogue;
- To learn from each other’s experiences in the field of peace work & conflict transformation.

31 participants (including 5 members of the Planning Team) from 16 countries took part in the activity. They were mostly youth leaders (staff or volunteers) representing different YMCAs and other civil society organizations across Europe.

The Study Session was implemented in full accordance with the Council of Europe youth sector mission that aims towards “enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe’s core values (human rights, democracy and the

rule of law)".

The main topics of the Study Session were:

- ★ Do No Harm Methodology;
- ★ Reflecting on Peace Practices;
- ★ Conflict Transformation Work of Council of Europe & YMCA Europe;
- ★ Advocacy Work of Council of Europe & YMCA Europe in peace building & conflict transformation work;
- ★ YMCA Europe (Roots for Peace) Peace Work Guidebook;
- ★ Sharing own experience & best practices (Marketplace);
- ★ Resources & Opportunities (World Cafe);
- ★ Creating safe space & trust;
- ★ Information channels and digital outlets of YMCA Europe (Roots for Peace) in peace building & conflict transformation work.

Main outputs & Learning Points:

- Acquisition of specific skill-set and tools (Do No Harm Methodology, Reflecting on Peace Practices, Advocating for Peace, Trust Building & Creating Safe Space, etc.) in peace building & conflict transformation work;
- Raised awareness about the Council of Europe and YMCA Europe; and various resources and opportunities to engage in and/or enhance involvement in peace building & conflict transformation work;
- Creation of physical and online (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) networking platforms of peace advocates and multipliers to support, mentor & inspire each other; to share ideas and ensure coordination and larger impact for joint follow-up initiatives, activities and project.

Introduction

The concept of “Give Peace a Chance” study session was elaborated within YMCA Europe Roots for Peace (Roots) project, specifically as a Local Capacities for Peace Program Festivals (LCP ProFests) component of it. A key activity within Roots that aims to empower the young people affected by conflicts and to positively change their perceptions, attitude and behavior.

Since 2007 and now within the 4th implementation phase, the Roots for Peace project has been YMCA Europe’s major initiative for stronger youth activism towards peaceful transformation of conflicts in Europe. The project has been very successful in devising a process that creates a safe space for relationship-building across ethnic and cultural divides based on ‘Do No Harm’ principles, aiming to provide young people with a platform for learning, dialogue, creativity and inspiration - leading to a better understanding of peace, reconciliation and cooperation.

As a pan-European institution, YMCA Europe strives to create a pool of dedicated and knowledgeable peace advocates that will promote the values and ideas of peace, tolerance and understanding within their communities, grassroots level especially considered. Their voice and active involvement are crucial to reverse the rapidly growing radicalization processes on the continent that have already resulted in major conflicts and continue to carry a threat of further deterioration.

“Give Peace a Chance” was devised to match with objectives outlined above. Key project staff (Vardan Hambardzumyan, Revaz Shavladze, Lika Zakaryan & Irina Berdzenishvili) were responsible to draft and submit the project proposal to the Council of Europe Youth Department.

The Planning Team

The preparation process for the study session started immediately after the approval and the planning team was set up: Revaz Shavladze (Georgia), Lika Zakaryan (Armenia), Irina Berdzenishvili (Romania), Hannah Sauer (Germany) & Levon Arshakyan (Armenia) - together with Ramon Tena Pera (Andorra, Council of Europe External Educational Advisor) and Vardan Hambardzumyan (Armenia, Expert) formed the team that oversaw all stages of planning, implementation and reporting of the study session.

Initially, there were six (6) members of the planning team envisaged in the application, but the final number was limited to five (5) due to the recommendation from COE Programming Committee.

One of the original members of the planning team (Jessica Woitalla, Belgium) withdrew at an earlier stage of the preparatory process and was substituted by Levon Arshakyan (Armenia).

The Participants

An open call for participants was placed on various digital outlets of YMCA Europe and Roots (Webpage, Facebook Page, etc.) with more than 300 applications eventually received & screened. The selection criteria was entirely merit-based, regardless of race, religion and gender.

Apart from general requirements like age, language skills, etc. - the participants were supposed to demonstrate evidence-based motivation and commitment to peace-building and conflict transformation work during and beyond the study session, along with becoming the multipliers of

knowledge and skills obtained.

Based on the nature of the initiative, being opinion-leaders, mature, open-minded, responsible and collaborative were the features that each applicant had to display. No preferential treatment was given to YMCA background. Although the slight majority of participants represented YMCA organizations, almost half of them came from outside YMCA network - which certainly added the diversity and different perspective to the activity.

Eventually, 31 participants (including the Planning Team) from 16 countries attended the study session. The large majority were between 18 - 30 years old; 23 participants were female & 8 were male; all of them with good/satisfactory command of English as the primary working language.

The planning and implementation period coincided with aggravated conflict situation in Israel/Palestine. Therefore, two participants from the region that had been selected to partake in the study session were unable to do so due to travel restrictions. Two other participants (from Azerbaijan & Italy) cancelled their involvement due to job-related commitments.

As the cancellations happened very close to the study session starting date, the planning team had to resort to recruitment of replacements in the emergency mode and successfully managed to find three (from Norway, Portugal & Spain) participants eventually.

The Major Program Elements

The program content of the Study Session was initially elaborated by YMCA Europe Roots for Peace staff team and was further developed during the Preparatory Meeting of the Planning Team at European Youth Center Strasbourg on July 12 - 15, 2023 and the following months prior to the Activity. The initial program submitted in the application was significantly modified and adapted according to the suggestions from the COE programming Committee.

As a final result, the overall program and activities were designed to be maximally in line with aims and objectives of the study session, as well as to meet the needs and interests of the participants and to make sure that the objectives would eventually translate into specific competences acquired by the participants at the end of the study session.

The principal focus of the Study Session was concentrated on tools and methods that raise awareness about peace building and conflict transformation work; and created the environment to make the learning process and subsequent impact effective and far-reaching. Specific program modules (selected based on significance & narrated in chronological order) were delivered to meet the intended objectives:

Expectations (Facilitated by Revaz Shavladze) - on the first day of the activity, the participants were offered to identify and share one most significant learning and developmental aspect that they anticipated to obtain from the study session - "To Grow & Learn", "New Tools & Skills" & "Sharing Best Practices" were some of the most mentioned ones. The expectations were revisited and analyzed during the evaluation session on the last day to find out whether they were met/not/met/partially met or exceeded.

Home Groups (Facilitated by Revaz Shavladze) - the communicative tool was integrated into the study session program to obtain regular feedback and inputs regarding the educational, logistical and group dynamic processes from the participants - for the planning team to address their needs and requirements whenever deemed appropriate and feasible. The participants were divided in five groups with maximum consideration of balanced nationality, gender and age factors. Through the tool, each day 5 (one from each Home-Group) different participants were delegated to feedback during end-of-the-day review and planning meetings with adequate reflection and reaction from the planning team.

Safe Space: The River Of Life (Facilitated by Irina Berdzenishvili) - a reflective and interactive exercise that encouraged participants to contemplate on and share about the journey that brought them to the present day, but more importantly to learn about the stories of their peers, and how they ended up where they are at present. Creating the atmosphere of a safe space is essential for implementing any project successfully, being even more crucial for a peace project - forming the base on which trust, understanding, connections and empathy are built.

Council of Europe & YMCA Europe Conflict Transformation Work (Facilitated by Ramon Tena Pera & Revaz Shavladze) - The Council of Europe (COE) and YMCA Europe has invested decades of work, efforts and resources in promoting dialogue and understanding on the continent. The participants were introduced to the history of The COE and YMCA Europe in the area of Peace Building & Conflict Transformation work, with particular emphasis on the COE “Youth Peace Camp” that annually brings together young people from conflict-affected areas (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo¹, Serbia, Moldova and the disputed breakaway republics) to foster dialogue and mutual understanding; And the Roots for Peace project as the current and largest pan-European initiative within YMCA.

Roots Stories & Know-How to Share (Facilitated by Lika Zakaryan & Irina Berdzenishvili) - YMCA Europe Roots for Peace Project has been ongoing since 2007 and produced, as well as collected a variety of personal stories, as well as tools and methods in peace building and conflict transformation work during this period. The participants learned about various digital outlets that Roots team uses to create and promote the alternative narrative to the hate speech that is currently prevalent in the media and the society; As a follow-up activity, they engaged in devising their own stories within respective Home-Groups that was later presented to the plenary; The attendees were also introduced with the Roots Peace Work Guidebook as a major output and a collection of tools and projects’ best practices in peace building and conflict transformation work. The session had an interactive character and the participants had the opportunity to pose questions and provide the feedback during the process.

Marketplace (Facilitated by the Planning Team) - To facilitate the process of experience and best practice sharing in peace building and conflict transformation work among all participants; and if having none, to learn about their motivation (if any) to engage in the sphere for the future. Each participant and the represented organization was given a floor to showcase the work they do for respective communities and direct beneficiaries. Eventually, seven (7) presentations (YMCAs of Georgia, Kosovo & Sweden; ICRC work within Armenia - Azerbaijan Conflict Framework; Activities of Youth Club in Budva, Montenegro; The work of United Nations Youth Representative in Georgia - Abkhazia Conflict & Zoom Call with the participant from Palestine that was unable to

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

attend the study session due to the conflict escalation in the region) were delivered with various methods (PowerPoint, Videos, Photos, Verbal Narrative) employed. Questions & Answers Session was conducted at the end of each presentation.

Meeting with the Council of Europe Head of the Youth Department (Facilitated by Ramon Tena Pera - Tobias Flessenkemper gave extensive overview about the history and present of the Council of Europe & European Youth Foundation (EYF), particularly highlighting the work done in the youth sector and the funding opportunities that are available for relevant initiatives, activities and projects at local, regional and pan-European levels - peace building and conflict transformation initiatives especially considered. The session had an interactive character and participants were able to ask questions about topics interesting for them in relation to potential cooperation with EYCS and EYF.

Tools for Conflict Transformation: “Needs & Fears” (Facilitated by Irina Berdzenishvili) - a conflict analysis tool, it is used to visualize, discuss and obtain deeper insight of what people state they want and what they actually need, but are unable or reluctant to express for various reasons. After the starting theoretical input, the participants were divided in two groups and presented the scenarios where these groups have a conflict/misunderstanding. During the groupwork, they had to identify their own needs and fears (at least 5), as well as those of the other group. In the end, both groups presented the findings to the plenary.

Trust Building: Blob Tree (Facilitated by Lika Zakaryan) - the visual tool is designed to allow individuals to express themselves and their emotions in a non-verbal way through the use of human figures known as Blobs who are genderless, ageless, and culture-less. The Blob Tree collection consists of a set of illustrations of blob figures in various poses and expressions, each representing a different emotion or feeling. These illustrations are intended to be used as prompts for individuals to identify and express their own emotions, or as a way to start a conversation about emotions and feelings. The exercise helped to bridge language and cultural barriers and make emotional expression more accessible for participants of different ages and backgrounds.

Do No Harm (Facilitated by Vardan Hambardzumyan, Expert) - Being one of the key and frequently applied Conflict-Sensitivity tools/methodologies in peace work and aid programs - it served as a roadmap that defines Roots for Peace project and shaped its action plan for so many years. The DNH is most effectively used for organization/project/initiative to:

- ❖ Understand the context in which it is operating, especially the dynamics of relationships between and among groups in that given context.
- ❖ Understand how the details of its interventions interact with that context. This includes not only the outcomes of the interventions, but also:
- ❖ Act upon this understanding to minimize the negative impacts of its interventions on the context and maximize positive impacts.

After initial theoretical input and presentation of general DNH concept, participants were given a task to apply acquired knowledge into practice and, divided into predetermined groups: 1. Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia); 2. Balkans (Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, Turkey); 3. Nordic Countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden + Ukraine) & 4. Western Europe (Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden + Ukraine) engaged in the simulation activity - planning an international summer camp, using the DNH matrix at every stage of their respective projects. At the end, each group presented the results to the plenary for discussion and analysis and concluded with 7 lessons learned through DNH.

Empathy Building: Phone Call (Facilitated by Lika Zakaryan) - another activity designed to sustain & enhance the feeling of safety and trust among the participants, the “phone call” encouraged sincere sharing and openness. The participants were divided into several groups and there was a specific question they had to discuss, such as: “If it was your last moment and if you were in serious danger, whom would you call and what would you say?” Upon conversations in smaller groups, everyone came together and the ones who wished to share the feelings with the entire group, did so. This exercise brought the atmosphere to a vulnerable and safe level, where people get truly connected to each other and become closer.

Advocating for Peace (Facilitated by Hannah Sauer) - Advocacy is an essential tool to amplify the impact of insights gained in grassroot peacebuilding and conflict transformation work. Understanding the key elements and starting points to develop advocacy initiatives that are built on participants' practical peacework is crucial to broaden their horizons on potential directions participant's expertise and motivation could take them. Throughout the session participants were encouraged to make connections to the methodologies they have learned about in previous sessions and how they can feed into the development of advocacy initiatives. The module included 1) group discussion introducing main differences and definitions between Activism, Lobbyism, and Advocacy; 2) Group task to arrange papers with the different phases of a campaign in the “correct” order and discuss their purpose in the process; 3) Identification of potential risks, fears and consequences in a group discussion, and finding strategies to mitigate them within the group & 4) Short presentation of YMCA Europe's Youth Representative Network and it's work on Advocacy, followed by Q&A.

Reflecting on Peace Practices (RPP) (Facilitated by Vardan Hambardzumyan, Expert) - RPP is a very useful tool for impact orientation in conflict transformation work, helping to understand one's own role in attribution to that impact, and also the actors needed to cooperate with (or be aware about) for achieving peace at large. The module was a logical continuum after Do No Harm session to conclude the learning cycle. At the beginning, the participants learned about RPP as an important tool for planning and designing, monitoring and evaluation of peace activities and through practical exercise clarified for themselves which are the areas and the actors of peace-work they are (or want to be) engaged in - by working in pairs and answering questions (1) who needs to be engaged for achieving peace, (2) what needs to change in order to achieve peace. As the next step, group work on elaborating RPP matrixes ensued - for impact orientation of the peace-work they are (or want to be) engaged in. The module was concluded with plenary feedback and Q&A.

World Café (Facilitated by the Planning Team) - served as a platform to showcase various projects and opportunities from and with the Council of Europe and YMCA Europe. There were 5 tables with a planning member stationed by each one and presenting the assigned topic/area, while 5 groups of participants were rotating around the tables, spending 10 minutes at each one. The topics/areas were:

- European Youth Foundation (COE);
- Roots for Peace Project (YMCA Europe);
- Peace Camp (COE);
- Camp Europe Project (YMCA Europe);
- Generation Next Project (YMCA Europe);

Immediate Reaction Evaluation (Facilitated by Revaz Shavladze) - various evaluation methods (Verbal, Written & Online) were employed to obtain the feedback from the participants. At first, participants had the opportunity to assess the week through “Mentimeter” software tool -

describing the study session with one “buzzword”. In continuum, the round of verbal evaluation served as another option to express opinions and gather the feedback. The results of evaluation were largely positive and demonstrated that the expectations of participants were met and/or exceeded in most cases. The main learning and take-away points that participants highlighted in their feedback were “Educational”, “Inspiring”, “Peace”, “Emotional” and “Fun” - stressing the significance of such international gatherings as platforms to learn, network and grow; and as a motivation to keep working in the peace building field, despite all the challenges and disappointments in the modern world.

The Post-Event Learning Evaluation was launched one month after completion of the Study Session. The results are provided as an appendix to the report.

Conclusions & Follow-up

Overall and despite certain challenges during the build-up and preparation process (cancellations; visa delays, high travel costs, etc.), all the envisaged program elements were implemented & the study session objectives have been achieved. There was a high level of engagement from participants, the experts delivered relevant content and the planning team functioned well and in coordinated fashion.

YMCA Europe Roots for Peace team will remain in regular contact with study session participants, offering a range of learning and practical opportunities in the field of peace work and conflict transformation in Europe. This will ensure continuity and sustainability of the ideas and initiatives generated during the study session and will multiply the impact and outreach of the knowledge and skills acquired.

The online platforms (Facebook & WhatsApp groups) created during the study session remain vibrant and active, with high engagement from most of the participants - a vivid demonstration of bonding and positive vibes born during the event.

Online Resources

[Article about "Give Peace a Chance" Study Session on YMCA Europe Roots for Peace Web Page](#)

["Give Peace a Chance" Photo Album](#)

["Give Peace a Chance" - Video # 1](#)

["Give Peace a Chance" - Video # 2](#)

["Give Peace a Chance" - Video # 3](#)

Appendixes

[The Program](#)

[The List of Participants](#)

[Post Event Evaluation Survey Results](#)

Appendix 1



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Strasbourg, 25 September 2023

Study session

“GIVE PEACE A CHANCE”

Study session organised within the [Youth for Democracy programme](#)
in cooperation with the **YMCA Europe** / www.ymcaeurope.com

European Youth Centre Budapest/Strasbourg*, room **0.1**
October 15 - 21, 2023

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday, 15 October, 2023

Arrival of participants

19:00 Dinner

21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 16 October 2023

09:00 Opening with Introduction of the session aims & objectives; Introductions of Planning Team & Participants; Expectations & Programme Overview;

11:00 Getting to Know each other game

11:30 Team Building activity – To get to know each other

13:00 Lunch

- 14:00** Ice-Breaker Activities
- 14:30** The Council of Europe & YMCA Europe Conflict Transformation Work in a nutshell
- 15:30** Coffee Break
- 16:00** Safe Space: River of Life
- 17:30** Home Groups: concept & reflection
- 19:00** Dinner

Tuesday, 17 October 2023

- 09:15** Roots Stories to Share: Personal, Communications
- 10:30** Coffee Break
- 11:00** Roots Know How: Guidebook, Online Platforms
- 13:00** Lunch break
- 14:00** Ice-Breaker Activities
- 14:30** Marketplace
- 15:30** Coffee Break
- 16:00** Trust Building Activity (Blob tree)
- 17:30** Home Groups: reflection
- 19:00** Dinner
- 20:00** Free Evening

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

- 09:15** Tools for Conflict Transformation (Council of Europe)
- 10:30** Coffee Break
- 11:00** Tools for Conflict Transformation (YMCA Europe / Roots for Peace)
- 13:00** Lunch break
- Free Afternoon & Evening in the City

Thursday, 19 October 2023

- 09:15** Do No Harm: Seven Steps plenary presentation with **Vardan Hambardzumyan**
- 10:00** Do No Harm: group exercise on Understanding the Context - Dividers & Connectors.
- 10:30** Coffee Break
- 11:00** Do No Harm: Understanding the Context (cont.)
- 11:30** Do No Harm: Unpacking the Project - Details Matter
- 13:00** Lunch
- 14:00** Energizers
- 14:30** Do No Harm: Assessing the Effects - RAFT

15:30 Coffee Break
16:00 Empathy-building Activity
17:30 Home Groups: reflection
19:00 Dinner

Friday, 20 October 2023

09:15 Reflecting on Peace Practices: with **Vardan Hambardzumyan**
10:30 Coffee Break
11:00 Reflecting on Peace Practices (cont.)
12:00 Advocacy
13:00 Lunch
14:00 Energizers
14:30 World Cafe for Opportunities
15:30 Coffee Break
16:00 Evaluation Activities (Acknowledgement game)
17:30 Closing
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Farewell party

Saturday 21 October 2023

Departure of participants

Aim and objectives of the study session

Aim: The major aim of the activity is to develop competences and enhance the local capacities for peace in Europe via empowering the young people to act as advocates and multipliers of peace and reconciliation in their respective communities - through raising the awareness and sharing the experience and know-how of YMCA Europe and Council of Europe in peace education and conflict transformation work.

Objectives

- Participants acquire the basics of peace building & conflict transformation methods and tools with a particular focus on how to apply them into youth work at a local level;
- Participants are aware of YMCA Europe and Council of Europe work in peace education and promotion of dialogue;
- Participants are empowered to take initiative to promote peace & dialogue within their sending organisations and / or own communities.

Appendix 2

"Give Peace a Chance" Study Session

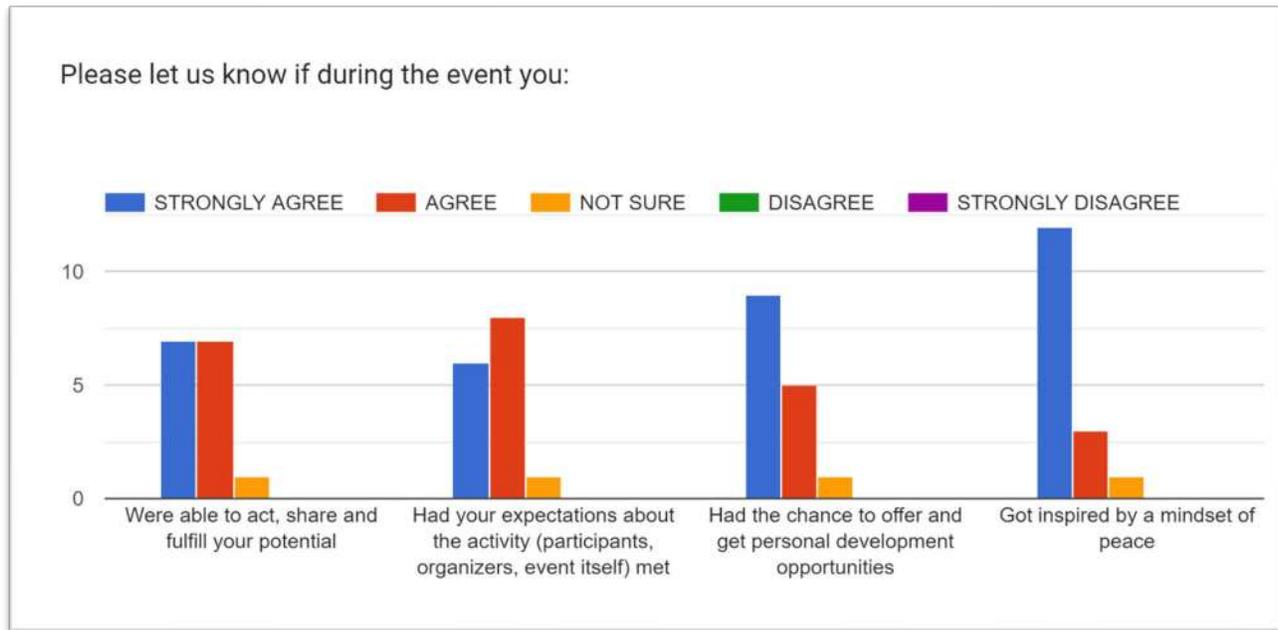
List of Participants

Name & Surname	Age	Gender	Country of Residence	Status
Armine Grigoryan	31	Female	Armenia	Participant
Anahit Hambardzumyan	18	Female	Armenia	Participant
Shahla Karimli	25	Female	Azerbaijan	Participant
Helene Meddeltho	21	Male	Norway	Participant
Giorgi Sturua	20	Male	Georgia	Participant
Elene Uchaneishvili	22	Female	Georgia	Participant
Daviti Esatia	24	Male	Georgia	Participant
Fenia Fousika	28	Female	Greece	Participant
Raquel Alcantara Cisneros	26	Female	Spain	Participant
Jasmina Bigović	23	Female	Montenegro	Participant
Mohammed Khuder Mohammed	27	Male	Spain	Participant
Sofia Piper	22	Female	Sweden	Participant
Vsevolod Lukashenok	28	Male	Sweden	Participant
Valja van Dijk	28	Female	the Netherlands	Participant
Halil Özkaraca	30	Male	Türkiye	Participant
Iryna Ditkovska	20	Female	Ukraine	Participant
Natalia Samoliuk	19	Female	Ukraine	Participant
Maud Broek	19	Female	The Netherlands	Participant
Nyncke Kuperus	20	Female	The Netherlands	Participant
Sonja Sirviö	28	Female	Finland	Participant
Veera Nikkarinen	27	Female	Finland	Participant
Mirjami Kallinen	28	Female	Finland	Participant
Gledia Shehi	22	Female	Albania	Participant
Tiago Andrade	21	Male	Portugal	Participant
Avnora Morina	31	Female	Kosovo	Participant
Edona Sandriu	28	Female	Kosovo	Participant
Lika Zakaryan	29	Female	Armenia	Planning Team
Irina Berdzenishvili	25	Female	Romania/Georgia	Planning Team
Hannah Sauer	23	Female	Germany	Planning Team
Levon Arshakyan	26	Male	Armenia	Planning Team
Revaz Shavladze	46	Male	Georgia	Course Director

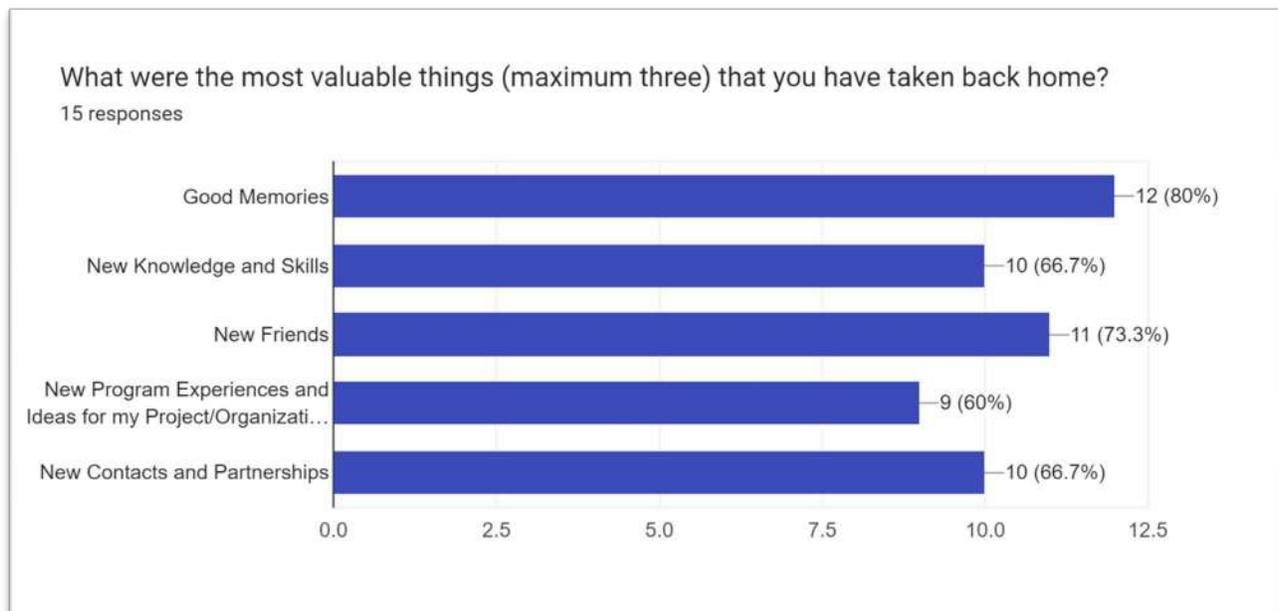
APPENDIX 3

**YMCA Europe Roots for Peace
"Give Peace a Chance" Study Session
Post Event Evaluation Survey**

Question # 1 (15 Responses)



Question # 2 (15 Responses)



Question # 3: Please read the following statements and indicate your view (15 Responses)

I felt safe during the event

I have learned about other countries, realities, culture, history and traditions during the event

I had fun and enjoyed the company of other participants

The event has inspired me

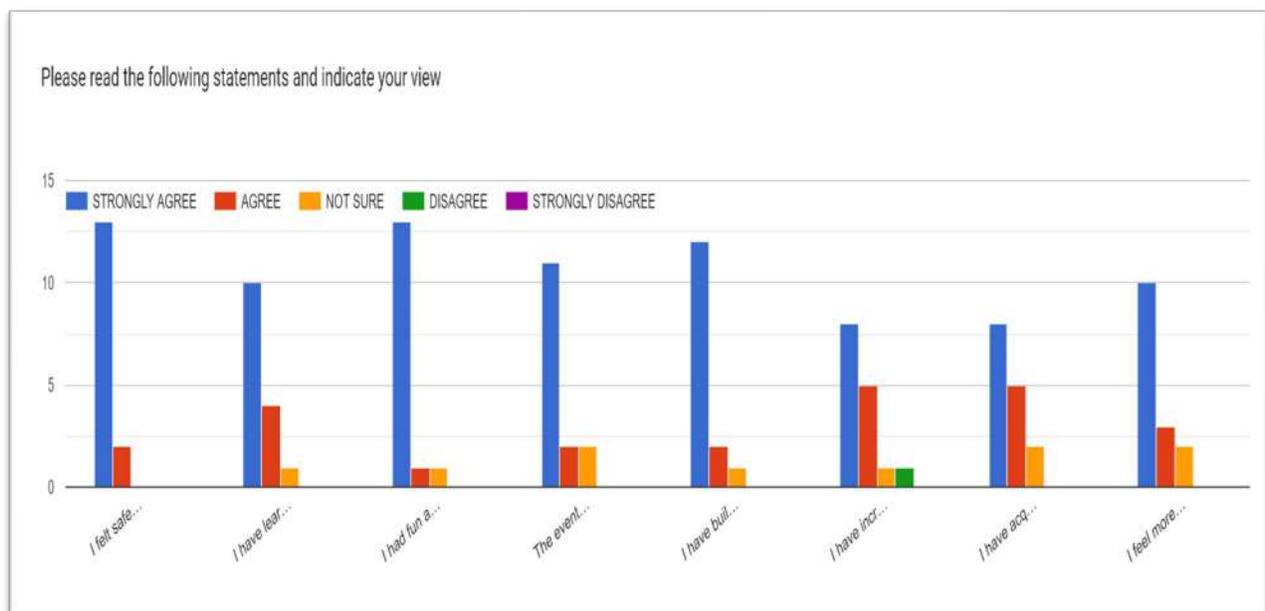
I have built strong relationships, friendships and bonds with people from other countries as well as my own

I have increased my awareness & tolerance towards those that represent politically antagonistic countries/side(s) and/or hold different values/opinions to my own

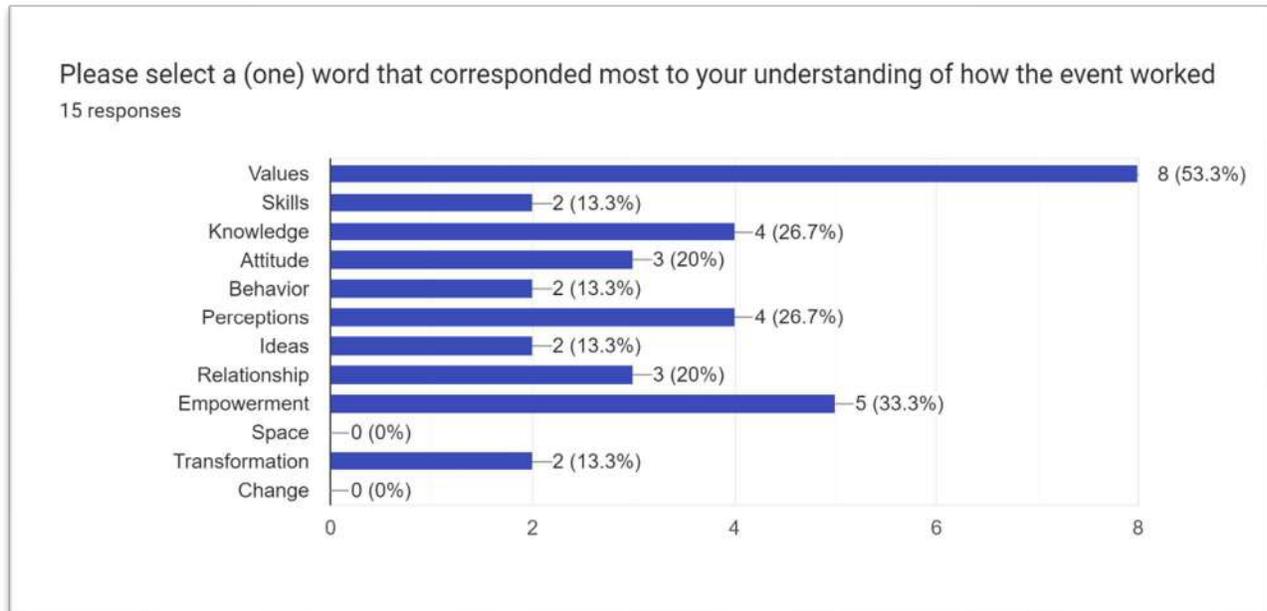
I have increased my awareness & tolerance towards those that represent politically antagonistic countries/side(s) and/or hold different values/opinions to my own

I have acquired specific tools and skills that I can use in my work/personal life

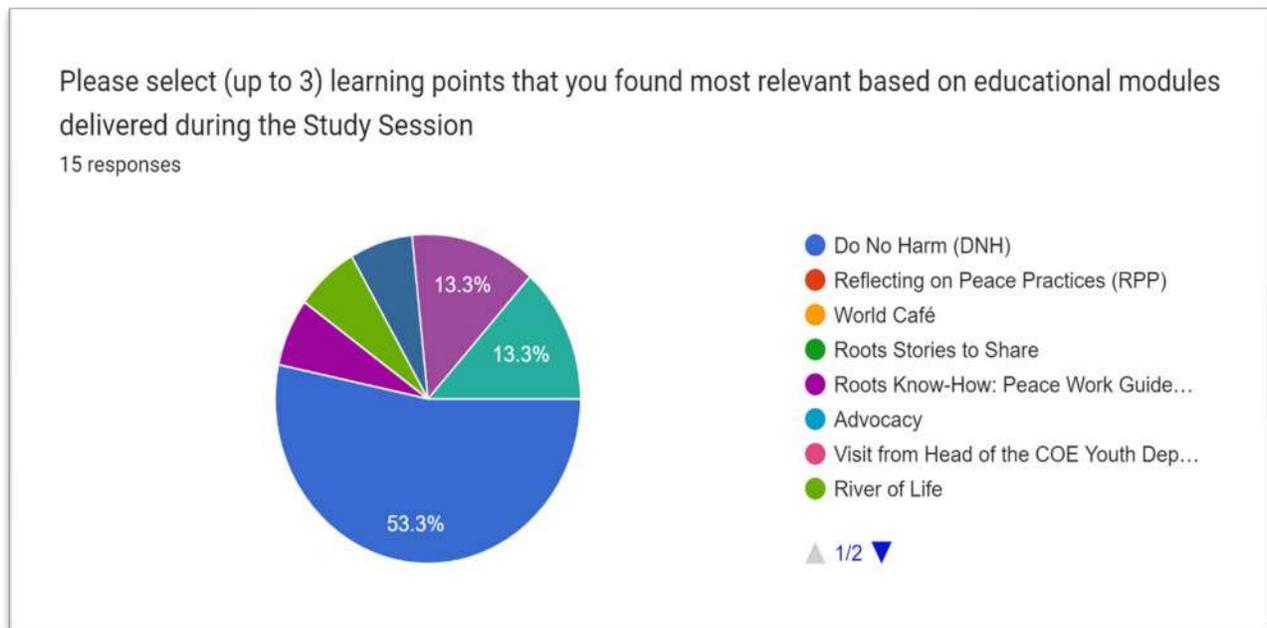
I feel more confident to engage in peacebuilding and conflict transformation initiatives and activities



Question # 4 (15 Responses)



Question # 5 (15 Responses)



Question # 6: If you would organize such kind of event, what would you do differently? (11 Responses)

A slightly changed balance of get-to-know-each-other and learning sessions towards the latter

Nothing it was good

The event was well organized and well thought through every session. Sessions with lessons and literature were coordinated with other activities so we didn't get overwhelmed and bored.

I would maybe do some sessions in a different location to get a little more variation! Maybe to put "the river of life" exercise a little later, when one haven't gotten to know each other a little more!

I wouldn't have done anything differently

I will focus more on the topics of conflict management and peacebuilding, delve deeper into the dynamics of the culture of dialogue, and create a good space for young people to spread the culture of peace.

Maybe prepare people that the session will contain a lot of emotional sessions in advance but otherwise I think the emotional sessions worked great. Since the session was located in Strasbourg it would have been interesting to visit some of the other institutions there as well, for example the European Court of Human Rights building... And I would love to learn more about the theories and peace tools - for example spend some more time with the do no harm.

I believe everything was told during the end of the day team discussions

I think the course was perfect, but I would exclude feedback part after each day, you were asking too many feedbacks, the rest was ok, I enjoyed it, and I hope I will have a chance to continue my path with you.

I would say that a more practical component is essential (keeping in mind that a second part it is very important to achieve that point). Suggestions: -after the event, I'd set a time to do a zoom conference to debate and show our achievements, goals, general journey, failures, etc.

I would like to say, that everything was planned greatly during the Study Session, I am really sincere when I say, that there are no complaints from my side. If I was organizing such kind of event, I will add more physical activities, because it helps participants to stay awake, energized and clear their heads. And a little detail, it would have been great if some of the participants had a chance to share more about their peace building backgrounds and how they contribute in peacework, because during marketplace there was a time limit and a little bit of misunderstanding of a presentation task.

Question # 7: Overall, what has changed for you as a result of the event? (11 Responses)

I got an effective introduction to Do No Harm framework

Skills, Knowledge, Attitude, Behavior, Perceptions, Ideas, Relationship

Being for a week with young people from countries around the world with different backgrounds made me understand more the definition of peace and also understand that what peace means for me doesn't mean for everyone. Being a child of the war and growing up in a conflict area you're used to hearing from others' ideas and solutions for conflict transition, participating in the "Give Peace a Chance" gave me a chance to also hear ideas, solutions, and experiences from people that faced the war and are still in the conflict areas. The event also helped me to get out of the Balkan bubble and see that we share the same stories with people in Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Syria, and a lot more.

I have gotten a much bigger understanding of how much impact one person can do as a part of YMCA! Also, I have much more insight in other people's lives and their story in relation to the story of their territory! Also, my understanding of peace have changed, where I understanding that Peace happens in grass root situations as well as in bigger power institutions!

I have become more aware of ongoing conflicts and issues concerning countries outside of my region and learned few approaches and methods those issues can be tackled.

I am very proud of this participation, and very grateful. I have increased my experience and skills further and worked to introduce a new methodology of tools and resources to spread the culture of peace. The most important thing is my passion and curiosity to learn more about the peacebuilding process

I came to Strasbourg a bit nervous but also very excited to be a part of "give peace a chance". I expected that the seminar would be more learning tools, skills and theories but I realized quite fast being there that tools are only one part of peace-building and to learn how to connect, build relations with people with different nationalities, religions, cultures etc. is also a very important part of the peace learning process. To open up emotionally is rare in Norway and I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning. It was definitely out of my comfort zone and I think that's why it was very valuable. Being a person from the "white, western rich world", it is easy to think theories and tools and forget about the emotional part. I believe that the student session was an unique experience that I will have in mind in my future peace work. I really hope that I can contribute to the peace work with YMCA in the future, for example help with organizing a peace camp.

My perspective on peace has changed, especially after meeting the group directly impacted by war and world problems with peace. I have felt many emotions during the programme, it has left an impression on me to try to do more.

I discovered that peacebuilding was very close to my heart and I would like to be included more in peacebuilding activities and trainings and why not to find a job at a Council of Europe or YMCA.

I was very unhappy with my YMCA state because of the youth department.

It was not working like it used to, so after this event I reconnected with my YMCA mates and we already started to work on some very interesting things, such as meetings and activities outdoor (yet being planned).

It is good to be back and I can't wait for the future with YMCA Setubal and YMCA Europe/roots

First of all, I would like to point out the fact, that whole planning team did an amazing job and all the participants were great, all of us connected easily and made great memories. Before coming to Study Session, I have already heard about most educational modules that you delivered in Strasbourg, but my knowledge was a little bit superficial. During this project I extended my knowledge about peacework and now I can apply learned tools to some projects with more confidence. Also, I would really like to mention, that I made some great connections with participants from all around the world and we even discussed potential projects, where we can use our shared experience gained during Strasbourg Study Session. Other than that, I made new friends, gained lots of experience, new skills and so on. Honestly, I am very grateful that I had a chance to be part of this amazing event and I hope I can use all my experience in the future.

Question # 8: Please use this space for general comments or for the feedback to specific questions within the survey. (6 Responses)

At this question, I couldn't select more than one answer "Please select (up to 3) learning points that you found most relevant based on educational modules delivered during the Study Session", so I'm adding here two other options that I wanted to select: 1. Tools for Conflict Transformation (Council of Europe); 2. Tools for Conflict Transformation (YMCA Europe / Roots for Peace)

It has been a blast meeting such profound and mature people with such interesting stories and thoughts!:)

Thank you very much, I appreciate your efforts. I hope there will always be such activities and training

I just want to thank you all for a fantastic and full of knowledge week...Thanks Vartan, Rezi, Lika, Irina, Ramon and Levon...I love you all....my best and sincere wishes to all of you. You do a fantastic job.

Last observations: great food, great hospitality, great space, great logistics, great team. I am very humbled and honored by this (give peace a) chance. Feel free to contact us - YMCA Setubal- if you need a space to develop future activities

thanks again for having me!