



# Short-Term Reflections on the Goals and Factors for Success after the 2015 ING Summit

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

## Research Team Members

**Dr. Matthew Browning<sup>2</sup>**  
**Wonjun Choi<sup>2</sup>**  
**Dr. Cheryl Charles<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>For more information about the Summit, please visit [www.ingsummit.org](http://www.ingsummit.org)

<sup>2</sup>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism

<sup>3</sup>Brandwein Institute Board of Directors, Hawksong Associates, Antioch University New England



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“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 *Goals, Expectations, and Factors for Success*: <http://ingsummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/INGPre-SummitReportFinalv2.pdf>).



This current report extends our prior results with findings from a second survey conducted at the end of the summit. This second survey 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. These data also allowed us to identify underlying themes that more succinctly described our data.

This is an interim report. We will administer a third survey in summer 2016 (approximately six 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 a paper survey during the closing session of the summit on November 8, 2015. This occurred in the Entry Auditorium of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. The surveys were one page (front-and-back) and took respondents less than five minutes to complete on average. Items included:

1. How involved were you in the movement to inspire a new generation of conservation leaders and reunite people with nature BEFORE you came to the 2015 ING Summit? *Not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, or highly*
2. 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*



3. 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*
4. Which of these things contributed MOST to the success of the 2015 ING Summit? *Participants were provided an open-ended text box.*
5. In what year were you born?
6. In what country do you reside?
7. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage? Choose all that apply. *American Indian, Alaska Native, or First Nation; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; White; or Other*

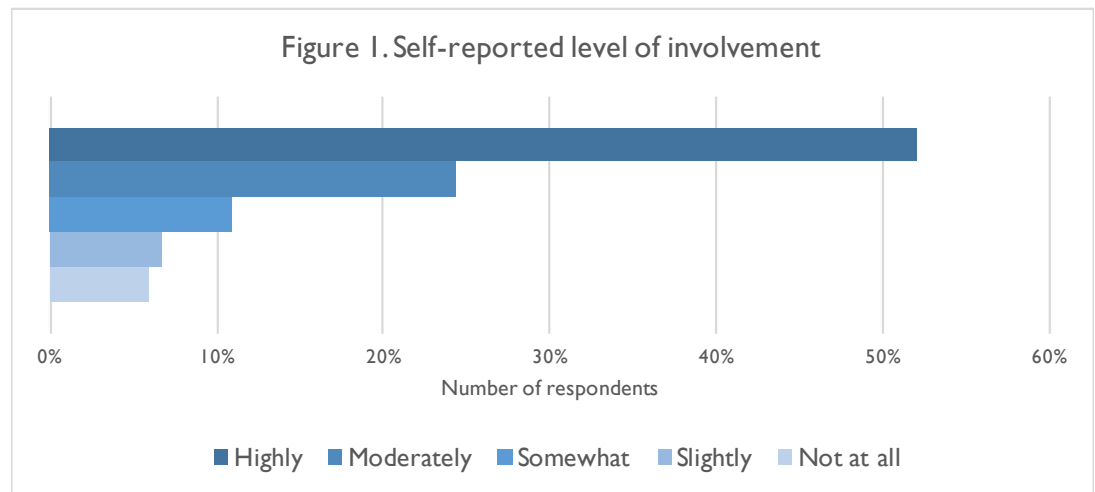
Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify underlying themes behind the survey responses. More specifically, this analysis identified which items respondents tended to answer similarly to one another. We averaged survey items that grouped together based on survey responses and that thematically related to one another to create indices. We tested the internal reliability of these indices and found them to be reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .60$ ). 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. Average values between themes - and between sub-groups - were examined with t-tests and Cohen's d effect size calculations.



## >> Results

### Description of Sample

We received 122 completed survey responses (approximately 71% response rate). Respondent age ranged from 22 to 77 (the average was 45) with 30% less than 36 years old, 30% 36-50 years old, 30% 51-65 years old, and 10% greater than 65 years old. The majority of respondents (75%) identified as White, while 8% identified as mixed race/ethnicity, 7% identified as Hispanic/Latino, 4% identified as Black/African American, 3% identified as Asian, and 3% identified as “other.” In regards to the countries where respondents lived, 67% were from the United States, 23% were from Canada, 4% were from Mexico, and 2% or less were from Afghanistan, Iran, Australia, Peru, Brazil, Italy, or the Netherlands. Just over half of the respondents (52%) indicated that they were “highly involved” in the movement to inspire a new generation of conservation leaders and reunite people with nature prior to coming to the summit. Because there was such a steep decline in the number of respondents who were less than “highly involved” (Figure 1), we separated our sample into two categories of involvement: (“highly involved” and “not highly involved”) for analyses.



### Goal Achievement

Participants indicated that the goals and outcomes identified in the pre-summit surveys were met somewhat to moderately well, on average (Table 1). Exploratory factor analysis suggested these goals could be captured with two overarching themes: *movement development* and *attendee development* (Table 2). Respondents indicated *attendee development* was achieved significantly better than *movement development* ( $p\text{-value} < .001$ ). The magnitude of difference between these two themes was very large (Cohen's  $d = 1.2$ ).

Table 1. Goal Achievement

Goal	Average level of achievement <sup>1</sup>	%age of respondents who indicated goal was met “moderately” or “very well”
Allowed attendees to have fun and enjoy being at the National Conservation Training Center	Moderately well (4.5)	93%
Offered networking opportunities to attendees	Moderately well (4.5)	93%
Built a community of like-minded people and institutions	Moderately well (4.3)	83%
Inspired (or re-inspired) attendees to be active in this movement	Moderately well (4.3)	86%
Fostered new partnerships between attendees	Moderately well (4.3)	84%
Built attendee’s commitment toward this movement	Moderately well (4.2)	87%
Developed a framework for action	Somewhat well (3.9)	71%
Taught attendees more about this movement	Somewhat well (3.9)	66%
Provided attendees with practical strategies that might advance this movement	Somewhat well (3.5)	53%
Empowered people 35 years old or younger in this movement	Somewhat well (3.3)	48%
Connected attendees with new resources (e.g., funding sources) that might advance this movement	Somewhat well (3.3)	43%

<sup>1</sup>regarding how well Summit achieved these things, survey response categories included: 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderately, and 5= highly

Table 2. Overarching Thematic Goals

Theme	Movement Development	Attendee Development
<b>Average Level of Achievement</b>	<b>3.7</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .64)	<b>4.4</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .56)
<b>Items Included in Theme</b>	<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>

## Contribution of Factors for Success

Participants indicated that the factors for success identified in the pre-summit surveys contributed to the success of the summit somewhat to moderately well (Table 3). Exploratory factor analysis suggested these factors could be represented by four overarching themes: *instigating change*, *further discussion*, *summit execution*, and *attendees' participation* (Table 4). Respondents indicated that *instigating action* contributed significantly less to summit success than other themes ( $p < .001$ ). The magnitude of difference between *instigating action* and other themes was moderate to large (Cohen's  $d$  ranged from .50 to .83). Respondents indicated that the three other themes contributed to summit success at approximately similar levels (there were no significant differences between average contribution of the three other themes).

We also asked respondents which factor MOST contributed to summit success. The most frequent responses related to the three influential themes above (*further discussion*, *summit execution*, and *attendees' participation*). However, one response from the *instigating change* theme was also commonly described - ten people (12% of respondents) believed “engaging and empowering people 35 years old or younger,” was the MOST important factor for success. Other common responses were:

1. Attendees sharing resources and information with each other (19%,  $n = 19$ )
2. The Summit having a clear and focused schedule (13%,  $n = 11$ )
3. Attendees collaborating with each other (11%,  $n = 9$ )

## Differences By Attendee Sub-Group

There were no significant differences between the average value of the four themes for success or the two thematic goals by attendee sub-group. These included no differences by age, self-identified race/ethnicity, or level of involvement before the summit. This indicated that respondents were generally in agreement about the extent to which the summit achieved its goals, and what factors contributed to the success of the summit, independent of socio-demographics or past participation.



Table 3. Extent to which Factors Contributed to Summit Success

Factor	Average extent to which factor contributed to summit success <sup>2</sup>	%age of respondents who indicated factor contributed “moderately” or “very well” to summit success
The Summit having a clear and focused schedule	Moderately well (4.5)	92%
Attendees collaborating with each other	Moderately well (4.5)	88%
Summit organizers demonstrating strong levels of leadership and organization	Moderately well (4.4)	85%
Attendees sharing resources and information with each other	Moderately well (4.4)	89%
Attendees arriving at the Summit with high levels of commitment toward this movement	Moderately well (4.3)	86%
Providing adequate time for attendees to socialize and interact during the Summit	Moderately well (4.2)	80%
Summit organizers evaluating the impact of the Summit	Moderately well (4.2)	89%
Building a strong community of like-minded individuals and organizations	Moderately well (4.2)	84%
Providing adequate time for discussion during the Summit	Moderately well (4.0)	75%
Creating a framework for action	Somewhat well (3.9)	71%
Attendees agreeing on core message and strategies for this movement	Somewhat well (3.9)	70%
Summit organizers adequately engaging and preparing attendees before the Summit	Somewhat well (3.8)	66%
Engaging and empowering people 35 years old or younger	Somewhat well (3.4)	47%
Engaging new stakeholders in this movement	Somewhat well (3.3)	47%

<sup>2</sup>regarding how much these factors contributed to Summit success, survey response categories included: 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = somewhat, 4 = moderately, and 5 = highly

Table 4. Extent to which Overarching Themes Contributed to Summit Success

Theme	Instigating Change	Further Discussion	Summit Execution	Attendees' Participation
<b>Contribution to Success (Avg.)</b>	<b>3.7</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .80)	<b>4.1</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .80)	<b>4.2</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .75)	<b>4.3</b> out of 5.0 (SD = .64)
<b>Items Included in Theme</b>	<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>





## >> Discussion

We found that the summit was generally successful at achieving those goals identified by attendees in pre-summit surveys. Of the two overarching themes that categorized these goals, respondents believed *attendee development* was better achieved than *movement development*. This finding suggests that the summit - while successful in many ways - may have best served its attendees. Perhaps by developing the people that attended this event, the summit will ultimately achieve its broadest goals related to inspiring a new generation of people to connect children with nature.



We also found that attendees believed a broad range of factors for success identified in pre-summit surveys contributed to the success of the summit. Of the four overarching themes that categorized these factors, respondents believed *instigating change* contributed least to the success of the summit. This finding reinforces the theory that the summit might achieve its broader goals by first investing in those who attended. Furthermore, we found that engaging and empowering young people was perceived as very important to the success of the summit by a small, but significant, number of respondents. While this factor was not particularly important for the majority of attendees, our findings suggest that investing in this target population may still be important for furthering this movement.



The findings that there were not significant differences by sub-group (age, race, or level of involvement) is also meaningful. The summit brought together a relatively diverse group of people to discuss action steps needed to inspire a new generation. The fact that these diverse people were aligned in their perceived factors for success may be explained in at least two ways. First, attendees may have developed a “group think” mentality about what is needed for this movement to succeed. Attendees were invited through similar social and professional networks, and those networks may have the same rhetoric about this movement. Attendees may have framed their view of the ING Summit and larger movement through very similar lenses. As such, survey responses may have been restatements of this rhetoric rather than individual attitudes and beliefs that were developed through critically thinking and reflection. The fact that attendees developed a relatively large and diverse list of action items at the end of the summit - however - discredits this interpretation of the results. A more likely explanation is that survey responses are indeed an accurate description of the primary factors necessary for this summit to succeed. These factors center on investing in the people who are engaged in this issue (e.g., ING attendees) by facilitating ongoing discussion and participation, and ultimately instigating change through actualizing a framework for action and engaging new stakeholders, in particular, people 35 years old or younger.



## >> Limitations

These results do not necessarily represent the range of perspectives or frequency with which these perspectives were held by summit attendees at large. We received a 71% response rate. Although we do not anticipate significant non-response bias from our surveys, we may have unintentionally invited people to the survey who were not otherwise engaged during the closing summit ceremonies. As such, other attendees who could not respond may hold different perspectives and may believe certain goals and factors for success are more or less important than our sample.

## >> Acknowledgements

We appreciate the tremendous help that the summit organizers have provided during our survey development and data collection. We look forward to continuing to work with summit organizers as this research project progresses.

