



Co-funded by
the European Union

“From Conflict to Collaboration: Building a Culture of Peace in Diverse Communities” Training Course

2-9.04.2024, Herentals, Belgium

IMPACT REPORT



Preface

This report summarises **the change** that the “**From Conflict to Collaboration: Building a Culture of Peace in Diverse Communities**” Training Course (2-9.04.2024) brought to its participants.

The training course was organised by Service Civil International (SCI) within the framework of the **Peace in Diversity** project (2024-2025). The project aimed to develop conflict resolution skills in youth leaders, equip professionals and volunteers with tools for peacebuilding in daily lives, enhance partner organisations’ capacity as peace promoters, and take co-responsibility for the peaceful future of Europe.

The training course took place in Herentals, Belgium and gathered **28 participants – residents of 10 countries** (and 18 nationalities) who were youth workers, beginner educators, volunteers and activists of NGOs working for peace.

Our project partners were PVN Albania, EdUcAntwerp Belgium, CVS Bulgaria, SCI Catalunya, SCI Germany, Utilapu Hungary, VSI Ireland, GAIA Kosovo, CID North Macedonia, SCI Poland, and YRS Serbia. The project was co-funded by the European Union through JINT – the Flemish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme.

The “From Conflict to Collaboration” TC aimed to **equip professionals and volunteers with expertise and tools to build and sustain peace on a micro level among the youth living in diverse groups and communities**. The focus during this course was Peace with Other.

During the training, the participants:

- got a better understanding of the concept of peace and its 3 levels – intrapersonal, interpersonal and with nature;
- enlarged their knowledge about building peace on a micro level in diverse groups;
- learnt tools and mechanisms for sustaining peaceful coexistence of teams and communities;
- strengthened their nonviolent communication skills;
- developed confidence to apply conflict resolution instruments in daily work;
- improved skills for presentations, active listening, learning and collaboration in an international and multicultural environment;
- exchanged ideas, good practices, inspirations, and shared resources;
- planned a follow-up action to take place in their local community upon the course completion.

These 7 full days of intensive, all-day-long learning were led by trainers Natalie Jivkova and Goška Tur.

The “From Conflict to Collaboration: Building a Culture of Peace in Diverse Communities” Training Course was organised within the “Peace in Diversity” project and co-funded by the European Union. We are grateful to our donor for the financial support, as it helps us to realise our ideas and turn dreams and plans into activities!

The European Commission's financial support for our training project does not constitute an endorsement of the contents of the report, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Why such a report?

Our team considers **evaluation and impact measurement** important parts of every project. They help us to understand the outcomes, check the value for money, and benchmark with other similar activities.

We were very interested in learning what the training would change in the **knowledge, skills, and attitudes of our course participants**.

That is why we used the expertise within the project team and experience from the previous projects to design an **impact measurement process** whose results we describe below.

The report consists of the following parts:

- 1) Preface
- 2) Note on the research methodology
- 3) Research results and summary of the key findings
- 4) Discussion points
- 5) Conclusions

The research and report were prepared by Goška Tur (MA in sociology) with the support of Natalie Jivkova. You can contact us for more information at training@sci.ngo.

Research methodology and questions

Our impact study intended to **measure the change in knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to the project** (i.e. around the topic of peace). We used the method of **ex-ante and ex-post questionnaires** for that purpose.

The participants of each training course filled in two surveys:

- ex-ante survey on Day 1 of the training course (during the Opening Session);
- ex-post survey (during the Evaluation Session).

Both ex-ante and ex-post questionnaires were **identical**, and both were **anonymous**, but participants got secret numbers so that we could identify which pre- and post-surveys belonged to which individual.

The surveys consisted of **9 self-assessment questions** (one of them having 11 sub-questions). The questions were phrased based on the standard methodologies used in sociology. Participants answered using a Numeric Rating Scale (from 1 to 7, 1 being the lowest) used in psychometry.

The questions were:

- 1) How much do you know about peace?
- 2) How much do you know about building a culture of peace in diverse communities?
- 3) Answer the statements below:
 - a. I know the concept of the 3 levels of peace.
 - b. I know how to act for peace in daily life, every day.
 - c. I have knowledge and tools to build and sustain peace and collaboration on a micro level in diverse communities.
 - d. I have confidence to apply conflict resolution instruments in daily work.

- e. I can list different Dimensions of (national) Cultures (e.g. according to the concept of G. Hofstede).
 - f. I know how to use the Dimensions of Culture concept to improve collaboration across people of different cultural backgrounds.
 - g. I know the concept and methods of Nonviolent Communication (NVC).
 - h. I can implement NVC principles in real-life situations.
 - i. I am aware of the concept of Emotional and Social Intelligence.
 - j. I have a good understanding of what inclusion and diversity are.
 - k. I am prepared to enhance inclusion and diversity in my community.
- 4) How well prepared are you to support peace building in diverse communities?
 - 5) How do you rate your impact on building a more peaceful world?
 - 6) To what extent do you regard yourself as a peace educator and/or a peace activist?
 - 7) Do you have a clear vision of how you want to be active and support building peace in diverse communities after our training?
 - 8) How much are you *willing and motivated* to complete a follow-up activity after this training course (e.g. a workshop, a community event, an intervention, etc.)?
 - 9) How *confident* are you in completing a follow-up activity after this training course?

We gathered 26 valid responses out of 28 participants, which we consider a very good result.

Results of the research

The graph below demonstrates our course's impact on the participants.



Here are some key things you can see in the chart presented on the previous page:

- Each bar represents a question on the survey.
- The question numbers in the chart, on axis X, correspond with the numbers of questions presented above, in the “Research methodology and questions” chapter.
- The questions are ordered in a specific way. The first questions and statements measure knowledge of peace and peace tools, as well as the ability to use these tools to promote the culture of peace in diverse communities. They are followed by questions about preparedness and confidence in supporting peace building in diverse communities, and ending with questions about personal vision and motivation for peace work, including the follow-up activity after the training course.
- The height of each bar shows the average response to that question, calculated from the 26 received answers. The scale on the left goes from 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest (e.g. the level of knowledge or ability).
- The first bar for each question (blue colour) shows average responses before the event, and the second one (green colour) – the average responses after the event.
- The bars in the second chart are taller than the first ones. This means that people gave higher ratings after the event, suggesting that the event had a positive impact on them.

Overall Training Impact

The training course demonstrated a positive overall impact, with an **average improvement of 1.87 points across all surveyed questions**. This indicates a general enhancement in participants' perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and preparedness after attending the course.

Detailed Question Analysis

The following section details the changes observed for individual questions, highlighting areas of significant improvement and those with more modest gains.

The theoretical maximum improvement from “I know nothing at all” to “I know everything about it” would be 6 points (a difference between 1 to 7). However, nobody comes to a training course as an empty vessel, without any prior knowledge, and therefore, even a difference of 1 point is considered significant, especially after short-term interventions, such as a 7-day meeting (and not, e.g. a university course). Therefore, we were very pleased to observe that as many as 5 areas of our interest got an improvement of over 2.5 points.

5 Top Areas of Improvement:

No.	Question	Mean score before	Mean score after	Improvement
3a	I know the concept of the 3 levels of peace.	3.27	6.46	3.19

3e	I can list different Dimensions of (national) Cultures (e.g. according to the concept of G. Hofstede).	3.19	6.19	3.00
3g	I know the concept and methods of Nonviolent Communication (NVC).	3.96	6.58	2.62
3f	I know how to use the Dimensions of Culture concept to improve collaboration across people of different cultural backgrounds.	3.35	5.92	2.58
3h	I can implement NVC principles in real-life situations.	3.73	6.31	2.58

Areas with Moderate to High Improvement:

In the following areas, the improvement is between 1.5 and 2.5 points (on a 1-7 scale).

No.	Question	Mean score before	Mean score after	Improvement
3c	I have knowledge and tools to build and sustain peace and collaboration on a micro level in diverse communities.	3.81	6.12	2.31
2	How much do you know about building a culture of peace in diverse communities?	3.65	5.92	2.27
3d	I have confidence to apply conflict resolution instruments in daily work.	4.00	6.12	2.12
5	How do you rate your impact on building a more peaceful world?	3.85	5.77	1.92
3b	I know how to act for peace in daily life, every day.	4.35	6.15	1.81
1	How much do you know about peace?	4.35	6.12	1.77
4	How well prepared are you to support peace building in diverse communities?	4.12	5.77	1.65
3i	I am aware of the concept of Emotional and Social Intelligence.	4.85	6.35	1.50
3k	I have a good understanding of what inclusion and diversity are.	4.69	6.19	1.50
6	To what extent do you regard yourself as a peace builder and/or a peace activist?	4.23	5.73	1.50

5 Areas with Lowest Improvement:

There were also areas in which improvement was observable and significant, but smaller.

No.	Question	Mean score before	Mean score after	Improvement
3l	I am prepared to enhance inclusion and diversity in my community.	4.73	6.08	1.35
3j	I feel confident in recognising and managing my own and others' emotions.	4.85	6.00	1.15
7	Do you have a clear vision of how you want to be active and support building peace in diverse communities after our training?	4.50	5.65	1.15
9	How <i>confident</i> are you in completing a follow-up activity after this training course?	5.42	6.19	0.77
8	How much are you <i>willing and motivated</i> to complete a follow-up activity after this training course (e.g. a workshop, a community event, an intervention, etc.)?	5.69	6.38	0.69

In the case of the above 5 questions, the entry level was already very high. E.g. the average motivation to complete a follow-up activity after the course was 5.69 points out of 7 at the very beginning of the TC. As a result, the difference before and after is smaller.

Discussion points

It must be underlined that the above results stem from a self-assessment score. An ideal way to scientifically measure the progress would be to combine self-assessment with an **observational study** – following the participants through their day and checking how they apply the new knowledge and skills in practice. This type of study is, however, difficult and costly to implement even within one company/department. Obviously, with our group living in 10 countries, it was not an option.

To see the long-term results and the **sustainability of the changes**, we also intended to return to our participants a year after the event to ask them about a descriptive assessment of the changes – were they short-term, e.g. lasting several weeks, or have they become permanent improvements?

We also observed a high success rate of our participants when it comes to the implementation of their follow-up actions (peace-related activities) between May and August 2024. Every single participant completed it!

Conclusions

The “From Conflict to Collaboration: Building a Culture of Peace in Diverse Communities” Training Course, organised within the “Peace in Diversity” project by SCI, **brought a positive change** to its participants.

It appears to have been especially effective in enhancing participants' understanding, skills, and confidence in various aspects of peacebuilding and collaboration.

Significant improvements were observed in conceptual understanding and practical application of conflict resolution instruments and cultural dimensions.

The research demonstrates an **average improvement of 26.7 percentage points** in the participants' way to the “ideal flawless peace builder in diverse communities” - from 60.4% of the maximum score before the TC to 87.1% of the maximum score after the TC (respectively, 84.58 and 122 points out of 140 points that one could get in the survey). We rate this as a **very high result**.

The **motivation** to be engaged in peace work stayed high with the group, and the participants developed a clear **vision** of how they wanted to stay involved in the peace-building field.

Overall, the data suggest a successful intervention in fostering greater capacity for peacebuilding among participants.

Goška Tur and Natalie Jivkova

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