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Youth for  
Human Rights

# *“Youth for Human Rights”*

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**PARTICIPANT SURVEYS: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## The Youth for Human Rights project in a nutshell

The aim of the **project “Youth for Human Rights”** is to foster social inclusion through making use of the full potential of youth work and of human rights education (HRE) in the context of youth work and young people’s non-formal learning. The project is a three-year action supported by the European Commission in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 3 (Initiatives for policy innovation – social inclusion through education, training and youth), and is part of the [consortium of social inclusion projects](#) tackling radicalisation. More about the project can be found on its website at [noored.ee/human-rights-education/](https://noored.ee/human-rights-education/).

## The objectives of the Youth for Human Rights project

The objectives of the project “Youth for Human Rights” are:

- To improve the understanding of HRE in the field of youth and supporting young people’s acquisition of social, civic and intercultural competence;
- To support youth workers, trainers and other practitioners in the field of youth in using HRE to address issues that directly affect social cohesion, such as inclusion and diversity;
- To improve the quality of youth practice, and of activities undertaken as part of young people’s non-formal learning (such as, volunteering), through networking and capacity-building.

## Key activities of the Youth for Human Rights project

The project kicked off with a series of national reports on human rights education in the field of youth and a common mapping synthesis report, which are available at [noored.ee/human-rights-education/mapping/](https://noored.ee/human-rights-education/mapping/). Informed by these mappings, human rights education training modules for local, regional, national and transnational youth workers and youth leaders were developed. These modules were tested in three different formats for capacity building, and complemented by transfer and networking seminars:

- A transnational training of trainers, consisting of two seminars and a practice phase in between
- A series of national trainings of youth workers, all conducted as sole 3-day (weekend) seminars
- A transnational staff training of Erasmus+ National Agency staff, conducted as a sole 3-day course

## Research strand of the Youth for Human Rights project

Embedded in the *Youth for Human Rights* project, participants of the *Training of Trainers* as well as participants of all national training courses have been invited to respond to pre- and post-course online surveys. The methodology is leaning on the research project on competence development and capacity building of the *RAY Research Network (RAY-CAP)*. More about RAY and RAY-CAP can be found online at [researchyouth.eu](https://researchyouth.eu).

The main research questions were:

- *What are the learning needs of youth workers and youth trainers wishing to train for human rights education?*
- *In which ways can training activities best respond to these learning needs?*
- *Which additional support would youth workers and youth trainers need in their human rights education work?*

## The scope and purpose of this document

This document provides an overview of key findings from the participant surveys of the transnational and national trainings and contains recommendations based on these survey findings.



## Overview of recommendations

### Recommendation 1

**Based on their experience, youth workers have different learning needs at different times of their engagement with human rights education.** Those new to human rights education especially require introductory knowledge and skills; more experienced youth workers additionally expect the exploration of attitudes in relation to human rights education; and youth workers with substantive experience expect specialist human rights and human rights education knowledge. These learning needs should be considered more strongly in future training modules and curricula.

### Recommendation 2

**There is a need to consider human rights education beyond its educational dimension, and develop a comprehensive approach that takes the multi-faceted character of human rights education fully into account.** The youth sector, with its rich tradition of non-formal learning, has an understandable focus on the educational dimension of human rights education. Trainers as well as youth workers would benefit from embracing the multi-dimensionality and complexity of human rights, and address intellectual, societal, juridical, political, programmatic and digital aspects of human rights education more systematically. Existing competence models should be reviewed and broadened to take this complexity into account.

### Recommendation 3

**Several dimensions of human rights education need to be strengthened in youth work on human rights, as well as human rights education, among them programmatic and digital aspects of human rights education.** It should also be explored whether specific dimensions, such as educational aspects of human rights education, are addressed *indirectly* for a conceptual reason, or out of necessity (such as lack of skills to address the aspect directly). Existing educational materials should be reviewed and extended accordingly.

### Recommendation 4

**Comprehensive human rights education needs new formats – the youth-sector-typical thematic week-end course seems not sufficient to approach human rights education in its complexity.** Youth workers should be able to leave a training on human rights education with a level of security and confidence that allows them to address human rights education at the level of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values – as well as through the lens of several thematic dimensions, as discussed in the context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation.



## Survey response rates

Response rates for the transnational training were 88% for the pre-course survey (before the first of two seminars), 70% for the mid-course survey (between the first and the second seminar) and 56% for the post-course survey (after both seminars).

Response rates for the national trainings were 76% for the pre-course survey (before the sole course) and 30% for the post-course survey (after the sole course).

The drop in response rate between pre- and post-course surveys is to be expected, as well as the higher response rate of the participants of the transnational training, who have been involved in their course for a longer and more intense period of time.

## Key survey findings

### 1. We asked participants of all training courses whether the focus on knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values had been too strong, sufficient, or too weak, in their opinion.

Participants of the transnational training were particularly keen on strengthening their skills (86%) and knowledge (76%) on human rights education, and to a lesser extent wanted to explore their values (57%) and attitudes (52%) on human rights education. In combination, the two seminars of the transnational training managed to balance these four aspects well: 82% of all responding trainers thought that the course had focused sufficiently on three out of four aspects (knowledge, skills, values), and 73% thought the same was true for attitudes. Differences between trainers with different levels of experience were not discernible, as the majority of participating and responding trainers had very similar levels of experience.

Participants of the national trainings were particularly keen on strengthening their skills (82%) and knowledge (78%) on human rights education, and to a lesser extent wanted to explore their attitudes (60%) and values (57%) on human rights education. Overall, the courses managed to strike the balance between these four aspects well: After their national training, more than two thirds of all responding youth workers thought that their course had focused sufficiently on each of the four aspects. 21% thought their course had focused too little on attitudes, and 18% each that their course had focused too little on knowledge, skills, and values.

A more nuanced picture emerges when clustering responses by level of experience. Responding youth workers who are new to human rights education (working less than a year on human rights education in youth work) considered the focus on **knowledge and skills** in their courses as too weak (25% each). Youth workers with some experience (working between 1 and 5 years on human rights education in youth work) considered the focus on **attitudes** in their courses as too weak (25%). And finally, youth workers with substantive experience (working 5 years or more on human rights education in youth work), considered the focus on **knowledge** in their courses as much too weak (50%).

## Recommendation 1

**Based on their experience, youth workers have different learning needs at different times of their engagement with human rights education.** Those new to human rights education especially require introductory knowledge and skills; more experienced youth workers additionally expect the exploration of attitudes in relation to human rights education; and youth workers with substantive experience expect specialist human rights and human rights education knowledge. These learning needs should be considered more strongly in future training modules and curricula.



Illustration 1: Assessment of trainers participating in the transnational training for trainers



Illustration 2: Assessment of youth workers participating in the national trainings





**2. We asked participants before each training, in which of seven dimensions they wanted to learn more about human rights education – and then after their training, whether this dimension had been focused on too strongly, sufficiently, or too weakly.**

Purposefully, these seven dimensions deviate from and complement the characteristic quadruple of planning and analysing learning processes the youth sector (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values). They are (in survey sequence, with explanations as provided in the surveys):

- *intellectual aspects of human rights education, such as concepts and research;*
- *educational aspects of human rights education, such as methods and challenges;*
- *societal aspects of human rights education, such as inclusion and impact;*
- *juridical aspects of human rights education, such as conventions and rights;*
- *political aspects of human rights education, such as discourses and tensions;*
- *programmatically aspects of human rights education, such as funding and support;*
- *digital aspects of human rights education, such as tools and apps.*

Participants of the transnational training were particularly keen on knowing more about educational aspects of human rights education (86%) and societal aspects of human rights education (81%), followed by political and digital aspects of human rights education (both 62%). Following the two seminars, 70% of responding trainers thought the seminars had focused too little on digital aspects, 64% thought the seminars had focused too little on societal aspects, and 60% that the seminars had focused too little on political aspects. In other words: **Out of the four dimensions the trainers had been particularly interested in, three were not covered sufficiently in their opinion.**

Participants of the national trainings were particularly keen on knowing more about educational aspects of human rights education (79%) and societal aspects of human rights education (70%), with all other dimensions receiving relatively even and considerably less initial interest (between 36% and 44%). After their national training, three quarter of all responding youth workers thought that their course had focused sufficiently on these two dimensions of particular interest to them. 49%, however, thought that their course had focused too little on political aspects of human rights education, and close to one third of the responding youth workers considered the focus of their national training on four additional dimensions (digital aspects, juridical aspects, programmatic aspects, and intellectual aspects) as too weak.

In comparison, the trainers involved in the project at transnational level had a clearer expectation than the youth workers involved at national level of tackling human rights education beyond its educational aspects. After their trainings, both trainers and youth workers thought that a number of dimensions had not been covered sufficiently in their courses – with the trainers being considerably more critical in their assessment.

## **Recommendation 2**

**There is a need to consider human rights education beyond its educational dimension, and develop a comprehensive approach that takes the multi-faceted character of human rights education fully into account.** The youth sector, with its rich tradition of non-formal learning, has an understandable focus on the educational dimension of human rights education. Trainers as well as youth workers would benefit from embracing the multi-dimensionality and complexity of human rights, and address intellectual, societal, juridical, political, programmatic and digital aspects of human rights education more systematically. Existing competence models should be reviewed and broadened to take this complexity into account.

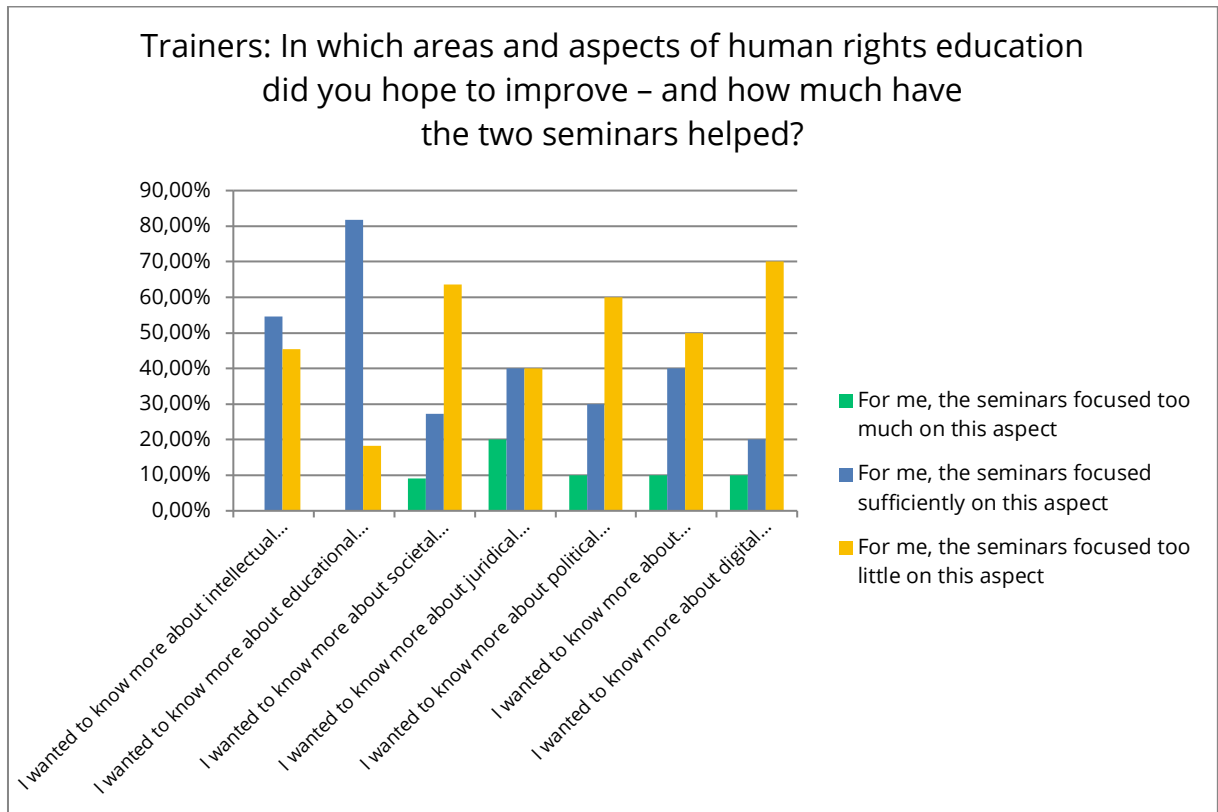


Illustration 3: Assessment of trainers participating in the transnational training for trainers

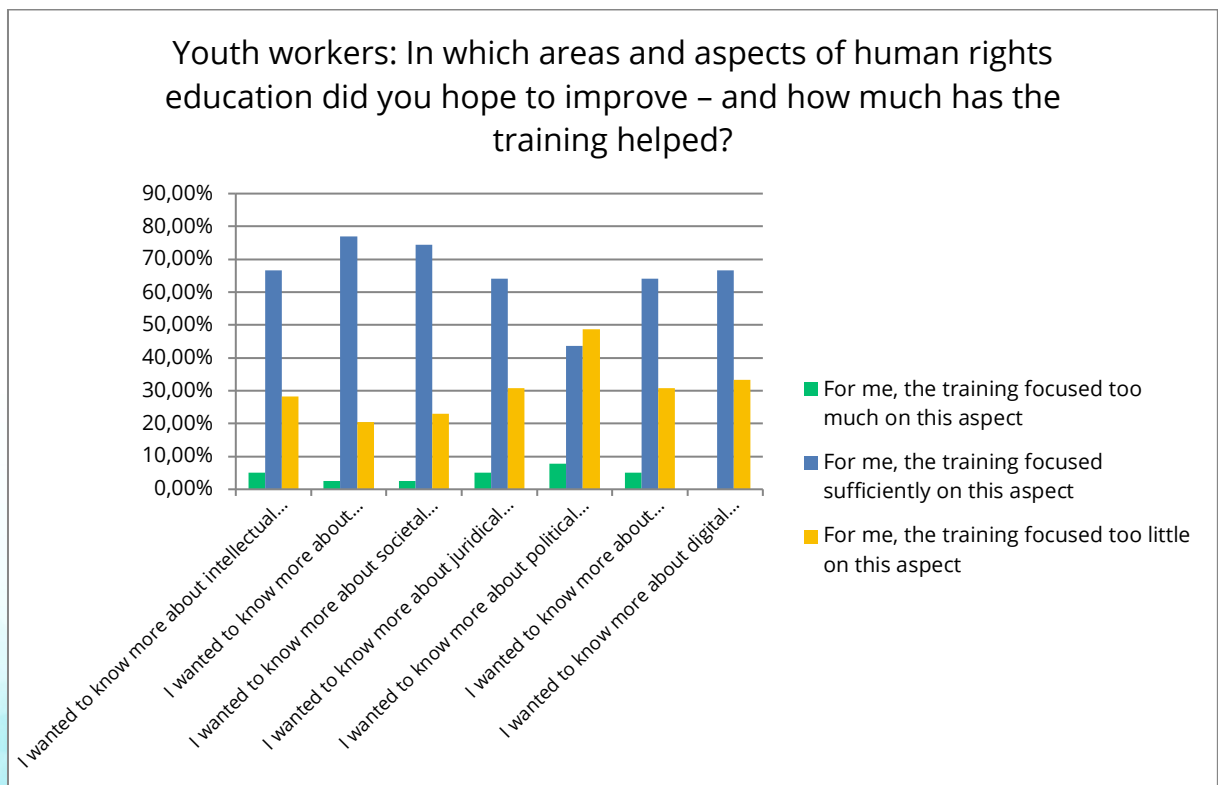


Illustration 4: Assessment of youth workers participating in the national trainings



### 3. We asked participants of national trainings how they typically address the various dimensions of human rights education in their youth work.

Youth workers address societal aspects of human rights education, such as inclusion and impact, by far most frequently *directly* in their youth work: 38% address this particular aspect of human rights education typically directly and extensively, and 35% typically directly but rather briefly. The second most frequently directly addressed dimension of human rights education is the juridical aspect, such as conventions and rights (47% – 9% typically directly and extensively, 38% typically directly but rather briefly).

The most frequently indirectly addressed dimensions are intellectual aspects, such as concepts and research (50% – 15% typically indirectly yet extensively, 35% typically indirectly and briefly), and educational aspects (also 50% – but 35% typically indirectly yet extensively and 15% typically indirectly and briefly).

The dimension that is by far most frequently not addressed at all is the programmatic dimension, including aspects such as funding and support – 55% of responding youth workers stated they do not address this aspect directly or indirectly. In particular with a view to the ambition of the “Youth for Human Rights” project to further distribute good human rights education practices, this omission seems problematic.

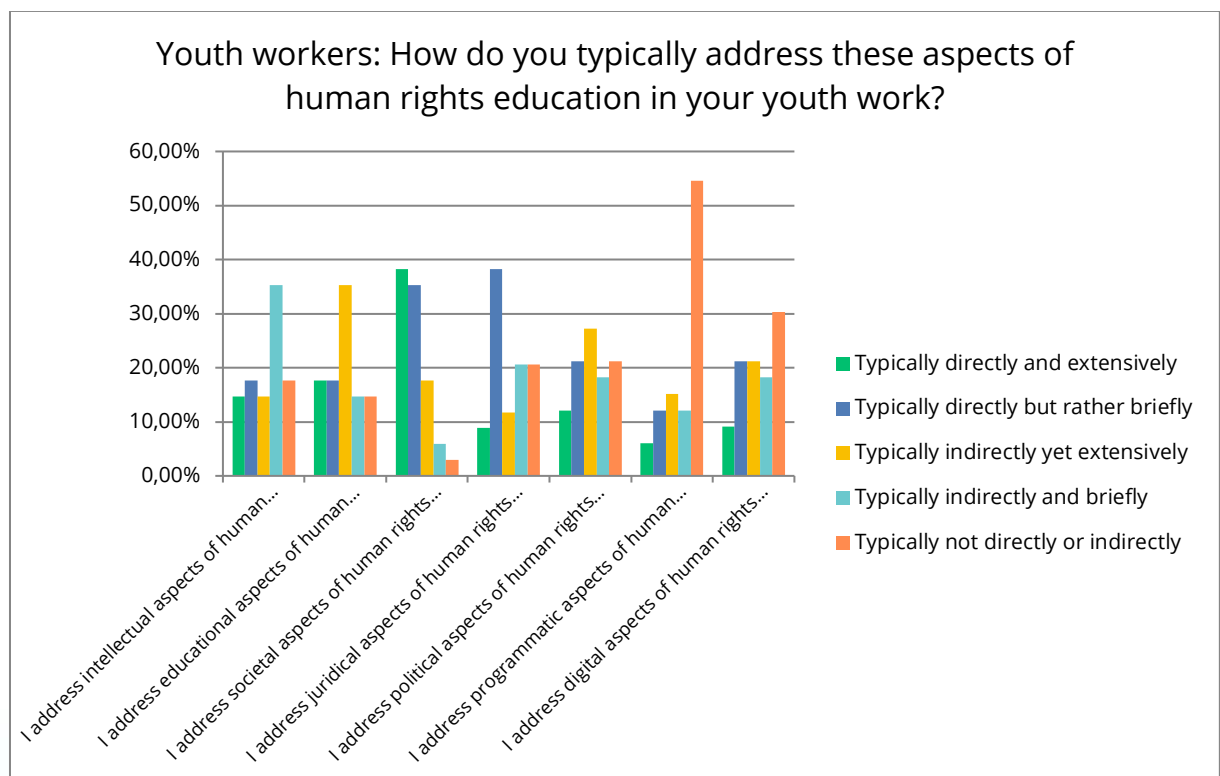


Illustration 5: Responses of youth workers participating in the national trainings

### Recommendation 3

**Several dimensions of human rights education need to be strengthened in youth work on human rights, as well as human rights education, among them programmatic and digital aspects of human rights education.** It should also be explored whether specific dimensions, such as educational aspects of human rights education, are addressed *indirectly* for a conceptual reason, or out of necessity (such as a lack of skills to address the aspect directly). Existing educational materials should be reviewed and extended accordingly.





4. We asked participants of the national and transnational trainings how secure they feel when it comes to applying their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values on human rights education in youth work.

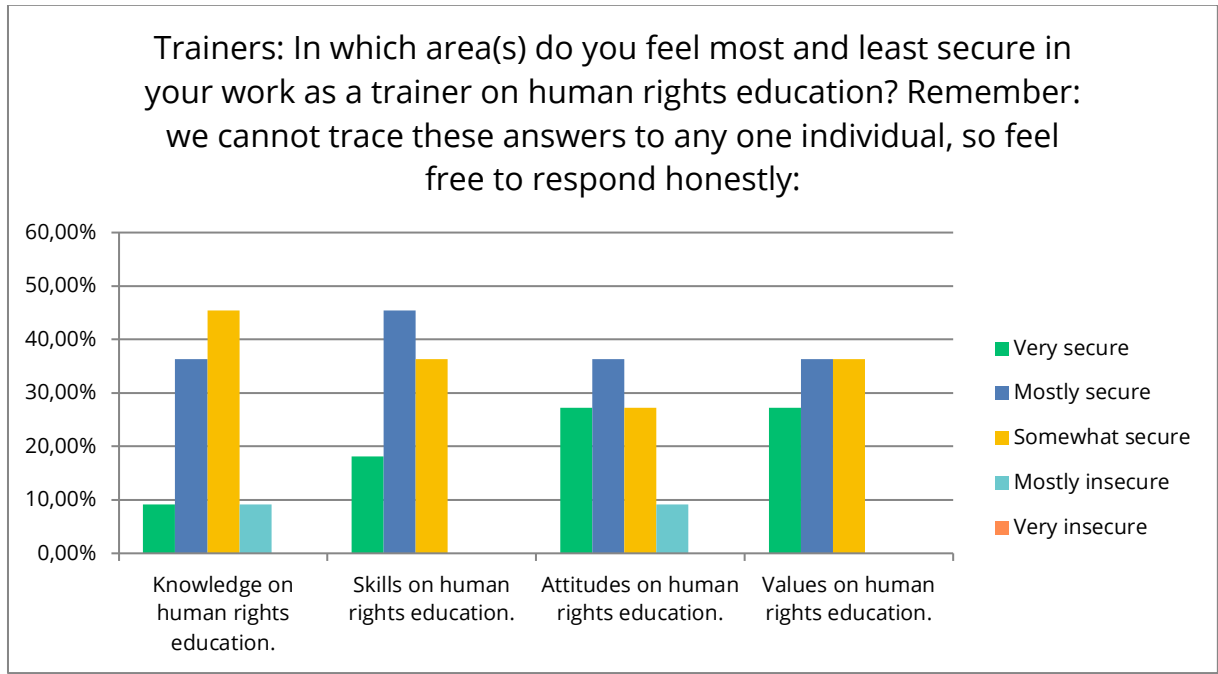


Illustration 6: Responses of trainers participating in the transnational training for trainers

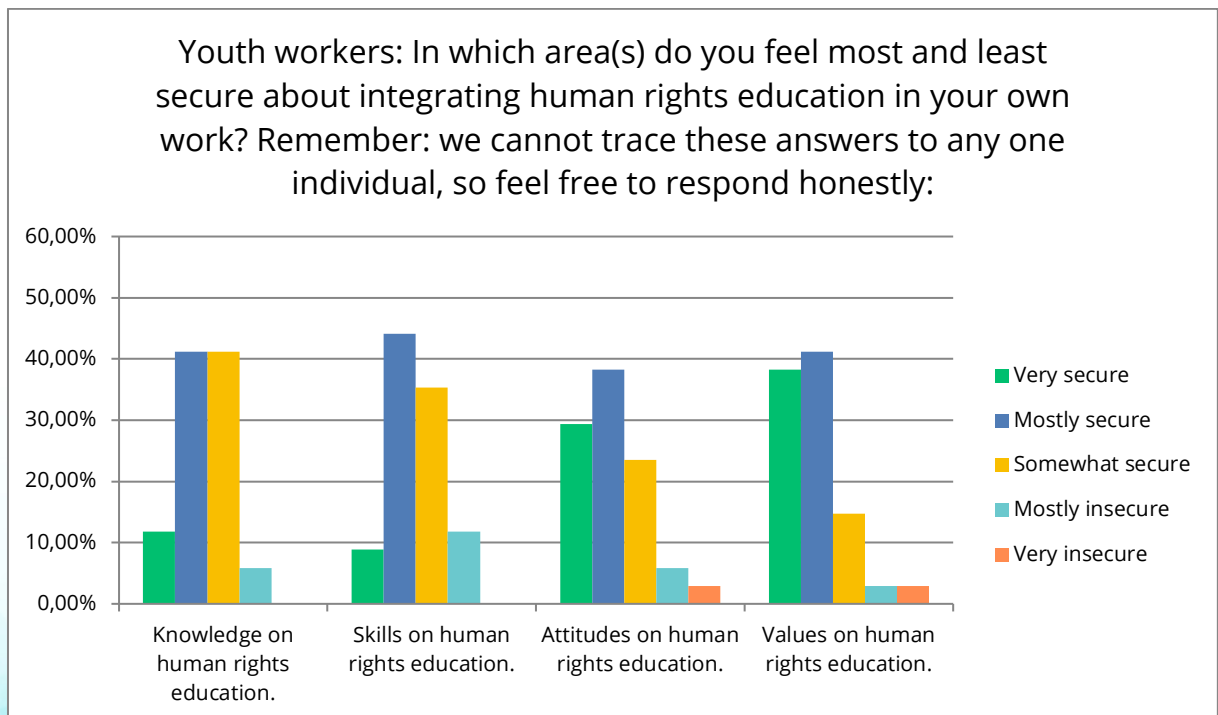


Illustration 7: Responses of youth workers participating in the national trainings



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The level of security differs considerably between the participants of the transnational training (two seminars, with six and three training days respectively, and a practice phase between those two seminars) and the participants of the national trainings (one seminar spanning three calendar days, typically over a weekend, resulting in two training days).

## Recommendation 4

**Comprehensive human rights education needs new formats - the youth-sector-typical thematic weekend course seems not sufficient to approach human rights education in its complexity.** Youth workers should be able to leave a training on human rights education with a level of security and confidence that allows them to address human rights education in their youth work equally at the level of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values – as well as through the lens of several thematic dimensions, as discussed in the context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation above.