

The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program



The Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program (CLP) is in its 14th year of operation at the University of Haifa. The program was established with the main objective to facilitate dialogue and multi-cultural social interaction between Jewish and Arab students.

Forty students were enrolled in the program in the last academic year – 21 Arab and 19 Jewish students. With additional funding from donors, the program will be expanded, and the number of participants will increase substantially.

1. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- (a) Increase awareness of the need for coexistence among Jews and Arabs and to work toward advancing this goal.
- (b) Develop joint leadership for social change among the students.
- (c) Improve the social and educational conditions of the diverse Haifa population through joint community projects.
- (d) Develop and raise social community initiatives among the student populations.

2. 2020/21 ACTIVITIES

During the academic year, the activities took place for four hours each week with 90 annual hours of activity. Two training courses were held for new and continuing students. Emphasis was placed on the development of entrepreneurial skills through theory and practice. The annual seminar was cancelled due to the pandemic.

- **Training Program - Intercultural Leadership Workshop**

The workshop ran throughout the year with four academic credits and included theoretical and practical studies on issues of leadership and multiculturalism. The students discussed various issues relating to their experiences in their respective community activities and analyzed them as case studies with their fellow students.

The workshop was led by an Arab and a Jewish instructor, Nisreen Morqus and Itay Shetsky, who both have extensive experience working with diverse groups.

- **Project at Achva School – Studying Hebrew**

Three Arab students were assigned to a group of Arab elementary schoolchildren who needed to improve their Hebrew language skills, specifically towards their matriculation. The students helped them practice their Hebrew through games, theatre and other creative endeavours.

- **Project at Hofit School – Personal Mentoring**

Two Jewish and one Arab student participated in this project. Each student accompanied an elementary school pupil who was facing difficulties in their studies, in their Hebrew knowledge and in their social abilities.

The school staff reported that the children made excellent progress through this project. During the COVID-19 restrictions, the students and pupils met through online platforms and continued the project from their homes.

- **Projects at the Mount Carmel Campus**

- Events for Dormitory Residents**

Dormitories on campus are home to 1,000 students from diverse backgrounds. During the year, nine students from the CLP were assigned to events held for the residents. In the first semester, the emphasis was placed on events that allowed students to experience various cultures.

Due to COVID-19, the emphasis shifted towards other activities, such as producing events dealing with the pandemic, to give the students tools to handle those difficult times.



Trivia Night



Middle Eastern Night

"SquashBond"

The SquashBond non-profit association operates twice a week at the University for the benefit of youth from all sectors of Israeli society. Through strenuous activities and long-term programs, SquashBond develops and produces confident, tolerant youth. Students participated in these activities on campus and provided various programs and events relating to multiculturalism and mutual understanding.



SquashBond meeting via Zoom



A SquashBond student, playing with a participant

- **Projects at Beit Hacheded**

Beit Hacheded is a voluntary organization, established as a home, shelter and a location for people in need who are struggling with various hardships. Beit Hacheded operates on two levels – the individual and the community. This year, the following projects took place within this framework:

Prisoners' Rehabilitation Initiative

A student trained in Meditation and Yoga training provided a workshop to the residents of the hostel, including sharing personal experiences. During their meetings, many issues came up and this setting was a great way to discuss and air grievances. The student managed to truly connect with the residents.

Learning Centre

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

- **Positive Events**

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

During COVID-19, the events were moved to online platforms (Facebook Live) and attracted over 13,000 views.



- **Mutual Learning - Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School**

Most of the pupils attending this public high school in Haifa are from a low socio-economic background. The students from the CLP participated in the language project for the third year. The project aims to enrich the Hebrew skills of the pupils. Six students participated once a week for a four-hour session which included teaching the pupils conversational Hebrew through songs and games.

Evaluation Process

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

From all the evaluation forms collected, all our community partners have expressed complete satisfaction with this year's conduct, despite the COVID-19 restrictions that had to be managed and are interested in continuing the joint activities in the next year.

Students Share Their Experiences:



Faraj Srour (Department of Music)

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



Amit Zerbib (Human Services)

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

Goals for the 2021/22 Academic Year

- Integrate the students in projects dealing directly with education and language such as applying the Al Mutanabbi-Shizaf High School model to other schools, specifically Jewish schools for Arabic language skills.
- Expand the scope of the Positive Events, including live streaming on Facebook.
- Offer another seminar of social entrepreneurship.
- Include the newest project of school seminars on multiculturalism.
- Organize additional events to promote the program in the Haifa region.

Request for Support

Each student who participates in the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program receives an annual scholarship of 8,000 NIS (\$3,000). Your support will help provide funding for tomorrow's leaders. Thank you for your consideration.