Peace in Practice Online Training Course
30.10-11.11.2020
by SCI Switzerland

Was it worth the effort?
OUR IMPACT ON THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Preface

This report summarises **the change** which our Peace in Practice Online Training Course brought **to its participants**.

The course gathered as many as **30 participants from 17 countries** who were volunteers, activists of NGOs working for peace, and youth workers. We held **40 training hours** of Zoom meetings, plus additional conversations via a dedicated Slack channel.

It was an **experimental activity**, as the pandemic forced the preparatory team to move it to an online space. Therefore, we were very interested to learn how the course changed (or not) the level of knowledge, skills and the attitudes of our course participants.

We consider **evaluation and impact measurement** an important part of every project. It helps to understand the outcomes, check the value for money, and benchmark with other similar activities. That is why, even though we lacked funds to hire an external evaluator/researcher, we used the expertise within the project team, and best practices from the field, and designed the impact measurement process whose results we describe below.

The report consists of the following parts:
1) Note on the research methodology
2) Graphs with the results of the research
3) Summary of the key findings
4) Discussion points
5) Conclusions

The research and report were prepared by Gośka Tur with the support of Natalie Jivkova and Loretta Scherler from the Peace in Practice coordination team.

You can contact us for more information at peace.practice@scich.org.

Research methodology

Our impact surveys intended to **measure the change of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant for the course** (i.e. around the topic of peace and its 3 levels – intrapersonal, interpersonal, and with nature). We used the method of **ex-ante and ex-post questionnaires** for that purpose.

All participants received two surveys:
- ex-ante survey on Day 1 of the training course (straight after the Opening Session);
- ex-post survey (48 hours after the Closing Session).

We waited 48 hours with the ex-post survey as we wanted the participants to cool down their emotions after a touching farewell session, and to get some distance before assessing the level of their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Both questionnaires were **identical**, and both were **anonymous**: participants chose nicknames so that we could identify which pre- and post-survey belonged to which individual. The surveys consisted of **18 self-assessment questions** – all of them presented in the next part of the report. The questions were phrased based on the standard methodologies used in sociology. Participants answered using a Numeric Rating Scale (from 1 to 7) used in psychometry.

We received 30 responses for the ex-ante survey and 24 responses to the ex-post survey. Additionally, we had one change in the composition of the group (with a person from the waiting list joining the course on its 2nd day), so in the end, we could **track the change** in 23 persons, which is **77% of the group** – a percentage we are very satisfied with.

Results of the research

The below compilation of graphs demonstrates the course impact on the participants.

All 18 questions are included below. The **orange** line presents the situation **before the course**, and the **dark green** one – **after** it. The vertical axis presents the number of participants who answered in the same way, and the horizontal one – their numerical answer (between 1 and 7).
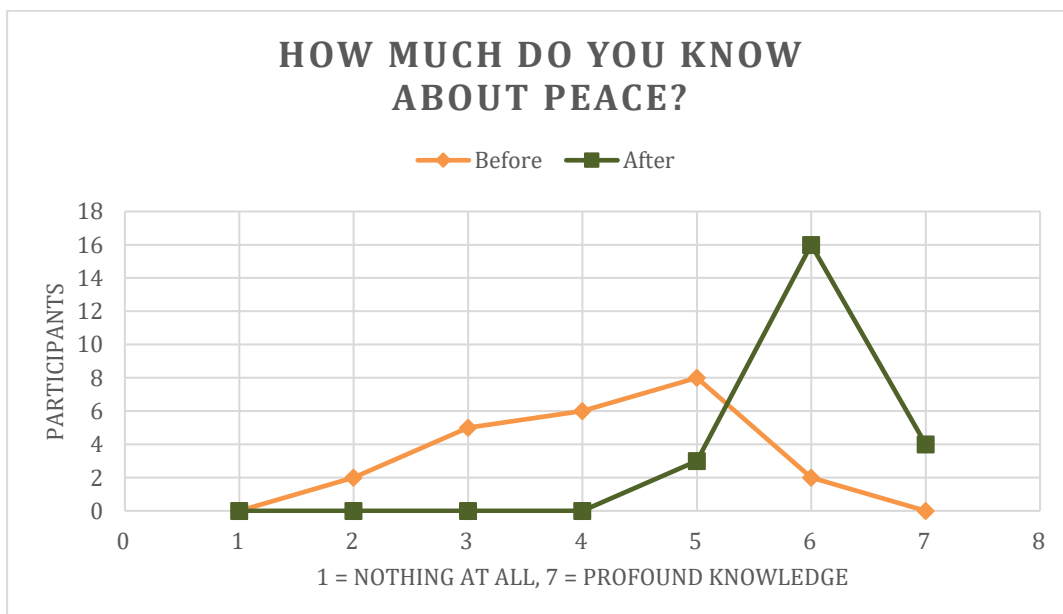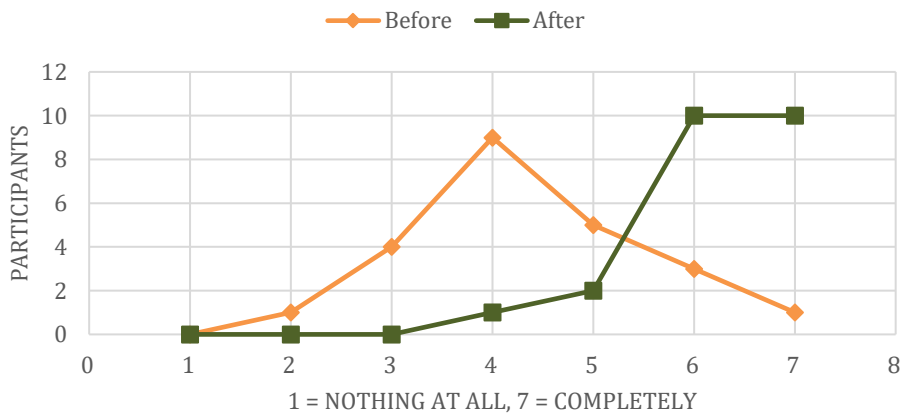
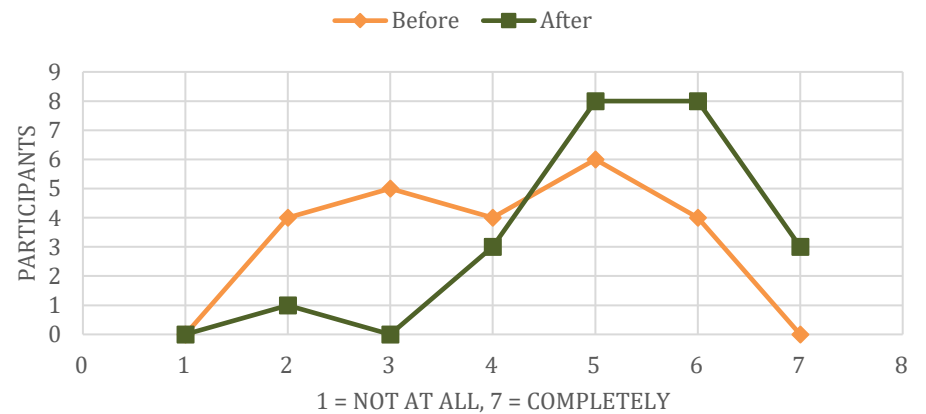HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PROMOTING PEACE?
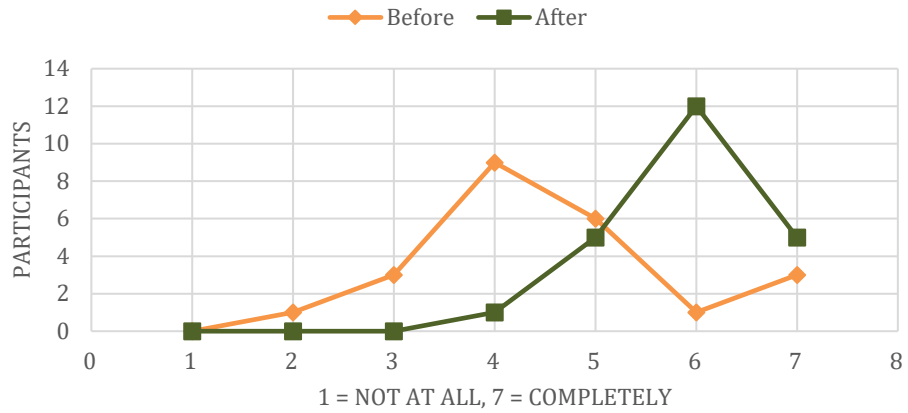
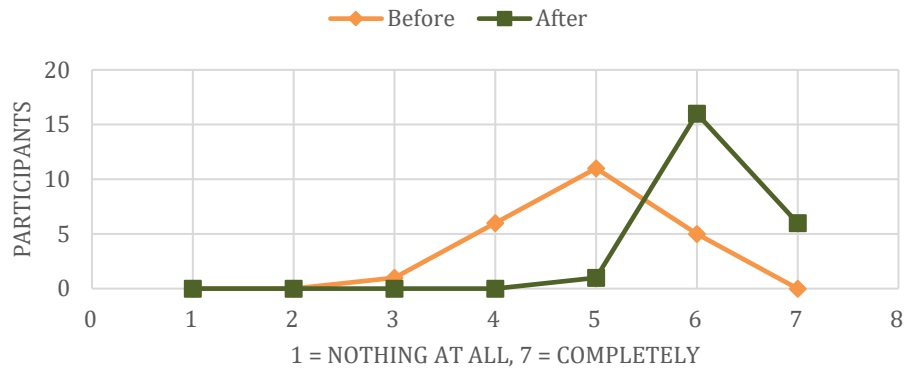HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU LIVE IN PEACE IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE?
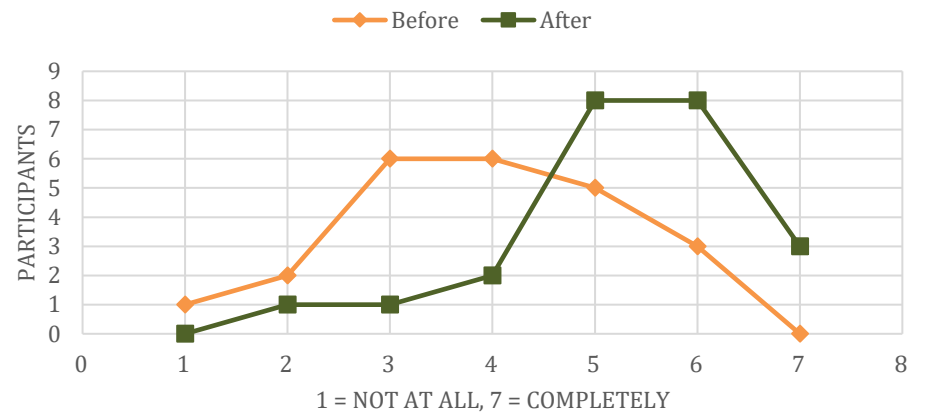
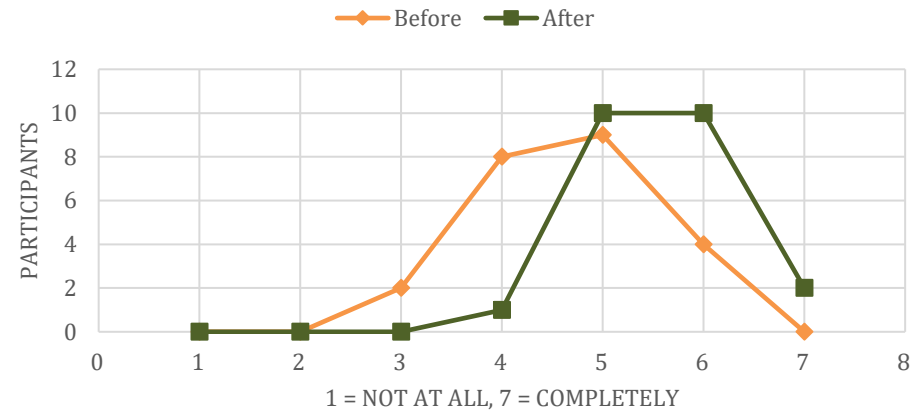HOW MUCH DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT INNER PEACE IS?

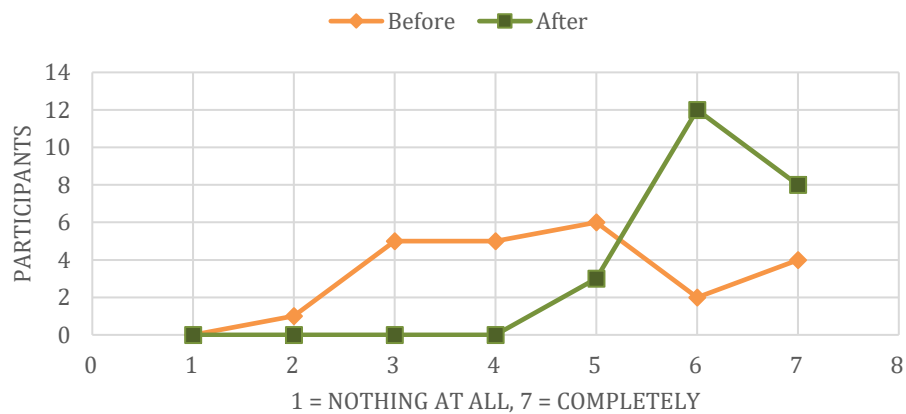HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU LIVE IN PEACE WITH YOURSELF?

HOW MUCH DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT PEACE WITH THE OTHERS IS?
Before / After
PARTICIPANTS
1 = NOTHING AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY

HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE OTHERS?
Before / After
PARTICIPANTS
1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY

HOW MUCH DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT PEACE WITH NATURE IS?
Before / After
PARTICIPANTS
1 = NOTHING AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY

HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU LIVE IN PEACE WITH NATURE?
Before / After
PARTICIPANTS
1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY
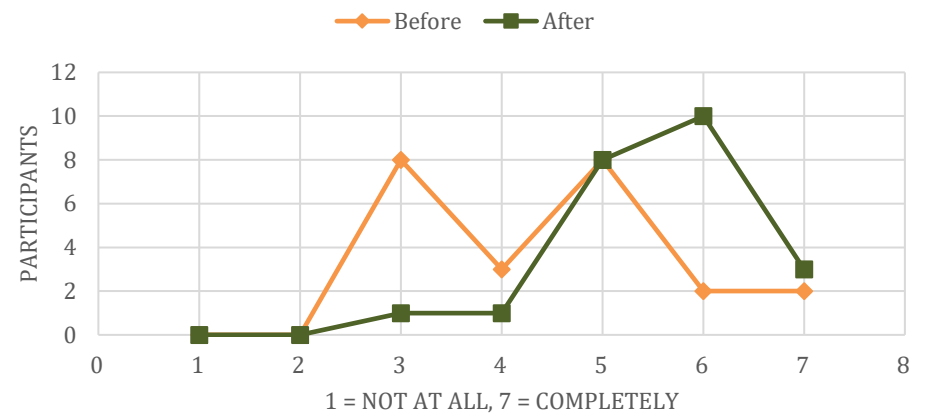
HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOTHING AT ALL, 7 = PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE
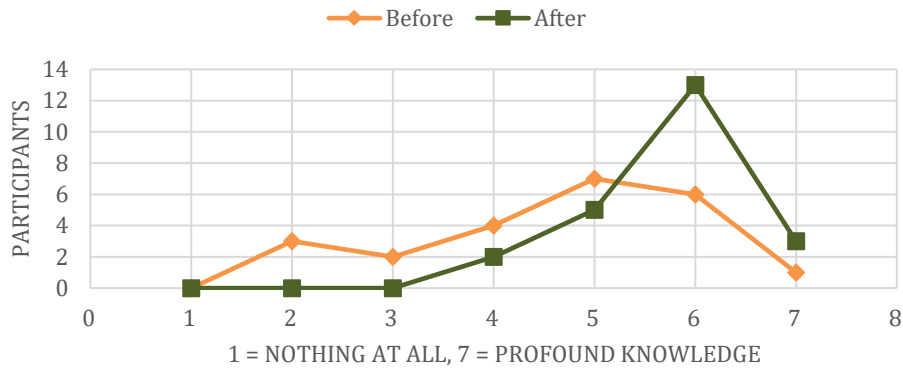
HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCES?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NO COMPETENCES AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY COMPETENT
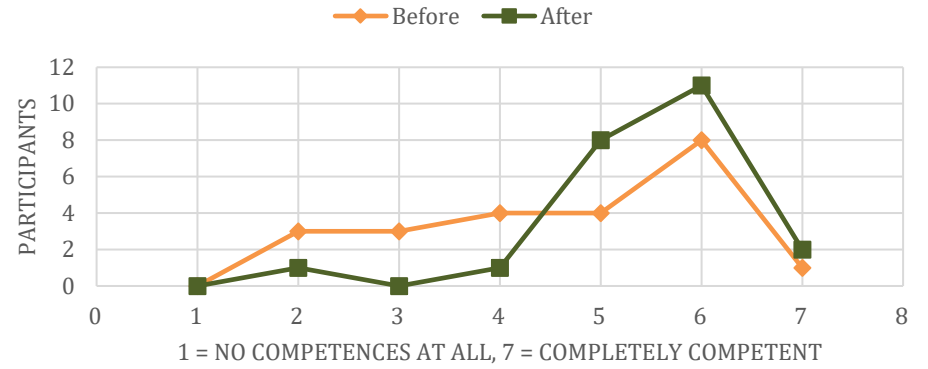
HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOTHING AT ALL, 7 = PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE
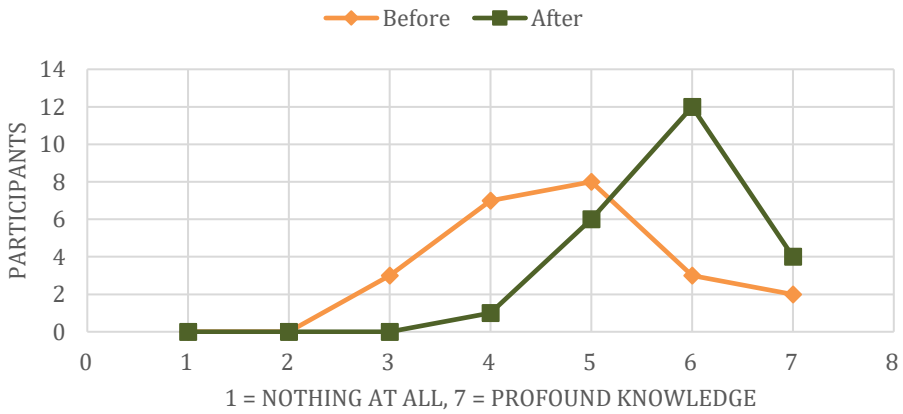
HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NO COMPETENCES AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY COMPETENT
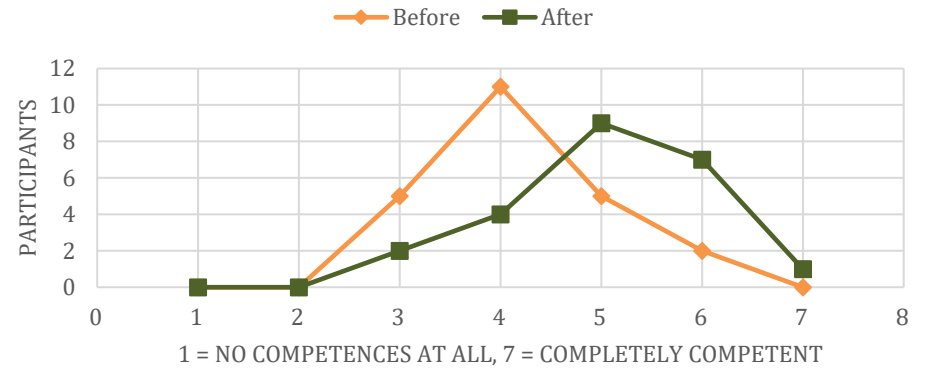
HOW MUCH DO YOU REGARD YOURSELF AS A CHANGE MAKER?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY
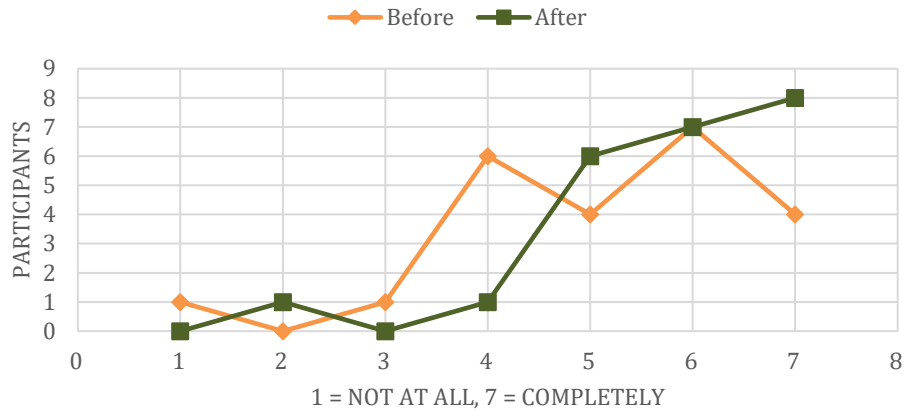
HOW MUCH DO YOU REGARD YOURSELF AS A PEACE-BUILDER / PEACE ACTIVIST / PEACE EDUCATOR?

Before — After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY
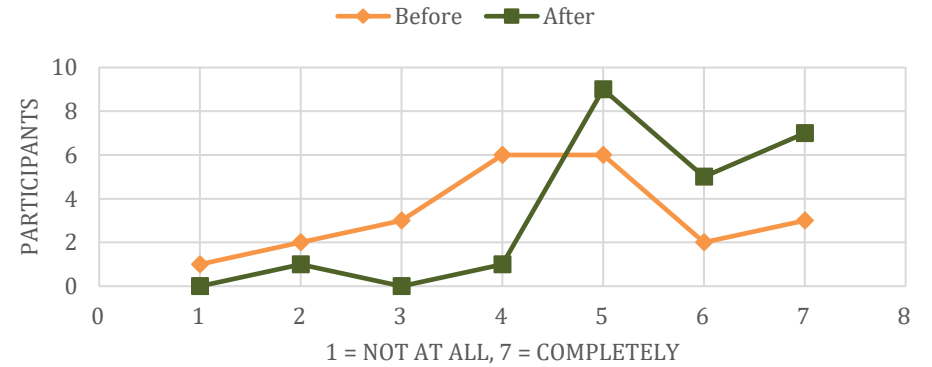
HOW MUCH ARE YOU WILLING AND MOTIVATED TO ORGANIZE A FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY AFTER THE TRAINING COURSE?

Before   After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY
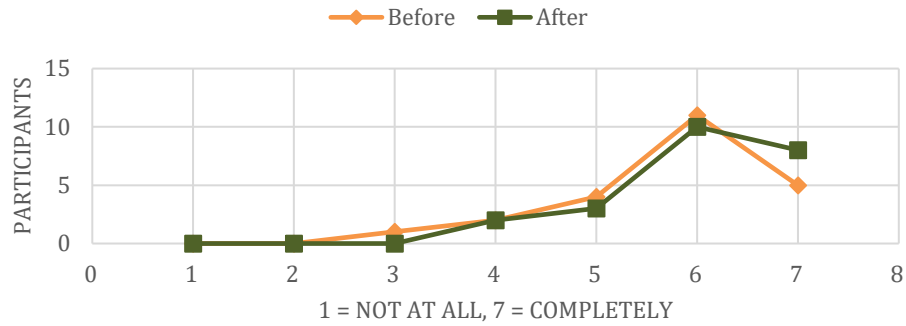
HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU TO ORGANIZE A FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY AFTER THE TRAINING COURSE?

Before   After

PARTICIPANTS

1 = NOT AT ALL, 7 = COMPLETELY

**DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR VISION
OF HOW YOU WANT TO BE ACTIVE
AND WORK FOR PEACE?**
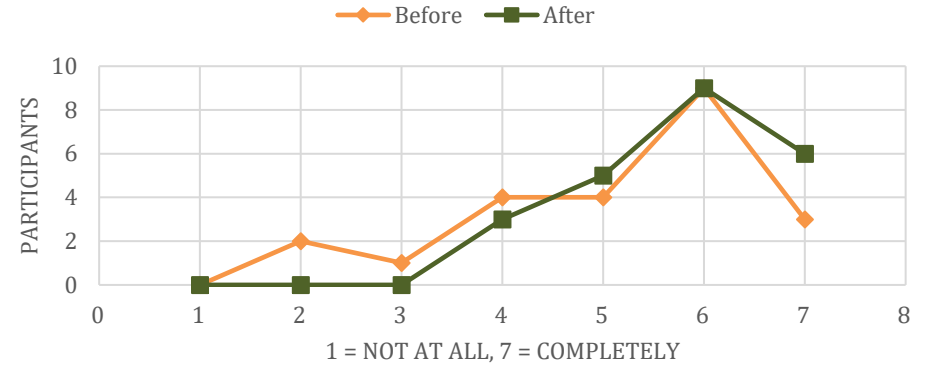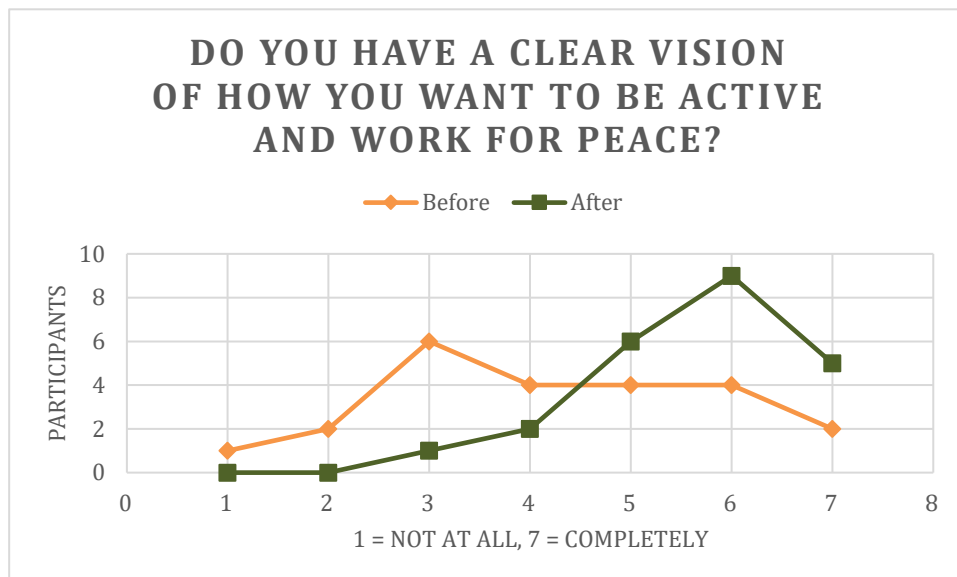
In addition to the above graphs, we checked **the average self-assessment score before and after the course**.

The (imaginary?) **ideal peace-builder** with profound knowledge on all levels of peace, fully competent in all types of skills related to peace work, and with the model attitude toward his/her work, would score here altogether **123** points (18x7). This constitutes 100%.
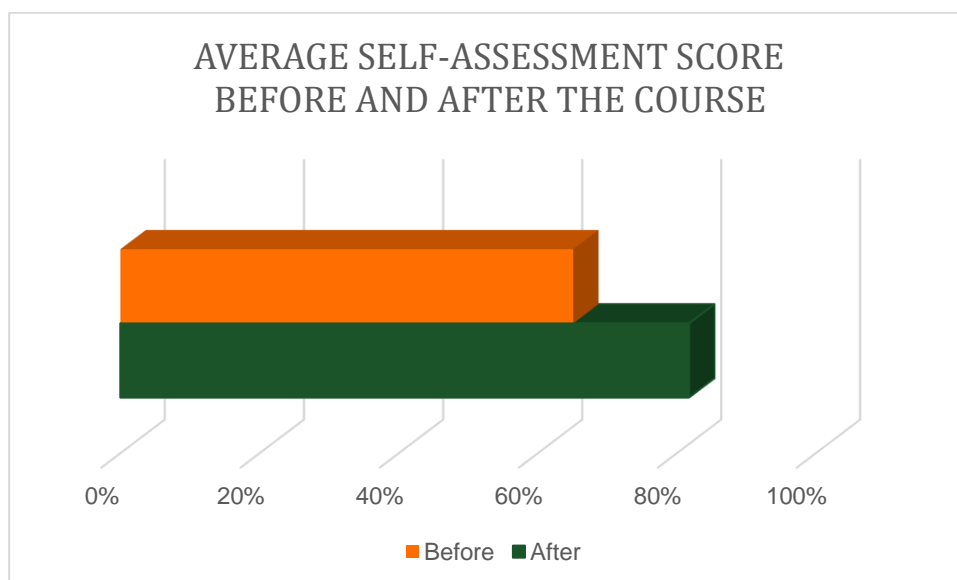
Our course participants rated themselves **82** points before the course, and **103** points after, which means respectively 65% and 82% - an improvement by 17 percentage points (pp).

Obviously, not every participant experienced the same level of improvement, and it ranged from 0 to 53 points, in general depending on the entry-level – e.g. the person with reported 0 points' change was already very experienced in the peace topic at the beginning of the course.

Summary of the key findings

- The Peace in Practice Online Course (November 2020) brought **positive results** to both knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the participants.
- The analysis of ex-ante and ex-post surveys shows an **average improvement by 17 percentage points** (from 65% to 82%) on the way to the "ideal flawless peace-builder".
- The course brought **increase to the knowledge of participants** especially in the below aspects:
  - General knowledge about peace – increase by 46%;
  - Understanding of inner peace – increase by 44%;
  - Understanding of peace with nature – increase by 34%;
  - Understanding of peace with the others – increase by 28%.
- The course also brought the participants' **knowledge** of various aspects of peace to **a similar, more even level**:
  - At the beginning of the course, the average score on the scale 1-7 on the 4 above-mentioned aspects of peace was between 4.1 and 4.9.
  - At the end of the course, the average score was between 6.0 and 6.2.
- When it comes to the **increase in the self-perception of skills and implementation of the knowledge**, the biggest improvement was noticed in the following areas:
  - Living in peace in everyday life – increase by 36%;
  - Living in peace with oneself – increase by 32%;
  - Living in peace with nature – increase by 25%;
  - Nonviolent Communication skills – increase by 21%;
- The group demonstrated **high motivation and commitment** to the follow-up activity already at the beginning of the course, therefore, a less significant change was observed here:
  - Motivation to organise a follow-up activity – increase by 5% (from 5.7 to 6.0);
  - Perceiving oneself as a change-maker – increase by 15% (from 5.1 to 5.8).
- The participants graduated from the course:
  - **much more confident** about promoting peace (an increase of 31%, from 4.5 to 5.9);
  - with a **much clearer vision** of how they want to be active and work for peace (an increase of 34%, from 4.2 to 5.7).

Discussion points

- The group joining the Peace in Practice course was already very committed and motivated (who else would sign up for 40 hours of Zoom meetings in a span of 2 weeks?!). It would be interesting to see in the future what type of change would be observed if the participants joining the course were **less experienced**.
- Another interesting comparison would be to organise **a similar stationary course**, with the participants living and learning together e.g. 1 week. Would this traditional, offline learning bring even better results?
- It must be again underlined that the above results strive from 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 17 countries, it was not an option.

- A useful addition to this research will be **the long-term impact study** that will be conducted in the group at the end of the project, in March 2021. This will allow us to look for the project impact on the long term and also beyond the core project group.

Conclusions

The Peace in Practice Online Training Course, organised by SCI Switzerland, brought a positive change to its participants at the levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant for the course, and regarding all levels of peace – intrapersonal, interpersonal, and with nature.

The experimental approach – the form of an online course transformed from what was supposed to be stationary training – worked well with the group.

It is uncertain what results would be observed with a less motivated and self-disciplined group who could have much higher absence rate in the online sessions.

The motivation to be engaged in peace work stayed high with all the group, and the participants developed a clear vision of how they want to work for peace and nonviolence.

To sum up, it can be concluded that the science-backed response to the leading question:
Was it worth the effort?
would be:
Definitely yes!