



# Six Month Changes in Evaluative Beliefs About the 2015 ING Summit

Second Interim Report on Post-Survey Results from the 2015 North American Inspiring a New Generation Summit<sup>1</sup>

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## The Paul F-Brandwein Institute

“To perpetuate the work of Paul F-Brandwein, the Institute is dedicated to the education of all learners in recognition of their interdependence with nature and responsibility for sustaining a healthful and healing environment.”

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## >> Introduction

The 2015 Inspiring a New Generation North American Summit brought together diverse stakeholders from public and private sectors to design a Framework for Action to reconnect people with nature. These stakeholders included 183 professionals, some of whom were not yet engaged in previous conversations about this topic. We administered surveys with primarily open-ended questions before the Summit to identify participants' goals and expectations for this event as well as the factors that participants believed would lead to success at this event. This survey effort and subsequent analyses identified 20 factors for success and 14 goals and expected outcomes (see: <http://ingsummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/INGPre-SummitReportFinalv2.pdf>).

Immediately after the Summit, we administered a second online survey that consisted primarily of close-ended questions about the factors for success and goals and expected outcomes identified earlier. Data allowed us to quantitatively measure which goals were accomplished more or less well than others and which factors contributed more or less to the Summit's success. Data also allowed us to identify underlying themes that more succinctly described attendees' evaluative beliefs about the Summit (see: <http://ingsummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/INGInterimReportFinalTF.pdf>). More specifically, these analyses identified which items respondents tended to answer similarly to one another. We averaged survey items that grouped together based on survey responses and that thematically related to one another to create indices. We tested the internal reliability of these indices and found them to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha > .70). Survey items that could belong to multiple themes (in other words, that cross-loaded on multiple factors) were not included in any index nor used in subsequent analyses. Ultimately, we identified two goals and four factors of success for the Summit (Tables 1 and 2).

This current report extends our prior results with findings from a third survey conducted six months after the Summit. This consisted of the same close-ended questions asked in the surveys administered immediately after the Summit. Our goal was to measure how participants' evaluative beliefs about the Summit - in particular, the success of the Summit and the factors that contributed to Summit success - changed over time.

This is a second interim report. We will administer a fourth survey in fall 2016 (12 months after the Summit occurred) to understand participants' longer-term perspectives. We will write a full report with the results from all three surveys in preparation for the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

## >> **Methods**

We invited the 170 Summit participants (13 of the attendees were facilitators or special guests) to complete an online survey from May 15-28, 2016. The surveys took respondents five minutes to complete on average. We received 50 usable responses. Survey items included:

1. Below is a list of goals and expected outcomes from the ING 2015 Summit. How well do you think the Summit actually accomplished these things?  
*Not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, or highly*
2. To what extent do you think the following things contributed to (or will contribute to) the success of the 2015 ING Summit?  
*Not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, or highly*

## >> **Analyses**

We tested for significant differences between the surveys administered immediately after and six months after the Summit in two ways. First, we used t-tests to test the probability that average values between these two time periods overlapped at 95% ( $p < .05$ ) confidence. Second, we used an effect size calculation (Cohen's  $d$ ) to test the level of difference between these two time periods' data. Values between .20 and .49 indicated the difference was small, between .50 and .79 were medium, and greater than .80 were large (Cohen, 1988).

## >> **Results**

### **Goal Achievement**

Six month follow-up survey suggested participants believed the Summit achieved its two broad goals less effectively than they believed immediately after the Summit. Immediately after the Summit, *movement development* was perceived as “moderately” well achieved, on average, but six months after, it was perceived as only “somewhat” well achieved (mean scores dropped from 3.67 to 3.01 out of 5, statistically significant with a  $p$ -value  $< .001$ ). The magnitude of difference between these two time periods was large (Cohen's  $d = .9$ ).

Similarly, *attendee development* was also perceived as “moderately” well achieved immediately after the Summit, but six months after, it was perceived as “somewhat” well achieved on average (mean scores dropped from 4.41 to 3.78 out of 5, a significant difference with a  $p$ -value  $< .001$ ). The magnitude of difference between these two time periods was large (Cohen's  $d = 1.0$ ).

Table 1. Themes of Overarching Goals of Summit

Theme	Movement Development	Attendee Development
Items Included in Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built attendee's commitment toward this movement</li> <li>Connected attendees with new resources (e.g., funding sources) that might advance this movement</li> <li>Developed a framework for action</li> <li>Empowered people 35 years old or younger in this movement</li> <li>Provided attendees with practical strategies that might advance this movement</li> <li>Taught attendees more about this movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed attendees to have fun and enjoy being at the National Conservation Training Center</li> <li>Fostered new partnerships between attendees</li> <li>Inspired (or re-inspired) attendees to be active in this movement</li> <li>Offered networking opportunities to attendees</li> </ul>

Table 2. Themes of Items that Contributed to Summit Success

Theme	Instigating Change	Further Discussion	Summit Execution	Attendees' Participation
Items Included in Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a framework for action</li> <li>Engaging and empowering people 35 years old or younger</li> <li>Engaging new stakeholders in this movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing adequate time for attendees to socialize and interact during the Summit</li> <li>Providing adequate time for discussion during the Summit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summit organizers adequately engaging and preparing attendees before the Summit</li> <li>Summit organizers demonstrating strong levels of leadership and organization</li> <li>The Summit having a clear and focused schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees arriving at the Summit with high levels of commitment toward this movement</li> <li>Attendees collaborating with each other</li> <li>Attendees sharing resources and information with each other</li> <li>Building a strong community of like-minded individuals and organizations</li> </ul>

### Factors of Success

Factors of success also dropped in a statistically significant way from immediately after to six months after the Summit. *Instigating change* was perceived as “moderately” important to the Summits’ success immediately after the Summit, but six months after, it was perceived as “somewhat” to “moderately” important (mean dropped from 3.70 to 3.34 out of 5, a statistically significant change with p-value <.05). The magnitude of difference between these scores was small (Cohen’s d = .37).

Immediately after the Summit, *further discussion* was perceived as “very” important to the Summits’ success, on average, but six months after, it was perceived as “moderately” important (mean dropped from 4.14 to 3.82 out of 5, a statistically significant change with p-value <.05). The magnitude of difference between these scores was small (Cohen’s d = .37).

Similarly, *Summit execution* was perceived as “very” important to the Summits’ success, but it was perceived as “moderately” important six months after the Summit (mean dropped from 4.24 to 3.73 out of 5, a statistically significant change with p-value <.001). The magnitude of difference between these two scores was moderate (Cohen’s d = .54).

Lastly, immediately after the Summit attendees' participation was perceived as "very" important to the Summits' success, on average, but six months after, it was perceived as "moderately" important (mean dropped from 4.35 to 3.83 out of 5, a statistically significant change with p-value <.001). The magnitude of difference between these two time periods was moderate (Cohen's  $d = .67$ ).

### **Open-ended Responses**

We offered an open-ended text box at the end of the survey for respondents to reflect broadly on the Summit. Many respondents discussed why they believed the Summit may not have been as successful as it could have been. Those responses could be grouped into three themes:

1. Need for a "backbone" organization and funding
2. Lack of clarity and reporting about follow-up activities
3. Groups not meeting after the Summit and breadth of action items too large

It should be noted that other responses were quite positive about the Summit, including its excellent organization, people, energy, and contribution to the movement.

## **>> Discussion**

We found that the Summit was perceived as generally less successful six months after it was held than immediately after it was held. This drop in "post versus follow-up" is common in evaluation literature and could be expected of similar programs. However, it is still a concern that the two broad categories of Summit goals dropped with large effect sizes. The sample size was much smaller for the six month follow-up survey (50 versus 120) so there may have been some self-selection bias in who completed this follow-up survey (e.g., people who were less optimistic about the Summits' success). Regardless, the Summit is now perceived as "somewhat successful" by participants on average, which is an overall positive evaluation with substantial room for improvement.

It's also interesting to note that all factors of success were perceived as less important in the longer-term. This may be a collateral effect of the general decrease in perceived success scores, or it may demonstrate that there were other factors that could have been actualized at the Summit to increase its success, but were not emphasized during and/or after the event (e.g., providing support and facilitating ongoing meetings between groups after the Summit was complete).

These results do not necessarily represent the range of perspectives or frequency with which these perspectives were held by attendees at large. We received a 29% response rate. As such, other attendees who did not respond may hold different evaluative beliefs about the Summit. Therefore, our findings should be viewed within the context of general trends in the Summit rather than absolute findings.