



The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program

Annual Report

2019/20 Academic Year



www.haifa.ac.il

 facebook.com/univ.haifa.ac.il

 @HaifaUniversity

 UHaifa on Instagram

August 2020

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
• Greeting from Mrs. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel	1
• Foreword	2
• Training Program - Intercultural Leadership Workshop	3
• Community Activities within Educational and Social Frameworks	4
<u>Project Descriptions</u>	
○ Project at Achva School – Studying Hebrew	5
○ Project at Hofit School – Personal Initiation	5
○ Projects at the University of Haifa	5-6
▪ Dormitory Activities	
▪ SquashBond	
○ Beit Hachessed – Pal-Yam Blvd.	7
▪ Prisoners Rehabilitation Initiative	
▪ Learning Center	
○ Positive Events – Musical and Cultural Happenings	8
○ Mutual Learning - Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School	9
• Evaluation of the Various Projects	9
• Goals for the 2020/21 Academic Year	9
• Appendix 1 - Training Courses	10
• Appendix 2 – List of Participating Students	13
• Appendix 3 – Faraj Srouf's Final Paper	22

Greetings

The University of Haifa is not only an institution of academic excellence, but also a place where thousands of young Jewish, Arab and Druze students come together. About a quarter of the student body is non-Jewish, which approximately corresponds to the Israeli population structure. As a place of dialogue and exchange between the cultures, the University of Haifa is considered the most liberal university in Israel.

To achieve this goal, hard work was required and daily efforts are needed to ensure a peaceful coexistence and a genuine cooperation. We support this development by

implementing programs that put the intercultural understanding into practice. The German Friends Association initiated the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program in 2006. Within the framework of the program, we award scholarships to promising Arab and Jewish students, enabling them to acquire leadership abilities and to assume responsibility in their communities during their studies. Accordingly, we attach great importance to the fact that our scholarship holders not only show extraordinary academic performances, but also actively strengthen a respectful coexistence in the pluralistic Israeli society beyond the boundaries of the campus. We are happy to rely on the University of Haifa as a competent partner on our side, which is supporting our scholarship holders with every academic or personal problem they may face.



This year, an extensive support was more needed than ever. Although every year the program brings its unique opportunities and challenges, due to the novel coronavirus, our participants had to adapt to new conditions in record time. It is all the more impressive to hear how well and creatively the participants dealt with the new challenges. The intercultural leadership workshops and some of the project activities had to be moved to online platforms when the pandemic began. The multi-cultural music performances as part of the Positive Events for example were streamed on Facebook Live and obtained over 13.000 views.

I am particularly proud that during this difficult times, many of our scholarship holders have not hesitated to volunteer also outside of the programs, thus sending a great signal of solidarity and showing a sense of community. I am grateful to be able to accompany those inspiring young people, who give me hope for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel".

Dr. h. c. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel

Chairwoman

Association of German Friends of the University of Haifa

The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program Annual Report for 2019/20

Foreword

The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program is a unique program, in its 14th year of operation at the University of Haifa. The program is generously sponsored by the German Friends Association of the University of Haifa. The main objective of the program is to facilitate dialogue and multi-cultural social interaction between Jewish and Arab students. Students who are active in the program have an awareness of the Jewish-Arab conflict coupled with a desire to lead a change in this area, as well as experience with social activism.

Objectives of the Program

1. Increase awareness of the need for coexistence among Jews and Arabs and to work toward advancing this goal.
2. Develop joint leadership for social change among Jewish and Arab students.
3. Bring about improvement in the social and educational conditions of the mixed population in Haifa through joint community projects.
4. Develop and raise social community initiatives among the Jewish and Arab student populations.

Elements of the Program

The program is comprised of two parts:

1. Community Activities within a Social-Educational Framework – Students invest their academic and individual capabilities for the benefit of the community. During this academic year, the activities are taking place for four hours each week, 90 annual hours of activity.
2. Training Program – This year two training courses take place for participants in the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program: one course for the group of new students and one course for continuing students.

The 2019/20 Activities – Focus

- Social Entrepreneurship - During the year we have placed an emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial skills through practice, reading related materials. We also planned a yearly seminar, but due to COVID-19 we had to cancel it.
- Students - At the beginning of the first semester, 19 Arab students and 21 Jewish students were recruited. During the second semester, one Arab and one Jewish student left the program due to personal reasons – Maria Abboud and Noa Aviv. **Overall, 38 students completed the program.** Please see the student list at the end of this report.

Training Program - Intercultural Leadership Workshop

In the framework of this activity, the students participated in a custom-made course known as the Intercultural Leadership Workshop. The workshop included theoretical studies on issues of leadership and multiculturalism as well as a practical aspect which was meant to put theory into action. In addition, the students brought up various issues relating to their experiences in their respective community activities, and analyzed them with their fellow students as case studies.

This year, two workshops were held: one for new students and one for continuing students. Both were year-long courses worth four academic credits. The courses were taught by two instructors (one Arab and one Jewish), Nisreen Morqus and Itay Shetsky who both have extensive experience working with groups of mixed populations. The syllabus is enclosed at the end of the report.



Zohar Zenescu, a second year MA student in Learning Disabilities shares some of her experiences over the year:

"I came to the program with a lot of question marks, expectations and concerns. During the year, I got to know lovely people who come from other cultures and with social norms I did not know. It was the first time I had formed friendships with members of the Arab sector, with people of my age. The Arabic language had already become an integral part of my routine and was no longer foreign to me. I really enjoyed the volunteering in the dormitories. Those fun and pleasant meetings are able to break through many barriers, as they are not necessarily related to politics, but give time for relief within a fun and positive atmosphere."

Community Activities within Educational and Social Frameworks

The following table details the various focal points for activities for the 2019/20 academic year:

Project Name	Where?	# of Students
Personal Mentoring – Hofit School	Downtown Haifa	3
Studying Hebrew – Achva School	Downtown Haifa	3 (2 completed the year as one student left due to personal issues)
Student Dormitories Activities	University of Haifa	9
Project "SquashBond"	University of Haifa	6
Beit Hachessed - Prisoners Rehabilitation Initiative	Downtown Haifa	1
Beit Hachessed- Learning Center	Downtown Haifa	5
Positive Events	Hadar Neighborhood & online	6
Mutual Learning	Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School	6 (5 completed the year as one student left due to personal issues)
Program Coordinator		1
Total	8 Projects	Overall, 38 students completed the program.

Project Descriptions

Project at Achva School – Studying Hebrew

Three Arab students took part in this project. The students accompanied a group of Arab elementary school pupils who needed to better their Hebrew language skills, specifically towards their matriculation. The students helped them practice their Hebrew through games, theatre and other creative endeavors.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, the school could not allow our students to participate in their activities, but after going back to normal, the school welcomed our students back.

The students made a true personal connection with the pupils, and the school staff reported that the pupils made real progress.

Project at Hofit School – Personal Mentoring

Two Jewish and one Arab student took part in this project. Each student accompanied an elementary school pupil who is facing difficulties in their studies, in their Hebrew knowledge and in their socializing processes.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, the students and pupils met at online platforms and kept the project going each from their home.

The students made deep personal connections with the pupils and the school staff appreciate their efforts.

Projects at the University of Haifa

Dormitory Activities

The University of Haifa dormitories are home to 1,000 students - Jews, Arabs and international students. During the 2019/20 academic year, nine students from the Community Leadership Program were placed in this project. Over the course of the year, the students acted in task groups and organized events for the residents. This year, in the first semester, the emphasis was placed on cultural events that allow students to experience various cultures. All activities took place with the collaboration of dormitory coordinators. Due to COVID-19, our emphasis shifted towards other activities. We produced events dealing with the pandemic, in order to give the students tools to deal with those difficult times.



Trivia Night



Middle Eastern Night



Middle Eastern Night

"SquashBond"

The SquashBond non-profit association operates for the benefit of youth from all Israeli sectors. Through strenuous activities and long-term programs, this non-profit association develops/produces confident as well as tolerant youth as all activities are mixed. The non-profit association operates at the University of Haifa twice a week. Our students accompanied these activities on campus and provided various activities that had to do with multiculturalism and mutual understanding. During COVID-19, we managed to move our activities with the children to online platforms.



SquashBond meeting via zoom



Daniel, a SquashBond student, playing with a participant

Projects at Beit Hacheded

Beit Hacheded is a voluntary organization, established as a house, shelter and a location for people in need who cannot find proper solutions to various hardships they are facing. Beit Hacheded operates on two levels – the individual and the community. This year, the following projects took place in this framework:

Prisoners Rehabilitation Initiative

In continuation from last year's success, this year one student, a Social Work student, took part in this project. The student has Meditation and Yoga training and provided a Meditation and Yoga workshop to the residents of the hostel, including sharing personal experiences. During their meetings, many issues came up and this setting was a great way to discuss and air grievances. The student managed to truly connect with the residents.

During COVID-19, the meetings could not take place as usual, but the student managed to keep in touch with most of the prisoners and Beit Hacheded's staff.

Learning Center

Five students took part in this project. This Center has been operating since 2005 and its purpose is to provide enrichment programs for at-risk children and youth in the Haifa area. The Center provides them an opportunity to develop and grow.

During COVID-19, the center was not allowed to operate, so our students used this break to develop new meetings with the children. When the students were allowed to go back to the center, the children and the staff were thankful and happy.

Moneer Khawalid, a second year student in Economics and Business Administration shares his experiences:

"I really enjoyed coming and playing with the kids and helping them with school duties, because it enabled a good connection between us. I learnt how to deal with different children, since each child has a different character and different needs: children who need to be played with to get closer to them, or children who need to be talked to about their private lives and to be in touch with them.

Throughout the year and my voluntary service, I realized that I have the ability and strength to mentor and guide, and I believe this will help me in the future."

Positive Events

Six students took part in this project. The Positive Events are special performances in people's homes that bring forth a unique model for community cultural events, which incorporate home hospitality and musical performances by multi-cultural groups. This creates cross-cultural intimate gatherings. This year, two events took place with the participation of approximately 170 guests.

During COVID-19, we had to rethink our options of operating such productions, and we managed to move the events to online platforms (Facebook Live). Our performances brought over 13,000 views.



Christmas Positive Event



Positive Event at a Special-needs



Facebook live performance

Mutual Learning - Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School

The Shizaf High School is a public Arab school in Haifa. Most of its pupils are from a low socio-economic background. The school runs a special program, which allows studying alongside the empowerment of the pupils and their families. The students from the CL Program participated in the language project for the third year now. The project aims to enrich the Hebrew skills of the pupils. Six students arrived at the school once a week for a four-hour session. At the first half of the weekly session, the pupils studied Hebrew, specifically spoken Hebrew. Studying was done through songs and games. At the second half of the meeting the pupils taught the students spoken Arabic with the attendance of an Arabic teacher.

Amit Zerbib, Human Services student, shares her experiences:

"I volunteered in a high school and taught Arab children the Hebrew language to facilitate their integration into the Israeli society in their adult lives. This program has greatly affected my life as well: All my life I have lived in an Arab environment, but there was no significant interaction or dialogue between us. Whereas this year I was exposed to the Arab society in a different, and more mature way, and today I accept them and their opinions – even if they are different from mine".

Evaluation Process

The evaluation of the CL Program is conducted on two levels simultaneously: project evaluations and student evaluations. The evaluations take place twice a year: at the end of the first semester (February) and at the end of the academic year (July). The program staff meet their contacts in the community as well as the students. They discuss all the issues and expectations. There is also an end-of-year meeting with the managers of the Unit of Social Involvement to discuss the past year and brainstorm about activities for the coming year.

From all the evaluation forms collected, the following has become apparent:

- All of our community partners have expressed complete satisfaction with this year's conduct, despite the COVID-19 restrictions all of us had to manage during this year.
- All our partners are interested in continuing the joint activity in the next year.

Goals for the 2020/21 Academic Year

- Integrating the students in projects directly dealing with education and language such as applying the Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School model to other schools, specifically Jewish schools for Arabic language skills.
- Expanding the scope of the *Positive* Events, considering streaming those events on Facebook Live as well in order to enlarge our impact.
- Offering another seminar of social entrepreneurship.
- Perform our newest project of school seminars on multiculturalism.
- Holding other events to expose the program throughout the city of Haifa.

Training Course for First-Year Students: Developing Intercultural Awareness

Goals:

- Development of intercultural leadership by learning through experience based on individual and group learning processes.
- Development and examination of concepts of personal and cultural identity within the context of a multicultural society. Development of reflective ability and critical analysis of perceptions and positions regarding cultural identity and the Israeli social structure.
- Acquisition of theoretical and practical tools required for effective interpersonal communication, joint work and community leadership in a diverse intercultural environment.
- Development of social ventures and acquisition of tools to lead projects, integrated with and accompanied by student volunteerism in community centers and in social projects on campus.

Key Course Themes:

- **Building a multi-cultural group** – what is multiculturalism in general and what does it mean in Israeli society in particular? Creating a shared and common goal.
- **Cultural and personal identity** – includes an examination of participants' personal identities and cultural origins, development of one's personal identity in a cultural context, and acceptance of the different identities by the group and by society.
- **Intercultural conflicts** – personal perception and perception of the other, ability to distinguish stereotypes, and strategic analysis and management of conflicts in an intercultural context.
- **Intercultural integration** – influence between different cultural sources, integration and combination of cultural sources, and cultural variety and diversity as a social resource.
- **Working in a multicultural setting** – practical aspects of a culturally diverse work environment.

Means of Study:

The workshop is based on both experiential and active experiences, employing a variety of workshop subjects and significant reflective processing of individual and joint experiences.

- A procedural series of meetings according to models of experimental learning, group development and the cultivation of multicultural awareness.
- Mixed group workshop activities that facilitate interpersonal and group encounters of participants from various cultures.
- Intensive study days for all program participants – academic multicultural study tour day and a joint final community project.

Student Assignments:

- Full participation and completing all routine assignments
- Participation in a joint community project during the course
- Completion of reading assignments
- Submitting a final concluding paper at the end of the year

The Final Paper

The final paper will include a reflective reconstruction of the personal and team process and its relevance to the theoretical models taught. Participants will have to rely upon a personal journal they will write throughout the course and reflect upon it. At the end of this report we enclose a wonderful paper written by the student Faraj Srour who submitted his final paper in English. It is a wonderful example of the impact of this course, and his coherent writing provides us with a glimpse of the process he underwent throughout the year.

Training Course for Continuing Students:
Intercultural Leadership – A Training Workshop for Mentors

Goals:

- Continuing and developing joint learning in mixed groups
- Developing, planning and leading skills for multicultural activity and basic mentorship skills
- Learning from social and leadership ventures in a multicultural atmosphere

Offered Framework:

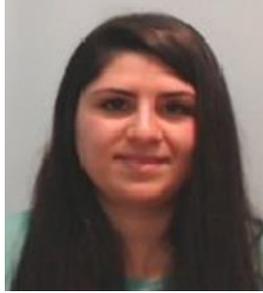
- One group was mentored by a Jewish mentor
- Bi-weekly two-hour session meetings. At first to build the group, plan the year and provide basic intercultural training
- Later on the meetings will take place once every fortnight and will accompany the community projects and deal with dilemmas arising from the work
- A joint activity such as a study tour or a joint community project

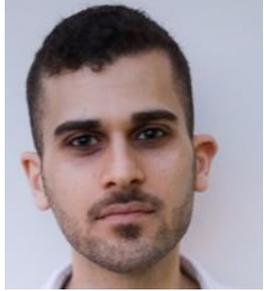
Key Course Themes:

- **Building the group and its cohesiveness – first 3 sessions**
 - Planning the year and managing expectations
 - Division into sub teams and planning their work
 - Peer learning
 - Leadership models
- **Following the initial 3 sessions the following sessions took place once every two weeks**
 - Guiding the task teams on a need basis and dealing with the dilemmas arising from the work in the field
 - Analyzing realities and dilemmas of intercultural leadership
 - Simulations and feedback
- **Responsibility for joint projects:**
 - Leading the activity groups in the dorms and the community centers
 - Producing two multi-cultural events in the Haifa community
 - Planning and leading dialogues ("roundtables") for students in the joint seminar

Participants in the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program 2019-2020

Arab Students

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
1	Aburaya Reena	Counseling and Human Development MA	2	
2	Awawdi Rami	MA Nursing	1	
3	Mary Ayoub	Law and Psychology	1	
4	Jubran Mona	Music	3	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
5	Rabia Dabag	Music	3	
6	Faraj Srouf	Music	2	
7	Noor Mallak	Theater	2	
8	Moneer Khawalid	Economics and Business Administration	2	
9	Hussien Taha	Political Sciences and English Language and Literature	2	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
10	Marwa Amarya	Multidisciplinary	1	
11	Shahd Boshnaq	Bibliotherapy MA	1	
12	Suha Turkman	Political Science and Psychology	2	
13	Ahmad Taha	Hebrew Literature	3	
14	Tarabe Maya	Medical Sciences	3	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
15	Bawardi Hisham	Sociology and Anthropology	3	
16	Maria Abboud	Art and Psychology	2	
17	Eyal Kheir	Political Science	3	
18	Ala Halabi	Music	2	
19	Ryad Khatib	Human Services	2	

Jewish Students

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
1	Bat-el Alon	Communications Sciences and Disorders	1	
2	Prinz Zilber Cecile	Community Mental Health MA	2	
3	Talker Shoham	Nursing	3	
4	Zohar Zenescu	Learning Disabilities MA	2	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
5	Daniel Mendelson	History of Israel	2	
6	Rachel Budovsky	Communications Sciences and Disorders	1	
7	Asaf Peled	Information Systems	2	
8	Cohen Inbal	Art Therapy - MA	2	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
9	Maggeni Neomi	Music	3	
10	Saati Guy	Social Work	2	
11	Gutkin Michelle	Nursing	3	
12	Lih Haim	Computer Sciences	1	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
13	Noa Aviv	Communications and Middle Eastern studies	2	
14	Dermer Bat-Hen	Special Education and English Language and Literature	3	
15	Amit Zerbib	Human Services	2	
16	Gil Klimor	Learning Disabilities MA	2	
17	Mor Moreno	Occupational Therapy	2	

No.	Student Name	Department	Year of Study	Student Photo
18	Netaly Sara Livshitz	History of Israel and Learning Teaching and Training	1	
19	Gudkar Sapir	Nursing	2	
20	Michal Levachev	Communications Sciences and Disorders	3	
21	Liav Eliyahu	History MA	1	

University of Haifa

A summarizing essay

Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program

Faraj Srour

07/2020

Introduction

At the beginning of the past year I was asked by a friend to consider joining the *Multicultural Leadership Program* at the University of Haifa. I was hesitant. Me being the cynical person I often am, I believed that I was going to struggle with the program a lot, while pretending that I liked it. Forcing myself into that uncomfortable situation did not seem a very good idea.

However, I decided to push myself out of my comfort zone, and despite my ability to often foresee where things are headed, the final result surprised me. I would never have been able to predict the process I went through – both individually and as part of a collective – and the things that accompanied me through this process: starting from conversations about the most sensitive subjects, all the way through the coronavirus pandemic and the virtual meetings that were forced upon us.

Multiculturalism is an important subject to me (even though it might not seem that way at first sight). Ever since I was young I always avoided subjects like politics, the news or racism, and lived in my own world. However, I soon realized that with so many different cultures existing in a shared space in this land, it is important that they don't live in separate bubbles, but coexist through dialogue. Therefore, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to be part of a group, in which I can listen to different minds from different backgrounds - a group which also shares things and is willing to meet and discuss important sensitive subjects, even if these subjects are difficult and might evoke uncomfortable feelings. I was inspired by the process of how this group came together and evolved, and I am hopeful to continue on this path, learn and widen my perspective about people and their identities and ideologies.

Reflective analysis

According to Tuckman's model of *Developmental Sequence in Small Groups*, the development and changes in the group's behavior can be divided into five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Tuckman, 1965). In the first stage, the group is setting goals and group members are attempting to discover what interpersonal behaviors are acceptable in the group. In the storming phase, conflicts between opposite goals and needs begin to emerge. These conflicts –which I will discuss in the next chapter – lead to the formation of group norms, which lead to the intimacy needed to move to the performing phase.

During the year, we went through an interesting process as a group, a process that somehow supports Tuckman's model of group development, but also includes many other aspects which influenced us individually and as a whole. The first example which comes to my mind, is an activity we had at the beginning of the year that relates to the strengthening of personal identity. On the board were different axes. Each axis had two words which describe two ends of a scale, such as: male-female, religious-secular, politically right-left and more. We were asked to choose a few words which define us, and place ourselves between the two ends of the scale. This activity was both interesting and exhausting for me. On the one hand, it was interesting to see the contrast between how everyone perceives themselves versus how I perceive them, and to get to know everyone on a deeper level beyond the usual information they present like their field of study, their age or job. On the other hand, it was difficult for me to participate, because I could not "define" myself based on choices "from a catalogue", and having to choose out of these possibilities seemed limiting to me. I chose to stay silent, but I still could not understand our basic obsessive need to "define" ourselves in order to put everyone in a category. For a long time after that, I felt that while the group may have already (almost) achieved the first phase in the group development model, I was still an outsider.

But soon after that I started to find a place for me to express my perspective. One example is an activity in which we were asked to analyze photos from sociopolitical photographers. We attempted to explain what comes to our mind when we look at these photos, and which message does the photograph convey. Following that, we were asked to take five pictures which represent us, and we had to think how to convey our message, our culture and our identity. It was very interesting for me, even necessary, to learn how to analyze the photos through a dialogue with another person from a different culture, a different background and a different point of view. It was exciting and important to look deeper into the lives of group members and to see their uniqueness.

At the end of the first semester, I was mostly satisfied with where things were headed, and had hoped to go even deeper into intercultural issues and discuss them thoroughly. However, before the second semester started, we were confronted with the coronavirus pandemic which, among the many effects it has, in my opinion stopped what we had been building. After many weeks of uncertainty, the only option for us was "virtual" online meetings through Zoom. Retrospectively, looking back at it after finishing the course, I can say that we managed to discuss serious and important topics, in spite of the difficulties of online meetings. However, at that time, I felt that it limited me in many ways. On the one hand, I could not see people's body language or vivid facial expressions.

I could not know if they listened to me or if they were looking at something else on their screen. I could not talk without the fear of technical difficulties disturbing my conversation. We spent more time than I wanted discussing pandemic-related topics and less time discussing cultural topics. On the other hand, it was interesting to see everyone in their "natural habitat", inside their homes. Sometimes the group was divided into smaller sub-groups which gave me a new opportunity to get to know people and run discussions with them that I wouldn't have otherwise – efficient dialogue is one of the most important things in building relationships within a multicultural group. In spite of the fact that a lot of things didn't go as I hoped, overall, I can say that I was satisfied with the outcome of this experience.

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity

According to Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, there are six stages that guide our experience of intercultural events: denial of cultural difference, defense against cultural difference, minimization of cultural difference, acceptance of cultural difference, adaptation to cultural difference and integration of cultural difference (Bennett, 1986). The first stage, denial, is the perception that one's cultural perspective is the only real, accurate or valid interpretation of reality. The last stage, integration, is the internalization of multicultural awareness and the ability to interact productively across cultural differences.

Here comes to my mind one example from the group meetings which supports this model – an example through which I got to experience these stages, one of my most important, eye-opening, emotional moments in this course. Around the time of Independence Day (Nakba Day), we discussed different topics in small sub-groups. One of these topics was 'ideological and national identity'. As a group of Arabs and Jews, it is normal that we have a range of ideologies and it is a privilege that we have the opportunity to discuss them.

In that discussion, I mentioned the fact that both I and another Arab girl in the group define ourselves as Palestinians. Some of my Jewish friends in our group were genuinely shocked and immediately asked for an explanation. Their shock surprised me, maybe they were in the denial-stage that the model suggests (and vice versa). But for the two of us Arabs, this identity is obvious, it goes without saying, and sometimes we might take it for granted. I tried to explain as clearly as I could where this ideology comes from, and explain our history – my history. I gave examples and even made analogies to already mentioned conflicts between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews. I made people emotional, and it was emotional for me as well, and I could see after a prolonged dialogue that we might have reached the adaptation-stage without realizing –the stage where one can empathize intellectually and emotionally with the experience of others and their culture.

I was surprised and happy to realize at the end of the year that it was a memorable experience for the others just as it was memorable for me. Maybe it gave me renewed hope, that we actually might have been able to reach the integration stage, where one's identity can evolve to incorporate the values and beliefs of other cultures.

Analysis of an Intercultural Conflict

Based on the previous topic, we also mentioned a topic that we only started to discuss, and I'm continuing it in this chapter. Around the same time of Yom HaZikaron, we watched an episode from "Avoda Aravit" which presented in a humorous way the complicated reality of an Arab family forced to deal with the conflict between identities. One of the conflicts we briefly discussed after this episode, was whether Arabs should silently stand at attention for two minutes during the sirens of Yom HaZikaron. This is a complicated conflict. For whom would Arabs stand up? Do they lose their self-respect if they do that? And either way, would it be accepted by society? Do they lose or sacrifice their identity to adopt another? These are interesting questions that we haven't had the opportunity to answer, but I am glad that we had the chance to at least mention them. People could react to this conflict either by avoidance, waiver, cooperation or compromise. I do not think that I have enough tools to propose a model for this conflict, but connecting it with the previous discussion about identity was certainly one of the most important moments for me so far. It paves the way for intercultural awareness, conflict analysis, the attempt to accept the values and beliefs of others, and for reaching a stage where one's experience is expanded to include different cultural worldviews. At this point the group had already gone through quite a bit, it formed itself, acquired tools for observation and analysis, examined and presented intercultural conflicts and looked critically at issues dealing with nationality, race, religion or ideology. And later on, the group even discussed the more complicated heavy subject such as Independence/Nakba day and Yom HaZikaron which were emotional for a lot of people, including myself.

To summarize, I can indubitably say that I learned a lot through these meetings. I am grateful that I had the privilege to be part of a program where people can talk freely about complex issues that no one dares to talk about. I gained a greater understanding of intercultural conflicts, and I still have many questions left, one of them being: Can we really call our society "multi-cultural"? Nonetheless, my awareness towards multiculturalism has risen. I wish to give back to the world everything I learned from this program, while keeping high hopes for a mutual culture and identity that includes Arabs and Jews together.

References:

Bennett, Milton. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 10, 179-196.

Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental Sequences in Small Groups. *Psychology Bulletin*. 63, 384-399.