International
Studies
Perspectives

International Studies Perspectives (2010) **11**, 75–91.

"Ripple Effects" in Youth Peacebuilding and Exchange Programs: Measuring Impacts Beyond Direct Participants

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A number of organizations have a mission of encouraging peace throughout the world by enhancing young people's knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures. One strategy used to further this mission is international or intercultural exchange programs. Most evaluations of exchange programs gather data only from the direct participants who traveled to another country. But these programs have the potential to have impacts that expand beyond the direct participants—or ''ripple effects.'' Thus, a more appropriate methodology to evaluate exchange programs is ''360-degree feedback,'' which gathers data from multiple sources. This study uses 360-degree feedback to evaluate a youth peacebuilding and exchange program by gathering data not only from the exchange students but also from chaperones, host families, and students and teachers in the host school. ANOVA analyses finds that the program had positive impacts on the exchange students and, in many cases, even greater ripple effects on indirect participants.

Keywords: peacebuilding programs, international exchange programs, ripple effects, 360-degree evaluation

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A number of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a mission of building peace throughout the world by enhancing the knowledge, understanding and skills of participants, many of whom are high-school and college students. Some organizations focus on ''peacebuilding'' among young people in high-conflict areas. For example, ''Seeds of Peace is dedicated to empowering young leaders from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation and coexistence'' (Seeds of Peace N.d.). Other organizations have a broader focus and work with young people from many countries and cultures around the world. For example, the purpose of AFS Intercultural Programs is ''to help people develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world'' (AFS Intercultural Programs 2003).

Recently, government officials and other public leaders have looked at international exchange programs and study abroad programs as strategies not only for building peace but also for enhancing the ''global competency'' of young people—that is, the knowledge and skills necessary to be competitive in the global economy. Karen R. Hughes, as Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and

Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (DOS), said, ''Just as previous generations needed basic literacy in the three R's, the next generation will need technological and global literacy skills to be competitive in our increasingly diverse and interdependent world—and study abroad has become the foundation of global literacy'' (U.S. Department of State 2006).

It is important to evaluate youth peacebuilding and exchange programs in order to assess the degree to which they are furthering their mission and achieving their goals. One reason is that these programs often receive financial support from government agencies, foundations, corporations, and/or individual donors. Evaluations by scholars and other third parties help to keep these organizations accountable to their funders. Another reason for evaluations of youth peacebuilding and exchange programs is that they may identify areas that are ineffective or weak and then make recommendations for improvements. Also, evaluations may identify areas in which these programs have been effective and, ultimately, share ''best practices'' and ''lessons learned'' with organizers of similar programs.

Most evaluations of international exchange programs for young people focus on the direct participants—that is, the exchange students. But this study accounts for the possibility that these programs can have ''ripple effects.'' In other words, it assesses the degree to which these programs have impacts on individuals beyond the direct participants to indirect participants, such as students and faculty in the host school and host families. In doing so, this paper reviews youth peacebuilding and exchange programs, discusses the 360-degree approach to evaluation and its appropriateness to these programs, presents a case study of the 360-degree approach applied to a youth peacebuilding and exchange program called International Projects Week, and discusses the findings.

Literature Review

Organizations with a mission of building or enhancing global peace implement various programs to further their work, including international or intercultural exchange programs, school-based educational efforts and public dialogs (Raines 2004). This study focuses on exchange programs, which create opportunities for mostly high school and college students to live and learn in another country. Exchange programs vary in many ways, particularly the level or age of participants, the length of stay (for example, 1 or 2 weeks, 1 semester, or 1 year) and the living arrangements (for example, a room in a host family's house, a dormitory room, or an apartment shared with other students). Exchange programs are similar to study abroad programs in that both help young people to live and learn in another country; however, they are different in set-up and administration. An exchange program is generally based on a reciprocal agreement between at least two institutions, often exchanging an equal or similar numbers of students, and the student generally pays tuition to his/her home institution, if there is tuition. A study abroad program is more of a free-standing program—not based on an agreement of exchanging a certain number of students—and the student generally pays tuition for credits to the institution that he/she is visiting.

Evaluations of youth peacebuilding programs, like Seeds of Peace, have been limited (Raines 2004). ''Most of the evaluations that exist have been conducted by NGOs working on this topic and they have generally gone unpublished. When evaluations are conducted, their findings are usually not shared beyond the organization itself'' (Raines 2004:13). There are quite a few evaluations of international exchange and study abroad programs; however, as with evaluations of peacebuilding programs, many evaluations of exchange and study abroad programs are conducted by the organizations that design and implement them,

which could influence the objectivity or at least the perceived objectivity. In addition, these evaluations tend to solicit feedback only from the direct participants who traveled to other countries.

One of the more comprehensive evaluations is a report by IES Abroad—an academic consortium of more than 175 US colleges and universities. The 2004 report was based on surveys completed by more than 3,000 alumni who participated in IES study abroad programs from 1950 to 1999. According to the report, 98% of respondents said the study abroad program helped them to better understand their own cultural values and biases, 80% indicated that it enhanced their interest in academic study, and 76% said it helped them to acquire skill sets that influenced their career path.

A more recent evaluation of a youth exchange program solicited input from a source other than the exchange students. In evaluating the International 4-H Youth Exchange program, Boyd, Giebler, Hince, Liu, Mehta, Rash, Rowald, Saldana, and Yanta (2001) surveyed 28 alumni of the exchange program and also 16 ''references''—that is, persons close to and identified by the alumni, including friends, parents, siblings, and other relatives. The authors said that the evaluation used ''a post-then-pretest design,'' although technically it did not have a pretest because both the pretest measures and posttest measures were taken after the program was implemented. Specifically, items early on the survey instrument asked respondents about their attitudes toward other cultures and their levels of awareness to global events after the exchange program (that is, the posttest) and items later on the survey instrument asked about their levels of awareness and sensitivity prior to the exchange program (that is, the so-called ''pretest''). According to Boyd et al., exchange program alumni and their references agreed that alumni were more sensitive to other cultures and more aware of global events after the exchange program. And interestingly, both groups of respondents concurred that family, friends, and community of alumni were more sensitive to other cultures and more aware of global events after the alumni's participation in an exchange program. In other words, the program seemed to have impacts beyond the direct participants—that is, ripple effects.

In addition to this one study of the International 4-H Youth Exchange program, at least two evaluations of international exchange programs for *professionals and other adults* used sources other than the individuals who went on the exchange. The Jazz Ambassadors (JA) program in the US DOS has sponsored more than 100 American musicians and jazz ensembles on international tours since 1997 (AMS Planning & Research Corporation 2006). An evaluation by a consulting firm solicited feedback via online surveys from JA program participants and from DOS staff at posts to which the musicians traveled. About 90% of staff and musicians agreed the JA program is effective in creating mutual understanding and strengthening relations with other countries as well as improving attitudes and beliefs about the American people.

Also, the DOS has contracted with consulting firms to evaluate the impact of professional exchange programs—such as the International Visitor Program and the Sister Cities Program—on hosts and ''resources'' in the city of Philadelphia (T.E. Systems 2002) and in the state of Iowa (T.E. Systems 2005). Evaluators of the impact of international exchange programs on hosts/resources in Philadelphia found the following: 97.1% of hosts/resources agreed that hosting and/or interacting with foreign visitors participating in exchange programs promotes mutual understanding among Americans and foreigners; 94.2% reported having ''basic to advanced knowledge'' about the culture and country of the foreign visitors immediately after the hosting experience, compared to 75.3% before the experience; and 85.5% shared information with their family, friends, and/or colleagues about their experience hosting and/or interacting with foreign

visitors (T.E. Systems 2002). The report concludes, ''The impressions that the majority of hosts/resources develop of foreign visitors, cultures and countries are both lasting and overwhelmingly positive. In addition, hosts/resources extend their knowledge to others around them, which spreads positive impressions and perceptions of foreigners to others members of the community'' (T.E. Systems 2002:7). In other words, these international exchange programs for professionals seemed to have ripple effects.

Researchers have also evaluated the impact of study abroad programs which, again, have similarities to international exchange programs. While a few evaluations have found that study abroad programs do not have a statistically significant impact on participants (for example, Zhai 2000), most have concluded that these programs have positive impacts on their skills, behaviors, and attitudes, including enhancing their second-language skills (for example, Rivers 1998; Jones and Bond 2000) and increasing their ''global-mindedness'' (Drews and Meyer 1996; Bates 1997). In a particularly relevant study, Hadis (2005) found that approximately 100 study abroad students in New Jersey experienced a positive and significant increase in a number of areas including the following: ability to speak a second language, amount of political information on host country, amount of geographical information on host country, amount of economic information on host country, and friendliness toward people of other countries.

Theoretical Framework

The 360-Degree Approach to Employee Performance Evaluation

Firms in the private sector began using ''360-degree feedback'' to evaluate employee performance in the mid-1980s, and organizations in the public sector followed suit in the late 1990s. The concept is defined as the assessment of an employee's performance by two or more sources, which may include the individual's supervisor, subordinates or direct reports, peers, customers or clients, suppliers, and one's self (for example, Dalessio 1998; Bracken, Timmreck, and Church 2001; Morgeson, Mumford, and Campion 2005). The popularity of such feedback programs has grown dramatically, with well over 100 scholarly and practitioner-oriented articles published since 1990. In addition, it has been reported that 90% of Fortune 1000 firms evaluate employee performance using 360-degree feedback (Morgeson et al. 2005), which has also been called ''multisource feedback,'' ''multirater assessment'' and ''full-circle feedback'' (Bracken et al. 2001). The growing popularity is the result of a ''confluence of movements'' in the 1980s and 1990s: the shift from a manufacturing economy to a service economy, which resulted in greater attention to customer satisfaction; the shift from traditional hierarchical approaches to work teams and quality circles as a way to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness; and the development of instruments that could collect feedback from multiple sources (Bracken et al. 2001). Hedge and Borman (1995) suggest that 360-feedback will continue to grow in use and importance in the future as changing conceptions of the work environment create situations in which one group (that is, supervisors) do not have the only—or even the best—perspective on an employee's performance.

Some studies of the 360-degree approach to employee performance evaluation have found different ratings by supervisors, subordinates, peers, clients or customers, and one's self (for example, Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Weick 1970; Borman 1974; Ostroff, Atwater, and Feinberg 2004). In other words, there can be high variation among the groups or types of raters. Scholars have asserted that this occurs because each group has unique perspectives and observes different behaviors (Campbell et al. 1970; Borman 1974) and that the

sum of these perspectives may result in enhanced learning and performance (Tornow 1993; Morgeson et al. 2005). ''Given that each source provides unique assessments of performance with simultaneous limitations, it is typically advisable to obtain information from as many sources as possible'' (Morgeson et al. 2005:202).

Applying the 360-Degree Approach to Youth Peacebuilding and Exchange Programs

As discussed earlier, the traditional method of evaluating youth peacebuilding and exchange programs is to seek input from only one source: the direct participants who travel to other countries. This is noteworthy because exchange programs have the potential—and often the intent—to impact not only the exchange students but also individuals in the host country, such as students and faculty in the host school and host families. Thus, this paper asserts that the 360-degree approach is a more appropriate method for evaluating youth peacebuilding and exchange programs.

One reason is that the use of multiple sources can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of youth peacebuilding and exchange programs, as discussed in the previous section. Another reason lies in the broader literature on program evaluation (for example, Posavac and Carey 2003; Davidson 2005). Considered one the best program evaluation texts available, Posavac and Carey's (2003) book says, ''Evaluators should strive to use multiple measures from more than one source'' (50). Davidson (2005) adds, ''This point cannot be emphasized enough. Sometimes you will need at least three or four independent angles on the same issue to make absolutely sure that you have a clear picture of what is happening'' (55). The literature on using multiple sources for program evaluation discusses the fact that there may be a lack of agreement among the sources, which echoes the literature on 360-degree or multisource feedback for employee performance evaluations.

This paper asserts that a youth peacebuilding or exchange program can impact not only the exchange students who travel and stay in other countries (that is, the direct participants) but also other individuals who are involved with the program in less direct ways, including chaperones who may travel with the exchange students, host families, and students and teachers in the host school (that is, indirect participants). Using the 360-degree framework, this study examines the following hypotheses related to the impacts or outcomes of a youth peacebuilding and exchange program:

H1: *The youth peacebuilding or exchange program is a positive experience overall.*

H2: *Participants perceive the program as enhancing communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries.*

H3: *The youth peacebuilding or exchange program increases participants' understanding and knowledge of other countries.*

H4: *The program improves participants' perceptions of other countries.*

Research Design

This study begins to test the hypotheses stated above by focusing on a particular youth peacebuilding and exchange program called International Projects Week (IPW). In its 60 years of existence, IPW organizers had received only informal feedback from participants, so they thought that it would be informative and helpful for external researchers to conduct a formal evaluation of the program. In 2006, the principal of Nativity School in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA—which was

hosting IPW that year—discussed the possibility of an evaluation with the authors. This section describes the evaluation of IPW, including the program, participants, measures, and data collection and analysis.

The Program

International Projects Week was conceived after World War II by the headmaster of a German school ''to plant the seeds of peace, friendship, and forgiveness for the coming generations.'' IPW has been formalized through a memorandum of understanding among schools from seven countries, including France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, and the United States. Every 2–3 years, the school principals, headmasters, and administrators involved with IPW organize a student exchange. On a rotating basis, one school hosts students from the other schools for 1 week. In 2006, the school in Cincinnati, Ohio hosted IPW from September 23 to 30, and organizers called it the ''Friendship Project'' with a tag line of ''A week to change the world.'' Schools in Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Russia sent delegations of students, teachers, administrators, and other chaperones. The schools in France and Poland were not able to participate in the 2006 IPW due to financial reasons.

The European exchange students worked with 8th graders in the American host school on ''project teams,'' and they made visits to the classrooms of lower grades to make presentations about their countries to the younger students. The project teams included the following: (i) a public art project for which members painted a mural with symbols of peace and justice on a 6-foot by 100-foot outdoor wall in the community; (ii) a sculpture project for which members built a three-dimensional sculpture of a peace dove to convey the meaning of friendship; (iii) a quilt project for which members used materials from their home countries to make quilts or ''banners of friendship''; (iv) a drum project for which members created music that explored ''the theme of friendship in song and rhythm''; and (v) a technology project for which members wrote stories, took photographs, and organized them into newsletters for multimedia presentations for ceremonies during the week, and for the Friendship Project Web site.

In addition, there were a number of events and other activities that involved all students in the American host school. For example, there was a ''Field Day'' in which the students and faculty—American and European—were divided into teams, each of which had representatives from all of the countries. The teams competed in games such as a relay race, long jump, three-legged race, water balloon toss, basketball shoot, and ''World Cup shootout.'' Other school-wide events included an opening ceremony, culture night, and closing ceremony, all of which celebrated the history, customs, and culture of the five different countries. American host families and other families of the American students were invited to participate in these events.

Program Participants

Again, there are two main types of participants: (i) *direct participants*, which are the exchange students who traveled from the four European countries to Cincinnati, Ohio (''European exchange students''); and (ii) *indirect participants*, which include teachers, administrators, and other chaperones from the four European countries (''European chaperones''); students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at the school in Cincinnati (''American students''); teachers and administrators at the school in Cincinnati (''American faculty''); and American families that hosted the European exchange students, teachers, administrators, and other chaperones (''American host families'').

Schools in Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Russia sent delegations of students, teachers, administrators, and other chaperones. Most of the European exchange students ranged in age from 13 to 17 years old. In all, 52 students and 18 chaperones traveled from Europe to Cincinnati. The American host school was a K-8 school with a total of about 400 students ranging in age from 5 to 13 years old. Sixty-three families in the American school served as hosts for European exchange students and chaperones, providing them a room in which to sleep and a number of meals during their stay.

Measures

For the evaluation of IPW, a survey instrument was developed based on previous evaluations of international exchange programs as well as the literature on 360-degree evaluations of employee performance (for example, Antonioni 1996; Dalessio 1998; Morgeson et al. 2005). Each survey instrument had items designed to measure the following impacts of IPW on direct participants and indirect participants:

- *Overall experience* (H1). One set of items asked participants to assess their overall impressions of IPW. These statements were on a scale of 1–5 with 1 being ''strongly disagree'' and 5 being ''strongly agree.'' These items included language about IPW being ''a positive experience,'' ''fun,'' and ''a life-changing experience,'' as well as ''would do again if I had the opportunity'' and ''would recommend to a friend.''
- *Communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries* (H2). Other items were designed to assess the degree to which participants perceived IPW as enhancing communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries. One set of items focused on communications by asking each participant the degree to which he or she agreed or disagreed that people from other countries were ''willing to listen,'' ''willing to share information,'' and ''interested in [his/her] country.'' Another set of items asked each participant the degree to which he or she agreed or disagreed that IPW ''promoted better relations between countries'' and ''enhanced trust between people from different countries.''
- *Understanding and knowledge of other countries* (H3). One item was also on a scale of 1–5 with 1 being ''strongly disagree'' and 5 being ''strongly agree.'' It stated that IPW ''increased [my] understanding of people from other countries.'' Another set of items is based on retrospective change ratings in 360-degree or multisource feedback evaluations (Smither and Walker 2001) as well as retrospective questions used specifically in evaluations of study abroad programs (Hadis 2005). Hadis (2005) used retrospective questioning, which presents respondents with a set of questions about their state of mind prior to the program and then another set about their state of mind after the program. Through criterion and construct validation analyses, the author concluded that retrospective questions can serve as ''acceptable substitutes for a real pretest in the context of study abroad program evaluation'' (Hadis 2005:16). For the IPW evaluation, a set of items asked participants to assess their own knowledge of other countries before the program on a scale of 1–10 with 1 being ''no knowledge'' and 10 being ''advanced knowledge'' and then another set asked them to assess their own knowledge of each country after IPW on the same scale. After the data were collected and inputted, a change measure for each item was calculated by subtracting the pre-IPW score from the post-IPW score. The survey items for European exchange students and European chaperones focused on personal/family life, religion, government and politics, education, and the economy in the United

States. The survey items for American host families included items regarding their knowledge of these aspects of their guests' home country. The survey items for American faculty asked about their knowledge of personal/family life, religion, government and politics, education and the economy in Europe in general since they met with European exchange students and chaperones from various countries.

- *Perceptions of other countries* (H4). Another set of items on each survey was designed to measure change in participants' perceptions of other countries as a result of their participation in IPW. On a scale of 1–5 with 1 being ''more negative'' and 5 being ''more positive,'' each participant was asked to circle the most appropriate number for each of the countries involved in IPW—that is, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United States (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Summary of Relevant Items from the Survey of International Projects Week (IPW) Participants

	Type of Scale	*Low End of Scale*	*High End of Scale*
Overall experience			
A positive experience	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Fun	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Would do again	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Would recommend to a friend	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
A life-changing experience	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries			
People from other countries were …	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
… willing to listen	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
… willing to share information	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
... interested in my country	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Promoted better relations	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Enhanced trust	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Change in understanding and knowledge of other countries			
Increased my understanding of people from other countries	5-point Likert	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
Increased my knowledge of other countries in terms of...			
… personal/family life	Change score*	NA	NA
… religion	Change score*	NA	NA
… government and politics	Change score*	NA	NA
… education	Change score*	NA	NA
… economy	Change score*	NA	NA
Change in perception of countries a result of participation in IPW			
Germany	5-point Likert	More negative	More positive
Hungary	5-point Likert	More negative	More positive
Netherlands	5-point Likert	More negative	More positive
Russia	5-point Likert	More negative	More positive
United States	5-point Likert	More negative	More positive

Notes. *Self-assessment of post-IPW knowledge (on a 10-point scale) less the retrospective self-assessment of pre-IPW knowledge (on a 10-point scale), with 1 being ''no knowledge'' and 10 being ''advanced knowledge.'' NA = Not applicable.

In addition to the items described above, the survey instrument also included more than 20 items which asked participants to assess the ''project teams'' (that is, mural, sculpture, quilt, drum, and technology) as well as specific events and activities (for example, picnic, opening ceremony, cultural show, field trip to a museum, etc.). These items are very specific to IPW; therefore, the responses may be interesting to IPW organizers and managers, but they offer very little

insight to youth peacebuilding and exchange programs in general. In addition, the instrument had three open-ended questions that asked participants: what they would keep the same about IPW, what they would change, and their most memorable experience.

Data Collection and Analyses

European exchange students, European chaperones, American students, and American faculty completed surveys at the host school on the last day of IPW. Surveys were distributed to the American host families at the end of the week for their completion. The survey instruments did not ask for participants to write in their names; therefore, they were anonymous.

In the end, surveys were completed by a total of 269 IPW participants—both direct participants and indirect participants. The survey respondents included: 50 European exchange students (that is, direct participants) as well as 18 European chaperones, 55 host families, 120 American students, and 26 American faculty (that is, indirect participants) (Table 2).

Responses to the surveys were input into a Microsoft Excel file and then imported into SPSS. The first step was to calculate the mean responses and standard deviations of each survey item for the entire group of respondents ($N = 269$). The next step was to calculate and analyze the mean responses for each group or type of participant (that is, European exchange students, European chaperones, American students, American faculty, and American host families). Then one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means by type of participant and determine the statistical significance of mean differences across participant types (F-statistics and p-values).

Table 2. Types and Numbers of Respondents to the International Projects Week (IPW) Survey

Type of participant	*Number*
Direct participants	
European exchange students	50
Indirect participants	
European chaperones	18
American host families	55
American students	120
American faculty	26
Total	269

Results

The first part of this section reports the findings for all of the 269 individuals who completed surveys for International Projects Week (IPW). The second part of the results section reports the results by type of participants in IPW—direct participants (that is, European exchange students) and indirect participants (that is, European chaperones, American students, American faculty, and American host families). It includes results from the ANOVA, which was used to compare the means by type of participant and determine the statistical significance of mean differences across participant types.

Results from All Respondents

Overall experience (H1). This part of the results section includes responses from the 269 individuals who participated in IPW and completed a survey, including

European exchange students, European chaperones, American students, American faculty, and American host families. As shown in Table 3, four of the five items asking respondents for an assessment of their overall experience with IPW had a mean score that was 4.6 or greater on a 5-point Likert scale. In other words, participants as a whole tended to strongly agree that IPW was: ''a positive experience,'' ''fun,'' something they ''would do again if they had the opportunity,'' and ''would recommend to a friend.'' Only one item had a mean score which was lower than 4.0. The mean score of 3.91 indicates that most participants agreed with the statement that IPW was ''a life-changing experience,'' but they agreed with it to a lesser degree than the other statements.

TABLE 3. Means and Standard Deviations from Responses by all Participants in International Projects Week (IPW)

	Mean (SD)
Overall experience	
A positive experience	4.75 (.48)
Fun	4.74 (.56)
Would do again	4.75 (.60)
Would recommend to a friend	4.60 (.69)
A life-changing experience	3.91 (1.10)
Communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries	
People from other countries were …	
… willing to listen	4.41 (.78)
… willing to share information	4.41 (.77)
... interested in my country	4.32 (.77)
Promoted better relations	4.49 (.64)
Enhanced trust	4.32 (.71)
Change in understanding and knowledge of other countries	
Increased my understanding of people from other countries	4.36 (.70)
Increased my knowledge of other countries in terms of...	
… personal/family life	2.58 (2.63)
… religion	1.85 (2.11)
… government and politics	0.99 (1.65)
… education	1.02 (2.34)
… economy	1.09 (1.57)
Change in perception of countries as a result of IPW	
Germany	3.87 (.88)
Hungary	4.00 (.89)
Netherlands	4.37 (.79)
Russia	3.29 (1.28)
United States	4.54 (.80)

$N = 269$.

Communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries (H2). A set of items on the survey instrument asked each IPW participant about the degree to which he or she agreed or disagreed that people from other countries were ''willing to listen,'' ''willing to share information,'' and ''interested in [his/her] country.'' As shown in Table 3, the mean score for all participants was 4.3 or higher on all three items. In addition to these three items measuring communications, there was an item that was designed to measure relations between people from different countries and another one that was designed to measure trust between people from different countries. The mean on ''promoted better relations'' was 4.49, and the mean on ''enhanced trust'' was 4.32.

Understanding and knowledge of other countries (H3). One item measured the degree to which participants agreed or disagreed that IPW increased

''understanding of people from other countries.'' According to Table 3, the mean score for all participants on this item was 4.36. Another set of items measured change in knowledge of other countries' personal/family life, religion, government and politics, education and the economy. Recall that the survey instrument asks respondents to assess their perceived knowledge before IPW and their perceived knowledge after IPW; both measures are on a 10-point Likert scale with 1 being ''no knowledge'' to 10 being ''advanced knowledge.'' The change in knowledge score was calculated by subtracting the pre-IPW score from the post-IPW score. A positive number represents a perceived increase in knowledge; zero indicates no change in knowledge; and a negative number indicates a decrease in knowledge. For all IPW participants, the mean was highest in the areas of personal/family life and then religion. The mean change score was 2.58 for personal/family life and 1.85 for religion, compared to a mean change score of about 1.0 for the other three aspects (that is, government and politics, education and the economy).

Perceptions of other countries (H4). The perception items were set up on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being ''more negative'' and 5 being ''more positive.'' Table 3 indicates that the mean scores for the five countries are greater than 3.0, indicating that, on average, participants' perceptions of all countries became more positive after their participation in IPW. But it should be noted that the change in perception was more positive for some countries than others. Specifically, the mean change in perception of the United States by all participants (except the Americans themselves) was 4.54, and the mean change in perception of the Netherlands by all participants (except the Dutch themselves) was 4.37. In other words, perceptions of the Netherlands and the United States improved quite dramatically after IPW. The mean change in perception of Germany by all participants (except the Germans themselves) was 3.87, and the mean change in perception of Russia by all participants (except the Russians themselves) was 3.29.

Results by Participant Type

Recall that there are different types of participants in IPW: European exchange students, European chaperones, American students, American faculty, and American host families. ANOVA was used to calculate an *F*-statistic and *p*-value for each survey item in order to compare means by the type of IPW participant. Table 4 shows the ANOVA results for the 21 items that are relevant to this study. Of these 21 items, 17 had a *p*-value of 0.10 or less and 13 had a *p*-value of 0.05 or less, indicating that there were statistically significant differences by participant type on many of the items.

Overall experience (H1). Of the five items that asked for respondents' overall assessment of the program, four have *p*-values of 0.10 or less and three have *p*-values of 0.01 or less, indicating that there were significant differences in the mean responses by participant type. Interestingly, the highest mean scores in Table 4 were those for some of the indirect participants. Specifically, European chaperones had the highest means for the items that stated IPW was ''a positive experience'' (5.00) and ''fun'' (5.00). American host families had the highest means for ''would recommend to a friend'' (4.85) and ''a life-changing experience'' (4.24).

Communications, relations and trust between people from different countries (H2). In regards to communications, Table 4 indicates that there were statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level in the mean scores for two of the three items—that is, the degree to which people from other countries are ''willing to listen'' and ''willing to share information.'' Again, interestingly, the highest mean scores were those for some of the indirect participants. Specifically, European chaperones had the highest means on these two items—that is, ''willing to listen''

TABLE 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Results for International Projects Week (IPW) Survey Items by Participant Type

	Direct participants	*Indirect participants*					
	European Exchange Students	*European Chaperones*	*American Students*	*American Faculty*	*American Host Families*		
	Mean (SD)	*Mean (SD)*	*Mean (SD)*	*Mean (SD)*	*Mean (SD)*	*F*-stat	*Signif.*
Overall experience							
A positive experience	4.82 (.44)	5.00 (0.00)	4.61 (.56)	4.85 (.37)	4.85 (.41)	5.17	0.001***
Fun	4.90 (.36)	5.00 (0.00)	4.58 (.68)	4.69 (.62)	4.91 (.29)	6.35	0.000***
Would do again	4.84 (.47)	4.89 (.32)	4.67 (.71)	4.65 (.63)	4.86 (.42)	1.78	0.134
Would recommend to a friend	4.74 (.44)	4.78 (.43)	4.38 (.88)	4.69 (.55)	4.85 (.36)	6.15	0.000***
A life-changing experience	3.96 (1.06)	3.53 (1.18)	3.79 (1.17)	3.88 (.86)	4.24 (1.02)	2.12	0.078*
Communications, relations, and trust between people from different countries							
People from other countries were...							
... willing to share information	4.53 (.71)	4.76 (.44)	4.28 (.79)	4.73 (.45)	4.35 (.91)	3.45	0.009***
... willing to listen	4.62 (.64)	4.78 (.55)	4.16 (.88)	4.62 (.50)	4.53 (.69)	6.25	0.000***
... interested in my country	4.40 (.81)	4.61 (.61)	4.23 (.79)	4.50 (.65)	4.29 (.76)	1.62	0.169
Promoted better relations	4.56 (.54)	4.56 (.51)	4.40 (.73)	4.62 (.50)	4.53 (.60)	1.09	0.360
Enhanced trust	4.40 (.68)	4.41 (.62)	4.16 (.81)	4.58 (.50)	4.44 (.57)	3.03	0.018**
Change in understanding and knowledge of other countries							
Increased my understanding of people from other countries	4.46 (.58)	4.61 (.61)	4.23 (.73)	4.46 (.58)	4.43 (.77)	2.10	0.082*
Increased my knowledge of other countries in terms of...							
... personal/family life	2.26 (3.02)	1.94 (2.73)	.	1.77 (1.97)	3.45 (2.28)	3.65	0.014**
... religion	2.32 (2.41)	1.56 (2.26)	.	0.96 (1.48)	1.95 (1.92)	2.60	0.054*
... government and politics	0.42 (1.16)	0.78 (2.44)	.	1.00 (1.5)	1.58 (1.63)	4.79	0.003***
... education	−0.02 (2.15)	0.61 (3.11)	.	0.81 (1.77)	2.20 (1.97)	9.61	0.000***
... economy	0.92 (1.44)	1.00 (2.33)	.	0.65 (1.26)	1.49 (1.45)	2.14	0.098*
Change in perception of countries as a result of participation in IPW							
Germany	3.54 (.96)	4.27 (1.01)	3.97 (.88)	3.77 (.82)	3.85 (.74)	2.46	0.046**
Hungary	3.78 (1.11)	4.14 (.95)	3.90 (.87)	4.38 (.64)	4.17 (.76)	2.90	0.023**
Netherlands	4.17 (.99)	4.19 (.91)	4.39 (.79)	4.64 (.57)	4.40 (.69)	1.54	0.190
Russia	2.27 (1.28)	3.08 (1.12)	3.47 (1.26)	3.73 (1.12)	3.44 (1.07)	8.44	0.000***
United States	4.68 (.71)	4.17 (.92)	.	.	.	5.85	0.018**

Notes. ***Significant at $p < .01$; **Significant at $p < .05$; *Significant at $p < .10$.

(4.78) and ''willing to share information'' (4.76). The differences were not significant on the item measuring the degree to which IPW ''promoted better relations'' between people from other countries. But they were significant at the 0.05 level on the item measuring the degree to which IPW ''enhanced trust'' between people from other countries. Again, the highest mean score on the ''enhanced trust'' item was for one type of indirect participants—4.58 for American faculty.

Understanding and knowledge of other countries (H3). Table 4 indicates that there were statistically significant differences at the 0.10 level in the mean scores for the item asking the degree to which IPW increased participants' understanding of people from other countries. European chaperones—another type of indirect participant—had the highest mean for this item at 4.61. For all of the five items measuring change in knowledge of other countries, the means are significantly different between participant types (three at the 0.05 level and two at the 0.10 level). American host families—another type of indirect participant—had the highest mean change in knowledge on four of the five items: personal/family life (3.45), education (2.20), government and politics (1.58), and economy (1.49). European exchange students had the highest mean for learning about religion (2.32); this is the only item for which the direct participants had the highest mean among the various types of participants.

Perceptions of other countries (H4). Table 4 indicates that four of the five items measuring change in perceptions of other countries had statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level. Most notably, European exchange students (except Russians) had much lower scores in their perception of Russia than the other participant type. Specifically, the mean change score in the perception of Russia was 2.27 for European exchange students, compared to a mean change score of 3.73 for American faculty, 3.47 for American students, and 3.44 for American host families. It is noteworthy that the mean change score of 2.27 is the only one that is less than 3, indicating that the European exchange students had a more negative perception of Russia after IPW than they had before it. A narrative response to one of the open-ended questions may shed a little light on this finding. One member of an American host family wrote: ''I would have liked the teachers and chaperones from Russia to have coached their students about the need for and value of participating more fully and more enthusiastically in the planned activities; to have assisted more directly in keeping them with the adults and other students with them during any activity; and to have convinced them that their desire to socialize with each other, while natural and appropriate to teenagers visiting an unfamiliar locale, should have been secondary to their involvement in the whole of the Friendship Project.''

Discussion

This study makes a contribution to the literature on youth peacebuilding and exchange programs, as it is an evaluation conducted by independent ''third-party'' evaluators and there are only a limited number of such evaluations (Raines 2004). It finds evidence that one peacebuilding and exchange program—IPW—achieves its intended goals of enhancing participants' knowledge, understanding, and perceptions of other countries. More importantly, this study is one of the first to find evidence that an exchange program can have a positive impact on groups beyond the direct participants who travel to other countries (that is, the exchange students). In fact, the 360-degree evaluation found that, in many cases, IPW had *an even larger* impact on indirect participants (that is, chaperones, host families, and students and teachers in the host school). As discussed earlier, to date, there has been one evaluation of a small youth exchange program in the 4-H and a few evaluations of *professional or adult* exchange programs that have solicited feedback from individuals other than the exchange

students—that is, friends, parents, siblings, program staff, and hosts (Boyd et al. 2001; T.E. Systems 2002, 2005). They found that individuals who hosted exchange professionals/adults or who supported them in other ways experienced an increase in their knowledge and understanding of other countries. So this study supports and extends these findings.

In addition to contributions to the literature, there are also some implications or ''lessons learned'' for practitioners. Most importantly, the 360-degree approach to evaluating IPW demonstrates that tapping into multiple sources can be valuable in determining the program's overall effectiveness. Recall that Hedge and Borman (1995) stated in their review of 360-degree evaluation for employee performance that supervisors do not have the only—or even the best—perspective. A similar statement could be made in terms of the 360-degree evaluation of IPW: direct participants (that is, the European exchange students) do not have the only perspective on this peacebuilding and exchange program. Specifically, this study found that IPW enhanced the knowledge, understanding, and perceptions not only of the 50+ European students who traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, but also more than 200 other people who were indirectly involved in the program. So the program had ripple effects on a number of individuals that was about four times the number of direct participants. At a practical level, leaders of NPOs and NGOs with peacebuilding and exchange programs may want to share this evidence of ripple effects with government agencies, foundations, corporations, and/or individuals who provide financial support to their programs. Taking it further, leaders of NPOs and NGOs may want to begin collecting their own data from individuals that have the potential to be indirectly impacted by their peacebuilding or exchange programs in addition to collecting data from direct participants.

Further, there are a few practical suggestions for NPOs or NGOs who may be interested in using the 360-degree approach to assess youth peacebuilding or exchange programs, which are based on a meta-analysis of empirical studies on 360-degree or multisource feedback of employees (Smither, London, and Reilly 2005). Based on ''promising suggestions'' in the Smither et al. article, here are some considerations for leaders considering a 360-degree evaluation of their peacebuilding, international exchange or other programs:

- Encourage program organizers or managers to talk to the various groups that provided feedback in order to get clarification and to set specific goals. For example, in the case of IPW, the program organizers (that is, school principals, headmasters, and administrators from the seven countries) should explore the reasons that the change in perception of Russia was lower than that of other countries. This may involve having a conversation with some IPW participants to identify reasons and possible strategies for more positive results in the future.
- For programs receiving favorable feedback, encourage organizers and managers to set even more challenging goals. Overall, IPW received very favorable feedback, as participants tended to agree or strongly agree that it was a fun, positive experience, increased understanding of other countries, promoted better relations between countries, etc. It would be easy for the program organizers to ''rest on their laurels.'' However, it behooves them to focus on improving the few areas of weakness, such as the perception of Russia as well as all participants' change in knowledge about government and politics and the economy in other countries.
- Remember that, like any other organizational intervention, 360-degree feedback will not result in equal improvements for all programs. For example, some peacebuilding and exchange programs may have fewer policies and restrictions than others and, therefore, greater flexibility and capacity for change. Also, some organizations may have more financial

resources, human resources, and other resources than other organizations; therefore, they have greater capacity to make changes to or investments in a peacebuilding or exchange program.

While this study has some informative and interesting findings related to youth peacebuilding and exchange programs, they should be seen as preliminary or even exploratory at this point. A key reason is that this study evaluates only one program—IPW. Some of the findings can be generalized to other youth peacebuilding and exchange programs, particularly the idea of including indirect participants in any evaluation. But there are unique characteristics of the IPW—such as bringing together students from five to seven countries for 1 week—that could inhibit its complete generalizability. Therefore, there should be additional research to evaluate the impact of *different* peacebuilding and exchange programs on both direct and indirect participants.

One last discussion point regarding the limitations of this study is that it uses a ''single-cell'' research design. In other words, it collects data only from individuals who participated in IPW (that is, the experimental group) and only after the program was implemented (that is, posttest). It does not collect data from IPW participants prior to the program (that is, a pretest), although it does use retrospective questioning to evoke participants' knowledge and perceptions of other countries prior to the program. Also, it does not collect data from individuals who did not participate in IPW (that is, a control group), either pretest or post test. But almost every evaluation of international exchange and study abroad programs uses single-cell design (Hadis 2005). Therefore, another call for future research is to begin working toward a more sophisticated research design—that is, quasi-experimental—by adding a control group and/or a pretest.

Conclusion

In sum, this was a study of a youth peacebuilding and exchange program called IPW that was conducted by independent ''third-party'' evaluators. It found evidence that IPW enhanced participants' knowledge, understanding, and perceptions of other countries. This study is important because most evaluations of peacebuilding and exchange programs have been conducted by the NPOs or NGOs that manage them, thus resulting in a perceived bias or possibly a real bias. Further, the findings indicate that youth peacebuilding and exchange programs may enhance the ''global competency'' of participants, which government leaders and observers have said are necessary to be competitive in the ''increasingly diverse and interdependent world'' (US Department of State 2006).

In addition, this study concluded that IPW had impacts that expanded beyond the direct participants—that is, the exchange students—to indirect participants such as chaperones, host families, and students and faculty at host schools. In other words, IPW had measurable effects on 50+ exchange students and more than 200 indirect participants. In many cases, these ''ripple effects'' on the indirect participants' knowledge, understanding, and perceptions were of a greater magnitude than the effects on direct participants. It is important to consider ''ripple effects'' in terms of the design, implementation, and evaluation of such programs. For instance, NPOs and NGOs with youth peacebuilding and exchange programs may want to think about ways to leverage various aspects of their programs to make them even more impactful and meaningful—both for direct and indirect participants—such as adding or expanding events for all participants, like opening ceremonies, closing ceremonies, and culture nights. As one American student, who was an indirect participant in IPW, said: ''I think the culture show was awesome. It was so much fun. It was my very favorite thing and I learned a lot about different cultures.''

Also, NPOs and NGOs may want to account for potential ''ripple effects'' in their evaluations of these types of programs, as this study found that the number of indirect participants impacted was four times the number of direct participants. This broader evaluation would provide a more ''complete picture'' of a peacebuilding and exchange program and would demonstrate its greater impacts to funders and other interested parties. Once again, these conclusions and suggestions are being made after the evaluation of one peacebuilding and exchange program. Additional studies of programs should be conducted to further examine these results, conclusions, and suggestions.

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