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Creating Effective Programming for Iraqi Adult Mentors in World Learning's Youth Peacebuilding and Leadership Programs

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Creating Effective Programming for Iraqi Adult Mentors in World Learning's Youth
Peacebuilding and Leadership Programs

Kira L Brady

PIM 70

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of
Conflict Transformation, and Youth Program Leadership at SIT Graduate Institute in
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May 25, 2012

Adviser: John Ungerleider

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Student name: Kira L Brady

Date: May 25, 2012

Dedication

I am thankful for the many amazing teachers and mentors in my life.

I am deeply grateful to my family for their wisdom, humor, patience and love.

This will continue to steer and guide everything I accomplish.

Finally, this work is dedicated to the young people and their teachers who struggle to bring peace into this imperfect world by creating opportunities for greater understanding.

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Glossary

WL: World Learning

IYLEP: Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program

DOS: Department of State

RFP: Request for Proposal

YP: Youth Programs

Abstract

This paper will examine how the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) can continue to grow and improve aspects of their programming. Specifically, the paper will address the role of the Iraqi adult leader. In order to increase the Iraqi adult's learning and mentorship capacity the paper will explore Youth Programs, IYLEP, and apply leadership theory through the creation of a handbook that will assist staff in addressing the needs of the adult mentor. This handbook will set clear and understandable guidelines concerning the role of the Iraqi adult as well as including a set of worksheets. The focus and goal of these worksheets will be the development of leadership skills, which the Iraqi adults will apply their work upon their return home.

Introduction

Through its various programs World Learning seeks to “provide education, exchange, and development programs that cultivate the global leadership and social innovation needed in a shrinking world...” through “inspiring citizen ambassadors... preparing global leaders... and ensuring sustainable development.” (“Unlocking the Potential,” 2012). One of the smaller programs run by World Learning is the Youth Peacebuilding and Leadership Programs. This program endeavors to bring young people together to create connections, and build relationships and skills to further their personal and collective peacebuilding potential. Youth Programs consistently offers unique programming enabling young adults to form relationships and build connections in a safe and educational environment created by a dedicated and well trained staff.

This paper will examine how the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) can continue to grow and improve aspects of their programming. Specifically, the paper will address the role of the traveling Iraqi adult leader. In order to increase the Iraqi adult’s learning and mentorship capacity the paper will explore Youth Programs, IYLEP, and apply leadership theory through the creation of a handbook that will assist staff in addressing the needs of the adult mentor. This handbook will set clear and understandable guidelines concerning the role of the Iraqi adult and will include a set of worksheets. The focus and goal of these worksheets will be the development of leadership skills which the Iraqi adults will be able to apply to their work upon their return home.

Personal Context

During the summer of 2011, I worked for World Learning's Youth Program as a Program Facilitator with a group of Iraqi, Kurdish and American teens. The group included three adults from Iraq in a group of 32 Iraqi and 18 American participants. The adults arrived with a variety of skills, and expectations about their role in the program. Their language abilities and cultural knowledge made them invaluable members of the group. However, it was challenging as a leader to manage their needs along with those of the rest of the group. It was my impression that there is a potential for increased leadership and learning for these adults.

As a new staff member I arrived at our staff orientation with an unclear idea of my role. I was given a handbook that included a calendar, travel details, program rules, staff expectations, and a great deal of other helpful information. Throughout the summer this handbook became invaluable to me and I constantly referred to it. I used the margins to take notes and make lists, and created tabs to help me navigate the forty-five pages. When I was confused the book helped to clarify details and the purpose of the exchange.

Much like my own staff handbook did for me, I hope to produce a valuable handbook for incoming adult mentors. This handbook will clearly state the expectations for their role on program and how they can be of the most assistance, and can best communicate their needs to WL staff. By spending time and energy training and preparing the Iraqi adult mentors to return home with actionable skills, they will be better able to assist participants with their transition back to life at home and application of their learning. Further, the handbook will set them apart from the participants by giving the

Iraqi adults access to information and an added focus for their experience on the exchange.

Youth Programs: Context and History

“The World Learning Youth Programs empower youth to understand their world, develop civic responsibility, build lasting friendships across cultures and to cultivate the skills and motivation to make a difference in their communities.” (Norton, 2012).

In the last twenty years Youth Programs has worked with over 5,000 young people from over fifty different countries. These programs have brought young people together from conflict areas such as Serbia, Algeria, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, England, Cyprus, Uganda and the United States. The participants have formed connections with their peers and together create a new vision of what the future could hold for them and their immediate and international communities.

In order to understand how these impactful connections are formed it is useful to examine the DiBenedetto Model of Youth Empowerment (1992). This model has three parts and each is equally important. “*Intellectual Challenge*: education, analysis, voice; *Emotional Nurturance*: safety, appreciation, diversity, expression; and *Shared Power*: non-authoritarian, exercised, action.” (pg. 19). These three foci, when used effectively, empower youth. YP is designed so that the activities each serve to further the empowerment of the participants, and care is taken to address each aspect of the DiBenedetto Model. While empowerment can be difficult to measure it is carefully considered in the planning process of YP.

John Ungerleider (2010), the founder and director of the program writes, “For young people to feel empowered to address social problems in their communities and

conflicts facing their world, they need to engage not only with the issues but with each other” (p. 1). In order to address the issues surrounding conflict, Ungerleider works with participants through a series of structured adult led peer dialogues where the participants, “can create a place and time to expand self-expression, envision peaceful change, and examine one’s own leadership potential” (p. 1). The combination of personal and public empowerment is crucial to YP’s work. Youth are empowered to be active and engaged leaders, but also to address the delicate business of growing and getting to know themselves. Dialogue combines many aspects of the DiBenedetto model and is a crucial aspect of many YP programs.

Although YP has been active for over twenty years, in the past five years the program has seen significant growth and development. In 2012 it will be running more than ten programs. Through travel, dialogue, discussion of global events, team building, cultural exchange, a homestay experience, and creating follow-on plans for the future, participants are able to become “globally empowered, and locally active youth” (Norton, 2012).

All of the programs will follow a similar structure, but each accommodates a different theme and often has some specific requirements from the funder or participants. YP staff are trained to lead a variety of activities and to process them with the overall goal of encouraging growth and movement in the participants. While each program maintains its unique and specific needs, each is run according to a similar formula that has proven to be effective.

The majority of programs, including IYLEP, begin with an in-country orientation followed by a weeklong Orientation and Leadership Camp at WL headquarters in

Brattleboro, Vermont. This portion of the program is devoted to teambuilding, forming relationships, skill building and becoming comfortable as a group. The large group then separates into smaller cohorts of twelve to fifteen students to travel to a U.S. city where participants have a two-week homestay experience. During this section of the exchange all of the participants live with an American family for a two-week period. The homestay concept was developed by Donald Watts, and is a major part of IYLEP, and most other YP programs. “With peace as their ultimate goal, the Watts (Donald Watt and his wife Leslie) developed and organized the radical concept of the homestay- sending people of one culture to live with a family in another, and supporting them in this dramatic environment (Schwartz, 2006, p. 683). The participants are able to share their background and culture while learning about the culture and routine of their host family. The homestays are intended to challenge the participants, deepen their relationships, and force them to step out of their comfort zone and use new skills. The whole group is then reformed in Washington, DC where the experience is processed while exploring the city and studying civic education. In Washington, DC emphasis is placed on returning home and how to transfer the work and learning from the program to their lives at home.

IYLEP participants are expected to create and implement out a follow on plan as a means to carry their learning home with them. In the final week the participants will create and present their follow on plan to representatives from the Department of State. It is important that each action plan reflect the central themes and learning from the specific program. For example if a theme of the program is civic responsibility the follow on plans would show how each participant connects the concept to his or her life at home. Follow on plans serve to bond participants as partners and give them achievable goals for

activism and educators when they return home. All of the programs intend to send participants home with increased leadership skills in the hope that they may be able to bring about greater understanding in their communities.

IYLEP

Within the past five years YP has added several programs to their portfolio including the Iraqi Youth Leadership Exchange Program (IYLEP). 2012 will be IYLEP's fifth year. The program has always been run by World Learning, and is funded by the U.S. Department of State (specifically the Office of Citizen Exchanges and Youth Programs Division), the US Embassy in Iraq, and the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. Due to this funding the program is free of cost to the participants (besides their own spending money). While the program is still young, it has been continually affected by the conflict in Iraq, which has seen a massive change within the past five years. Because the conflict directly impacts the daily life of participants, the program has needed to be flexible with its programming in order to meet the needs of the participants. These needs can be diverse since the Iraqi participants come from different areas of Iraq and have different social, political, and religious backgrounds. Further, these young people have different experiences with the conflict, and different coping strategies.

In the Department of State's Request for Proposal (RFP), where organizations can bid for the opportunity to run programs, the Statement of Work includes,

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of the U.S. Embassies in Baghdad...are supporting the participation of teenagers in intensive, substantive three- to four-week exchange

programs in the United States. The programs focus on the themes of civic education, leadership, respect for diversity, and community engagement.

Participants will engage in a variety of activities such as workshops, teambuilding exercises, community site visits, interactive discussion groups, small group work, presentations, local cultural activities, among others, and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and their American peers. Please note: ...the project with Iraq will include adult participants. (“Project Objectives,” 2012, p. 1)

The above statement outlines the Department of State’s intention for the program. In order to win the bid WL has designed a program that addresses the focus set by the Department of State. In addition to the above mention of the Iraqi adult participants, the RFP (2012) also requests that the program, “...provide opportunities for the adult participants, outside of joint activities with youth participants, to work with their peers and other professionals, volunteers, and youth advocates with whom they discuss the support of youth development.” (pg. 2) There is a clear focus to the role of the Iraqi adults, and the Department of State values their participation with the IYLEP program. However, in practice this focus has been difficult to realize.

The Iraqi adults present a unique programmatic challenge because their level of comfort and participation can be difficult to predict. In some cases they are only a few years older than participants, however they may be older than some staff members. Issues of age and gender can be difficult to manage because of cultural and contextual norms. Further these adults are coming from a country that has been in an active conflict for many years. The opportunity to engage in games, outdoor activities, social events, and

dialogue can be very overwhelming. While some adults may seem to regress into what may have been lost from their own adolescence, others may feel uncomfortable and be unable to understand the purpose of the program because it is so different from their own education. On the other hand, the Iraqi adults may embrace the program and have a wonderful time learning from the participants and staff alike. The adult mentor is unpredictable, and frankly not a priority of the staff who are trained and interested in working with youth (Norton, 2012).

The intersection between the Iraqi adult experience and the participant's is unavoidable because the adult opinion can influence the participants. In order to give both the youth and adults a chance to participate actively and authentically it is crucial to give each a space where they can discuss the experience and process how they are feeling. It is crucial that the adults have an effective, meaningful and fun program where their efforts and work can be celebrated.

Currently within IYLEP adults have proven to be very unpredictable. Simon Norton, a program director, reports that within the last four years IYLEP's adults have not always been people that are interested in working with youth. Past adult mentors have been dentists, neurosurgeons, teachers, or medical and business students. Norton (2010) says, "IYLEP has the most random selection of adults...I personally have very low expectations about the caliber of adults". Norton's candor shows how frustrating it can be to manage the adults on program. Many staff members share his opinion and this is reflected by the programming choices. In order to increase the learning potential for the adults and simultaneously encourage the youth to embrace and be present on program it is necessary that there is a clear parallel program established for the Iraqi adults.

In order to create a comprehensive, actionable program for the adult mentors it is important to articulate exactly how and why the staff are making choices and decisions about programming. There is a clear difference in leadership style and teaching methodology on program that the Iraqi adults may not be familiar with. This could account for a great deal of misunderstandings and feelings of discomfort for the Iraqi adults. In order to mitigate these feelings before they begin, it would be prudent to make the YP style and programming choices clear to the adults.

An example of the confusion about the Iraqi adult's role is that they are referred to by different names. These have included, 'chaperone,' 'adult leader,' 'adult participants,' and 'mentor.' Partly to simplify and partly to help to manage the confusion the Department of State and IYLEP Program Directors have chosen to refer to adults that travel from Iraq with the IYLEP group as 'adult mentors.' This title empowers the adult to step into a leadership position while still distinguishing them from program staff. While it is helpful to have a proper title, their behavior expectations are still important to clarify (Thomas & Stryzinski, 2012).

In my own experience as a program facilitator these guidelines are not made explicit even though the adults receive the written guidelines in their pre-departure packets. In order to make these guidelines and expectations understandable I want to reinvent how they are presented to Iraqi adults on program. The handbook will contain much of the existing rules and procedures but I will also develop worksheets that will require the adults to discuss the implications and behavior associated with these expectations. It is my intention that these conversations remain as positive as possible so that the adults feel empowered to act within their role rather than shut down by it. The

expectations are intended to help them be successful and positive additions to IYLEP. The Iraqi adults will be empowered to use the information to participate more fully in the program as mentors.

No amount of paperwork or material sent before departure can replace a clear, respectful, and articulate conversation about the adult's role. Encouraging the adult mentors to speak with WL staff as a means to process the experience will help to ensure that they are not only processing with the participants, which can prove to be difficult as the youth is then focused on the adult's experience rather than their own. In order to increase the communication between staff and the Iraqi adults it is important to create time and space where these conversations can continue.

Action Learning and Action Research

In order to create an effective and usable program for the adult mentors I will apply the Action Learning framework. "Active Learning provides a way of building individual practitioners' trust in themselves, and in their own strength and abilities... [it] is not something which is done to us, it is something which we do for ourselves" (Taylor, 1997). The learning process is oriented toward the partnership and pairing of a 'learner' (in our case, the Iraqi adult) and a traditional 'mentor' (in our case, a WL staff member). The Iraqi adult will be paired with a WL staff mentor, who will help them to process the experience and model a mentoring relationship. According to Taylor (1997), the process is called, "Praktykbegeleiding from the Afrikaans language. Directly translated it means 'practise accompaniment'. *Praktyk* means practice and refers to the practice of our lives. *Begeleiding* means to walk alongside or next to someone" (pg. 6). The mentor, or WL

staff member, “gives advice and fulfils an accompaniment role... This person will not do things for you or supply the answers, but consciously allows the [learner] to participate fully in his/her own growth and development” (pg. 6).

The learner will no doubt benefit from the chance to process the events surrounding the choices they are making. The structure of such a relationship is important because it is crafted to assist in the growth and understanding of the learner, but each member of the partnership benefits. In this way it is different from a friendship, or even a working relationship. The pair work together toward a common, agreed upon goal.

While Action Learning refers to the process of gaining information about the self, Action Research refers to how to learn about the other through an increased understanding of the self. The two frameworks are different however they are not mutually exclusive. While one assists in the introspective process of growth and skill building, the other refines and focuses how a person views the outside world. Action learning and Action Research both attempt to engage the self in work and relationships.

In an article entitled *Learning by Action Research: A Policy for School Development*, Thomas Hansson (2002) discusses how action research, “presents a method for experiential learning among educators who develop as learners in an educational setting” (p. 37). The process enriches the education for both the learner and the mentor. “The argument is that action research includes learning for the educators and development of activity for the students. An action research project enables the researcher to become involved, to intervene... Action Research is an opportunity for insight and understanding of learning, change, and development” (Hansson, p. 42). The

inclusion of the researcher in the learning process is important because it is in line with YP goals and methods. Action research, as Hansson defines it, further explores the shared learning process that exists between staff, Iraqi adults and participants in the program.

Action research is a good fit for IYLEP's adult mentors because the learner/mentor relationship could communicate the WL staff expectations for the Iraqi adult mentors while producing an actionable presentation or product to connect the adult mentors with the arc of the program. Further, the partnership will help to focus and ground the adult's learning because they will be accountable to their own mentor for reflection. From a practical standpoint, the Iraqi adult would have added structure to their day through organized meetings with staff, while from a more theoretical standpoint their learning would be deepened and their experience improved. In addition the adult mentor program is intended to address the RFP guidelines as stated by the Department of State.

Participant Voices

In order to provide a program for the adult mentors and allow them to serve and connect with the youth on program it is valuable to study and hear the voices and reflections of IYLEP alumni. As the program enters its fifth year the effects are becoming visible in the actions of the alumni. As staff and alumni process the exchange, the importance and effectiveness of the program are articulated in a way that can lead to learning and increased awareness. These reflections continue to influence the direction

IYLEP. As I proceed with this project I am interested in sharing some of these reflections, which helped to shape the handbook.

In order to hear from past IYLEP participants I looked to the results of the IYLEP Alumni Survey on SurveyMonkey. Fifty-six alumni (including Iraqi adults and participants) have responded to the survey, which asked questions concerning the alumni's current occupation and how their experience with IYLEP has impacted this. Although the survey was anonymous, it identified the home city but did not differentiate between alumni participants or adult leaders. The survey was done in preparation for an annual alumni gathering in Erbil, Iraq. The purpose of the survey is to check-in with alumni so that the reunion programming is appropriate. As a staff member it is rewarding to hear what the participants are doing, how they are communicating with other participants and how they are processing the experience. I have elected to share the responses that represent the general themes of the collective answers. However, I recognize that the participants are from different communities and backgrounds within Iraq and that each response comes from their own experience. I have chosen to present the responses as they were typed into SurveyMonkey, so as not to interfere with the tone of each response.

“Since you completed IYLEP, tell us about some big successes and challenges that you experienced in your personal, professional, and volunteer life in the past year.”

Successes included:

- now I am more confident about my self, I express myself better, which made it easier to me to make chanhes in my college and also motivated my friends to change for better
- Work successfully with groups and be able to participate more in volunteer activites

- IYLEP improved my abilities in public speaking and know i can stand in front of everybody and speak confidently.
(survey 3/28)

These responses all refer to the way that participants generally feel an increased sense of confidence and empowerment after the program. This empowerment is intentional and it is rewarding to see that participants are more certain and assured when working with their peers. The reports of increased confidence speak to the success of the program, and to the incredibly resilient and bright young people.

In addressing the challenges that they faced participants responded with:

- explain what was the aim of IYLEP
- Actually, when I return to Iraq. I found some difficulties with my friends. i felt that they are jealous from my, because i participated in the program and went to US and they did not. I overcame for it.
- one of the chalanges is that when people you know so good or relatives say that you have changed and you've been Americanized . and alot of people ask about how did i spent the days there alone and how do u travel by yourself and your a woman from iraq?
- Just being a regular Iraqi young man trying to express my ideas to the public and motivate my friends and colleagues to do the same and follow our big dream in starting a change
- Some people bothered me for going to U.S.

Some of these responses speak to the typical struggles that young people have as they mature, and have divergent experiences from their friends and family. IYLEP is only one month long, but it is a powerful and busy month. It makes sense that participants will struggle as they return to what was normal before the program. Added to this is the fact that these students are participating in a program funded and sponsored by the US Department of State, which is a political choice with which some people within Iraq may strongly disagree. The struggle to articulate the “aim of IYLEP” and that people are “bothered” that the participant traveled to the US are very real concerns and challenges.

Staff Voices

WL IYLEP staff cannot as non Iraqis truly understand this phase. Through interviews with Christina Thomas, IYLEP's Program Manager, we discussed how the adult mentors could support the work that the participants have done on program and navigate the deeply challenging conversations and interactions that take place when they return home. More active adult mentors could serve to strengthen the support that participants receive at home, which could lead to more effective follow on planning. Through structured mentorship by WL staff on program we could educate the adults to be more prepared for the challenges of arriving home and readjusting to life in Iraq (Thomas, 2012). Further, Thomas pointed out we are driven to support the requests of the U.S. Department of State. The U.S. Department of State's RFP states that the program "Provide opportunities for the adult participants, outside of joint activities with youth participants..." (pg. 2). Not only does the creation of a program for the Iraqi adult mentors support the participants' successful return and reentry into their homes, but it also relates to the RFP.

The IYLEP Adult Mentor Handbook

The following handbook has been developed to assist the Iraqi adults to step into a mentoring role during the month they will travel as a member of the IYLEP team. Rather than reinvent any rules or expectations, I have used and adapted what already exists. Much like the WL staff is given a handbook to guide their work, the Iraqi adults will receive this handbook in their orientation and will use it throughout the program as a tool to organize and engage their learning and empower their leadership. They will work

collaboratively with other Iraqi adults and WL staff to fill out worksheets, have conversations, and reflect about what is going on and why. Work produced in the handbook is intended to introduce a concept or an idea that the adult can use in their work as a mentor with the participants. In conversation and dialogue with their own WL staff mentor the Iraqi adult will learn to transfer their learning from the handbook to their work with the participants.

A handbook is used specifically over another form of organized information because this is what works for the WL staff. WL staff receive handbooks in the program orientation and an additional handbook for the specific program they will be working with. These handbooks are used as tools throughout the summer. They assist in providing intricately organized, consistent, and dynamic programming. In providing handbooks to the Iraqi adult mentors the staff is passing on what works to keep them prepared and ready for work. Further, as the WL staff will be contributing members of the Iraqi adults' program, a handbook will help to keep them informed and on track with the adult program.

The IYLEP staff handbook inspired the structure of the Iraqi adult mentor handbook. I purposefully wanted to have the two books similar in design so as to empower the adult mentor to see themselves as leaders. The tone of the handbook however is intended to mimic how the WL staff works with the participants. It is intended to have serious moments but also to be fun and upbeat. Hopefully the handbook encourages the adults to engage deeply in the experience while having fun and staying healthy.

The handbook begins with a welcome note, some important dates and vocabulary terms. It then presents IYLEP's goals and design followed by program policies and expectations for the Iraqi adult behavior. I started with these very important pieces so that they have access and knowledge of the policies but also to set them apart from the participants. I want to empower the Iraqi adults to follow these guidelines which have been established to maintain a safe and educational environment. Their understanding of these guidelines and norms will help the participants to adjust and feel safe.

WL Staff who will be working with the adult mentors will receive an Iraqi Adult Mentor Handbook marked 'WL STAFF' that will include guidelines to conversations. In this way staff members will be able to work together to offer consistent programming while establishing boundaries and working to improve upon the Iraqi adult's leadership skills. The IYLEP senior staff who will work with the Iraqi adults will have scheduled meeting times throughout the Vermont week, and will communicate by email or phone during the city visits. The Iraqi adult mentor will be able to reach out at any time for guidance or support. During the DC week the Iraqi adult mentors will lead and process a teambuilding activity with the assistance of staff. Through this experience they will learn how to plan and lead an activity and receive feedback about their leadership skills. This activity will enable Iraqi adult mentors to show what they have learned through IYLEP and receive positive feedback. Much like the participants deserve to celebrate at the end of the program, the adult mentors need to feel that they have overcome a challenge on the program. When the participants develop their follow on, or action plans, the Iraqi adult mentor will plan and present how they can continue to support the participants through their return home.

WL staff will receive and work from the same handbook that the Iraqi Adults will receive however theirs will include several helpful points to ensure that each adult is receiving the same information. The guidelines will help to encourage the tone of the relationship between the Iraqi adult and WL staff member. The WL staff handbook will begin with the following instructions.

These highlighted sections of this version of the handbook are intended to direct and advise the WL staff conversations with the Iraqi adult.

I have intentionally pointed out what I think is important to convey however please allow the conversations to be natural, and use your judgment and experience in addition to the curiosity of the Iraqi adult to inform the conversations.

Overall, this handbook intended to invite and empower the Iraqi adult to join in our work, and a productive, safe and fun way.

Please celebrate and delight in their successes and give them gratitude and appreciation.

The highlighted sections will help to organize and support the WL staff member's communication. The relationship should feel natural, however some instruction can help each to feel comfortable and safe as they begin their work together. Further, I am hopeful that my directions can help to focus the conversation toward the growth and development of leadership skills.

Overall the handbook is meant to encourage the adult mentors to be successful, positive members of the IYLEP team while addressing the needs outlined in the Department of State RFP. Through the additional structure established by a WL staff mentor and careful reflective work this handbook can assist the adults to be mentors to the participants and more meaningful members of the program.

Iraqi Adult Mentor Handbook

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Welcome بي حرت Bi xêr bî, Bi xêr hatî

On behalf of all of the WL and IYLEP staff we are so excited to have you join us as an adult mentor! We are excited to be traveling with you this summer and getting to know you! The purpose of this handbook is to make sure you have access to important information to help you become familiar with how IYLEP is managed by program staff, and to help you learn and develop leadership skills. We are thrilled that you are part of IYLEP!

Please keep this handbook with you throughout our travels as there is a great deal of important information included and we may be using various worksheets throughout the day.

Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program 2012 Program Numbers

IRAQ ECA: July 11 to August 11

Total: 32 Iraqi youth + 16 US youth = 48 youth + 4 Iraqi adults = 52 participants

Pre-departure Orientation, Istanbul, Turkey: July 11 - 14

Orientation and Leadership Camp, Vermont: July 14 – 22

Community Program, homestay cities: July 22 – August 3

Civic Education Week, Washington DC: Aug 3 – 9

Fly home from Turkey to Iraq: August 1

(Staff Packet, p. 5)

Important words you need to know:

- IYLEP: Iraqi Youth Leadership Exchange Program
- WL: World Learning, the Organization that is running IYLEP
- Experiential: Based on experience
- Empowerment: Give authority to somebody; to make them more confident or assertive
- Action Plans: The take home plans created by IYLEPers to use skill learned on program
- Chaperone: Group supervisor
- Culture: Shared beliefs and values of group
- Observer: Somebody who sees or watches; a nonparticipating witness
- Sweep: Taking a final look to make sure that all the participants have left
- Check-in: How a person is feeling physically & emotionally, refers to the beginning
- Check-out: How a person is feeling physically & emotionally, refers to the end
- Leader: Somebody whom people follow
- Mentor: Experienced advisor and supporter (YOU)

Some of our very favorite things to hear!

“What can I do?” “How can I help?” “Please!” “Thank you!” “Good job!”
“Excuse me, I have a question.” “I don’t know, but I will help you find an answer.”

Program Goals:

1. To develop a cadre of young adults in Iraq who have a strong sense of civic responsibility, a commitment to community development, an awareness of current & global issues, and strong interpersonal leadership skills;
2. To enable participants to understand civic participation and the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy;
3. To develop leadership skills among high school students and adult mentors appropriate to their needs;
4. To foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups in Iraq; and
5. To promote mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration between the United States and Iraq.

US Program Design:

The program will begin with an orientation in Istanbul, Turkey, followed by travel to Brattleboro, VT for the start of the US portion of the program. Upon arriving in New York, participants will travel to Vermont by bus where they will meet the participants from the US.

The program will begin with a week-long Orientation and Leadership Camp at World Learning's Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. This camp will focus on developing skills for peacebuilding and leadership through experiential learning with emphasis on building communication, conflict management, negotiation, group decision-making and problem solving skills in youth leaders as well as inspiring their motivation to bring about long-term positive social change in their communities.

Each group will then divide up into 4 or 5 subgroups of 13/14 Iraqi and US participants for a community program for 11/12 days. The goals of the community program are to:

- Emphasize and see examples of ethnic tolerance in a multi-ethnic society and youth leadership;
- Create a multi-media project;
- Meet with local government, community and religious leaders;
- Highlight civic participation in the United States; and
- Interact with their American peers.

The final program segment, a civic education week in Washington, DC, will allow the students to use Washington as an experiential classroom, integrating what they have learned in the previous weeks with the sights and experiences of the nation's capital. This segment will also allow for the students to brainstorm follow-on activities they will be able to implement to their home communities. (Staff Packet, p. 4)

Basic Policies for Iraq Young Leader Exchange Program

The following policies have been established to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment. You are responsible for knowing these policies and adhering to them.

Schedule of Activities: Participants, and adult mentors are expected to attend all sessions, including social activities, unless the program is marked as optional, in which case attendance is recommended. Staff will check to see that all are present at the morning meeting, at the beginning of each educational session, upon boarding and re-boarding all busses for events, and upon checking-in for all ticketed events.

Illness: In the event of illness, report your condition to WL staff immediately.

Homestay: While staying with your host family you will be expected to participate in family life, which may include performing routine household chores. Be alert to the fact that your host family will have “family rules” by which you are expected to abide.

Travel or Trips: During the exchange you may not travel on overnight or extended trips with your host family or others (ask a leader if you have a question about this). Moreover, you may not participate in any other organized trips, other than those planned and scheduled for the entire group.

Alcohol and Drugs: Drinking alcohol or using drugs is not allowed. Any violation will lead to immediate dismissal from the program and the participant will be sent home at his/her parents’ expense. Please be aware that it is illegal in the United States to purchase cigarettes if you are under 18 years of age.

Driving: Participants and adult mentors are not permitted to drive any motor vehicles.

Health Considerations: Participants will be covered by comprehensive health and accident insurance. You will acquaint yourself with the provisions of the coverage and any exclusions listed.

Rooming Requirements: Sometimes you will be asked to share rooms with other participants. Boys and girls will NOT be permitted to share rooms. You are not allowed to enter the room or sleeping area of a participant of the opposite sex.

Media: Participants and adult mentors will not participate in any media event without their permission. In the event there is a media event, neither names nor photos will be given to the media outlets.

Program Pace “American-style” program: This program is very busy and it requires a lot of energy and a high level of attention. It is expected that meetings will start on time. Although “down time” is scheduled into the program, the participants often use that as social time or shopping or other ways to maximize their time in the U.S., and we find that the participants often don’t take a lot of time to rest by themselves. This is their choice, of course, but we still expect them to attend program activities!

End of Program: Participants are required to return home with the group at the end of the program and may not stay on in the US for further travel, even if the family offers to cover the additional costs.

Other Policies: Please be aware that these basic policies are not exhaustive. In specific contexts, there may be specific requirements (for example, conduct in libraries, the classroom, or the dormitory).

Violations: Participants or adult mentors who violate any aspect of these basic policies will receive a warning or may be subject to dismissal, depending on the severity of the violation. Repeated violations/warnings will not be tolerated and the participant may be sent home at his/her parents' expense.

Visitor Policy: (for adult mentors and participants)

- Visitors are not permitted to participate in any program activities
- Program participants may not travel overnight with their visitors and may not miss any program activities
- Visitors are not allowed to stay in the dorms with the program participants. Visitors will need to make their own arrangements.
- Students are allowed visitors if they meet the following conditions:
 - Advance approval by the participant parents or legal guardian sent via email to the World Learning Iraq based field staff and the US based IYLEP program director. Without advance approval, unannounced visitors will be turned away and will not be permitted to see the student.
 - Time spent with visitors does not conflict with any scheduled program activity, including on weekends and evenings.
- Visitors must meet with the IYLEP program director or local community IYLEP program coordinator.
- Participants are not allowed to leave the program location with visitors even if it is for dinner.
- The approved visits will take place at the program location and a program staff member will be in attendance at all times. (Staff Packet, p. 35-36)

Leadership is a series of evolving decisions based on the best possible information available in the moment, combined with the lessons and wisdom of experience, sound analysis of the factors in front of you, and maximum use of all available resources.

(Norton, 2011)

Responsibilities & Expectations for Adult Participants on IYLEP

The following have been developed to help you understand your unique role with IYLEP

Adult Mentor Role: Adult mentors play many roles on this program. You are a participant and will learn with the students, but you are an adult as well, so you also have additional responsibilities. You serve as a cultural guide for the American staff and program coordinators. The participants will naturally look to you as group leaders and as elders. Being an adult mentor also entails handling problems that may arise and communicating and working with the program staff to handle any issues or behavioral problems with students. Please familiarize yourself with programs rules and policies before you leave for the US.

More than anything, we also see you as mentors to the students who they can go to for advice and encouragement during the US program, and when returning to Iraq and starting to implement their action-plan.

(Pre-Departure Guidelines- IYLEP Adults, pg. 1-3)

We hope that we can work together to bring out the best in the participants, and successfully reach our program goals. Additionally, we are confident that we can help you to set and reach your own goals.

*Leadership is a loaded word in many cultural contexts, and is often associated with elitism, power dynamics and authority over others. It is a central theme in IYLEP, but rather than emphasize the individualistic, go-it-alone and take charge approach (command and control), our goal is always to draw out the collective, group-oriented leadership skills- often referred to as **teambuilding**.*

(Ungerleider, 2009)

Specific Iraqi Adult Mentor Expectations

- Become familiar with the schedule, and assist staff in reminding participants about upcoming workshops, field trips, and daily activities.
- Observe all Youth Program rules while on campus. **Model respectful, positive, cooperative interactions.** Help to create positive energy and enthusiasm among participants.
- In some cases we may need you to talk with participants in their own language however we generally require you to communicate to all participants in English.
- Support the development of a community among participants.
- Ask the staff if they need help; if you see that something needs to be done – for example, chairs set up for a meeting – please take the initiative and make it happen.
- Attend as many of the program sessions as possible – including field trips. Your attendance and positive participation sets a strong example to the young people.
- **Assist all participants in arriving at all activities on time!** This includes making sure that people are getting up in the morning, getting to workshops, dialogue sessions and activities, and being ready to leave on field trips, or load vans at the appointed time. Before activities, help staff to ‘sweep’ hotel rooms, classrooms and send participants in the right direction!
- Pay attention to the mood, needs and dynamics of the group – notice those who are isolated, homesick, or having difficulty adjusting. Please communicate relevant observations to World Learning staff.
- There may be times when we’ll need to assist with evening transitions, and room checks.

We do recognize that being with teenagers for long hours can be tiring, and sometimes adults want to simply hang out with other adults, and have different types of conversations. There will be opportunities for you to have some breaks from the group. Please communicate with staff when you feel that you need some adult time.

Smoking: Many places and parts of the US have now chosen to be ‘smoke-free’. It is safe to assume that smoking is forbidden everywhere, unless indicated otherwise. In fact, World Learning bans all smoking during the program for those under 18. It is not normally acceptable to smoke in people’s homes. It is common for smokers to step outside to smoke. If you smoke, please take care to do this away from the students, and in a discreet manner that will model respectful, rule-abiding behavior. If you know there are student smokers in the group, please remind them that this is their chance to quit – because they will not be allowed to smoke AT ALL on the program.

Managing Expectations: It is very important to manage expectations when working with youth – in other words, try and give them as accurate and realistic a sense as possible of what they can expect. It is very good to know and to remind students that this is not a vacation, and not just an exchange - it is an opportunity to learn new skills, enhance their potential as youth leaders, to inspire them to be active in the community and that youth do and can make a difference. It is an educational program, and while very different from school, everyone will be expected to work hard.

Be as honest and open as possible with the students – and if you’re not sure of the answer, don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know – but we’ll find out soon!” This will be a powerful and new experience for you as well, and it is fine to tell the students that you’re curious and excited to learn with them – it will help to allay their fears.

While you are expected to be present at all program activities, we have different expectations for you because you are an adult mentor. In most cases the staff will let you know if they want you to be a full participant or an observer. If you are confused about this, please ask a staff member. If a staff member asks you to observe rather than participate it is because we want the participants to come to their own conclusions, without an outside influence. As adult mentors you have the ability to influence the participants learning and sometimes the staff might want the youth to come to their own understandings. As an observer you may take notes about the lesson, the teacher’s methodology and discuss your opinions later.

Communication with home: While participants should certainly let their family know they arrived safely and how they’re doing, communications with home, especially by e-mail, should be kept to a minimum. It tends to exacerbate homesickness and can prevent the participant from fully experiencing what the exchange has to offer. Participants should also be sensitive about spending too much time on the telephone or computer while they’re at their host families’ houses. Long distance telephone bills will be the responsibility of the exchange participant – the host families will not be asked to cover these expenses. (Pre-Departure Guidelines- IYLEP Adults, pg. 1-3)

Helpful hints

Wear a watch!
Have fun!
If you are confused about a task, ask for clarification.
Make sure you are getting enough food and drinking water!
If you need support or assistance, ask for it!
Make sure you are staying organized and taking care of yourself before you help others.
Keep track of your important papers!
Say “please,” and “thank you” as much as possible.

Date:

Identifying Leadership Skills

These worksheets are intended to assist you with your adult mentor role.
Please take notes as you might want to look back at them later.

Who are some leaders that you admire?

What are some skills that these leaders have?

What do these skills look like in real life and when do people use these skills?

How could you use these skills on program?

What leadership skills do you want to develop in your life?

OKAY, let's go! Traveling with IYLEP!

Below are some tips for traveling as an adult with large groups.

Managing the group through the airport: The staff will let you know how you can be the most helpful as you travel. They will let you know who will go through security first, and who will wait until all the participants are through. It is a good idea to ask how you can help keep the participants together once they have checked in, or as you wait for the rest of the group. Traveling can be stressful with a large group, and the staff may call on you to help.

While waiting for flights: It is good to set a meeting time and place if there is time for students to go to the shops for food and souvenirs, and to leave at least one adult with the bags and at the meeting place at all times. If you or any of the participants need to leave the group be sure to tell a staff member so they can be sure to know where you are. Make sure you are communicating with staff to see what you can do to help. For example, staff might tell you to make sure that all the participants are present.

TWO QUICK STUDENT COUNTING TECHNIQUES YOU MIGHT USE:

1. **“Buddy Check”:** As you may know, the word buddy is an American colloquialism for ‘friend’. Ask the students to pair up, and form “buddies”, and they must remember who their buddy is. When you need to do a quick check to make sure you’ve got everyone, call “Buddy Check”, and the students have to make eye contact, or link arms with their buddy. If anyone’s buddy is missing, they should tell you immediately. You should also do a quick count – 10 pairs of buddies, and you’ve got a full group – you may have one whole pair missing.

2. **“Count off”:** When you have all the participants together, ask them to count themselves off from 1 – 20. To get a quick count of the group at any time – call “Count off”: the person who is # 1 should loudly say “1”, then the person who is “2”, and so on, until you’ve got a full count. You can make it a game by having them count off quickly!

Important: If you have any doubt that you’re missing someone, double check, triple check! If someone is missing, don’t panic. Staff members will handle it.

Arrival: When the flight lands and we arrive at our destination we will stay on board until all other passengers have left the plane. This makes it easier to stay together as a group. Please remind all participants to double check that they have not left anything at their seats. We will stay as a group as we go through customs/immigration. This process can take some time and it is important to stay calm and respectful through this process. (Pre-Departure Guidelines- IYLEP Adults, pg. 4)

Vermont! Vermont!
Orientation and Leadership Camp

While in Vermont we will be staying at the SIT Graduate Institute campus outside the small town of Brattleboro. Here you will meet the American IYLEP participants, and your dedicated staff who will be traveling with you. There will be other groups of young people, on different programs from all around the world. You will meet a whole bunch of wonderful new people. You will receive a schedule of the week's activities that will help you to be organized and on time. There will designated times where you will be meeting with special staff that will work especially with you.

In Vermont we will be very busy from breakfast until bedtime. There will be:

- Dialogue
- Classes and Workshops
- Teambuilding games
- Ropes-Course
- Leadership Groups
- Meal times
- Music and Dancing
- Evening activities
- Free time (use it well!)
- Staff dances
- Tents
- Bugs and Animals
- (some) Shopping
- Trips to town

In Vermont make sure you:

Look up at the stars and out at the views
Go see the turtles and fish in the pond
Roll down hill green hillsides
Talk a walk down to the farm
Spend time in (or beside) the river
Say thank you to the staff

Sing *Vermont, Vermont* at sunset
Grab free popcorn at Sam's
Have an iced drink from Mocha Joes
Listen to the quiet at dawn
Count the languages in the cafeteria
Get to know as many people as you can

Date:

Icebreaking & Teambuilding

What did you learn? How did you do it?

What icebreakers and teambuilding games did you do? Did you like them?

What were the guidelines/rules of your favorite?

Why do you think we do them with participants?

What did you learn?

Could you use these games in your work at home? When?

Do you want to lead one of these games later in the program?

Date:

Vermont Classes and Workshops

You will have the opportunity to attend classes and workshops, what are you learning?

What classes and workshops have you attended?

Who led this class? What were they teaching? What was memorable about this?

How did the leader teach the group? What was their style?

What skills did the teachers use?

Date:

What would you do?

Together, let's brainstorm (think up ideas) of how we would manage these situations.

You really need to get something important from a participant, but the participant is in the middle of a dialogue group being facilitated by a program staff member. You know you were told not to interrupt sessions, however it is very important that you talk to this participant. How would you manage this situation?

You witness a serious rule violation involving two members of your own group. You don't want them to get in trouble and don't want the whole group to look bad because of these two students, so you are not sure if you should report it to the US program staff. What would you do?

(Norton, S. 2012)

Community Program: Homestays

The best way to understand another culture is to live as a member of one of its families.
We believe the following guidelines will help you to be successful!

You will be given a calendar of events and information about your homestay city along with important phone numbers to call in case of emergency.

Helpful Information:

- If you do not feel well, you should report it to an adult mentor, a staff member, or a host parent.
- Do not suffer in silence – we are here to help and support you, and if you don't feel well, we want to know about it so we can help you.
- If you require basic medication – for a headache, stomachache or cramps, staff will ask you if you are allergic to certain medications, and may also refer to your health form. Staff have basic first aid supplies and medicines.
- If there is an emergency on program, contact an adult immediately. If it is a serious emergency that you know requires police, fire engines or an ambulance, call 911... (with a caution that it is illegal to prank-call 911, and do so ONLY in the event of a real emergency)
- Listen to all instructions given about where you can go on your own, if you are required to be with a buddy – a fellow participant or a host sibling, and what time you must be back. (Staff Packet, p. 39)

It can be awkward and uncomfortable to stay in a new home, but we are confident that you will make great new friends as you explore a new part of the world.

Do you have any stories that you want to be sure to share with your host family?

(It can be helpful to think of things to say beforehand in case you get nervous.)

tell them about the Vermont program
relate a story about flying with so many teenagers
show pictures from Turkey and Vermont

Homestay Expectations Agreement: for all participants

- Your homestay family is expected to provide you with a safe environment. You are expected to do your part in maintaining that safe environment.
- Be respectful of host property and personal belongings.
- Participate in home life – as opposed to staying in your room. Your attempts at starting conversations will be welcomed.
- Keep your room/space clean and orderly. The same applies to the bathroom facilities.
- Show respect for the rhythm of your new household; be aware of and present at meal times.
- Alert your hosts in advance of your schedule. Find out what their expectations are for curfews.
- In the event of illness, you agree to notify the Program Coordinator immediately.
- Take initiative to create clear communication with your hosts. If you have serious, recurring troubles making yourself understood, seek help from your Program Coordinator or other program staff.
- The use of illegal drugs is prohibited.
- You acknowledge that the World Learning Visitor Exchange Program (WLVEP) has explained its Harassment Policy to you. Your host family has agreed to support you by ensuring that their home remains a safe environment for you and that the home is free from harassment of any kind from any family member or guest in the home.
- Sexual relationship of any kind between homestay family members and students are not allowed.
- Inform your Program Coordinator or other staff member immediately of any incident that affects your personal safety, security, or ability to fully participate in the program, including harassment.
- Talk to your hosts about your role in the family's daily life including meals, setting the table and cleaning up. Find out what chores you could do around the home to be helpful.
- Check with your host family before inviting anyone in to the home, especially members of the opposite sex. No overnight guests are permitted.
- Find out and respect the expectation for your use of their home phone, computer, Internet, laundry, refrigerator, and other resources.
- Phone use can be a particularly troublesome issue. You should be sensitive to the time you spend on the line regardless of who is paying for the call. Refrain from extended cell phone use when you could be interacting with your hosts.
- Always ask before using the phone, computer, equipment and/or Internet access and be sure not to overuse it. Phone booths, overseas calling shops, and Internet cafes may be better options.
- Expect to take care of your own laundry including any ironing unless advised otherwise.
- Have a conversation with hosts about any personal habits that may impact the household, such as dietary restrictions. The student may need to be flexible because the hosts may not be able to provide special food. (Staff Packet, p. 34)

Date:

Community Program: Check in

How are you and the group doing in a whole new city?

What are your first impressions of your host family and host city?

How are the participants doing? What is the mood of the group?

What do you expect to learn from the homestay experience?

Do you feel that you are addressing your leadership goals? (see pg. 10)

What are your impressions of IYLEP? How has this handbook been helpful?

Date:

Leading an Activity

Please interview a staff member and get the answers to the following questions.

What is your favorite activity to lead and why?

How do you prepare and plan to lead this activity?

Do you always stick to your plan?

Do you know ahead of time what you want people to get out the activity?

Have things ever gone wrong? What did you do?

Washington, D.C. Civic Education Week

Let's reunite, share our stories, explore this city and do some action planning.

It will be wonderful to see all the faces back together as we all regroup in this amazing city. Washington, DC is home to many historic monuments, museums, parks, and it is where the US government is headquartered. While we are staying in DC we will spend a lot of time exploring the city, doing some shopping, visiting museums, taking pictures, and having some important meetings. The participants will be creating their action plans, and presenting them to the Department of State, Youth Programs Division.

We will be staying in dormitories at the 4-H Center and we will likely need your assistance keeping the participants calm and focused. We will be sharing this space with many other youth groups and so it can be a little confusing and stressful to get everyone organized. We will be out in the city a lot, which means: lots of counting, staying in 'buddies', and public transportation! Be prepared to ride on a public bus, get a little bit lost on the metro and have a personal tour of the US capital WL style. Oh, also you might want to get excited for the ice-cream machine at the 4-H center.

You will have the opportunity to lead an activity and use some of the leadership skills we have been working on. Please reach out to staff and have them share their experience and help you to plan your activity. We can help you to choose a really fun activity that will give you the chance to show off your leadership activities. Further, we will be discussing how your role as an adult mentor looks when you return home.

Here are a few facts you can dazzle the participants with:

- DC is a very international city, home to more than 170 embassies and international cultural centers. 15% of DC residents speak a language other than English at home.
- The Capitol Dome took 11 years to build. On top of the dome is the "Statue of Freedom," which may look small, but it's actually 19 feet 6 inches tall and weighs approximately 15,000 pounds.
- Washington takes its name from our first president, George Washington. "Columbia" in "District of Columbia" stands for Christopher Columbus.
- Washington, DC is not a state, nor is it part of any state. It is a unique, "federal district" created specifically to be the seat of government. (Destination DC website, April, 2012)

Date:

Planning An Activity

You are encouraged to lead an activity that you have done on program, however if you have new ideas or want to get creative... that's great!

What is the purpose of this activity?

What activity do you want to lead?

What are the guidelines? How do you want it to go?

What kind of space will you need?

What leadership skills will you need to use for this activity to be successful?

What do you want the participants to take away? How will you make sure this happens?

Date:

Feedback: How did it go?

This can be the most difficult part of leading an activity, but it is important.

Congratulations on planning and leading an activity!

How do you feel it went? How did the participants respond?

What did you do well? How did that feel?

What skills did you use?

Did the activity make the intended impact on the group? How could you tell?

If you could do it over, would you make any changes?

How will you use this activity and these skills in your work at home?

Closure

"There are no good-byes, where ever you'll be, you'll be in my heart." – Ghandi

We will say goodbye to the American participants and some staff in DC before we get on a bus that will take us to New York where we will fly to Turkey where you will spend the night before leaving for Iraq. These goodbyes are difficult for participants, however they show how deeply important these friendships have become. These goodbyes are hard for staff as well, however it is rewarding to watch how close the participants have gotten. In the past participants have written notes for their friends to read. People exchange email address, phone numbers, and become Facebook friends so they can maintain their friendships. Some participants may have a harder time saying goodbye than others. These may need some additional support from you and the staff.

While it can be exciting to return home and see your family and friends, you may struggle with this as well. This is normal after such an intensive program and we recognize that this can be a hard transition. The staff is here to support you and help you and the group to get home safely.

You will discover: there is no "me" in "us"

Written by 4 2011 participants, from the World Learning IYLEP Blog

Every once in a while we sit and think of the memories we have about the adventures we had, not only between July and August but even way before. It started out meeting the list of names, and ended up having those names engraved in our memories as family from a once in a lifetime adventure. Now IYLEP is not just a mere memory but our IYLEP family members are deep inside each one of us forever.

Each one of us has a new outlook now, a new perspective on the world, on each other and most importantly on ourselves. Those whispers of "I can, it's never impossible" is what we can hear everywhere. All we have to do is to stand and listen, it's never an impossible thing.

Our advise to incoming IYLEPers to make their coming experience as best as possible, is to stop to hear what you really want to do and decide upon it and then to just **DO IT!** It is never hard to make all those around you listen to you. Play your music to your own beat, that's how you make change. Inside you, and inside everyone there is the storm of thoughts which no one can stop. You have to let the storm out. Then you will find that many people will do the same.

It is important to spread all that you have to share and never keep anything hidden for the rest of your life. Life is too great to hide your true self, share it with everyone around you. It will be great and fill your life with joy.

Some last words of advice: Have fun, rush nothing, and hope for the best!

Evaluation

This handbook has been developed with the intention that it be used with the IYLEP program in the summer of 2012. I anticipate that several changes will be made in the application of the program. In order to track the effectiveness of the handbook and the individual documents I will be in contact with staff and the adults mentors to determine what is helpful and what can be improved. At the end of the program participants, Iraqi adult mentors, and WL staff will be asked to give feedback about the handbook.

Conclusion

This handbook will be used daily by the Iraqi adults. Its contents will connect their experience to the IYLEP themes, the theory and assumptions that inform the work of the WL staff, and the practical rules and guidelines intended to keep the participants safe and healthy throughout the program. In addition to the information included here there will be contact information for staff members, and space to take notes, ask questions, or doodle.

The hope is that this handbook will empower the Iraqi adult mentors to develop meaningful and effective leadership skills while staying healthy and having fun. Upon their return to Iraq they will be able to use their skills and experience to assist participants with their readjustment and follow on plans. An evaluation completed by participants, adult mentors, and WL staff will assist in modifying the handbook and program to increase the effectiveness of the materials.

The youth that come together as a result of the IYLEP program are part of a movement to empower, inspire, and connect the next generation of leaders. The adults

and staff that travel with them have the responsibility to provide a safe, meaningful and impactful program. As a result of the program the participants will engage meaningfully within their communities and work together to bridge and overcome the lasting impact of the conflict.

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