



אוניברסיטת חיפה  
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA  
جامعة حيفا

# University of Haifa's Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program

Annual Report for 24/25



# Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program Annual Report - Academic Year 2024-2025



## Greetings

This academic year has once again shown us how powerful education, dialogue, and human connection can be — even in times that test hope and resilience.

The University of Haifa continues to stand as a place where diversity is not just a principle, but a lived reality. In an environment shaped by complexity and challenge, the University remains a space where Jews and Arabs learn together, grow together, and take shared responsibility for the future. This commitment to coexistence, mutual respect, and democratic values is not theoretical — it is visible every day in the lives of the students we are so proud to support.

For me personally, this year held a particularly meaningful moment. In October 2025, we, the German Friends, had the privilege of meeting all of you — the CL scholarship recipients — at our German Coexistence Event. Seeing the strong, thoughtful, and supportive community that has grown among these young people was truly remarkable. Your openness, your respect for one another, and your shared determination to shape a better future were not only impressive — they were deeply encouraging.

The Community Leadership Program is more than an academic initiative; it is a network of young leaders who carry the values of dialogue and responsibility into their academic work, their communities, and their personal lives. The sense of solidarity among the students is tangible, and it is wonderful to witness how much they grow — not only academically, but also as individuals and as a community.

Moments like these remind us why this work matters. They show us that real coexistence is built through encounter, through listening, and through the courage to engage with one another even when circumstances are difficult. Our scholarship recipients embody this spirit in an inspiring way.

As German Friends of the University of Haifa, we remain deeply committed to supporting the University and its students. We believe in the power of education to build bridges, in the strength of diversity, and in the importance of nurturing young people who are willing to take responsibility for a shared and peaceful future.

Meeting this year's scholarship holders reaffirmed my confidence that these values are in good hands. The students' energy, their intelligence, and their humanity give us every reason to look toward the future with courage and hope.

Dr. h.c. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel  
Chairwoman, German Friends of the University of Haifa

## Program Overview

The Jewish–Arab Community Leadership Program, managed by the Unit for Social Involvement within the Dean of Students Office at the University of Haifa, has been operating continuously for 19 years as a flagship initiative promoting shared society, intercultural dialogue, social engagement, and active citizenship.

The program integrates a year-long accredited academic course with structured social leadership activities on campus and in the community. It is professionally facilitated by both a Jewish and an Arab facilitator, and is designed to provide students with a strong theoretical foundation alongside practical experience in social leadership.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, 40 students participated in the program — 21 Arab students and 19 Jewish students. They were divided into two mixed groups who met weekly and engaged regularly throughout the academic year. Meetings included dialogue facilitation, social entrepreneurship tools, and trust-building processes.

Against the backdrop of an ongoing war, the program served as a stable and supportive framework in which students chose connection over separation and dialogue over silence. The program fostered meaningful encounters, strengthened interpersonal trust, and cultivated a shared vision of leadership and social cohesion.

## Vision and Core Objectives

The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program is guided by a clear and principled vision: to foster an Israeli society in which every individual, regardless of background, can participate, influence, and experience a genuine sense of belonging.

In line with this vision, the program seeks to establish a nurturing multicultural environment that enables meaningful interaction and sustained collaboration between Jewish and Arab students across campus. It promotes the development and implementation of joint community and campus-based initiatives that reflect shared civic responsibility, partnership, and social engagement.

The program places strong emphasis on cultivating an activist mindset among its participants, strengthening leadership confidence, and nurturing a new generation of socially responsible leaders committed to tolerance, mutual respect, acceptance of difference, and collective responsibility.

Through continuous intercultural dialogue and structured encounters, the program actively works to reduce prejudice, deepen mutual understanding, and transform the academic campus into a living model of shared society, a space in which Jewish and Arab students study, collaborate, and shape a shared future together.

## Academic Course Framework and Training Process

A central component of the Jewish–Arab Community Leadership Program is the year-long Intercultural Leadership Workshop, an accredited academic course awarding four academic credits. This workshop integrates theoretical study with experiential leadership training in a multicultural environment and constitutes the academic backbone of the program.

The workshop is professionally facilitated by Arab and Jewish co-instructors Nisreen Morqus and Ofer Lior Lang, both of whom bring extensive experience in guiding mixed Jewish–Arab student groups and leading intercultural educational processes. Their professional guidance ensures a safe, reflective, and intellectually rigorous learning environment throughout the academic year.

The workshop is grounded in experiential learning, reflective practice, and applied social leadership training. Students participate in structured peer discourse sessions, are encouraged to share personal experiences from their social initiatives, and are guided to critically analyze challenges encountered in their engagement within the academic campus.

## Academic Framework and Pedagogical Orientation

The Intercultural Leadership Workshop is designed as a comprehensive learning journey that cultivates intercultural leadership capacities through experiential and structured learning processes. Throughout the academic year, students engage in an ongoing exploration of personal and cultural identity within a multicultural society, while strengthening their ability to examine social perceptions, power relations, and collective narratives.

This workshop provides participants with a combination of theoretical and practical tools that support effective interpersonal communication, collaborative leadership, and joint social engagement. Students develop competencies in social entrepreneurship, gaining the capacity to conceptualize, design, and implement initiatives that address complex social challenges within the academic and broader social environment.

The learning process emphasizes the development of multicultural group dynamics, the establishment of shared goals, and the cultivation of leadership presence within the academic space. Participants are introduced to structured thinking tools that support informed decision-making and the development of sustainable student-led initiatives.

Special attention is given to strengthening intercultural communication, recognizing diversity as a social resource, and developing the ability to respond constructively to complex social challenges. Throughout the year, students translate academic learning into meaningful social engagement on campus.

## Joint Social Activity and Campus-Based Leadership Initiatives

In addition to the academic workshop, the program includes a structured leadership framework that fulfills students' required social involvement hours and translates academic learning into real-life social impact. This framework constitutes the program's second pillar and focuses on the development and implementation of campus-based initiatives promoting shared living and intercultural partnership.

## Partnership with Rothschild Ambassadors

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the program was implemented in collaboration with the Rothschild Ambassadors Organization, creating a joint platform for student leadership and campus-based social entrepreneurship. This partnership enabled students to access professional mentoring, leadership tools, and applied learning methodologies while strengthening the institutional reach and sustainability of shared living initiatives within the University.

## Ambassadors of Shared Life on Campus

In response to the challenges that intensified following the events of October 7<sup>th</sup>, the program established a complementary leadership framework titled Ambassadors of Shared Life on Campus. This initiative was designed to provide students with structured opportunities to meet, engage in dialogue, initiate joint projects, and actively promote shared living within the academic space.

Forty Jewish and Arab students participated in this framework, attending bi-weekly leadership and entrepreneurship sessions and working in mixed groups to design and implement sustainable on-campus initiatives. The framework is guided by the Joint Creation Model, which emphasizes the co-initiation and joint leadership of projects, shared responsibility, and the collaborative creation of inclusive campus spaces.

## Campus Hackathon

The central social event of the academic year was a campus hackathon held during the second semester. The hackathon served as a major milestone in student engagement, supporting participants in transforming ideas into practical initiatives.

During the hackathon, students attended an inspirational lecture on social and community engagement, followed by structured workshops and entrepreneurship training. Working in mixed Jewish-Arab teams, participants developed initiatives under professional guidance.

## Campus Hackathon

The hackathon culminated in the implementation of five student-led initiatives:

- ⊗ An art exhibition combining personal narratives and AI-generated visual imagery.
- ⊗ A Hebrew–Arabic academic terminology glossary.
- ⊗ A multicultural event at the School of Social Work.
- ⊗ Bilingual seating corners featuring shared messages.
- ⊗ A video project capturing authentic student reflections on identity, belonging, and shared living.

## Selected images from the Art Exhibition

### Combining Personal Texts and AI-Generated Visual Imagery

As part of the Shared Life Ambassadors project, Jewish and Arab students led a joint initiative titled “Book of Dreams,” in which they wrote personal visions for the future of Israeli society and transformed them into AI-generated visual images. The project encouraged meaningful encounters, strengthened students’ sense of belonging, and served as a model of partnership and respectful dialogue, reflecting the program’s vision of a shared and equitable society in Israel.



## Training Rationale and Institutional Framework

The training framework of the Jewish–Arab Community Leadership Program is based on the understanding that the academic campus constitutes a central social and living environment for students from all sectors of Israeli society. Particularly during periods of prolonged social tension and national uncertainty, structured intercultural encounters and joint action frameworks play a critical role in strengthening resilience, fostering a sense of belonging, and reducing social friction.

## First Semester - Identity to Responsibility

During the first phase of the program, students engaged in an in-depth process of building group trust, deepening familiarity, and establishing shared group agreements. The learning process focused on empathetic listening, narrative awareness, and the exploration of personal and collective identities within a multicultural context.

Students examined personal, group, and shared identities through reflective dialogue and theoretical frameworks, while developing nonviolent communication skills and an understanding of multicultural, multi-identity academic spaces. The program introduced three overarching identity theories that served as analytical tools for understanding self, other, and shared social structures.

As the semester progressed, participants explored leadership through the lens of identity and social responsibility. They were introduced to the analysis of complex social challenges using the problem-tree model, enabling them to define issues, identify root causes, and explore potential solutions. Students distinguished between technical and adaptive challenges, learned to identify “the elephants in the room,” and analyzed case studies drawn from the University of Haifa’s academic environment. This phase culminated in intensive experiential learning sessions that prepared students for the transition from reflection to action.

## Second Semester - Learning to Shared Initiatives

The second semester was dedicated to translating learning into shared social action on campus. During this phase, students deepened their engagement with questions of identity and narrative within the academic space, while developing personal and group tools to initiate and lead student-driven social initiatives.

Students acquired practical tools for building social initiatives and jointly shaped directions for shared action. At the same time, emphasis was placed on developing teamwork skills, strengthening a sense of partnership, and fostering the ability to function as part of a leading group.

Throughout the semester, students were exposed to stories of grassroots action and models of community leadership. They also developed the ability to articulate their personal stories and express social perspectives within the shared campus space. The learning processes included preparation for the presentation of initiatives, team-based work on final projects, and hands-on experience through implementation.

The semester concluded with the presentation of final student-led initiatives, the extraction of insights from the activity, and a collective group reflection defining the kind of ambassadors students sought to become within a shared academic space.

## **Institutional Impact and Community Reach**

Beyond its academic framework, the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program has become a significant institutional platform contributing to the strengthening of the social climate on campus. The program operates not only as a learning environment, but as a living social system that influences norms of dialogue, partnership, and shared responsibility across the University.

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, student-led initiatives reached broad and diverse audiences within the University community, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, and administrative staff. The visibility of multicultural discourse, bilingual communication, and shared campus spaces increased meaningfully, contributing to a campus atmosphere that encourages respectful dialogue and civic engagement.

The Shared Living Ambassadors served as peer leaders, fostering informal dialogue spaces, promoting bilingual accessibility, and facilitating multicultural encounters that strengthened students' sense of belonging across diverse backgrounds. These processes supported the normalization of Jewish–Arab partnership within the academic environment and reinforced the University's role as a bridge between communities.

## **Professional Guidance and Program Leadership**

Professional leadership and consistent guidance are central to the program's success. The program is led by an experienced academic and professional team that supports students throughout the year through experiential learning processes, leadership development, and continuous mentoring. Together, the team provides professional support and practical leadership tools that enable sustained social impact.

The Intercultural Leadership Workshop is facilitated by Nisreen Morqus and Ofer Lior Lang on behalf of the Mabat Association, both of whom bring extensive experience in guiding mixed Jewish-Arab groups and leading intercultural processes.

The Ambassadors of Shared Life on Campus initiative, including the development and implementation of student-led initiatives, was professionally guided by Eti Chen-Mazan, who oversaw the applied on-campus activities.

Overall coordination of the program was led by Miri Atias, Director of the Unit for Social Involvement, and Eyad Kezel, Coordinator of Social Leadership Programs, who guided students throughout the year in leadership development, strengthening partnership, and leading campus-based initiatives.

## **Impact and Institutional Significance**

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, the Jewish–Arab Community Leadership Program served as a meaningful and stable framework for sustained dialogue, collaborative leadership, and shared responsibility within the University of Haifa. During a period marked by social complexity and ongoing national challenges, the program provided students with a secure and empowering academic environment in which Jewish and Arab participants consistently chose connection over separation and partnership over distance.

The program's impact was reflected in strengthened interpersonal trust, increased student engagement in campus-based shared living initiatives, and the development of sustainable student-led ventures that continue to shape the academic space.

The visibility of multicultural values across campus was significantly enhanced, alongside the growth of a community of socially responsible Jewish and Arab students equipped with the skills, awareness, and commitment to influence their communities well beyond the University community.

Through its integrated academic and applied leadership frameworks, the program contributes to the long-term foundations of a more inclusive, cohesive, and resilient society.

## **In Conclusion**

The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program continues to stand as a flagship initiative of the University of Haifa, advancing the values of dialogue, partnership, and social responsibility. The achievements of the 2024–2025 academic year reflect both the dedication of the participating students and the professional leadership of the facilitation and guidance teams.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the German Friends Association of the University of Haifa for its long-standing partnership, trust, and support. Through this enduring partnership, Jewish and Arab students are given the opportunity – often for the first time – to meet, engage in meaningful dialogue, build meaningful social connections that extend beyond the program, and work together on shared projects that actively contribute to a more equitable, respectful, and cohesive Israeli society.

Thank you for being valued partners in this educational and social journey, and for the continued trust you place in the path we walk together.

## Campus Hackathon – Activity Highlights

The central social event of the academic year was a dedicated hackathon held at the University on April 28, 2025. The event was designed to support students in developing and structuring initiatives focused on shared living.

During the event, students participated in a lecture on activism and social engagement. In the second part of the day, they engaged in practical workshops focused on teamwork and transforming ideas into actionable social initiatives. Working in groups, students developed their concepts and began shaping their projects under professional guidance.

The following photos capture key moments from the hackathon.



## Participants in the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program 2024-2025



**Mariane Abed**  
Faculty of Law  
Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



**Lna Assadi**  
Department of Economics and Accounting  
Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



**Areen Abo Ata**  
School of Creative Art Therapies  
Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



**Rana Azaiza**  
Department of Physics  
Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



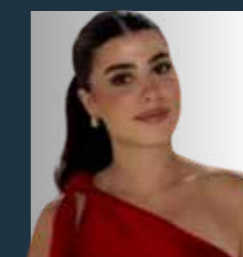
**Jamama Adan**  
Department of Economics and Accounting  
Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



**Safaa Basis**  
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Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



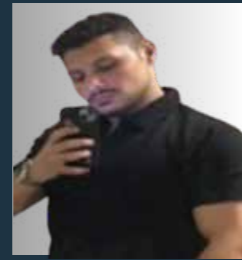
**Mohammad Ajinee**  
School of Social Work  
Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



**Rozana Bdarnh**  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Multidisciplinary Studies  
Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



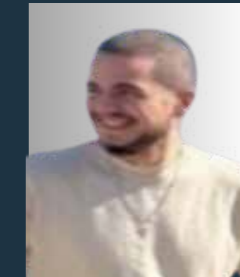
**Shada Bishara**  
 Department of Psychology  
 Department of Human Services  
 Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



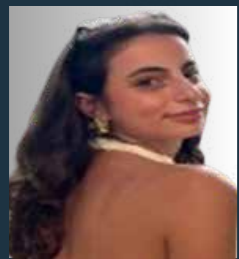
**Hanna Hazzan**  
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 School of Business Administration  
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**Mais Mreed**  
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 Department of Communication  
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**Adham Shehadeh**  
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 Department of Human Services  
 Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



**Mayar Abu Salah**  
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 Year of Study - 3<sup>rd</sup>



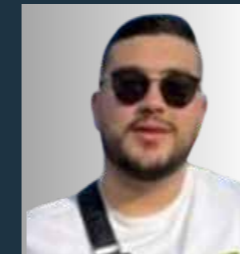
**Tanya Zeitun**  
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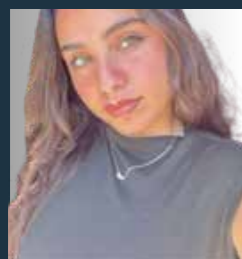
**Salma Ghaben**  
 Department of Special Education  
 Department of Sociology  
 Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



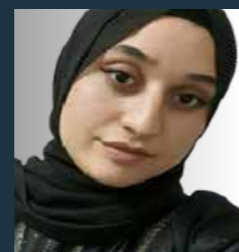
**Angham Khateeb**  
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**Eyas Sayegh**  
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**Jolenar Habibalah**  
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**Noor Masarwa**  
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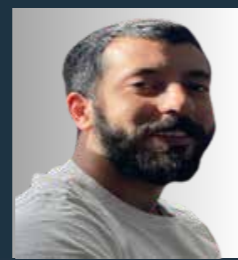
**Leonid Nanos**  
 Department of Nursing  
 Year of Study - 4<sup>th</sup>



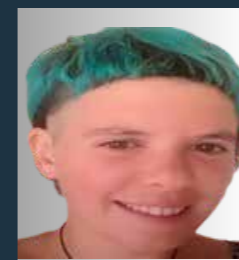
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**Talya Arieli**  
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 Department of Special Education  
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**Eliya Grady**  
 School of Social Work  
 Year of Study - 1<sup>st</sup>



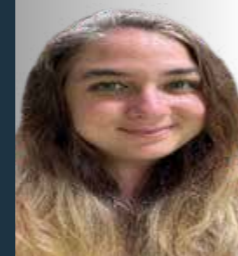
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**Menachem Simcha Firszt**  
 Creative Art Therapies  
 Year of Study - 2<sup>nd</sup>



**Yael Cohen**  
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 Department of Multidisciplinary Studies  
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**Leah Tregub**  
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**MA**



**Vita Manin**  
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**Ofek Schmorak**  
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**Maor Twig**  
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Department of  
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**Tal Ziv**  
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