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Building Hope: An Experiential, Interfaith and Peacebuilding Leadership Curriculum Design for American, Israeli and Palestinian Teenagers

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Course-Linked Capstone: Youth Program Leadership and Design

Building Hope: An Experiential, Interfaith and Peacebuilding Leadership Curriculum Design for American, Israeli and Palestinian Teenagers

Jack M. Karn – PIM 73

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, VT, USA.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the design, implementation, and results of an interfaith and peacebuilding leadership curriculum prepared for the 2015 Jerusalem Peacebuilders Leadership Camp in Brattleboro, Vermont. Drawing upon different theories of moral and transformative leadership, experiential education, youth leadership, and peacebuilding and conflict transformation, this curriculum design offers a new and unique approach to leadership development for Israeli, Palestinian, and American teens. The six, 1.5-hour unit curriculum includes icebreaker and team building activities, theory and practice connections, dialogue, and opportunities to practice leadership and peacebuilding skills on several small group projects. Supported by a literature review, eight interviews from youth leadership and peace-building practitioners and post-program survey data from fifteen youth participants, findings of this study include: the importance of shorter, more engaging learning sessions, the value of small group dialogue, insight into different qualities of leadership, and recommendations for activities and content to incorporate in future leadership designs. Overall, this short-term leadership program model is arguably highly effective in the formation of young American, Israeli and Palestinian peace leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

During my work for Jerusalem Peacebuilders, I discovered the specialized blending of moral, transformative leadership, interfaith understanding, experiential education and peacebuilding and conflict transformation in a youth program remained largely unexamined and ignored in academic research. Thus, the time for a deeper consideration and study of the combination of these disciplines through examining a short-term educational program for young adults is now. This connection is vital because of our diverse, interconnected, and changing world. Common understandings of how we approach education are shifting through growing evidence arguing for the effectiveness of experiential education in youth leadership programs. Religion and spirituality, while sometimes misappropriated for justifying terrible crimes and destruction of life like with the religious extremist group ISIS, is ultimately a powerful resource for developing young people into leaders who seek to foster peace, love, respect and justice in the world. Lastly, peacebuilding and conflict transformation activities are increasingly becoming recognized as integral to the healthy development and prosperity of societies. This model offers youth participants a transformative learning experience that empowers them to become leaders and peacebuilders in a hurting world.

I devoted my Reflective Practice Phase and Capstone Research Project to exploring these theoretical and practical connections through the central research question: “*What learning approach, activities, and topics should be addressed in a short-term interfaith leadership and peacebuilding curriculum for young American, Israeli, and Palestinian teens?*” To reach this end, I designed and re-designed an interfaith, leadership and peace-building curriculum for American, Israeli and Palestinian 15 and 16 year-old teens for the organization Jerusalem Peacebuilders Inc. As part of a larger leadership, peace and empowerment camp program, the six, 1.5-hour/unit curriculum folds into the larger two-week transformational youth

empowerment program. Through a literature review, post-camp survey, and interviews with youth leadership practitioners, several important findings were discovered to improve the leadership curriculum for future years. Findings include: creating shorter, more engaging learning sessions, the importance of small group dialogue and sharing perspectives, success of content offered, insight into different perspectives on leadership, suggestions on teambuilding/trustbuilding exercises, role-playing and storytelling activities, studying history, and developing communication and conflict resolution skills.

Jerusalem Peacebuilders (JPB) is a non-profit interfaith organization offering educational peace-building and leadership development programs for children and adults from North America and the Middle East. Entering its sixth year of operation, JPB currently operates two interfaith summer camp programs focused on the three Abrahamic faiths (one for 13 and 14 year-olds and another for 15 and 16 year-olds), a nine-month afterschool program in Jerusalem, personalized pilgrimages for adults to the Middle East, and a range of other contracted trainings and service offerings in and around New England. Each year since its inception in 2011, the organization has steadily developed its capacity and quality of programming offered to its target audiences.

From 2011-2015 JPB operated in formal partnership with Kids4Peace International (K4P) an interfaith youth peace-building organization focused on bringing together children from different cultures, nationalities, and faith traditions to build lasting friendships, values of respect and tolerance, and explore each others differences and similarities. Launched in 2002 in Jerusalem in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, K4P offers after-school and summer camp programs for youth in grades 6-12. Both K4P's and JPB's programs bring together Israeli, Palestinian and United States participants for year-round and summer peace programs in

Israel/Palestine and the United States. The *raison d'etre* behind this tri-national focus of participants reflects the contextual realities of the conflict –that Israel, Palestine, and the United States are all parties to this conflict and thus must each play a primary role in its resolution and transformation.

With a focus on Israel/Palestine, JPB's programs explore ways to build peaceful and life-long friendships that cut across different identities known to divide people, as well as empower participants with the knowledge, skills and awareness to make a positive difference in their home communities and later in their adult lives. The context of this research rests in JPB's more advanced and intensive program for older teens: the Leadership Camp at Acer Farm in Brattleboro, VT. Held over the course of twelve days in July, the leadership camp brings together a small, select group of young teens from Israel, Palestine and the U.S., who have demonstrated a genuine interest in peacemaking and a commitment to furthering their leadership qualities and skills.

Remotely nestled in the green forests, mountains and rushing streams of southern Vermont, Acer Farm is a beautiful 200-acre quintessential property owned and maintained by JPB's founders, Reverend Canon Nicholas and Dorothy Porter. A 1960s-era log cabin complex serves as the central location for much of the learning, recreation and domestic life that makes up the experience. Most staff and guests stay on-site, which gives the camp a unique family-like atmosphere allowing participants to feel safe and comfortable. Low staff turnover each year creates a trusting and supportive staff team that can more effectively engage and challenge the youth in their learning. The property boasts several notable amenities on-site: a spring-fed pond for swimming, horseback riding, hiking trails, and a chapel for Christian worship. In 2014, JPB installed a 20' yurt structure next to the cabin to house more campers and free up space inside the

house for guests and staff. Most of the camp program takes place at the farm, limiting transportation costs and inefficiencies in the schedule. All of these features merge to create a safe and comfortable learning environment, which allows for a more transformational and empowering experience.

The following literature review will explore different theories of leadership, youth leadership, experiential education, and peacebuilding and conflict transformation to form a foundation of knowledge that informed the actual leadership curriculum design. Afterward, an overview of the JPB Leadership Camp program and the research data methodology for the post-camp participant survey and interviews with leadership development practitioners will be presented. I will then lay out each unit of the leadership curriculum design and the experience of implementation at the camp. Data results from the post-camp survey and practitioner interviews will be provided to support this research, along with a discussion of the significance of their findings. I will close with several recommendations to improve the program in future years followed by a conclusion and summary.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

This review of the academic literature will explore different theories of leadership, youth leadership, experiential education, and peacebuilding and conflict transformation that influence and support the leadership curriculum design of focus. Each field contains valuable insight for how to create an effective, interdisciplinary short-term leadership program for Israeli, Palestinian, and American youth. The leadership curriculum design pulls information from each of the four bodies of knowledge to create a powerful synthesis and platform for personal and group transformation, empowerment, interfaith learning, and developing leadership and peacebuilding knowledge and skills.

Leadership

Many different theories of leadership exist in the modern historical archive. An adored concept with a rich history, serious leadership studies remained limited until the 20th century. Models and perspectives of leadership have been developed by scholars in the fields of business, education, military and politics (Rost, 1993). This multiplicity of understandings has created intense debate among researchers. However, Bernard Bass presents us with this summary:

“Leadership has been conceived as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular behaviors, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as initiation of structure, and as many combinations of these definitions.” (Bass, 1990, p. 11).

The first definitions of a leader and leadership look to a person being the focus of group processes (1990). Since the 1930s, leadership has regularly been perceived as good management (Rost, 1993). Researcher Peter Northouse defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” (2007, p. 3). Early research looked at the inherent qualities and traits of a leader, not dynamic processes of developing leadership. It was initially assumed that leadership was a natural disposition for some individuals, possessing

unique traits that made them different from others (MacNeil, 2014). In the 1950s, leadership theories of behavior, situational/contingency, and excellence emerged in the field (Rost, 1993). Each leadership theory had its heyday of popularity.

In the second half of the 20th century, leadership theories from areas of social science developed as alternatives to the dominant industrial leadership paradigm. What resulted were theories of leadership based on influence, transformation, service, and morality. In his groundbreaking book, *Leadership*, Bernard Burns (1978) authored his definition of leadership that leads to his elucidation of his prolific theory of transformational leadership:

“Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political or other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers.” (Burns, 1978, p. 425)

Burn’s transformational theory focused on a transformational process, “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.” (1978, p. 20).

Around the same time, Robert Greenleaf generated the servant-leadership theory, arguing that leadership is directly expressed by serving others, stating, “the great leader is seen as servant first, and that is the key to greatness.” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 21). Joseph Rost points out that Burn’s definition added an ethical/moral dimension that had never before been a part of any other leadership theory (1993). Of course, Greenleaf’s definition also did this. In response to Burns, Joseph Rost put forth his definition: “leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.” (1993).

One more theory of leadership is important to highlight. Moral leadership, as defined by Bernard Bass, focuses on the relationship between the follower and the institution:

“Moral leadership helps followers to see the real conflict between competing values, the inconsistencies between espoused values and behavior and the need for realignments in

values, changes in behavior, or transformations of institutions.” (Bass 1985, p. 182).

The impetus for a moral leadership approach in leadership development among youth can arguably be effective in almost every context. All three theories on leadership (transformational, servant, and moral) continue to hold significant influence today.

The field of leadership studies underwrites a significant amount of research and thinking about approaches to developing youth for leadership. Many youth programs employ the models of transformational, moral, and servant leadership in their program designs and educational strategies. Each model has different strengths and weaknesses, and their use should depend on the context of the program, desired goals, and the participants. Youth programs that mix two or more of these approaches together offer compelling positive outcomes.

Youth Leadership

Birthered from the fields of leadership, education, and youth development, youth leadership is a younger field of academic research and study. Youth leadership can be defined as “the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and decision making.” (Kress, 2006). There is a consensus that youth development and leadership programs are purposefully designed to instill in youth a set of core competencies viewed as necessary for one to have a successful and participatory adolescent and adult life (2006). Educational processes that combine theory and practice learning with outlets for the active application and exercise of leadership are most effective (Stein et al., 2005). Significant contrasts have been made between learning about leadership and learning leadership.

Learning leadership is developed through lived-experiences practicing the roles, skills, and approaches to leadership. Beyond learning leadership skills and listening to great stories of leadership, youth educators must create the relationships and contexts where young people can

actively engage in an authentic and meaningful practice of leadership (MacNeil & McClean, 2006). In addition, youth educators are tasked with developing opportunities for youth to take on adult roles that require responsibility and initiative (Blanchet-Cohen & Brunson, 2014).

Connected to this approach is the complex and essential role of adults in youth leadership and empowerment programs. It is important that adult facilitators and youth program staffs are examining youth-led youth program activities with an ecological framework of individual, group, and organizational lenses (2014).

Youth leadership programs have the power to transform and dramatically change the lives of their participants. When approached with an understanding of the value of theory to practice connections and applied learning processes, allowing youth to exercise leadership skills through planning, decision-making, and execution, and creating contexts and environments where youth can take on new challenging roles and responsibilities, the opportunity for substantial development and growth within young individuals is high.

Experiential Education

Youth leadership programs often draw from the essential lessons borne out of the experiential learning movement of the 20th century. As such, experiential education is being increasingly viewed with high importance in today's ever-changing learning environment for youth and adults. Teachers and students have long since called for a more holistic learning experience that moves beyond the traditional educational paradigms of our public school systems that claim to be effective. The movement toward experiential education began with the philosophical work of John Dewey in the early 20th century that stressed the learner as the center of learning and the value and validity of individual experience. Laura Joplin claims that all learning is experiential stating, "anytime a person learns, he must 'experience' the subject –

significantly identify with, seriously interact with, form a personal relationship with, etc.” (1981).

Experiential education can be summed up in the following statement:

“Good experiential learning combines direct experience that is meaningful to the student with guided reflection and analysis. It is a challenging, active, student-centered process that impels students toward opportunities of taking initiative, responsibility, and decision-making. An experiential approach allows numerous opportunities for the student to connect the head with the body, heart, spirit, and soul... Experiential education engages the learner emotionally.” (Chapman et al., 1992).

While this learning approach grounds in experience, it is also characterized by a set of relationships between the learner and the self, teacher, and environment (1992). The onus is on relationships that involve self-reflection, facilitation and guidance from the teacher, and the physical environment or content that the learner engages.

Experiential education is often described as a practice-oriented process (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). Joplin argues that experiential education programs have two main responsibilities: providing the learner with an experience and facilitating the reflection on that experience (Joplin, 1981). She stresses that experience alone cannot equate with experiential education, but also requires a process of reflection. Within this thinking, the philosophy of experiential education is committed to achieving personal and individual growth (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). Core to pursuing this goal comes out of developing trust between participants, self-awareness, team-building and teamwork, personal dignity, and individual and group problem-solving skills (Smith et. al., 1992). Lindsay and Ewert add important emphasis that program goals may include enhancing decision-making skills and participants setting their own goals (1999). While experiential education programs focus on the individual, their unstated goals often include broader community engagement and societal dimensions (1999).

Educational summer youth programs must walk a delicate line between balancing the priority of generating enthusiasm for learning and personal development while avoiding the

common trap of boring and losing participants' interest through over lecturing and "keeping youth in their seats." To prevent this pitfall in education, programs must challenge participants in expressive and creative ways, give them a level of control over the decision-making process, and offer opportunities to apply their learning through hands-on projects and activities. Empowering participants to develop their relationships through trust and team-building exercises, self-reflection, and problem-solving can yield significant results in youth programs.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

Conflict is a part of every person's life, the form and outcome it expresses itself in depends upon the particular contextual realities and circumstances. Conflict can be viewed as involving "actors in pursuit of incompatible goals" (Galtung, 1958, p. 25). And peace can be viewed simply as the absence of violence and people being able to achieve their full potential. Over the 20th century, as the field of peace and conflict studies evolved, so did our understandings of the two: how to approach the former and actualize the latter. For conflict, the concepts of conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict transformation have been established to describe different processes involved with how we approach and view conflict. For peace, the terms peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping now exist to explain different experiences in creating, developing, and sustaining peace. Each concept holds a recognized place in the ongoing discussion. For the purposes of this research, however, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation are the terms most important to explain here.

Peacebuilding can be defined as:

"Peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct." (Lederach, 1997).

Thus educational programs for youth that explore peace represent one process of peacebuilding that should be included among a holistic approach to peacebuilding. If we are to create sustainable societies that cooperate and work together towards shared goals, then peacebuilding programs with youth are an essential policy to include. Peace education that folds into a youth leadership development program creates a powerful synthesis of learning leadership towards a building a more just, prosperous, and peaceful world.

Conflict transformation is a relatively new term born out of earlier understandings of looking at conflict as exclusively needing resolution. Conflict resolution refers to:

“An outcome and process in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between the parties that were previously hostile adversaries. (Mitchell and Banks, 1996).

Over time, this definition became insufficient for some because of a conflict’s continued expression even after a formal peace agreement or resolution was signed. The alternative put forward was conflict transformation, arguing for a more dynamic, sustainable way of looking at conflict within human relationships:

“...to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.” (Lederach, 2003).

Conflict transformation argues not simply for seeing conflict as something needing resolution and having an endpoint, but as requiring sustained action and ongoing attention. For as we have seen in history, some conflicts have such deep roots that believing there will be one final resolution that ends the conflict once and for all can be perceived as short-term thinking. Thus, each of these three concepts hold important places in youth leadership development programs among Israeli, Palestinian, and American teens.

The conceptual thinking and understandings of peacebuilding and conflict transformation create a central pillar in the leadership curriculum's approach and emphasis on peace education. Youth leadership programs are smart to include peace education elements, for leaders will encounter the need to anticipate, respond, resolve, and transform situations of conflict in order to pursue, achieve, and sustain peaceful relationships. The lack of many youth leadership and peace education programs today makes this fusion all the more important.

The fields of leadership, youth leadership, experiential education, and peacebuilding and conflict transformation are bodies of knowledge that the JPB leadership curriculum design draws upon to create a powerful, effective, and transformational short-term youth program. Through understanding the theoretical and academic record around these topics, the curriculum is enhanced by their incorporation and direct influence. The theories of leadership discussed above inform the multiple approaches to leadership being employed in the overall camp program and leadership curriculum in particular. The discussions on youth leadership and experiential education help us to understand how to approach developing leadership among youth in creative, engaging, and challenging ways. And the background and definitions for peacebuilding and conflict transformation focus this leadership curriculum in on the context that undergirds the pioneering work of Jerusalem Peacebuilders.

LEADERSHIP CAMP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The JPB leadership, peace and empowerment camp focuses on building knowledge, skills, and awareness on topics of leadership, interfaith understanding, and peacebuilding. This experimental recipe of including multiple cultures, religions, and nationalities into an experiential youth leadership and peace education program presents a new approach to leadership development within an intensive, short-term format. Developed through a mix of practical experience and theoretical learning, the camp's schedule and curriculum follow an experiential and critical youth empowerment model to achieve its goals. The goals of the leadership camp program are: 1) To develop greater responsibility, initiative, self expression, communal awareness and goodwill in each camper, 2) To deepen personal, national and religious connections between American, Israeli and Palestinian youth, 3) To strengthen the campers personally, intellectually, and spiritually to be effective leaders and builders of a peaceful and just future beyond the status quo (Jerusalem Peacebuilders Brochure, 2014). Through a balanced program of education, recreation, domestic living and spiritual practice JPB's programs seek to achieve these ends.

The camp's daily schedule follows a standard pattern throughout much of the camp: wake up, breakfast, morning chores, warm-up activity, morning workshop I and II, prayers and lunch, break, afternoon workshop I and II, swim or free time, prayers and dinner, break and evening dialogue or activity. The content of the daily workshops varies from learning about: Israel/Palestine, communication, relationships, personal expression, identity formation, social justice issues, leadership, religion, and arts and music. A mix of traditional and experiential workshop formats provides participants with a range of ways to learn and develop their thinking and capacity around topics of leadership and peacebuilding. A majority of the camp's workshops are led by guest educators and specialists in the fields of international relations, religion, refugees,

peace and conflict, environmental conservation, and trauma healing, giving participants a range of perspectives to consider in developing their thinking on different issues and topics. Although the camp is intensive in terms of its academic content and mental challenge, the schedule provides an adequate amount of time for reflection, relaxation, and play. Outdoor sports, board and card games, hammocks and swings, swimming and canoeing, arts and music, and a vast library of related books on religion and the Middle East are some of the options campers can choose from for recreation and leisure. Hidden away from the trappings of mainstream society, the camp is ideally situated to give participants a unique, transformational experience that feels safe, sacred, and peaceful. All meals are homemade, prepared, and cooked in a kosher kitchen on-site staffed by volunteers and guests. Each of the three Abrahamic faith traditions respective daily prayers and days of worship are honored and celebrated.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM POST-CAMP SURVEY AND INTERVIEW

METHODOLOGY:

In addition to the literature review, I employed the use of an anonymous post-camp participant survey and conducted a series of eight interviews to support this research project. These data collection tools were guided by the central research question: “*What learning approach, activities, and topics should be addressed in a short-term interfaith leadership and peacebuilding curriculum for young American, Israeli, and Palestinian teens?*” I set up my survey and interview questions based on this main question to uncover direct insight into how to improve and enhance the leadership curriculum for future programs.

For the post-camp survey, fifteen minor participants and their parents were required to sign IRB-approved Adult Informed Consent forms from JPB in order to participate in this research project. These forms were administered during a visit to Jerusalem in April 2015 before the camp. To avoid the risk of over-surveying minor participants, the IRB mandated that the post-camp survey questions unique to this research project combine with a larger set of survey questions –to be used for another SIT Graduate Institute student’s capstone research– to evaluate the overall JPB Leadership Camp program. Over the course of the final day of the camp, each participant was given 30 minutes to complete a hard-copy survey individually. The survey included four short-answer questions to measure the effectiveness and impact of the leadership curriculum. These questions will be introduced and analyzed in a later section.

Eight in-person, phone, and video interviews with youth leadership practitioners were conducted to support the findings and recommendations of this research project. Using a core list of eight interview questions, I interviewed eight professionals currently involved in roles of youth leadership development and peacebuilding in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The interviewees were from the organizations: Kids4Peace, Heartbeat, Ultimate Peace, Pyalara (Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation), and Bennington College. Interview participants were comprised of a relatively balanced and diverse set of identities based on nationality, religious affiliation, and gender preference. The interviews ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All interviewees were given interview questions beforehand and thanked afterwards for their participation. There was no monetary for interview participants who consented to being interviewed. To protect the anonymity of the interview participants, the quotes chosen will remain anonymous and no identification given. In total, there were eight interview questions, but only five questions will feature in the interview data analysis section of this paper.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM DESIGN:

The camp's leadership curriculum was designed using a mix of experiential and traditional learning approaches to explore leadership development through a peacebuilding and conflict transformation lens. Six 1.5-hour units were developed for the 2015 Leadership Camp. The units were: *Foundations of Interfaith Leadership, Dignity, Peace and Conflict, Nonviolent Communication, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Resolution and Transformation (Negotiation)*. I will describe each unit of the curriculum in detail covering aspects of the design, implementation, and reflection phases. I authored and designed each unit using information and resources acquired through my MA course studies at SIT Graduate Institute between 2013-2014 and later work with World Learning's Youth Programs in 2015.

The curriculum design reflects a moral, transformative approach to youth leadership. The curriculum holds a particular alignment towards moral values and peace and direct and indirect connections to each of the three Abrahamic faiths. Its mix of experiential, challenge learning, coupled with opportunities for youth to express themselves and exercise leadership skills on self-guided projects beholds a transformational, moral leadership development experience. Through safely addressing their own and their societies' moral behaviors, conflicts, and contradictions, participants develop a deeper sense of group trust and shared motivation to grow. This experience results in many participants feeling empowered with a positive change in perspective and attitude, knowledge about different religions and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, new leadership skills, a stronger awareness of one's identity and relationships with others.

Each unit began with an icebreaker (or team builder) activity intentionally situated to connect with that specific day's content. The group would then convene at the outdoor classroom space located directly next to the residential cabin building. The day's topic would be introduced

to the whole group and a few minutes would be spent recapping on the previous unit. For each unit, I designed workbooks to help engage the youth in their individual and corporate learning. The workbooks contained important definitions, pictures, and sections where the participants would be asked to write in their responses to questions individually, express themselves and theory to practice, and complete group work assignments. I decided to use this mixed approach to accompany the large and small group discussions in many of the units. The workbooks modeled the training guide I followed and referred to during the implementation of the units. During each session, I employed the use of activities that had the participants divide into smaller groups for more personal and deep sharing before coming back together for a debrief and summary. As trust deepened between the group's participants and the facilitators, we were able to challenge and learn from each other's perspectives, thinking, and actions. At this point, I will describe each unit, discussing the implemented material and its placement, adding personal reflections and observations for each of the sessions.

Unit 1: Foundations of Interfaith Leadership

Unit 1 begins with an icebreaker activity called "Name and Adjective" when everyone stands in a circle, and one by one says their full name, what name they prefer to be addressed with and an adjective describing themselves (Bonner Curriculum, n.d.). The participants would also have to introduce the person who had previously gone, recalling their name and adjective. It was the second day of camp and the Israel, Palestinian and American participants did not know each other. The activity not only helped participants learn each other's names, but it also gave everyone the opportunity to think about how they describe and identify themselves. With the ice officially broken, the group sat down and we opened with the general question: "What's a leader?" Participants recorded some thoughts in the space provided in their workbooks and

shared their responses with the whole group. Participants mentioned several key attributes and descriptors that leadership scholars commonly point to in their theories.

Leadership begins with leading yourself, or self-leadership. Self-leadership comprises three main parts: 1) Having a vision of where you want to be, 2) Figuring out the steps of how you want to get there, and 3) completing those steps one at a time (Boy Scout Handbook, 2012). Participants were instructed to write one-week, one-year and five-year vision statements and develop short- and long-term goals to help realize their vision. Following the “Think, Pair, Share” approach, the participants were given five minutes to share their vision and goals with their partner. I believed this approach would be effective because participants needed to take ownership over their responses when they shared them with their partner.

A core part of the interfaith component of the leadership curriculum, the group explored each of the Ten Commandments and the Five Pillars of Islam as moral foundations for leadership within the three Abrahamic faiths. Rich discussion developed among the whole group as we looked at each one and discussed its meaning and importance. Also included in the workbook was a list of other possible morals, after which I developed an activity called “Consider Your Morals” where each participant would choose one moral they felt they practiced a lot and one that they wanted to work on; an additional challenge was for them to reflect on where they had experienced their choices. After a few minutes of reflection, I opened it up to open sharing for anyone who felt comfortable. To my pleasant surprise, most of the participants were willing to share and elaborate on their responses. This early level of trust and sense of safety was an important indicator of the group’s cohesion on Day 1 of camp.

To close Unit 1 we did a variation of the popular “Identity Shield” exercise to explore the connections between a leader and their identity. Using markers and the blank Identity Shield

template in their workbooks, participants worked individually for 10 minutes on their shields. I decided to adapt the activity to the multicultural context through encouraging participants to use their native language, draw pictures, and even prepare a sound or action to express an identity. The participants appreciated this creative freedom. We then divided into three pre-planned groups of mixed identities for a facilitated dialogue around social identity. The Israeli and Palestinian counselors and I each led a separate dialogue group. What followed was a good exploration of social identity with each participant sharing his/her identities and their importance. It was interesting to see which identities participants felt most important and aware of. The most common identities mentioned were those of nationality, religion, and gender. I also included another model in the workbook to inspire questions and critical self-reflection. Using the Mosaic of Identity Model by Camile O'Bryant (2007), our group explored how social identities have many overlapping forms that can impact and influence other social identities. To close the unit I asked participants to briefly reflect on the workshop's content and connect it with the kind of leader they wanted to be.

Unit 2: Dignity

The second unit focused on the concept of dignity as theorized by Donna Hicks, in her groundbreaking book *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*. For this unit, I was joined by The Rt. Rev. Thomas Ely of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont. Bishop Ely was passionate about exploring the topic and JPB agreed that its inclusion would benefit the camp's participants. My role in the unit was to support Bishop Ely in his instruction and facilitation. The unit focused heavily on exploring Hick's articulations of the "Essential Elements of Dignity" and the "Ten Temptations to Violate Dignity" (2011, 2013). Each element and temptation were transcribed on large pieces of paper and translated into Hebrew and Arabic to support campers' learning. After

sharing the Elements, the group spent ten minutes discussing them in smaller groups. This routine was repeated for the Temptations before closing the section. Some behavioral problems developed during this session with two Israeli participants who did not speak English very well. I believe that these issues were in part due to this language barrier and thus causing the participants lost interest and focus.

To continue exploring the concept beyond that afternoon's leadership session, we focused the evening dialogue on the topic of dignity with questions of "Can you remember a time when you violated someone's dignity?" and "When have you honored the dignity of another person?" The large papers with each Element and Temptation were hung around the dinner table for the duration of the camp to encourage further reflection and conversation. At the end of the camp, we tested out a new activity where participants recited the Declaration of Dignity in front of everyone at the camp (Hicks, 2013). This activity allowed participants to practice their public speaking and English language skills to build self-confidence.

Unit 3: Conflict and Violence

Unit 3 began with a quote from Albert Einstein and an experiential activity called "Conflict Close-Up" from Mary Scanell's book *The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games* (2010). In this activity participants would stand in a circle with one person in the middle. Participants were asked to think of the middle person as "conflict" and position themselves according to how they would respond to that conflict. Some put their fists up, others put their arms out, and one even ran away! I asked the group several debrief questions asking them why they positioned themselves in that way. Most of the group saw conflict as a problem that needed a solution. I then explained the workshop's focus and introduced the next activity.

Returning to Scanell's book, I employed the use of an activity called "How do you see it?"

in which participants would interview each other about their definition and understanding of conflict, feelings about conflict, and how they commonly respond to conflict (2010). I intentionally grouped the participants in mixed pairs based on nationality, gender, and religion to challenge the youth and promote greater connections across different identities. The participants spread out around the cabin and were given ten minutes each for their interviews. Upon completion I brought everyone back together and offered several follow-up questions to see what each person had learned. Many seemed surprised by what they discovered about their partner and felt it helped make conflict a little less scary to talk about. We then explored three popular definitions of conflict from scholars Johan Galtung, Ross Stagner, and Louis Kreisberg. With these definitions I asked the group to think about keywords and parallels between the three definitions, thus synthesizing the three definitions into one general understanding.

Afterwards, I had the group gather around a TV monitor to look at a visual slideshow I had prepared to display various images of violence. Allowing each image to be displayed for ten seconds, I cycled through pictures of war, domestic abuse, boxing, verbal bullying, video games, materialism, conscription, martyrdom, public debate, homelessness, riots in the West Bank, the KKK, pollution, the Separation Barrier between Israel-Palestine, and Barbie. The group was required to remain silent during the slideshow to reduce distracting others and encourage deeper thinking about each image. I asked participants their thoughts about what they had seen. Everyone was really curious after seeing the slideshow and some were confused by what they had seen. The video games, materialism, and Barbie images sparked debate and confusion.

Encouraging this questioning and conversation, I steered the group toward exploring two definitions of violence from scholar, Tatsushi Arai, and an anonymous source. I directed the group to look at their workbooks again to Galtung's theories on direct and structural violence

(1969) and his later addition of cultural violence (1990). Explaining the differences between direct, structural and cultural violence was moving for the youth, with everyone deeply focused and attentive. To close the session I had everyone stand up and move back to the grass lawn next to the cabin for a “Where do you stand?” exercise. I set up two place markers to make a line and told the group that one end meant if you agreed with the statement and the other if you disagreed. The middle point between the two endpoints would be if you were unsure or torn between the two sides. I made several statements such as “violence is innate in every human person” and “the death penalty is an effective deterrent against heinous crime” to encourage participants to formulate a position based on the statement. Each statement had those who agreed and disagreed with the statement, showing the complex nature of the issue and a range of different perspectives. I asked participants to explain their positions on each statement as a way of encouraging self-expression and empowerment. Hearing so many perspectives on controversial issues was effective in encouraging critical thinking and self-reflection.

Unit 4: Intercultural and Nonviolent Communication

In the previous year of the leadership program, I implemented an entire unit on intercultural communication, focusing on effective strategies for people from different cultures to be able to communicate successfully with each other. This year, prior to beginning the leadership sessions, we explored some of these points because we believed it was important for the youth to begin practicing these strategies immediately, not halfway through the program. Over the course of revising the leadership curriculum between 2014-2015, I decided to test out a new unit on Intercultural and Nonviolent Communication (NVC). A communication style authored by Marshall B. Rosenberg, NVC transforms the harmful ways we typically communicate with each other into life-giving and compassionate exchanges.

The unit began with me explaining the idea of NVC and how our current ways of communicating with others can be flawed. I shared how NVC is an ongoing process that increases our mindfulness and awareness of ourselves and how we perceive others through approaching our thoughts and behaviors with more compassion and self-reflection. With a central focus on compassion, NVC views exchanges between two people as requiring emphatic listening and honest expression (Rosenburg, 2003). Through these two shifting states, Rosenberg argues that the parties move through a process of giving and receiving their observations, needs, feelings, and requests (2003).

In this unit, participants explored these four stages of NVC and engaged with each other in both core communication positions. They first began with making observations about their environment in the large group. When asked to share some observations, participants offered examples like “the sky is blue,” “Nicole is wearing a white shirt,” or “I see four cars in the driveway.” I discussed with the group how observations are about what you see. I mentioned how we quickly turn our observations into judgments afterward, which can often end up being negative. We cannot avoid making judgments about our observations, but we can reduce their negative influences on our thinking and expression in our communication with others.

Next, the group moved into stage two of the process and considered their feelings and those of the other person. Before breaking into pairs, I asked participants the question “think of a time when somebody said something to you that you didn't like hearing. What were their exact words?” I then asked them to consider what their feelings were when they heard those words and what they were needing. Participants wrote down their moments, feelings and needs in their workbooks. To encourage empathy, I challenged the group to also consider the feelings and needs of the person who made the hurtful statement. This role-reversal and change of perspective

allowed participants to reconsider a particular moment and gain a deeper understanding of its causative elements. I divided the group into intercultural pairs and asked them to share their experiences with their partner. What followed was a period of deep sharing among the participants, where they shared personal stories, expressed feelings, and considered their needs.

Remaining in these same group pairings, I asked the participants to revisit the intercultural communication workshop we had earlier in the camp, where we talked about effective communication techniques such as eye contact, nodding, active listening, asking questions, verbal and non-verbal behaviors, and giving and receiving feedback. Now I asked them to apply those skills while sharing a story with their partner about one of the following prompts, “a time when you were having a tough time in school” or “a time when you felt proud of yourself.” Participants could include exploring their observations, feelings, and needs. After fruitful exchanges between pairs of participants who expressed feeling heard and understood by their partner, I added the final ingredient of NVC to the recipe. I asked participants to formulate requests that would lead to positive and life-giving outcomes. Many of the participants displayed a change in thinking and awareness around their communication and expressed how difficult it was always to practice NVC. I closed the unit with the reflection question: *Why is NVC important to leadership and the kind of leader you want to be, and the kind of society in which you want to live? How does it connect with the material we learned yesterday?*

Unit 5: Conflict Analysis

Due to a conflict in the schedule caused by poor weather, the length of this unit had to be condensed down from 90 minutes to 60 minutes. I began the unit with an experiential problem-solving activity called “Human Knot.” This popular team-building and problem-solving activity requires everyone to stand in a tight circle and hold the hands of two different people standing on

the opposite side of the ring. With everyone holding hands, the goal is to unravel the chain of connections without anyone letting go of the peoples' hands they are holding. Because of our group's large size, I broke them into two smaller groups of eight participants each (a group size of between 8-12 participants is best). What followed was everyone communicating with each other in verbal and nonverbal ways to try and find a solution to the problem. This high-risk activity worked well here because the youth felt comfortable and trusting of each other after a week of being together and boundaries around cultural sensitivity and personal space was better understood.

With the youth assembled on the patio, I opened the unit with looking at an image of an iceberg and then a tree, asking the group what they perceived and how does it relate to conflict. This exercise in perception was helpful for the group, as many did not recognize what was below the iceberg's surface or the grass at the foot of the tree. Using large pieces of paper with iceberg models drawn on them, I broke the group into three smaller, mixed groups to analyze the types of violence in the United States, Israel, and Palestine. For 25 minutes the three groups recorded the direct, structural, and cultural violence examples they perceived. The use of mixed national groups to look at violence in one of the three specific national contexts created the space for participants to learn collectively about that country's specific challenges. This exercise also created some disagreement among members of the group about whether certain government policies or ideologies could be considered violence. We all reconvened, and each group presented about their investigation into the types of violence in their countries. By allowing the groups to present to the larger group, they were practicing their public speaking skills and thus gaining confidence in their ability to articulate and name these forces.

Unit 6: Conflict Resolution and Transformation (Negotiation)

The final unit began with the experiential problem-solving activity called “Mindblaster.” This activity requires participants to figure out a secret code based on order and selection. With four spots laid out, participants stand on foam platforms on the ground and ask the code keeper to tell them if they have the right combination. The code keeper responds by telling the group how many correct people in how many correct spots. What follows is a series of trials where participants are shuffling around trying to remember past attempts and make new combinations. Depending on group cohesion and trust, this activity can prompt some participants to become more vocal and active in leading the group towards a solution. Because of the high level of trust among the group’s participants, many voices were active in the activity, and few were marginalized. The experience in the group was interestingly one where concern for the process towards finding a solution seemed to weigh on the group’s ability to find the solution. Debrief questions focused on the importance of including multiple voices and navigating a range of views and ways of thinking within the group.

To conclude the leadership curriculum, participants were required to complete a final project: to create, negotiate, and present a peace plan for the City of Jerusalem. Participants spent two 90-minute sessions developing their plans with support from the Israeli, Palestinian and American staff and junior counselors. I led the group in an initial brainstorming session around what topics would be significant to highlight and discuss in the plans. With the issue of sovereignty and, at least, two other topics required to address in each plan, the groups named the following topics for consideration: refugees, borders, land, economy, transportation, military, holy sites, schools, housing, public spaces, and settlements. In consultation with my Israeli and Palestinian staff counterparts, we intentionally mixed the groups and paired certain individuals together to encourage robust discussion, challenge, and spaces for the exercise of leadership.

For two days, the groups slowly moved towards agreement through tough, and at times, emotional conversations and deliberations. Conflict was inevitable in this exercise. Each group had some participants who were more flexible about certain issues than others. The American participants most noticeably assumed the role of a mediator in each of the three groups negotiations during the exercise, continually restating the positions of each side and helping move things forward by introducing alternatives and encouraging creativity. It was here that I witnessed and developed a deeper understanding of the high importance of the American role, both at the camp and in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The project culminated with the participants presenting their peace plans to the whole camp and receiving questions and feedback from the audience.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM POST-CAMP SURVEY RESULTS:

To measure the impact and effectiveness of the leadership curriculum, I designed and administered a section of JPB's post-camp survey for program participants. This data-gathering tool proved instrumental in learning about what worked well and what did not work well in the leadership curriculum design. The leadership curriculum section of the survey included four short answer questions to gather qualitative data on participants' experience in the leadership program. The questions were:

- 1). What did you find yourself liking and disliking about the leadership activities?*
- 2). What did you learn through the leadership program (about leadership skills and yourself as a leader)?*
- 3). In a few sentences write about the most memorable moment of one specific leadership session?*
- 4). What suggestions of topics and styles do you have for future leadership sessions?*

These questions folded into a larger post-camp survey as previously mentioned. Each question appeared together in the above sequencing and order. Question #1 was used because it revealed participants' general thoughts and feelings about what they liked and disliked in the leadership program. These initial memories provide valuable insight into any program. This question also represents a low level of difficulty to answer, thus making it a good question to start. Question #2 directs participants to think about what they remember learning. Again, the emphasis rests on what the participants learned and absorbed as a result of the program. It directs the answer towards connecting to participants' KASA learning (knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness). It can reveal whether participants had a holistic learning experience during the program. Question #3 seeks to disclose that standout moment from the leadership program. What was powerful and meaningful to them? Whether this was a bit of information or a particular activity

the group did, it helps to know what profoundly impacted participants. Lastly, Question #4 turns participants toward thinking about future leadership programs and what would make them better. After initial thoughts, sharing learning, and reflection on a memorable moment in the program, participants' are primed to offer constructive feedback and recommendations for how to make the leadership program more effective in the future.

Survey Question 1: *What did you find yourself liking and disliking about the leadership activities?*

Responses to this question expressed three main themes: length, content, and approach. First, some participants expressed that the length of units was too long and could be shorter: *"The leadership sessions were very long (longer and about 2x as long as classes in school). And there were no breaks in between to refocus and stretch our legs."*, *"I like everything but the only issue is that they were very long sessions."*, *"I loved hearing all the different perspectives people brought to the conversation, but the sessions were too long."* In total, 5/15 responded to this question saying the sessions were too long. However, one participant's response suggested that the length of the sessions were too short. The rest of the answers did not mention the duration of the sessions.

Second, almost every participant commented on liking the content of the leadership sessions: *"I liked the sessions so much. They included all the important details."*, *"...the ideas and concepts we learned were amazing."*, *"I really liked the leadership sessions because they were challenging yet felt fun and safe. I was always excited during them and willing to participate. I also liked that we worked in groups most of the time."*, *"What I liked about the leadership program is that it made us think in so many different ways and also think about the future and not only think about the present. I really can't think of a thing that I disliked about it..."* One participant expressed that the content could be more advanced saying, *"What I dislike,*

what I think should be improved is we should learn more things that you would learn in a college peacebuilding course.” In total, 14/15 participants recorded favorable responses about the leadership program’s content and its quality.

Lastly, some participants mentioned positive and negative aspects of the approach used in the leadership sessions: “*...I also thought they could be more interactive rather than a lecture or mostly lecture.*”, “*Sometimes the packet felt too much like school and sometimes the sessions were pushed.*”, “*I liked how we were allowed to take control of certain aspects of the sessions.*”, “*I liked that no one was excluded and that the sessions included some movement.*” Overall, 4/15 participants mentioned either liking or disliking the approach used in the leadership sessions, respectively.

Responses to this first question raise several considerations that will be taken into account in redesigning the curriculum. Participants stressed the importance of shorter learning sessions, a more active and engaging approach, the value of hearing different perspectives, and the quality of the curriculum’s content. The comments display the need to preserve and improve most aspects of the curriculum.

Survey Question 2: *What did you learn through the leadership program (about leadership skills and yourself as a leader)?*

This question focused on trying to ascertain what specific knowledge and skills participants learned during the leadership program. After review the survey responses, three themes emerge, moral qualities of a leader, communication skills, and shifting one’s perspective. First, a majority of participants responded about how they had gained knowledge and developed the moral qualities of being a leader: “*I learned that being charismatic helps but it’s not necessary. You have to learn to be courageous and trustworthy.*”, “*I learned all the qualities required of a leader and all the methods to implement them in real life. I also learned how to*

become more brave and courageous and let my leadership skills shine and improve.”, “As a leader you need to have courage, forgiveness and hope to be a good leader. I learned about myself that I need to be more honest.” “I learned a lot about confidence and courage. I really liked it. And about how you lead people in the right way.” In all, every participant learned about the moral qualities of being a leader, whether explicitly stated or implied.

Second, a profound theme of participants gaining skills in how they communicate clearly emerged from the survey: *“Think before you speak, be respectful, listen, share, be honest...”*, *“To listen, open for ideas, patience”*, *“There are so many ways I can lead someone, And the leadership program made me made me comfortable in leading people and expressing my feelings and what I want to say.”*, *“I learned that through listening and responding thoughtfully, you can generate a lot of enthusiasm and people will be open to listening to you. “That I include others in any discussions and don’t just deal with everything myself.”* Participants expressed crossover between the first and second themes, suggesting their dynamic connection and interrelationship. Many shared the impact the sessions had on their overall confidence.

Third, the theme of shifting one’s perspective was evident in some of the survey responses to this question: *“I learned about patience and what the building blocks of each conflict turned out to be. I learned how to effectively understand the other side of a conflict.”*, *“I learned that a leader can’t stay on one side, but neutral...”*, *“I learned about new ways of looking at the qualities we talked about, which gave me a deeper understanding of each topic, which I enjoyed.”*, *“I learned to identify with the other side, listen and give dignity through a lot of sessions.”*, *“I found new interests and ideas, especially from the guests we had and the topics discussed. I learned lots about dignity and what its like to build peace.”* Through learning about

new topics through creative means and alternative voices, participants experienced moments when they critically examined and shifted their perspective.

Survey Question 3: *In a few sentences write about the most memorable moment of one specific leadership session?*

This question sought to extrapolate anecdotal evidence from participants about what parts of the leadership curriculum deeply impacted their overall camp experience. From the survey responses, two themes stand out: negotiating peace plans for Jerusalem, and exploring conflict and violence in our lives. First, over two-thirds of participants describe their experience working on the peace plan as their most memorable moment: *“Jerusalem peace-plan was a total blast. I loved it so much. We had to get to a win-win solution every time.”*, *“When we had to do the Jerusalem peace plan. We had to think in many different ways and to be realistic as possible.”*, *“The most memorable moment was...the session about negotiation because we learned how we can get what we want from both side.”*, *“The peace plan was the best part because we got to put together everything we learned.”* Evidently, the peace plan project was immensely successful among youth participants.

Second, the other theme of exploring conflict and violence in our lives displayed itself in some responses, but in notably different ways: *“When we talked about different kinds of conflicts, it showed how we all had problems in our life that are connected to.”*, *“When I shared with a small group the fact that it’s hard for me to live with an autistic brother.”*, *“When we had to talk about violence and to work in groups to think about all the violence in Israel. It was memorable because we really cooperated as a group and were able to present really well.”*, *“When we talked about our basic needs and then thought of a situation when we were frustrated with our parents and broke the situation down to delve deeper and put ourselves in our parents’ shoes. It was powerful and helped me better understand them.”* Participants highlighted this theme, but its

time of occurrence during the leadership program varied significantly. Participants expressed these moments during dialogue and leadership sessions.

Survey Question 4: *What suggestions of topics and styles do you have for future leadership sessions?*

Participants offered many suggestions for what to improve upon and revisit in the leadership curriculum. Suggestions were across the board, but the theme of making sessions more interactive appeared four times. Examples of ideas to make sessions more interactive were: *“I suggest a more interactive style of communicating the leadership concepts, and hopefully something more active so that we don’t zone out and stop paying attention.”*, *“Maybe some direct touch (human-to-human) sessions could be pretty nice.”*, *“Maybe more interactive activities.”*, *“I will suggest to do more games in the leadership sessions because it was hard to sit all the time.”* Other general suggestions included: *“Debating etiquette. Some political science. Also addressing what peace really means? What are its conditions?”*, *“Maybe talk more about the actual conflict rather than general tidbits”*, *“I really liked when we split up to small groups and we were able to share. In the smaller group people share a whole lot more.”*, *“Lose the pamphlets.”* There were many suggestions offered, and each recommendation deserves close consideration.

The qualitative data collected from the leadership camp’s post-camp survey highlight several key areas where the curriculum was both highly effective and less impactful for camp participants. Repeated comments on shorter, more interactive and engaging sessions connect to the need to design learning activities and leadership sessions that challenge and focus students’ attention through creative approaches and short lessons. Positive feedback describing learning around the topics of peace, conflict, dignity, communication, negotiation, and leadership qualities and attributes reveals the overall success of the curriculum’s chosen topics. However,

some comments suggested the need for more advanced educational content and the inclusion of additional subjects. Favorable experiences during small and inclusive group activities show the success of these formats as opposed to relying chiefly on the large group model. The implementation of participant workbooks seems to have produced mixed results, for a couple of comments note aversion to their use while they were useful for individual learning, note taking, and reflection.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM INTERVIEW RESULTS:

To support this leadership curriculum design, I planned and conducted eight interviews with American, Israeli and Palestinian youth leadership practitioners and professionals. The results of the data gathered from these interviews revealed several important insights on understanding leadership and what activities and concepts were most important to focus on in a youth leadership program. The interview questions were:

- 1). How would you define the term leadership?*
- 2). What do you believe to be the key characteristics of Israeli, Palestinian or American leadership? Are there any shared qualities? Differences?*
- 3). Why is interfaith leadership important in Israel, Palestine, and the United States?*
- 4). What issues and topics do you feel are most important to address in a youth leadership development program? Are there specific experiential activities that you feel can be applied to any participant group? Are there leadership activities that work best with a specific population?*
- 5). How do you classify your own leadership style?*

Question #1 serves as an introductory question for the interviewee. Although the question is broad and may require some time to answer, it gets the interviewee thinking about the topic and expressing their opinion on what leadership means. Question #2 points the interviewee to reflect on the national contexts and cultures relevant to this research. It seeks to identify any notable differences or similarities that exist between the leadership styles of each by asking the interviewee to provide their input. Question #3 looks at exploring the idea of interfaith leadership and how interview participants imagine it. It also looks to see if the interviewee views the presence of religion and interfaith understanding in leadership as valuable. Question #4 asks respondents to offer insight into what specific topics and activities to include in a youth leadership program. Since each interviewee has either worked in the past or currently works with youth, this question presents an excellent opportunity to gain indigenous and informed insight

into approaches to and activities for developing youth leadership. Question #5 closes the interview with a lighter question asking interviewees to self-reflect on their leadership style, thus offering more insight into indigenous approaches to leadership.

Interview Question 1: *How would you define the term leadership?*

Interview participants offered informative responses that defined leadership as containing a mix of personal qualities, attitudes, abilities, and skills. Some of these examples included: “[Leadership is a] combination of being authentic, inspirational, listening, an ability to hold opposing viewpoints.”, “...the ability to set a direction. We look toward leaders for which way to go. Leaders act from a certain value stance, [set] a course around that value, ... and move the group in that way.”, “...includes: strength, respect, nonviolence, and integrity... It’s also about making decisions and to know how to make good decisions at the right time.”, “...to bring people to a position that you hold and feel is important.”, “...should focus on tolerance, acceptance, understanding gender, being genuine and possessing a genuine desire for love and peace, ...and being balanced.” Here it becomes evident how these individual definitions of leadership connect with the different theories of moral and transformational leadership mentioned in the literature review. Interviewees highlight the importance of communication skills, leadership qualities such as authenticity, respect, strength, and charisma, and the view that leadership involves decision-making, guiding, and setting a direction.

Interview Question 2: *What do you believe to be the key characteristics of Israeli, Palestinian or American leadership? Are there any shared qualities? Differences?*

By asking American, Israeli, and Palestinian professionals about their opinions of what these three countries’ styles of leadership, indigenous perspectives could be fleshed out. The responses revealed some interesting points: “Israelis and Palestinians both use the word peace,

but Israelis mean peace and the Palestinians mean justice... fear guides a lot of Israeli policy and indignation guides a lot of the Palestinian style. With that, there's short-term thinking and long-term thinking... reactive not proactive styles.”, “[Palestine]: There is a strong desire to default to age or experience. Age trumps experience. There is a respect for authority. [America]: Americans are more comfortable with an emotionally grounded style of leadership. There is an interest in valuing all perspectives. There is emphasis on valuing the process over the product... [Israel]: Israelis are comfortable challenging authority...”, “I think the Palestinian leadership is a new leadership, it is not based on many years of accomplishment. It is facing a Jewish problem but also a regional problem. The Jewish leaders are still coming from this [experience] with WWII. The security of living in this area and how we will survive is still a question.” It appears each society has their way of thinking about leadership that includes areas of commonality and difference based on history, religion, and culture. This area could be explored more in the future. Interviewees' responses show that national and cultural contexts do influence a perception of leadership, and that these understandings must be accounted for in this leadership curriculum.

Interview Question 3: *Why is interfaith leadership important in Israel, Palestine, and the United States?*

This question aimed to uncover how others conceptualized interfaith leadership within the three national contexts. Due to the lack of research on this emerging concept, these interviews form a basis for further thinking and exposition. However, interviewees offered compelling insights with their answers to the question: *“Religion can transcend differences... It can build bridges.”, “Interfaith [leadership] is a really important component to a peace agreement in the Middle East. I think the reality is that Israel is a religious state. Trying to ignore that fact in working for peace is a mistake.”, “I think [that] as soon as we begin to involve religion in the conflict in the Middle East it makes the situation worse. Religion in the*

middle of the peace process will lead to no solution... We know that religion is a part of the peace.”, “Faith-based leadership is valuable because it provides a framework that people can relate to... It provides a rationalization to why we should trust a leader. I think interfaith leadership is when you have multiple faith leaders working together to collaborate and share leadership.” Interviewees’ responses affirm that religion can be a positive motivator in leadership and peacebuilding, however, direct experience revealed some reservation to its position in the peace process. Their conceptions about interfaith leadership focused on religion’s transformative nature, familiarity to people from different cultures, and that it can heal or exacerbate a conflict. More research needs to explore interfaith leadership in the United States and Israel/Palestine.

Interview Question 4: *What issues and topics do you feel are most important to address in a youth leadership development program? Are there specific experiential activities that you feel can be applied to any participant group? Are there leadership activities that work best with a specific population?*

Because all the interviewees had direct experience working with youth on leadership and peace-building programs, asking them about their ideas and opinions on what should be included in a leadership program is important. The interview responses to this question both affirmed and encouraged rethinking: *“Teach them various conflict resolution theories to start. Teach them different leadership styles. Do role-playing... Learn your history... Find different newspapers in looking at a story to get different perspectives on the conflict.”, “1. You’re not necessarily right on everything. You should be open-minded. 2. Learn about others before you make judgments about them... 3. Many issues between Arabs-Arabs and Jews-Jews that need to be explored before looking at Israel-Palestine issues. 4. To learn respect.”, “Effective leadership revolves around trust... Building empathy and understanding the perspectives of others. Value-based leadership... Patience and the ability to see the long road and stay committed. Endurance.*

Humility... Admit mistakes and know when your wrong.”, “Politics is the most important topic for youth... Storytelling is a part of leadership development.”, “The variable of gender and encouraging girls to become leaders...”, “There needs to be an environment of trust... That involves lots of activities of trust-building. Sharing stories with the group... I think facilitation and mediation skills are really important for youth... They allow you to hold other viewpoints or perspectives easier... Learning about nonviolent action and historical figures... History is important, especially with peace work... Examining past conflicts that have been resolved.”

Responses to this question revealed a wealth of valuable information and recommendations for how to approach leadership development from a general point of view. However, the interviews did not illumine direct insight into more contextually appropriate activities. Interviewees mention the importance of trust-building exercises, role-playing simulations and storytelling, history, leadership styles, and communication and conflict resolution skills. From focusing on personal characteristics, knowledge, and skill development, these responses offer useful and real strategies for how to further develop the JPB leadership program.

Interview Question 5: *How do you classify your own leadership style?*

The final question of the interview was designed to promote self-reflection among the interviewees as a way to better understand indigenous perspectives and approaches to leadership. In doing so, this question displayed great tenets about leadership styles: *“Using empathy as much as possible. Really try to hear the person and where they are coming from.”, “... I’m not afraid of people. This makes me strong enough to go and meet the other. I know Arabic, Hebrew, and English... My family has always taught me to learn about the other side.”, “I am a fairly facilitative leader. I see my work as fostering people to perform at their best. Giving them the support to do their work... I think it’s a lot about understanding... I think my leadership style is*

being a mediator and determining what needs to happen.”, “I have a situational leadership style... I tailor my actions and words to respond to the situation... I prefer orderliness and systems moving smoothly. I value process over product and knowing when to step back. I lean more towards a democratic style... I aspire to be as close to the middle as I can.”, “I focus on being open and vulnerable, but also having clear boundaries and goals. I try to be very flexible around the needs of these people and focus on how do I lead them there. I lead them through questions and not a top down approach... Having humor and good energy. Make it fun, but make it serious when it is supposed to be serious.” The evidence gathered in this final interview question helps to understand how these leadership development practitioners approach their work with youth and design programming. Interviewees demonstrate the diversity of leadership styles as having flexibility, asking questions, clear communication guidelines and skills, organization, balance, mindfulness, and guiding. Understanding the leadership style of the leader reveals important information about the approach and effectiveness of the program.

Overall, the eight interviews conducted were very positive and offered a substantial amount of important information that will help inform future leadership workshops and ongoing revisions to JPB’s leadership curriculum. They offer a more nuanced and deeper understanding of how to approach interfaith youth leadership and peacebuilding programs within the three national and religious contexts. Each interviewee’s perspective on leadership offered a plethora of ideas and more specific areas to focus on during leadership sessions. The responses offered on the importance of religion in leadership and peacebuilding within this context confirm and support the overall approach of the leadership camp curriculum. Several ideas and suggestions were presented for specific activities and topics to include in leadership sessions. Exploring history, social justice issues, identity development, role-playing and trust-building exercises,

dignity and respect, communication and facilitation skills, and leadership styles and qualities all stand out as areas to consider for future programming. Lastly, the data gathered for the leadership styles question reveals unique insight into how trainers and facilitators can develop a better awareness and mastery of their own style during activities and workshops with youth. Further development of the interview questions and increasing the number of interviews in future research projects on these topics would add more credibility and weight to the design.

DISCUSSION OF DATA FINDINGS:

The post-camp survey and interview data uncovered what program elements unique to the leadership curriculum were effective and could be improved. The post-camp survey results show that participants: 1). Were positively impacted and empowered in developing their knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness of moral, transformative leadership and peacebuilding, 2). Thought the program was strong but felt it could be reviewed and improved in the ways content is delivered and approached. Participants expressed the development of specific characteristics of moral leadership such as respect, dignity, courage, confidence, and forgiveness, and displayed transformational leadership in their experiences in hearing and considering different perspectives in small group dialogue, coming into conflict with each other's values and behaviors, and in working on small group projects like the Jerusalem Peace Plan during the leadership sessions.

Participants described liking that the learning environment was engaging, safe, and challenging, and involved a lot of group work. Others expressed that they were excited and empowered by thinking in new and different ways about the present and future. Participants generally disliked the length of the leadership sessions and some called for less workbook activities and more hands on learning. When asked about what they learned in the leadership program, participants' responses demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of many moral qualities of a leader. Their comments also highlight substantial development in their intercultural communication skills and awareness. Experiences of thinking and learning about issues and topics from a different perspective appear to have had a transformational effect on several participants, connecting to the curriculum's stated focus on moral, transformational leadership.

The most memorable moments of the program were overwhelmingly centered on the Jerusalem Peace Plan project and sessions with small group dialogue and sharing. Participants described their positive and empowering experiences working on this challenging project through searching for a realistic, win-win solution. Several participants described the cathartic and empowering experience of expressing their thoughts and feelings with others in small group dialogue sessions. Lastly, participants offered great suggestions to make the leadership curriculum more effective: shorter sessions, more engaging activities, less workbook activities, and including additional topics around peace, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, debating etiquette, and political science. Overall, the results from the post-camp survey demonstrate the effectiveness of the leadership curriculum with youth in this context, but more work can be done to improve the curriculum to make it more engaging and impactful for participants.

The research interviews with youth leadership practitioners both support the direction and content of the leadership curriculum and uncover new insights into indigenous perspectives on leadership and suggestions and ideas for how to improve the curriculum's content. Practitioners' definitions and conceptions of leadership support the curriculum's focus on moral and transformative leadership. Their comments affirm the importance of developing communication skills, exploring different moral qualities of leadership, and developing an understanding of what leadership means to each of us. Interviewees' indigenous insights offer clues on how to connect and relate to the different leadership styles expressed in the three national and religious contexts. Considering the Israeli style of questioning authority and the influence of fear and historical trauma in decision-making and leadership styles could prove useful. The Palestinian inclination to default to age over experience, equating peace to mean justice, reactive decision-making, and respect for authority are areas for further examination. Viewing American leadership as being

more process-oriented, democratic, and rational will be important to keep in mind in future leadership curriculum designs.

Interfaith leadership and faith-based leadership are largely viewed as helpful approaches to leadership within these three national and religious contexts. Because of religion's familiarity, foundational, and transcendent nature, it offers people a framework to successfully navigate challenging and thorny conflicts. Many agreed that the presence of religion in a future peace agreement between Israel/Palestine would be a positive and motivating force. Suggestions on specific content such as leadership styles, history, gender, trust-building, and storytelling both support and provide insight on how to approach future revisions. Lastly, interviewees conveying their personal leadership styles emphasized having flexibility and mindfulness, intercultural communication skills, balance, order, and the role of acting as a guide. Overall, these interviews were helpful in maintaining the effectiveness of the moral, transformative approach of the leadership and peacebuilding curriculum, as well as affording many invaluable insights into ways to further improve the curriculum to ensure higher effectiveness and transformation among youth participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The 2015 leadership and peace-building curriculum designed for the JPB Leadership Camp was both effective and impactful in instilling and developing participants' knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness of interfaith leadership and peacebuilding. Quantitative data obtained through the post-camp survey and interviews offer valuable information into how to improve the leadership curriculum. The post-camp survey data reveals that the topics addressed in the design were appropriate, but the inclusion of more interactive, shorter sessions could increase their effectiveness in a short-term program format. More accelerated learning on leadership, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation with limited use of participant workbooks is worthy of consideration. Use of small group activities achieved favorable results, suggesting the need for more sessions to include these types of approaches.

The qualitative interview data gathered shows different ways of thinking about leadership based primarily on national and religious identity. These responses help to present leadership in a more contextually appropriate and sensitive manner. Strong support arguing for the inclusion of religion in leadership development and peacebuilding within this context affirms the direction of the leadership curriculum design. The suggestions presented for activities and topics to address in a leadership curriculum encourage their incorporation and inclusion in future designs. Lastly, the perspectives offered on leadership styles assist in the trainer to understand one's own leadership style and those of individuals representing the respective national and religious contexts involved.

While the responses and feedback from youth participants surveyed and adult practitioners interviewed were predominantly positive, there are several important recommendations that I offer for future leadership curriculum designs:

- 1). *Develop leadership sessions to include more experiential, challenge, and outdoor learning activities.*
- 2). *Make leadership sessions shorter. Or consider a short break in the middle to re-engage participants.*
- 3). *Incorporate more resources and insight from the religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as the American, Israeli, Palestinian national and cultural contexts.*
- 4). *Explore including additional topics and units on gender, mediation, dialogue facilitation, nonviolent action, history, and media literacy.*
- 5). *Increase partnership and sharing of ideas and programming with other youth leadership development programs in the U.S. and Middle East in order to further develop the leadership curriculum and its use in the field.*

CONCLUSION:

The 2015 JPB Leadership program offered participants a unique, innovative, and challenging curriculum in developing moral and transformative youth leadership, interfaith understanding, and peace-building knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. Merging these three revered disciplines together with an experiential learning approach yielded positive results and significant movement among its intended audience. While largely successful, the leadership curriculum's post-camp survey and interviews conducted for this research project revealed significant strengths and areas for improvement around developing youth for interfaith leadership and peacebuilding in the world. Through a process of designing, implementing, researching, reviewing, and reflecting on the leadership curriculum, it becomes clear that this model is highly effective in youth leadership development among teens from Israel, Palestine, and the U.S. In addition, this design offers practitioners of youth leadership and peace education a valuable example of how to approach synthesizing these topics into an educational program for Israeli, Palestinian, and American teens.

Jerusalem Peacebuilders believes these topics go hand-in-hand in today's complex and challenging world, however, leadership programs often tend to focus more narrowly, thus ignoring the tremendous potential for effective moral transformation when put together in a youth program. Through future revisions and continued research on how to make the curriculum more impactful, the potential this model holds for building young interfaith peace leaders from Israel, Palestine, and the U.S. remains high.

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