

# FIFTEEN YEARS OF HUMANITY IN ACTION:

EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF THE AMERICAN SENIOR FELLOW NETWORK

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# FIFTEEN YEARS OF HUMANITY IN ACTION

In 2013, a study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the Humanity in Action American Senior Fellow network. The study involved an online survey of American Senior Fellows and in-depth interviews with a smaller sampling of Senior Fellows.<sup>1</sup> It investigated their Fellowship experiences, continued engagement with Humanity in Action, current undertakings, and future aspirations. Key findings from the study include:

### Summer Fellowship Experience

- At the time of fellowship application, almost half (46%) of Senior Fellows said that they knew one or more people who had already participated in Humanity in Action.
- 98% of Fellows said that if they had the chance to do Humanity in Action again, they would. 93% reported that the Fellowship was a tremendously positive experience.
- 13% of Fellows said that participating in Humanity in Action was not a good decision for them. 4% said that they would not recommend Humanity in Action to other interested young people.
- 96% of Fellows reported that they gained a better understanding of minority and human rights issues during the Fellowship.
- The most positive assessment of Humanity in Action came in Fellows' discussions of the relationships they built with other Senior Fellows during and after the Fellowship. 93% of Fellows reported that they made one or more close friends in the Fellowship. 98% said that they felt connected to and supported by the Fellows in their program.
- Fellows are less convinced that the Fellowship itself prepares them for activism or service. Only slightly over half claimed that Humanity in Action encouraged them to be involved in service or activism after the Fellowship.
- Approximately one in three fellows reported that they felt physically and emotionally drained by the Fellowship.

### Post-Fellowship Engagement

- Approximately two-thirds of Senior Fellows said that they are still involved with Humanity in Action. 28% of Fellows said they are very involved, 40% said that they are somewhat involved, and 6% said that they are not at all involved.
- Fellows' most common form of engagement with Humanity in Action is through attendance at informal Senior Fellow gatherings or participation in application reading committees. Two in three Fellows have attended one or more Humanity in Action conferences, and one in four Fellows has found a job through Humanity in Action or a Humanity in Action contact.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report alumni of the Humanity in Action Summer Fellowship are referred to as Fellows or Senior Fellows.

- In the first year following the fellowship, one in three Fellows attended a Humanity in Action conference and one in two Senior Fellows was individually contacted by a Humanity in Action staff member. Of the 95 Fellows who were contacted by Humanity in Action staff within the first year, 42% of them said that they were very involved with Humanity in Action (compared to 28% of all Senior Fellows). This suggests that one potentially effective means of retaining engagement over time involves reaching out to Fellows immediately following their Fellowship.
- Fellows feel a strong continued connection to Humanity in Action through their maintenance of close friendships with Senior Fellows. Nine out of ten Fellows made one or more close friends through Humanity in Action.
- One in two Fellows consider someone they know through Humanity in Action to be a role model.

## Senior Fellows' Professional, Civic, and Personal Engagements

- Most Humanity in Action Fellows are engaged in pro-social careers, working in the fields of education, law, government, policy, and international relations.
- Fellows are highly civically engaged: 95% of eligible Senior Fellows voted in the 2008 presidential election, and 87% of Fellows have donated money for charitable purposes within the last year. One in four Fellows currently serves on the board of a non-profit organization or student association.
- At the same time that most Senior Fellows espouse an interest in and commitment to pro-social work, they also point to additional deeply held values that guide their choices, including financial stability and familial relationships. This suggests that Humanity in Action may be able to best support its Fellows over time by developing new means of engagement that take into account these values.

## Recommendations for Humanity in Action

Five central recommendations are drawn from the research findings. Consideration of these recommendations may provide Humanity in Action the opportunity to reflect on how to best support and empower incoming and past Senior Fellows. The recommendations include:

1. Intensively engage Senior Fellows in the first year following the Fellowship to ensure longer-term engagement with Humanity in Action.
2. Provide Senior Fellows with more geographically diverse opportunities to participate and stay involved with Humanity in Action.
3. Create more opportunities for Senior Fellows to connect, potentially through forging older and younger Senior Fellow bridges.
4. Expand on Humanity in Action's current definition of human rights in order to engage a broader range of Senior Fellows over time.
5. Offer more financial aid and diverse funding opportunities for Senior Fellow undertakings.

# INTRODUCTION

*“My Fellowship invigorated and re-energized me by exposing me to new frameworks through which to think about minority issues, putting me next to thoughtful young curious thinkers and enabling me to feel a part of a social justice movement bigger than myself.”*

In August 2013, to mark Humanity in Action’s fifteenth anniversary – and fifteen years of offering international human rights Fellowships and working to build a transatlantic community of engaged youth – a study of the Humanity in Action American Senior Fellow community was conducted.<sup>2</sup> The study was made of two components: an online survey of the Senior Fellow community and in-depth interviews with a smaller sampling of older Senior Fellows.

The 460 American Senior Fellows who had participated in a Humanity in Action Fellowship between 1998 and 2012 were emailed an online survey. The survey, which 211 Fellows completed, elicited information about Fellows’ motivations for participation in Humanity in Action, their Fellowship experiences, and their continued engagement with the organization.<sup>3</sup> Beyond inquiring into their Humanity in Action experience, it investigated their life trajectories, including their career paths thus far, current attitudes and values, and future aspirations.

In addition to the survey, 24 Senior Fellows who completed the Fellowship between 1998 and 2006 were interviewed. While the survey offered breadth in reaching almost half the Humanity in Action American network, interviews achieved a more in-depth look at individuals’ Fellowship experiences and relationship with Humanity in Action. Additionally, the interviews unearthed detailed information on how Senior Fellows in their late twenties and early thirties are mapping out their personal and professional paths, and how Humanity in Action can optimally support them during this life stage.

Taken together, the survey and interview findings offer a snapshot of the Humanity in Action American Senior Fellow community – from their current engagements and priorities to the impact they believe Humanity in Action has had in their personal lives and on their professional ambitions. By offering a deeper understanding of its alumni profile, the findings offer Humanity in Action the chance to consider how the organization can best serve and empower incoming and past Senior Fellows. The feedback can help both improve Humanity in Action’s utility to its expansive Senior Fellow community, while simultaneously strengthening those Fellows’ commitment to the organization.

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<sup>2</sup> Humanity in Action (HIA) is an educational human rights organization. Since 1998, HIA has offered summer activist fellowships to over 500 American college students and recent graduates. Fellows spend a month in one of five European cities exploring past and present minority rights issues. Through the fellowships, HIA aims to “instill a responsibility among Humanity in Action Fellows to recognize and address the need to protect minorities and promote human rights in their own communities and around the world.”

<sup>3</sup> Response rate = 46%. Issues with the response rate and non-response bias are worth addressing. There is no doubt that response was correlated with engagement and connection to HIA. Survey responses likely painted a more favorable picture of Humanity in Action than would have been produced had all 460 alumni completed the survey. At the same time, there was still notable heterogeneity in respondents’ assessments of HIA, their ongoing engagement with the organization, and their current attitudes and values.

With these goals in mind, the report is organized into the following sections:

**I. Senior Fellows' Fellowship Experiences**

- A. Motivations for Participation
- B. Fellowship Evaluation

**II. Senior Fellows' Post-Fellowship Experiences**

- A. Continued Involvement with Humanity in Action
- B. Current Work, Ambitions, Values

**III. Looking forward: Implications and Recommendations**

**IV. Appendix: Respondent Characteristics**

In all sections of the report, I draw on both survey and interview data in order to pair a wider snapshot of the Senior Fellow community with a more intimate, nuanced picture of individual experiences. Moreover, survey respondents had the opportunity to offer extended feedback in a series of open-ended questions. I combine this feedback with that from the in-depth interviews to highlight common, reoccurring themes and critiques.

The first section, Senior Fellows' Fellowship Experiences, offers an overview of Fellows' motivations for applying and their evaluations of the Fellowship. In the second section, I present findings on Senior Fellows' Post-Fellowship Experiences, beginning with a look at how Fellows engage in the first year following the Fellowship and what this may mean for their engagement long-term. I go beyond that first year following the Fellowship to discuss Senior Fellows' continued relationship with Humanity in Action and variations between Fellows' ongoing connectedness to the organization.

Next, I present Senior Fellows' current engagements, values and future ambitions. Here, I draw particular attention to three central values that appear widely held among Humanity in Action Senior Fellows: 1) making an impact, 2) achieving financial security, and 3) raising a family. I present data on how Senior Fellows strive to balance these potentially conflicting values in order to highlight the challenges for Senior Fellows as they transition from college students into working adults.

Finally, I draw on a number of the study's findings in a Looking Forward section to offer a set of implications and recommendations for Humanity in Action to better fulfill its mission of producing a highly integrated and diverse network of politically active, civically-minded adults.

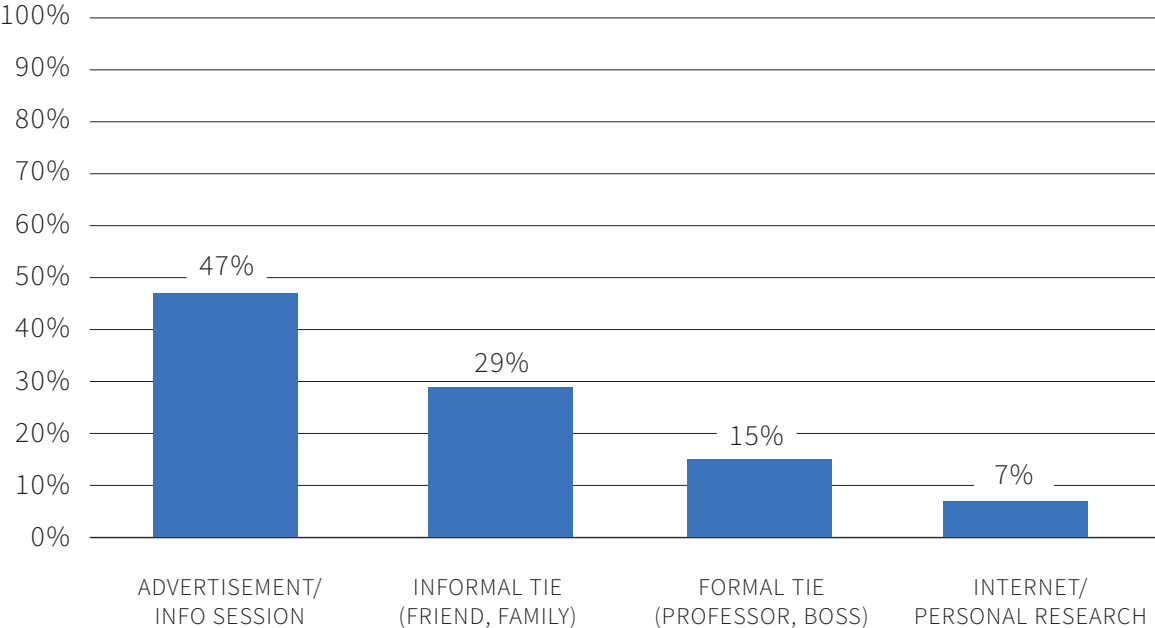
# SECTION I. SENIOR FELLOWS' FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES

*“It was a life changing experience for me. The best part about it was the people that I met and the friendships that I made – truly some of the most wonderful people that I have had the pleasure to become acquainted with.”*

## A. Motivation for Participation

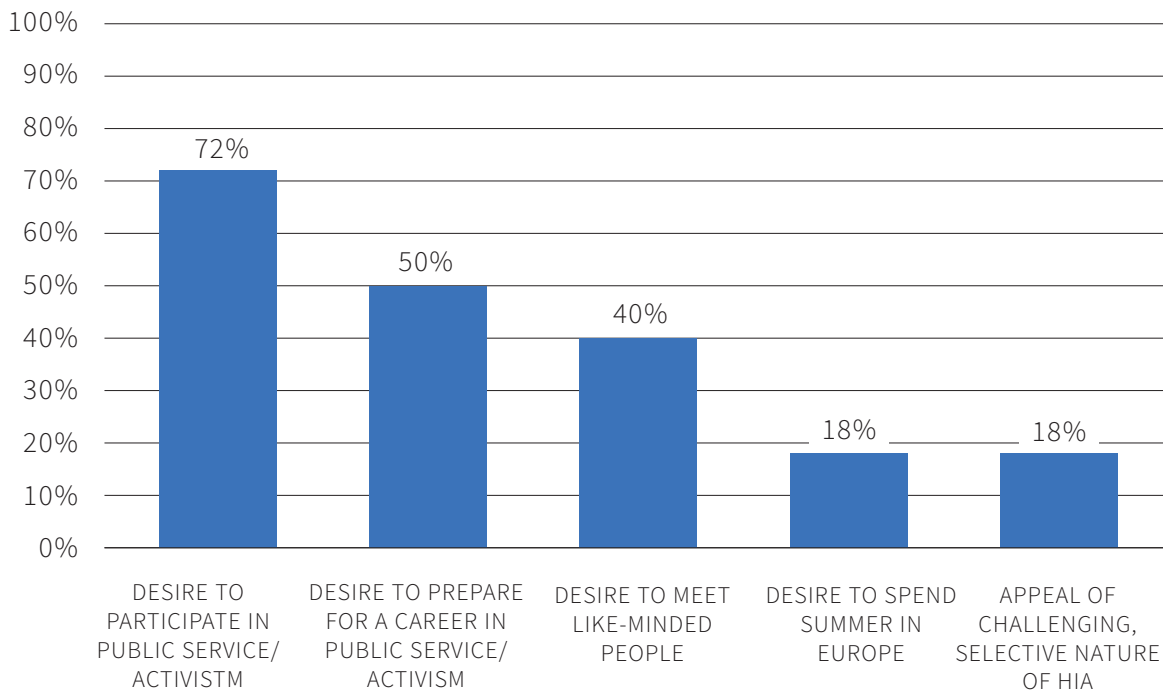
How do Senior Fellows first discover Humanity in Action, and what are their reasons for applying to the Fellowship? Approximately half of Senior Fellows first learned about Humanity in Action through an advertisement such as a flyer or mass email. The other half discovered Humanity in Action through their social network: 29% of Fellows found out about Humanity in Action through a family member or friend, and 15% through a professor or work colleague. Within the group of Fellows who learned about Humanity in Action through a friend or family member, it was Humanity in Action Senior Fellows themselves who offered these potential applicants their first exposure; one in five Fellows first learned about Humanity in Action from a current Senior Fellow. Moreover, at the time that they applied for the Fellowship, almost half (46%) of Senior Fellows said that they knew one or more people who had already participated in Humanity in Action.

FIGURE 1. HOW SENIOR FELLOWS FIRST LEARNED ABOUT HUMANITY IN ACTION



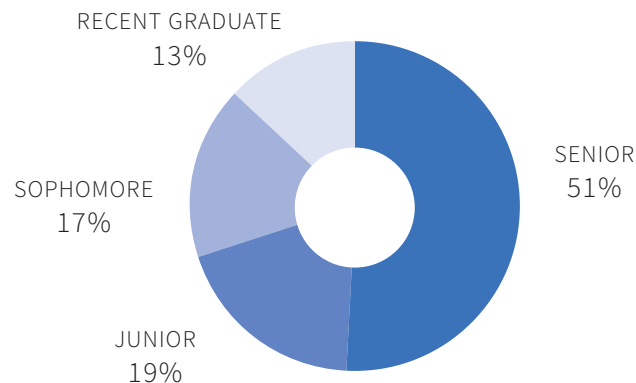
Senior Fellows expressed a variety of motivations for participating in the Summer Fellowship. By far, the most commonly noted motivation was a desire to participate in public service/activism. Over 70% of Fellows cited this reason. Approximately half of Fellows said that they had a desire to prepare for a career in public service/activism. Slightly under half (40%) of Fellows claimed that their desire to meet like-minded people was a major motivator. For one in five Fellows, the desire to spend a summer in Europe or the appeal of Humanity in Action’s challenging, selective nature was a top motivation.

FIGURE 2. MOST CITED MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITY IN ACTION



Most Senior Fellows participated in Humanity in Action toward the end of their undergraduate careers. At the time of application, approximately 2 in 3 Senior Fellows were either incoming college seniors or recent graduates.

FIGURE 3. YEAR IN SCHOOL AT TIME OF FELLOWSHIP



Thus, the majority of Fellows participate in Humanity in Action during what may be a transition point in their lives: in the final year of college and immediately after, many students are in the process of deciding what to do in the coming year(s). For some Senior Fellows, Humanity in Action may play a pivotal role in helping them figure out their next professional steps. Interviews with Senior Fellows suggested this to be the case:

*“I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I started to become really interested in law and international law. I think it was Humanity in Action that tipped the balance on that. It was a very important experience for me. I met very interesting people, and some of the experiences had a big impact on me.”*

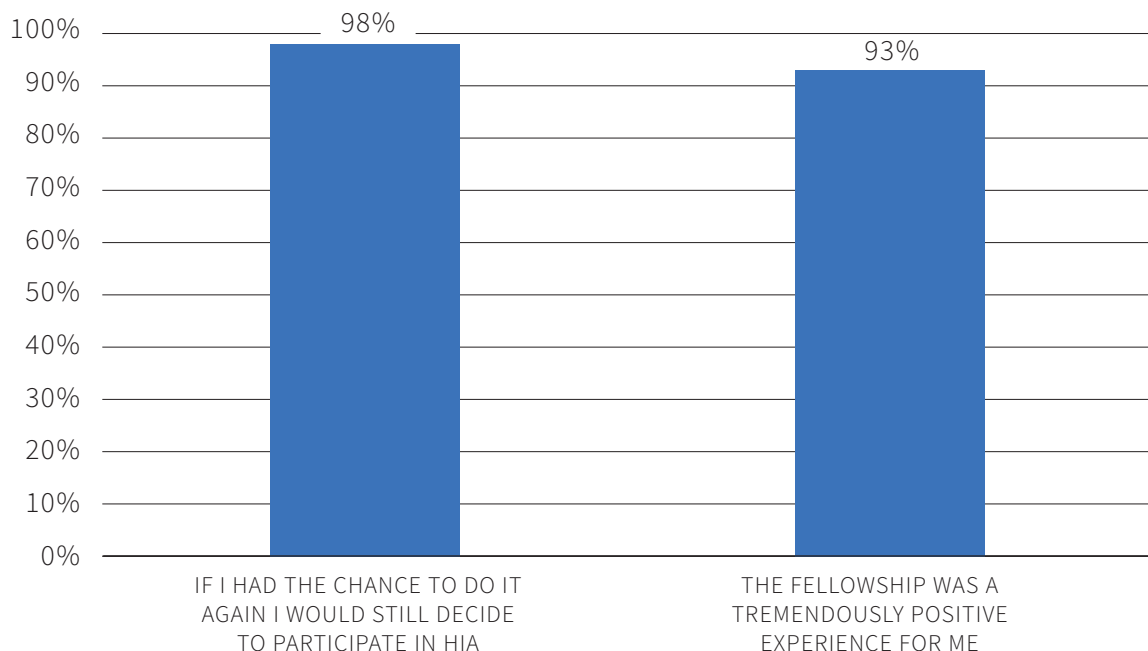
*“The fact that I’d just graduated from college made Humanity in Action particularly formative for me – I hadn’t really decided on a career path quite yet.”*

*“The Fellowship re-oriented my brain towards the Holocaust and the Second World War and definitely European minority integration issues, which I had not really thought about before at all. I started learning a lot about international criminal justice. So actually all of the things that I do today, I credit Humanity in Action with first engaging me with – in a very serious way that I found stimulating and interesting.”*

## B. Humanity in Action Fellowship Experience

Across the board, Fellows rated their Fellowship experience overwhelmingly positively. 98% of Fellows said that if they had the chance to do Humanity in Action again, they would. 93% reported that the Fellowship was a tremendously positive experience for them.

FIGURE 4. OVERALL EVALUATION OF HUMANITY IN ACTION FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE





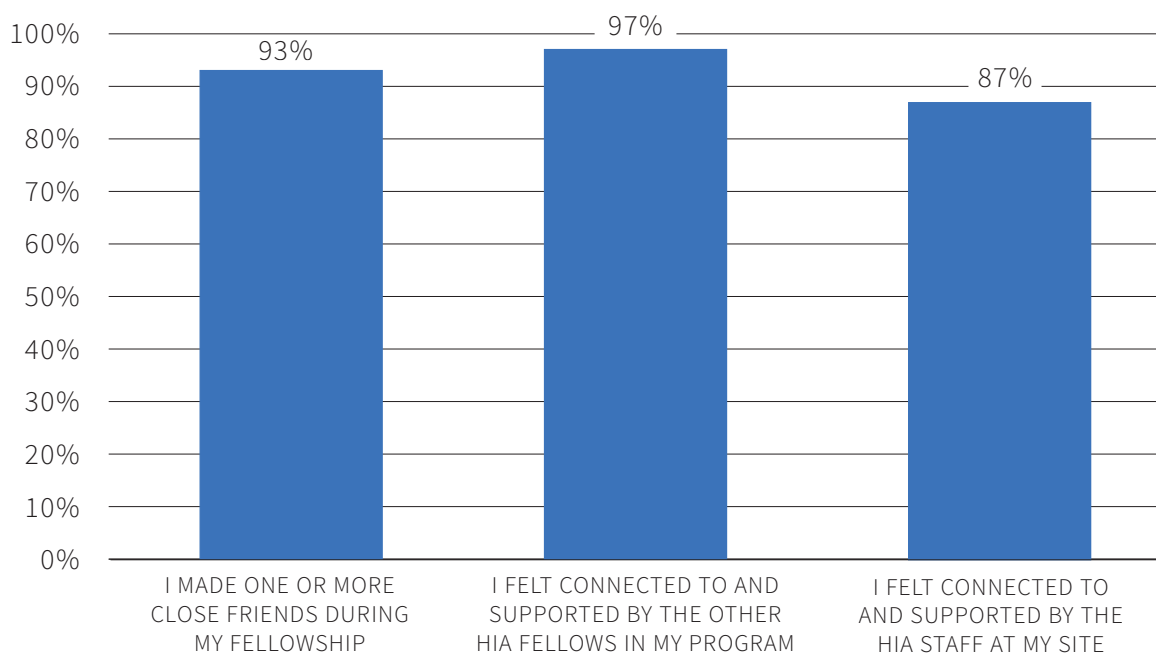
Survey and interview feedback largely corroborated these findings. Words commonly used to describe the Fellowship in the survey’s open-ended sections and interviews included: transformative, seminal, and impactful. Only 4% of Senior Fellows indicated that they would not recommend Humanity in Action to other interested young people. 13% said that participating in Humanity in Action was not a good decision for them.

The Fellowship’s value to Fellows can best be characterized along three major lines: content, relationships, and professional utility. Fellows’ assessments of the content of the Fellowships were largely positive. 96% of Fellows reported that they gained a better understanding of minority and human rights issues during the Fellowship. Survey feedback and interview data supported these statistics. Many Fellows noted that the content of the Fellowships increased their understanding of human rights and minority rights issues:

*“The conversations we had were very real and very challenging. You had to start to work in a different cultural space where you had to challenge why you were thinking what you were thinking – whether it came from your culture, background, politics or knowledge. You had to actually start to know issues, you couldn’t just philosophize. You had to go and talk to people who were in these neighborhoods, who were in these organizations trying to make things happen. So it was much more rigorous of an intellectual pursuit.”*

At the same time, a resounding theme was that the content of the Summer Fellowship was not necessarily the most positive aspect of Senior Fellows’ experiences. For most Senior Fellows, the most positive outcome of the Summer Fellowship was the relationships they built with each other during the Fellowship and their cultivation of those relationships through ongoing connection to the Senior Fellow network. 93% of Senior Fellows reported that they made one or more close friends during the Fellowship. 97% reported that they felt connected to and supported by the other Fellows in their program. Slightly fewer (87%) reported the same for their site’s Humanity in Action staff.

FIGURE 5. RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND SUPPORT DURING SUMMER FELLOWSHIP



Survey and interview feedback underscored and offered deeper insight into the value of the Senior Fellow network to Fellows. For one, Fellows discussed the importance of gaining access to a community of individuals passionate and committed to social justice:

*“Becoming part of and building community with like-minded human rights individuals was my favorite aspect of the Fellowship.”*

*“I met this this group of young people who shared my interests. Prior to that it was sort of hard to find that kind of social circle where people liked to talk about these issues. It was a great revelation to find friends who liked to have fun and also liked to talk about the same things. This opened up that world to me.”*

*“My Fellowship invigorated and re-energized me by exposing me to new frameworks through which to think about minority issues, putting me next to thoughtful young curious thinkers and enabling me to feel apart of a social justice movement bigger than myself.”*

*“What I learned from the program and what I value most was the connections I was able to make with a few like-minded individuals who were interested in looking at systems of oppression and exploitation and how they relate to ourselves and the cities we were in.”*

*“This was, overall, a very positive experience – though more so, I think, in terms of the friendships and connections I made than the educational or career-oriented takeaways.”*

*“It was a life changing experience for me. The best part about it was the people that I met and the friendships that I made – truly some of the most wonderful people that I have had the pleasure to become acquainted with.”*

Fellows additionally noted that that they have been able to use the connections they made to other Fellows following their Fellowship experience. Thus, the relationships formed during the Fellowship not only aid in ensuring an impactful summer experience, but also continue to serve Fellows as they move through their careers.

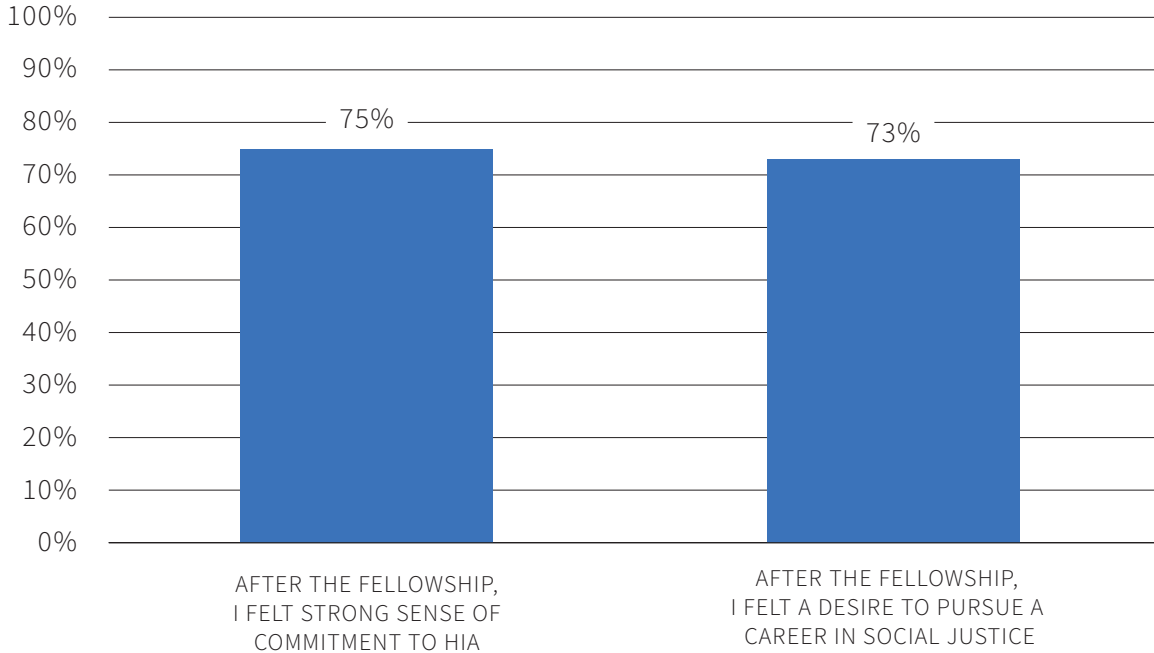
*“As a current graduate student, my access to the larger network of Senior Fellows has been really valuable for making connections or just finding places to stay while traveling. I gained so much from Humanity in Action, but the biggest rewards came from surprise friendships and the ability to network.”*

*“The people I met I still think about a lot and I am close to a significant number of them - this to me has been the biggest gain, since all of the people will go on to do amazing things.”*

For the majority of Fellows, the Summer Fellowship either created or helped solidify an already existing interest in social justice. Three in four Fellows reported that after the Fellowship, they felt a strong sense of commitment to Humanity in Action as well as a desire to pursue a career in social justice. Similarly, three in four Fellows noted that they felt they learned information that would be useful to them for making a contribution in their community back at home.

**FIGURE 6.**  
POST-FELLOWSHIP COMMITMENT TO HUMANITY IN ACTION AND HUMANITY IN ACTION IDEALS

Senior Fellow Interviews illustrated how Humanity in Action may help shape individuals' interests and set them on a new career path:

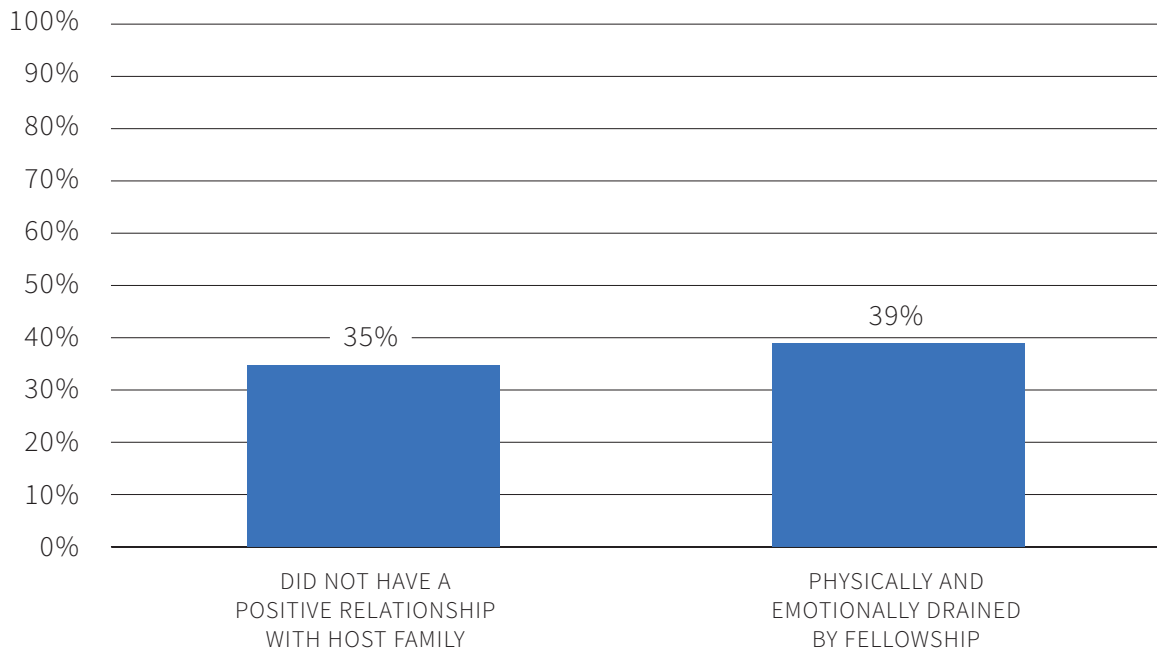


*“Today, I work as an immigration attorney [...] My career choice and path are a direct consequence of my Humanity in Action Fellowship experience.”*

*“The Fellowship challenged a lot of my views on life and help shaped a lot of the political opinions I hold today.”*

While most Fellows rated their Fellowship experience positively, there were a few areas where their evaluations were less positive – and where Humanity in Action could make important improvements. The first is in the realm of host families: one in three Fellows reported that they did not have a positive experience with their host family. Secondly, approximately one in three reported that they felt physically and emotionally drained by the Fellowship.

FIGURE 7. HOST FAMILY AND PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL STATE EVALUATION



Feedback from Fellows offered insight into the physical and emotional toll that the Fellowship can take on participants:

*“Because of the demanding schedule and subject matter (genocide, war, asylum, discrimination, and how intimately tied that was to my family’s own history), there were times that were emotionally exhausting, difficult to cope with, and even stirred up past personal traumas. Because of that, I hope Humanity in Action has since gotten a psychological professional in each host city who is willing to be available in case of personal emergencies.”*

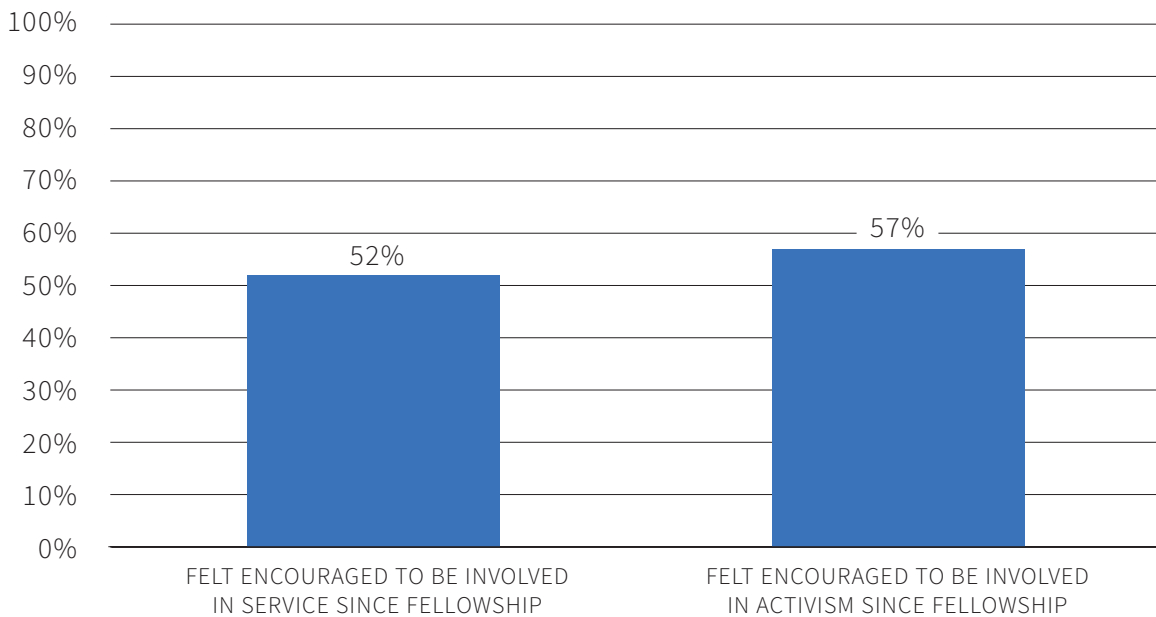
*“There was a significant amount of tension as people came from different backgrounds, had different outlooks and expectations. I felt that this only contributed to my learning, and made it a very valuable experience. On the other hand, I also know there were people in my program who felt that there wasn’t enough facilitation and time for these difficult discussions and who were dissatisfied with some of the assumptions of the program. I think these disagreements are inevitable and I think they are productive – but they need to be carefully addressed so that no one will feel frustrated or ignored.”*

*“It was difficult – we all returned from the summer in Warsaw pretty broken spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.”*

While Senior Fellows underscored the high value of the relationships they formed with their Humanity in Action peers, only slightly over half claimed that the organization encouraged them to be involved in service or activism after their Fellowship.

Interviews and survey responses offered insight into these statistics. Many Fellows noted that while the Fellowship’s educational component was strong, Humanity in Action did not always adequately

FIGURE 8. IMPACT OF HUMANITY IN ACTION ON FELLOWS' POST-FELLOWSHIP ENGAGEMENTS



show them how to translate that learning into action. While Fellows learned a lot during the Fellowship, not all felt that they gained the skills necessary to advocate on behalf of the issues they were passionate about.

*“I had fun and made friends, but we did not learn how to be activists. We attended lectures.”*

*“The only problem I had with my particular program was that it focused way too much on history, education, and lectures and not enough on activism or action. I would think that I was simply taking a regular college course if it had not been for the name attached to the program. I think that is one of the things that makes a few Fellows disillusioned with Humanity in Action. Humanity in Action needs to focus more on training people for action and not only on history lessons.”*

*“I feel that Humanity in Action would better meet their goals if they focused time on working with Fellows to connect their passions to human rights activism.”*

*“I learned a tremendous amount about social justice and activism during my Fellowship, but only due to connections with other like-minded Fellows. The substance of the official program itself was less relevant to what I was interested in learning.”*

*“I think some Fellows in my program were confused about whether the program wanted to make us challenge and question current institutional structures and systems of discrimination and oppression, or simply be a pathway to a career addressing human rights and minority issues within these institutions. I definitely felt that tension as well, but I don’t think it can or should be avoided. Humanity in Action is not a “radical” political*

*Fellowship in that sense, but it should include radical perspectives [...] and encourage broader discussions about what brings about social change.”*

*“I don’t think the Fellowship necessarily prepares for activism, and I think Fellows who expect this will probably be disappointed. Although we did meet some activists, the focus was on learning, research, and discussion rather than learning advocacy skills or movement building. I think we were exposed to a pretty broad range of views, although at times I felt certain aspects could have been left out (orientation with the State Department/Pentagon, meetings at the Dutch Foreign Ministry) since they didn’t really seem to fit into the problem.”*

*“Overall, Humanity in Action was a great experience and I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunity. Many of the Fellows did joke, however, that Humanity In Action is better named, “Humanity Inaction” because there is actually no activist work done by the Fellows. I think that if we truly want people to feel committed to service, there should be an actual service component to the Fellowship.”*

Together, Fellows’ evaluations of their Fellowship experiences and takeaways suggest that while the Fellowship offers an overwhelmingly positive experience for the vast majority of participants, the purpose of the Fellowship is not always as clearly understood.

Fellows see extreme value in the relationships they forge and are generally pleased with the educational content; they are, however, less convinced that the Fellowship itself prepares them for the activism or service they may wish to engage in.

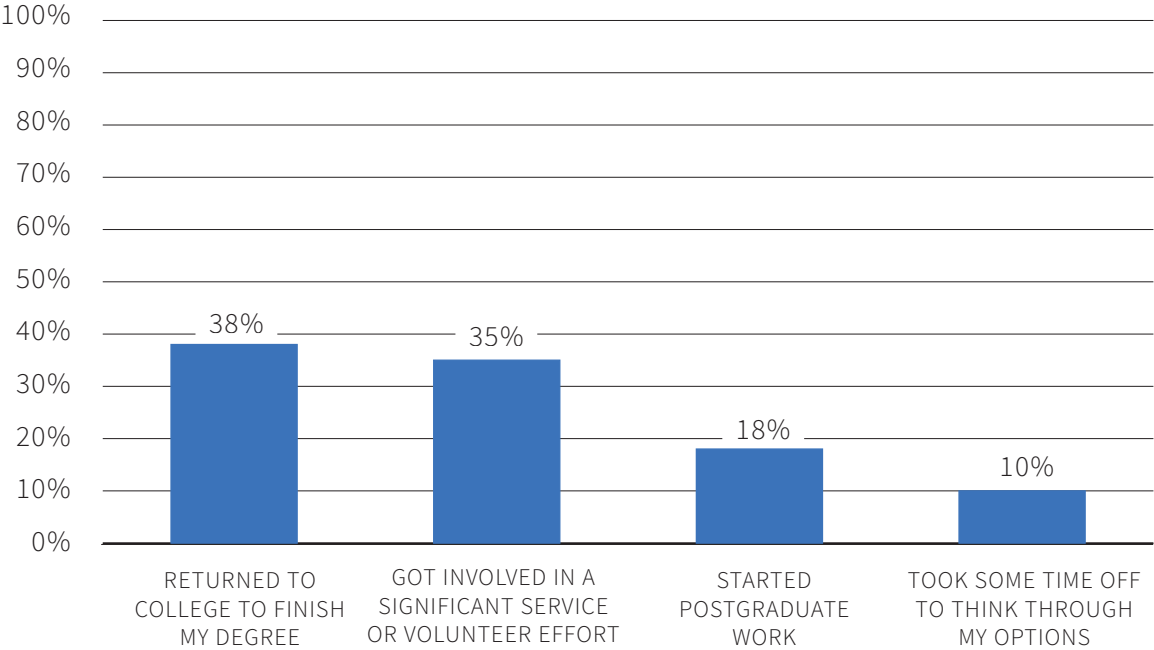
# II. SENIOR FELLOWS' POST-FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES

What have Fellows done since their Humanity in Action Summer Fellowship? This section presents a snapshot of how Fellows have continued to engage with Humanity in Action over time, as well as their current activities and ambitions.

## A. Senior Fellows' Continued Involvement with Humanity in Action

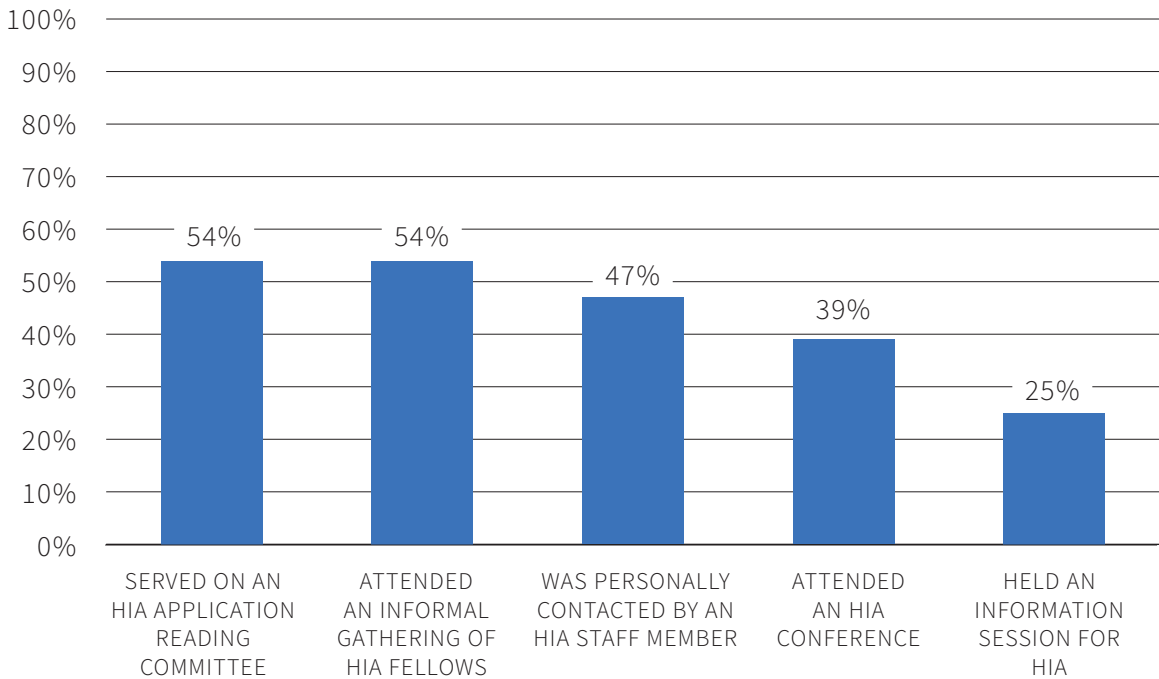
The first year after their Humanity in Action Fellowship, most Fellows return to school, either to finish their college degree or to begin post-graduate work. A minority take some time off to think through their options. One in three Fellows reported that they became involved in a significant service or volunteer effort following the Fellowship.

FIGURE 9. FELLOWS' ACTIVITIES IN FIRST YEAR AFTER FELLOWSHIP



In the first year following their Fellowship, Senior Fellows stay involved to varying degrees. The most common form of engagement with Humanity in Action is through attending informal gatherings of Humanity in Action Fellows or serving on application reading committees. One in three Fellows reported that they attended a Humanity in Action conference in that first year, and one in two Senior Fellows was individually contacted by a Humanity in Action staff member.

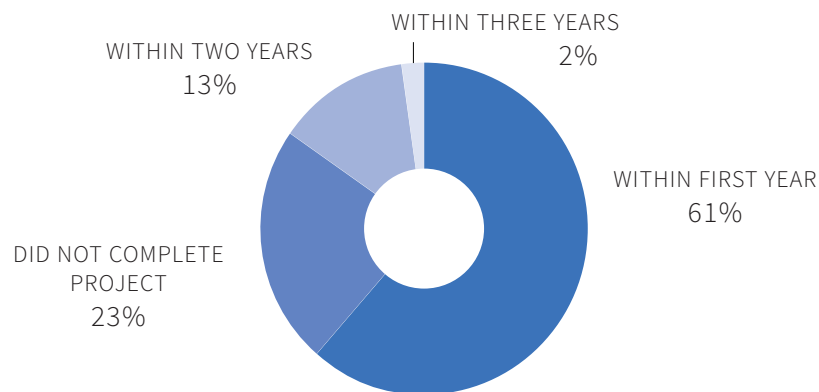
**FIGURE 10. MOST COMMON HUMANITY IN ACTION INTERACTIONS IN YEAR AFTER FELLOWSHIP**



The fact that half of all Senior Fellows continue to engage with Humanity in Action in the first year after their Fellowship indicates that Humanity in Action currently offers a number of opportunities for continuing participation.

Similarly, within that first year, two out of three Senior Fellows completed their Action Project. The majority of those projects are carried out independently.<sup>4</sup> One in five Fellows never completed an Action Project. This data suggests that if a Fellow does not complete their Action Project within the first year, they may never complete it. Thus, Humanity in Action could consider offering extra support to Senior Fellows to ensure that they successfully carry out their Action Projects within that first year.

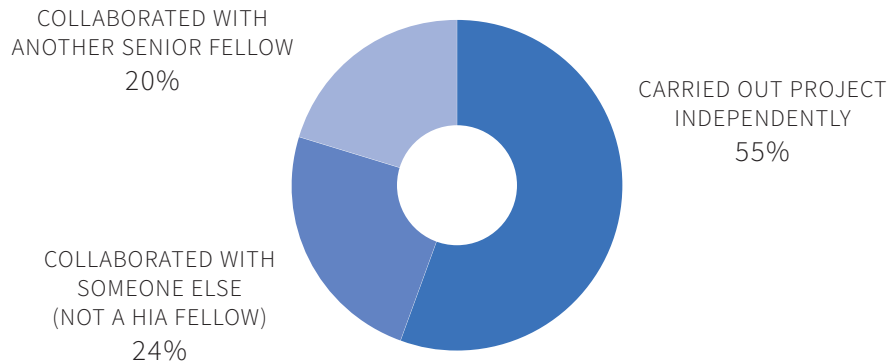
**FIGURE 11. FELLOWS' TIMES TO ACTION PROJECT COMPLETION**



<sup>4</sup> All Humanity in Action Fellows are expected to carry out an Action Project, which is a hands-on initiative inspired by their fellowship experience, within the first year following their fellowship. Projects may take different forms, including community service, advocacy, art projects, lectures, conferences or social entrepreneurship.

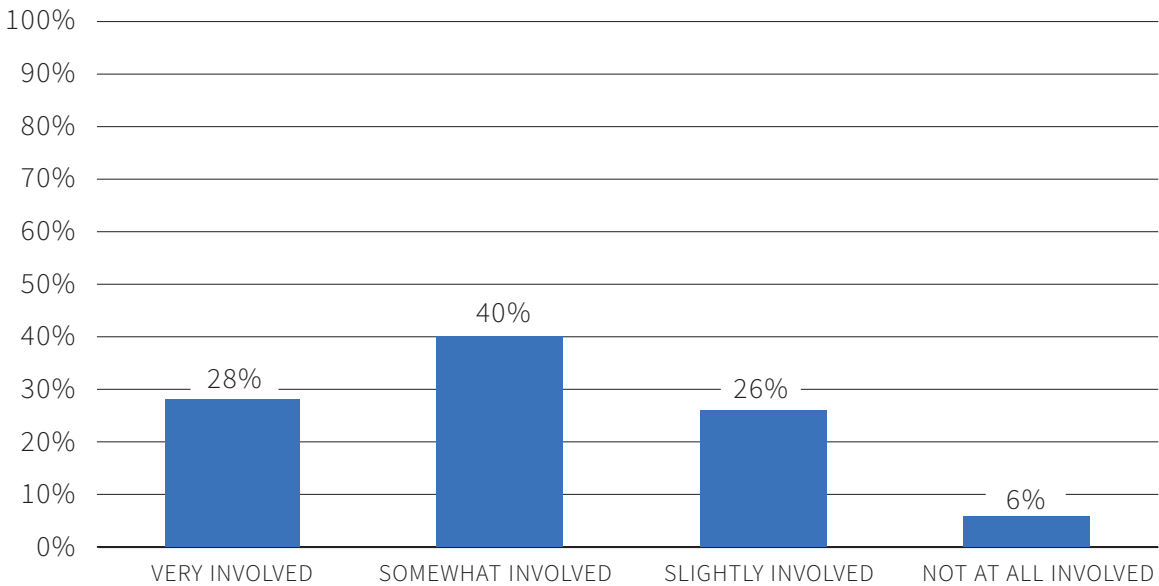


FIGURE 12. ACTION PROJECT COLLABORATION



The majority (68%) of Senior Fellows said that they are still presently involved with Humanity in Action. 28% of Fellows said they are very involved, and 40% said that they are somewhat involved. Only 6% of Fellows said that they are not at all currently involved with Humanity in Action.

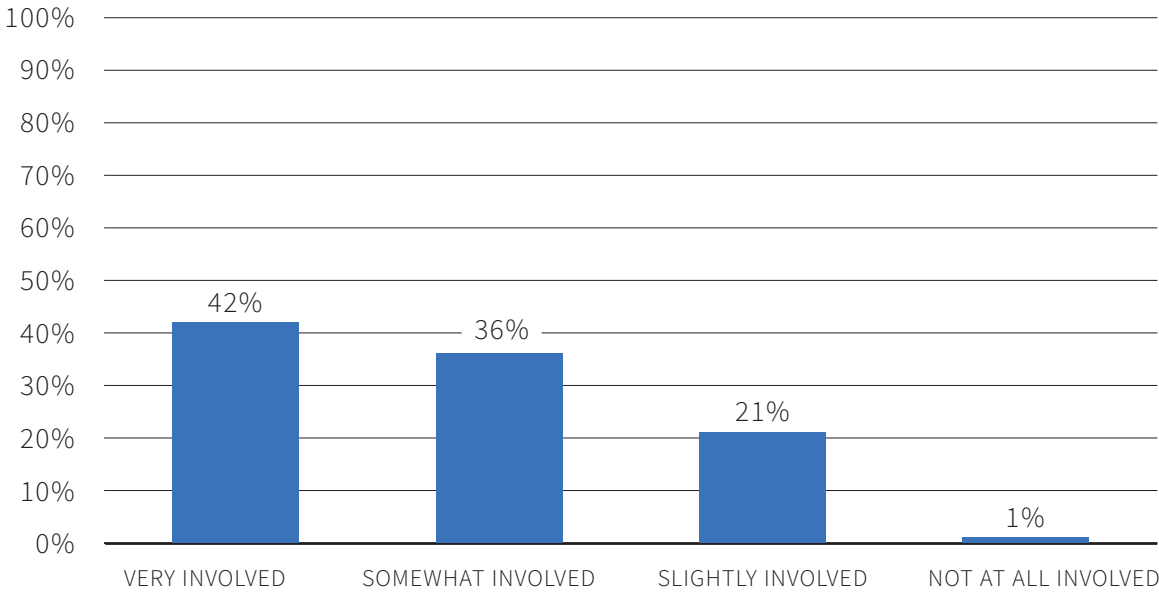
FIGURE 13. FELLOWS' CURRENT LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH HUMANITY IN ACTION



There are a couple of noteworthy correlations between the degree of Fellows' involvement with Humanity in Action and their immediate post-Fellowship experiences. For instance, of the 95 Fellows who were contacted by Humanity in Action staff within the first year, 42% of them said that they are currently very involved with Humanity in Action (compared to 28% of all Senior Fellows).

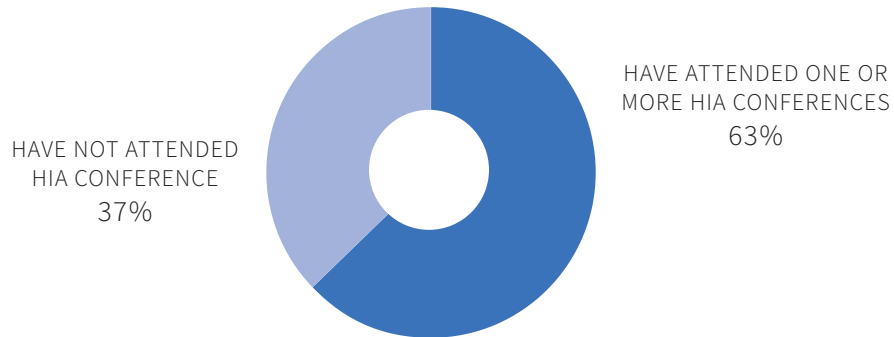
Only one of the Fellows who was contacted by Humanity in Action staff in the first year said that he/she was not at all involved with the organization presently. This suggests that one potentially effective means of retaining engagement over time lies in the reaching out to Fellows immediately following their Fellowship.

**FIGURE 14.**  
 FELLOWS' CURRENT LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT IN HUMANITY IN ACTION IF CONTACTED IN YEAR 1

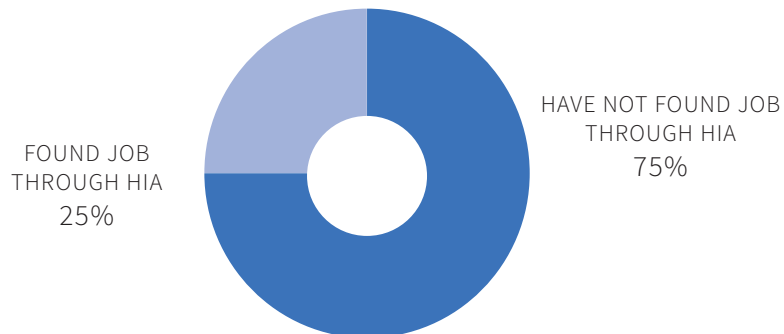


To better understand the ways that Fellows continue to engage with Humanity in Action, the survey investigated Fellows' participation in a range of activities. Two in three Fellows have attended one or more Humanity in Action conferences, and one in four Fellows has found a job through Humanity in Action or a Humanity in Action contact.

**FIGURE 15.** FELLOWS' CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE SINCE FELLOWSHIP

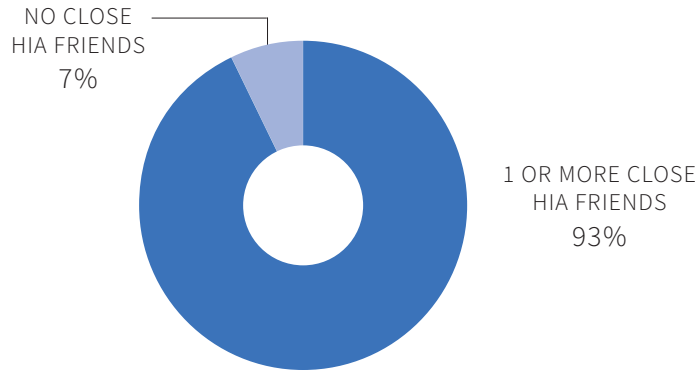


**FIGURE 16.** FELLOWS WHO FOUND A JOB THROUGH HUMANITY IN ACTION



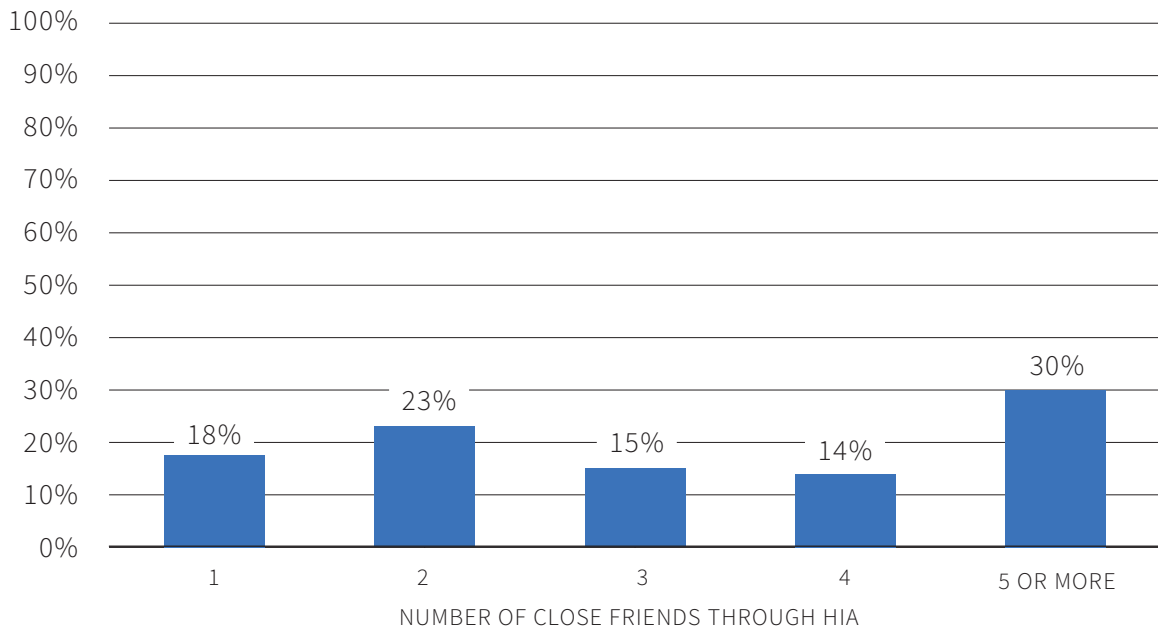
The most striking way that Fellows feel a continued sense of connection to Humanity in Action is through their maintenance of close friendships with Senior Fellows. Nine out of ten Fellows have one or more close current friends through Humanity in Action.

FIGURE 17. CURRENT NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS THROUGH HUMANITY IN ACTION



Of the 197 Fellows with one or more close friends, one in three claimed to have made five or more close friends through Humanity in Action.

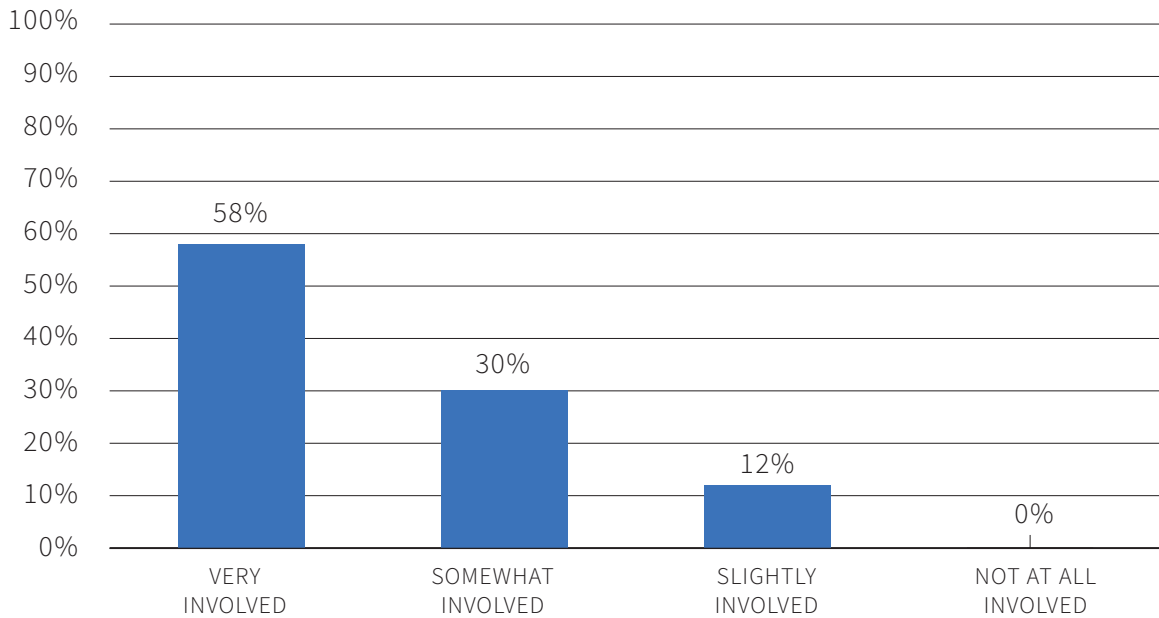
FIGURE 18. NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS THROUGH HUMANITY IN ACTION



Interviews supported these statistics. Of the 24 Senior Fellows interviewed, 22 claimed a close relationship with at least one other Senior Fellow. For these Fellows, who had completed their Fellowships between eight and fourteen years prior to the interview, that they were still friends with someone they met through Humanity in Action speaks to the organization’s strong relationship- and community-building potential.

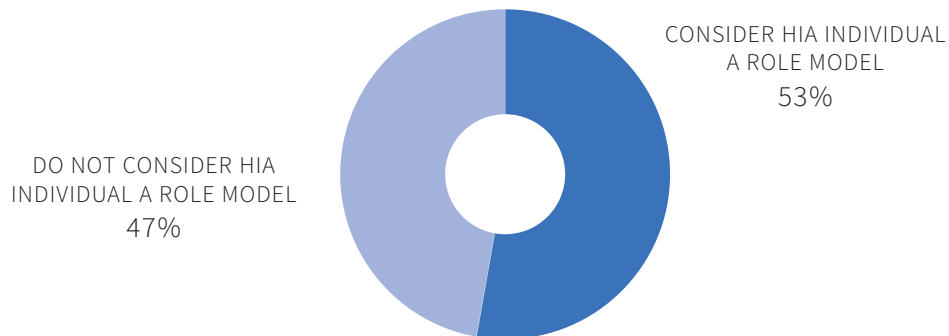
Moreover, just as an individual’s current level of involvement with Humanity in Action was correlated with having been contacted by staff within the first year, it was also highly correlated with having five or more friends. 58% of Senior Fellows with five or more Humanity in Action friends claimed to be very involved with Humanity in Action. It appears that involvement with Humanity in Action may run hand-in-hand with the depth and breadth of Senior Fellow relationships.

FIGURE 19. WELL-CONNECTED FELLOWS’ LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH HUMANITY IN ACTION



Finally, one in two Fellows claimed that they considered someone to be a role model who they met through Humanity in Action. Of these 109 Senior Fellows, 42% mentioned Judy Goldstein as a personal role model to them.<sup>5</sup>

FIGURE 20. ROLE MODELS WITHIN HUMANITY IN ACTION

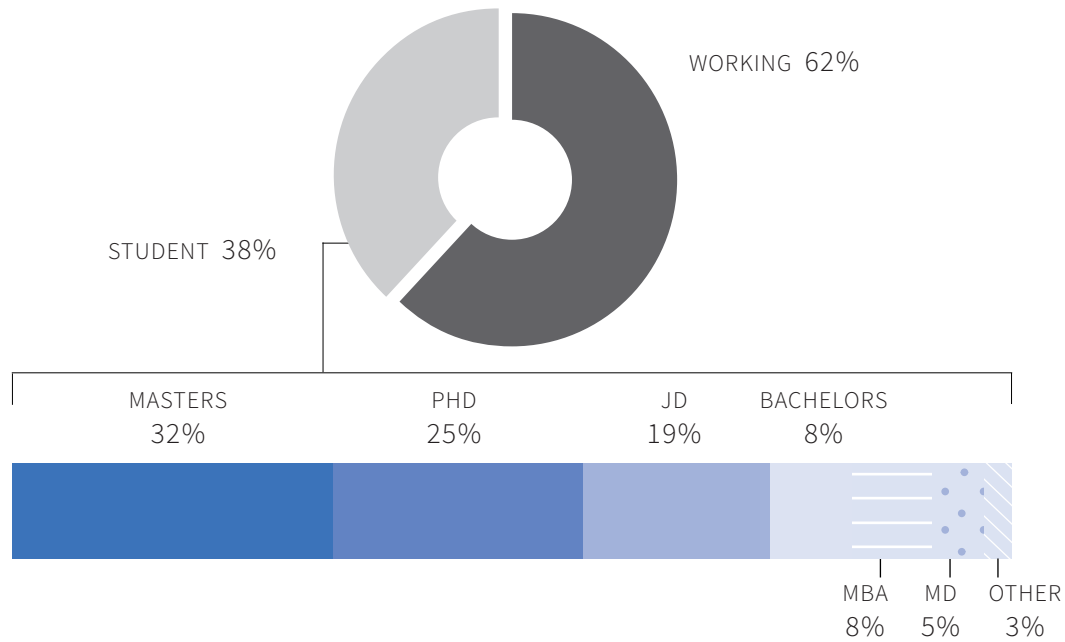


<sup>5</sup> In the survey, if Fellows responded “Yes” to the question of “Do you consider someone you met through Humanity in Action be a role model?” they were then asked to write in the name of that person. They were not primed with names of individuals.

## B. Senior Fellows Today: Careers, Ambitions, and Values

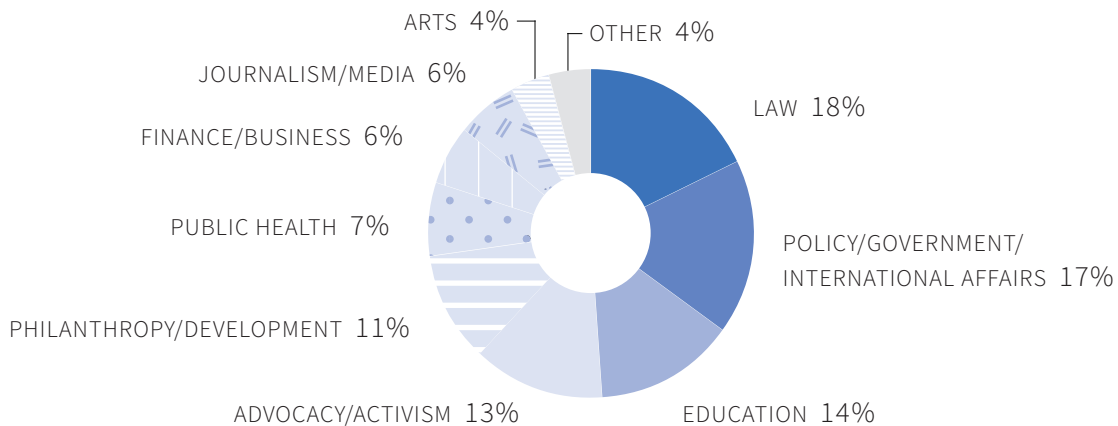
The majority of Senior Fellows are either working or looking for work, while approximately one in three is currently a student. The 80 students are pursuing a range of degrees. One in three students is pursuing a Masters, one in four a PhD, and one in five a JD. A handful of Fellows are pursuing MBAs, MDs, or completing their Bachelors degrees.

FIGURE 21. FELLOWS' CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND DEGREES CURRENTLY PURSUED



The 131 employed Fellows are working in a number of fields. The most popular field is law, with policy/government/international affairs a close second. Nearly one in five Fellows is working in either of these two fields. Following those two, Fellows are mostly represented in education, advocacy/activism, and philanthropy/development. Overall, the picture of Fellows based on their professional pursuits is that they are engaged in pro-social careers and fields.

FIGURE 22. EMPLOYED FELLOWS' FIELDS OF WORK



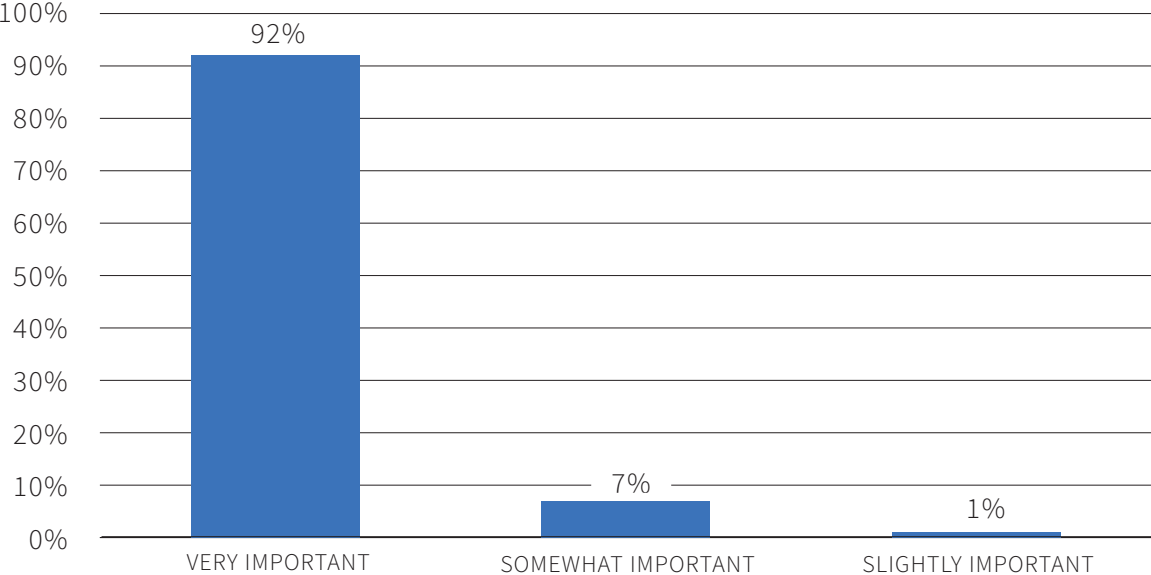
Beyond their fields of employment, Humanity in Action’s Senior Fellows’ civic engagement levels present a similarly compelling picture of participation. 95% of eligible Senior Fellows voted in the 2008 presidential election.<sup>6</sup> 87% of Fellows donated money for charitable purposes within the last year. One in four Fellows currently serves on the board of a non-profit organization or student association.

Clearly, the Humanity in Action network is one composed of Fellows that place a high value on pursuing pro-social, meaningful work. To gain a deeper understanding of the values underlying their pro-social careers and high engagement levels, the survey and interviews inquired into the motivations behind Senior Fellows’ current work and future aspirations.

Three deeply held values emerged across the network. At the same time that Senior Fellows espouse, on the one hand, an interest and commitment to working in realm of social justice, they also point to and speak of additional priorities that guide their choices. These include include financial stability and familial relationships. Fellows express a desire to be present for a family and be financially secure, while still feeling that the work they do is meaningful and impactful.

The survey asked Fellows to rank how important a number of values are to them. 92% of Fellows reported that it was very important for them to make a difference in society.

FIGURE 23. IMPORTANCE OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SOCIETY



Interviews corroborated this statistic and offered insight into how Fellows think about having impact. Without being explicitly asked, 21 out of 24 interviewed individuals mentioned the importance of pursuing a career that allowed them to remain engaged with a political or social issue of significance to them. Be it in the field of human rights or environmental justice, the vast majority of individuals indicated that they saw their profession as the primary means of staying involved in a cause. They noted how a desire to have an impact on that issue helped them decide between potential career paths:

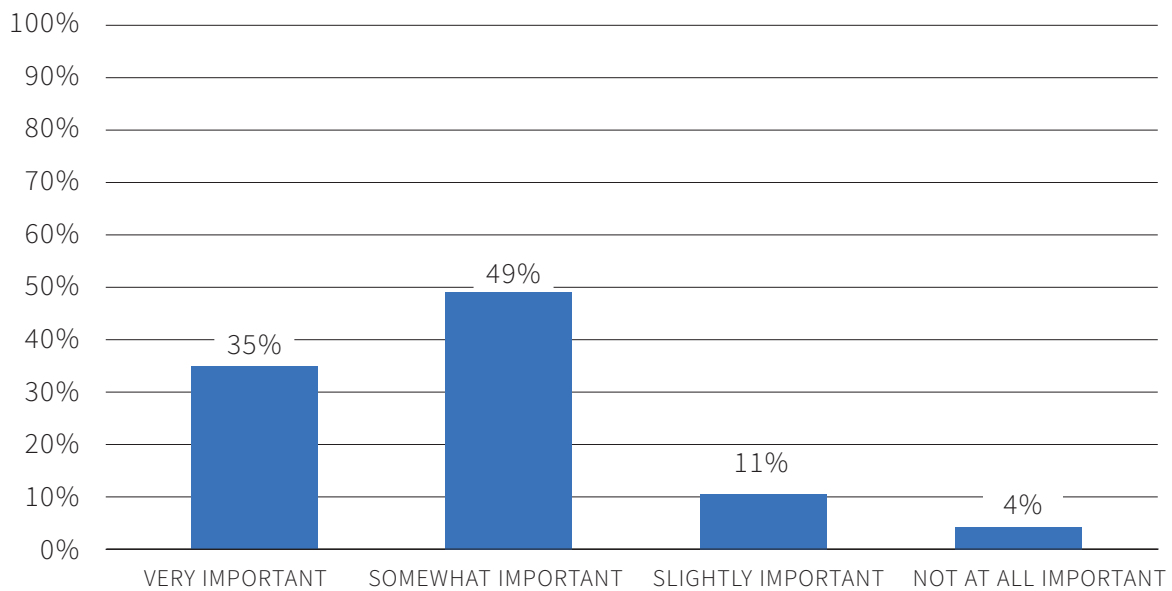
*“I also was just really attracted to the idea of writing about what was going on in the community that I was living in or in the world around me. I wanted to write about real*

<sup>6</sup> As a point of comparison, 51% of eligible 18- to 29-year-olds in the United States voted in the 2008 presidential election.

*things that were happening that had relevance that people would think about rather than just an academic article. [...] I wanted to feel what I wrote had some impact. Which I mean academics do but I increasingly felt, me personally, I could have more impact as a journalist.”*

At the same time that Fellows care deeply about making a difference in society and having impact, financial considerations are also significant. Almost 80% of Fellows reported that it is somewhat to very important for them to do well financially. 83% of Fellows reported that it is somewhat to very important to be able to financially support their parents later in life. Almost 100% of Fellows noted that it is important to them to be financially independent.

**FIGURE 24. IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL SUCCESS**



**FIGURE 25. IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE ABILITY TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT PARENTS**

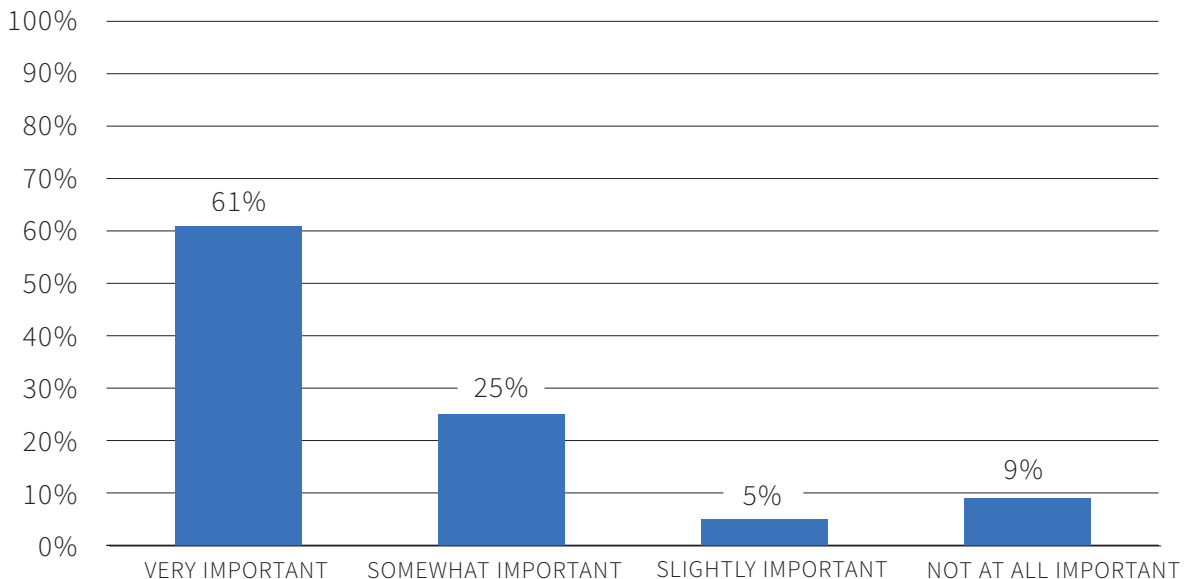
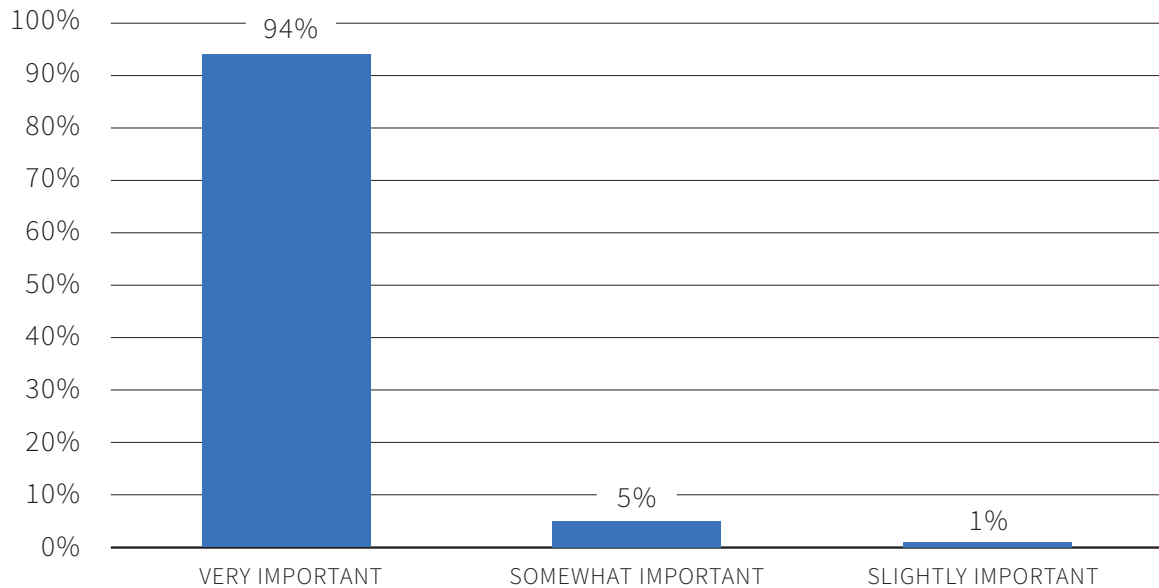


FIGURE 26. IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE



Interviews offered deeper insight into the role of finances and values about money in Fellows' lives. Individuals' concerns about financial resources clearly shaped the role that earning money plays in their lives, enabling some to pursue their ideal line of work while constraining others. Certainly, a desire for financial stability is not the same as aspiring to affluence. Most Senior Fellows interviewed stated that they did not seek to nor did they ever plan on being very wealthy as long as they continued down their envisioned path.

*"I never went into this imagining that I was going to be able to make money in my life. I imagined that I would get to a certain place thanks to the generosity of my parents and then I could try and maintain that place and make ends meet – but no, it's not a very financially interesting position nor is it ever likely to be."*

*"I don't need to be an insanely wealthy person, I don't even need to be a rich person, but I would like to have an income someday. Going from my job in D.C. where I was making a good middle class income to now, with my meager graduate school stipend, it's hard. And so I look forward to being gainfully employed some day. I don't feel like I need to make a lot of money, but I would like to be financially secure [...] I would like it if I had at least a stable life."*

Senior Fellows also spoke of the large role that student debt played in their lives – as both a source of stress as well as a deciding factor in whether to pursue post-graduate education. The Senior Fellow lawyers I spoke to with a strong desire to do public interest law discussed the loan repayment program as significant in allowing them to attend law school and thereafter work in this field. All but one of the public interest lawyers and current law students I spoke to mentioned the program, which allows individuals who earn less than a certain yearly salary in public interest law to have their debt paid off by their law school over time:

*"Ten years from now I will still owe <law school> money, but I've never wanted to make a ton of money. The way the program works is that if you earn less than \$80,000 a year*



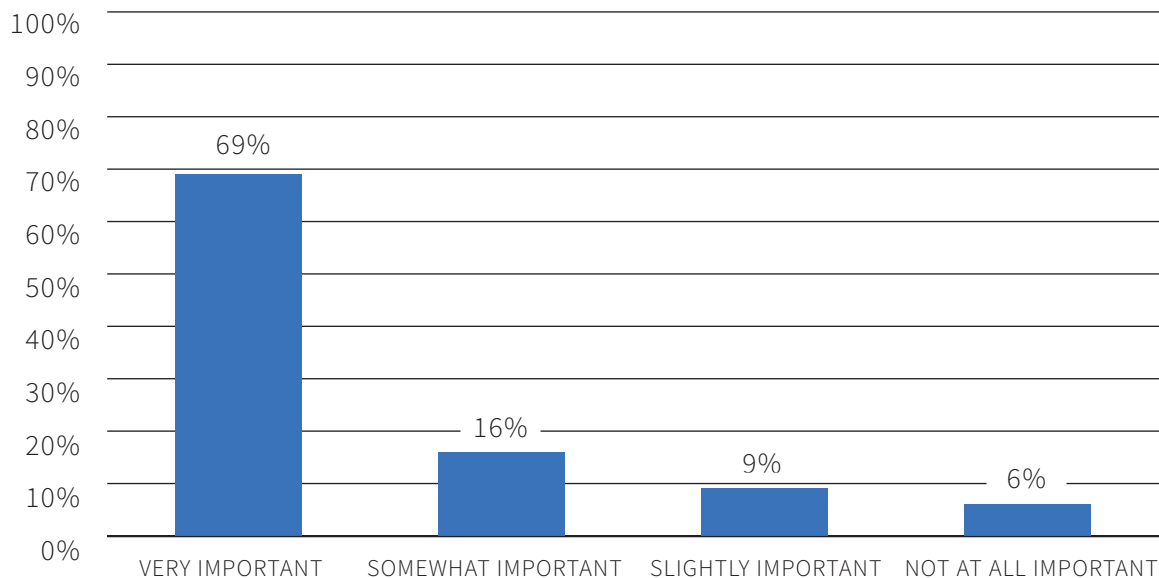
*and work in public interest law, you don't pay anything toward your loans and it takes them ten years but they pay it off for you. If you earn more than eighty thousand, then you pay a quarter of what you earn over eighty toward your loans [...] I'm not out to make millions of dollars doing what I want to do so as long as <law school> is true to its promise of paying off my loans if I do public interest work, then that's okay with me."*

*"I had to go to a school with a loan repayment assistance program. I just did because of the work I wanted to do. I feel like that's absolutely essential. And really only a handful of law schools – or at least at the time and I think still – offer good loan repayment assistance programs."*

This suggests that Fellows highly depend on financial support in order to pursue work that feels both impactful and personally fulfilling. Without such aid opportunities, Fellows may be more inclined to pursue other kinds of work that grant them a desired level of financial security.

The third and final value of high importance to Senior Fellows is that of raising a family, with 85% claiming this as somewhat to very important to them.

FIGURE 27. IMPORTANCE OF RAISING A FAMILY



Interviews supported this statistic, with 21 out of 24 Fellows expressing a desire to raise a family. Interviews shed light on Fellows' aims of not only securing their own financial security, but that of their children as well. These considerations make Senior Fellows reconsider whether they will move abroad for work, what jobs they will be willing to pursue, and whether those jobs will grant them adequate time to spend with their families. Whereas pursuing meaningful work and financial concerns are the two guiding forces in Fellows' early career decisions, relationships – with partners and children – emerge as another deeply held value as they age:

*"I would love to someday get married and have kids and have a family. That's something that I aspire to, whether that happens or not we shall see [...] And then I would like for my kids, if I had kids some day, for them to be able to have – I don't know, I was always*

*kind of envious of students who were going off and doing other internships with really cool non-profit organizations or social enterprise and doing really interesting things but things that were not financially – like you wouldn't make money there. So I would like if someday my kids had more liberty to be able to do some of those things.”*

*“We don't have plans to have start a family super soon. But I would like to start a family, and I think I'd like to provide them with a lot of the same opportunities that I had growing up. It's a pretty strong driving force for me.”*

What these three values – impact, money, and family – suggest is that the way that Humanity in Action can best continue to engage and support its older Fellows may differ from how it does so with its younger Senior Fellows. Put simply, Fellows' motivations and priorities change over time. With these shifts in mind, this report's final section combines survey data with concrete feedback from Senior Fellows to present a set of recommendations for Humanity in Action moving forward.

### III. LOOKING FORWARD: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey and interview findings show that the majority of Humanity in Action American Senior Fellows had a positive Fellowship experience, continue to engage with Humanity in Action, and are both professionally and civically engaged. However, study findings also point to a number of areas where Humanity in Action could improve in how it serves its current and incoming Senior Fellows. The five chief recommendations include:

**Recommendation 1:** Intensively engage Senior Fellows in the first year following the Fellowship to ensure longer-term involvement with Humanity in Action.

Survey findings suggest that the first year following the Summer Fellowship may be critical in ensuring long-term engagement with Humanity in Action: Most Fellows who complete an Action Project do so within the first year, and a greater percentage of Fellows who were contacted by a Humanity in Action staff person in the first year are currently more engaged than Fellows who were not contacted.

Thus, Humanity in Action may consider offering extra support to Fellows in that first year. That support could include, for one, help in implementing an Action Project. Given that the majority of Fellows participate in the Summer Fellowship during their final year of college or directly after graduation, Humanity in Action could also offer these individuals career guidance. Such guidance could involve connecting Fellows with leaders working in their fields of interest, or as I elaborate upon in Recommendation 3, facilitating mentor-mentee relationships between younger and older Senior Fellows. The organization could offer additional financial aid to bring new Fellows to New York City for the fall conference, or offer meaningful opportunities for them to participate virtually.

**Recommendation 2:** Provide Senior Fellows with more geographically diverse opportunities to participate and stay connected to Humanity in Action.

Many Senior Fellows pointed to the difficulty of staying connected with the Humanity in Action network depending on their geographic location. While opportunities for ongoing engagement abound in cities like New York City and Washington, D.C., Fellows in less Humanity in Action-dense areas of the country or world find it difficult to stay connected:

*“I had an overwhelmingly positive experience. I just wish there were more opportunities to be involved as a Senior Fellow. It appears most of the current activities are very New York-centric. I would love the opportunity to spearhead a West Coast hub of Humanity in Action activity.”*

*“I think that I would have felt a much greater tie to Humanity in Action if I had been able to participate in Senior Fellow activities afterwards. I moved to a fairly remote area in*

*Africa within weeks of completing the program, so it was very difficult to maintain the ties and friendships I made over the summer. Once I moved back to the US I had a desire to get involved with Humanity in Action activities in NYC, but it seemed that every time there was an event it conflicted with other commitments. In other words, I enjoyed the program and would like to be more involved, but it takes a more effort than I have been willing to put in because most activities are not in geographic proximity to me.”*

*“While I still feel emotionally connected to the larger Humanity in Action community, it has been unfortunately difficult for me to participate further – there are only a handful of other Humanity in Action Senior Fellows in <Midwest state> and we’re spread across the state. I wish there was more I could do to stay involved.”*

Some ways to engage Fellows beyond the Senior Fellow geographic hubs would be to offer conferences or study trips in more varied locations. That so many Fellows participate in the yearly local application reading parties suggests that there may be dormant Humanity in Action communities throughout the country that would be more active if given the opportunity or structure to do so. Fellows offered similar ideas:

*“The New York City program was especially meaningful for me as a native New Yorker. I think having a few more Humanity in Action sites throughout the United States (maybe one on the east coast and one on the west to begin with) would be a terrific idea.”*

### **Recommendation 3:** Create more opportunities for Senior Fellows to connect, potentially through forging older and younger Senior Fellow bridges.

Given how highly Senior Fellows value relationships to other Senior Fellows and the Humanity in Action network, Humanity in Action could do more to encourage ongoing opportunities for Senior Fellows – of all ages – to connect with each other and with the organization.

One potentially meaningful way to engage older and younger Senior Fellow cohorts would be through Senior Fellow mentoring opportunities. Older Senior Fellows could be paired with younger ones as a way of not only keeping older Fellows engaged, but also helping younger Fellows navigate their professional paths. In some cases, these mentorships could connect Fellows living in the same geographic region, ideally in the same city. Such a matching strategy would grant Fellows who live in areas with less active Humanity in Action communities the opportunity to meet each other and retain a sense of connectedness to the organization.

Moreover, interviews with older Senior Fellows suggested that these Fellows have a bounty of advice and guidance to offer college graduates. The interviews offered insight into how Fellows’ priorities and goals change over their twenties and thirties, and how they are still able to stay involved in social justice causes despite new financial and familial considerations. Younger Fellows would certainly benefit from exposure to and mentorship in these areas.

**Recommendation 4.** Expand on Humanity in Action’s current definition of human rights in order to engage a broader range of Senior Fellows over time.

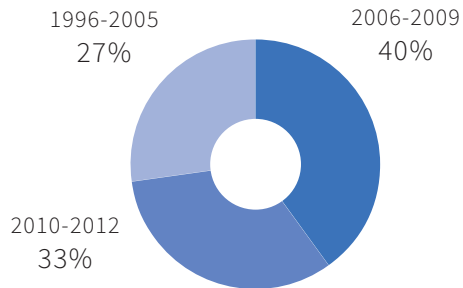
Many Fellows spoke of the need for Humanity in Action to offer a more expansive definition of human rights, and include topics such as environmental and food justice as important. Fellows who end up employed in fields beyond education and international affairs – which have traditionally been a focus of the organization – may feel alienated or unwelcome at Humanity in Action events. Some Fellows indicated that they would like to engage more with the organization but do not feel that their current work would necessarily be considered by Humanity in Action as meaningful or aligned with the organization’s mission.

**Recommendation 5:** Offer more financial aid and diverse funding opportunities for Senior Fellow undertakings.

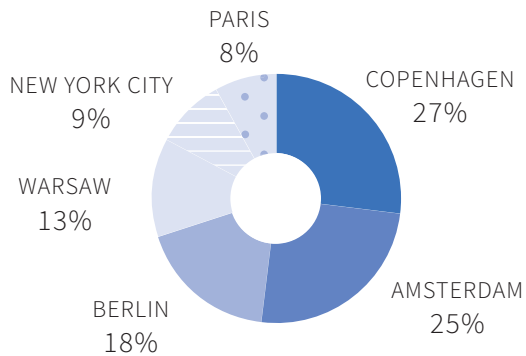
While Humanity in Action does an impressive job of offering Fellowships for conference and study trip attendance, it could also consider how to financially support Senior Fellows in their educational endeavors. For Fellows who pursue law or Masters degrees, increasing amounts of student debt may limit their perceived ability to pursue pro-social, less well-compensated work. Moreover, while Humanity in Action offers funding for its own internships, the organization could also consider offering grants or scholarships for participation in other unpaid work or internships. Whatever resources Humanity in Action can use to encourage and support Fellows in staying committed to pursuing pro-social work would be resources well spent.

## IV. APPENDIX: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

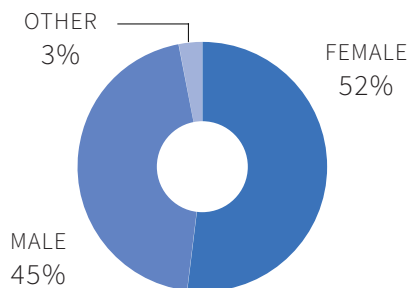
**FIGURE 28.**  
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' FELLOWSHIP YEAR



**FIGURE 29.**  
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' FELLOWSHIP SITE



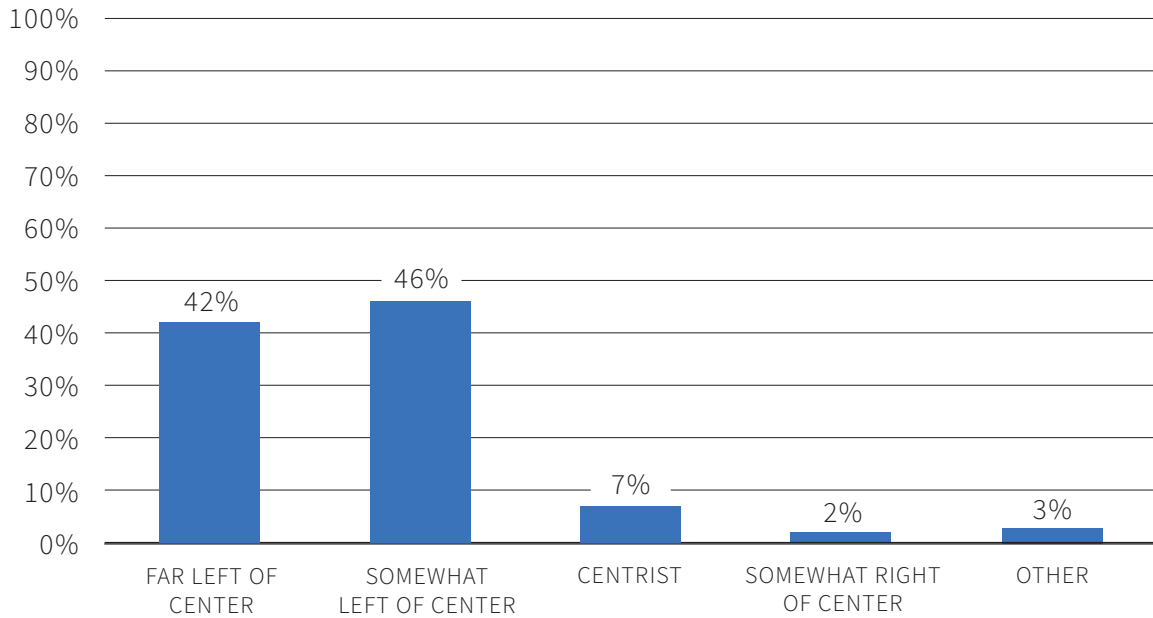
**FIGURE 30.**  
SURVEY RESPONDENT GENDER DISTRIBUTION



**TABLE 1.**  
SENIOR FELLOW INTERVIEWS:  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<i>NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES</i>	24
<i>AGE RANGE</i>	28-35
<i>MEDIAN AGE</i>	31
<i>GENDER</i>	13 FEMALE 11 MALE
<i>SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS</i>	11 UPPER MIDDLE CLASS 8 MIDDLE CLASS 5 WORKING CLASS
<i>RACE/ETHNICITY</i>	17 WHITE 3 ASIAN 3 HISPANIC/LATINO 1 AFRICAN AMERICAN
<i>CAREER FIELD</i>	9 GOVERNMENT/POLICY 8 NON-PROFIT/NGO 3 PRIVATE SECTOR 3 STUDENTS 1 MEDICINE 1 ACADEMIA
<i>FAMILIAL STATUS</i>	9 MARRIED 4 DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS 11 UNMARRIED/SINGLE

**FIGURE 31. SURVEY RESPONDENTS' CURRENT POLITICAL LEANINGS**



**FIGURE 32. SURVEY RESPONDENTS' SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND (ALL YEARS, 2008-2012)**

