

## **Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East (CHYME)**

### **Program Overview 2000-2004**

Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East (CHYME) was a project that engaged Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian professionals who work with youth in enhancing communication among young people from their three communities. CHYME used oral history and story-telling practices to build capacities for listening, communicating, and understanding among those who work with young people in the Middle East, and in turn, among the youth themselves.

CHYME was a collaboration among four partner institutions: Givat Haviva (Israel), Masar (Jordan), the Palestinian House of Friendship (Palestine), and Brandeis University. At Brandeis, the project was hosted and facilitated by the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence (Slifka Program), and the Heller School's Center for Youth and Communities (CYC).

The project began with a proposal submitted in the summer of 2000. It was funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, with additional support from Morton Meyerson and the Meyerson Family Tzedekah Funds. The project concluded in June 2004, but its network of practitioners remains active.

The principal products of CHYME are a series of "digital stories," on-line narratives that describe the lives and communities of Palestinian, Israeli, and Jordanian youth and youth workers. These stories, which were put together with the help of Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, can be found at <http://www.cctvcambridge.org/stream/qt/chyme/index.html>

By working together to address issues that face youth in Jewish and Arab communities, the CHYME participants demonstrated a 21st century approach to leadership that was regional rather than national or sectarian, and in doing so they have served as models for the teenagers with whom they work.

**A retrospective history, analysis, and evaluation of**

***Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East  
(CHYME)***

***(originally known as the Middle East Youth Leaders Project)***

A program of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life  
and the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at  
Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts, USA)

in cooperation with

The Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva (Israel)  
MASAR (Amman, Jordan)  
The Palestinian House of Friendship (Nablus, Palestine)

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For reasons of security and confidentiality, this report refers to the Middle East participants by first name only. Their full names may not be used under any circumstances. To obtain other permissions, contact Cynthia Cohen at 781-736-5001 or coexistence@brandeis.edu.

**CHYME is a project of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, and the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at Brandeis University.**

**The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life** exists to illuminate the ethical dilemmas and obligations inherent in global and professional leadership, with particular focus on the challenges of racial, ethnic, and religious pluralism. Examining responses to past conflicts, acts of intervention, and failures to intervene, the Center seeks to enable just and appropriate responses in the future. Engaging leaders and future leaders of government, business, and civil society, the Center crosses boundaries of geography and discipline to link scholarship and practice through publications, programs, and projects.

**The Alan B. Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence** at the Center generates and disseminates knowledge useful to practitioners of coexistence and related fields, and engages students and other members of the larger Brandeis community in the theory and practice of coexistence.

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This project would not have been possible without the hard work, dedication and commitment of its participants, the youth leaders – Mohammad and Abdel Hadi from the *Palestinian House of Friendship*, Khaled, Bashar, Bissan, Nadia and Rania from *Crossing Borders*, and Shimon, Liat, Suha, Yosef and Yaakov from *Givat Haviva*. We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the youth who took the time out to share and reflect on their personal stories with our youth leaders, for it these stories that make up the very substance of this project.

We are indebted to Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State for providing the grant that funded this program. Senior Exchange Specialist, Tom Johnston and Program Officer, Susan Krause, were very supportive and helpful in providing us with the information and resources we needed at various stages of the project's planning and implementation. Many thanks to the staff at the U.S. Embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman, and the U.S. Consulate in East Jerusalem who helped us in arranging for the visa and travel requirements for our youth leaders to attend the program's two institutes at Brandeis University. The interest and support of the Embassy and Consulate within the region has been critical.

We thank the Morton Meyerson and the Meyerson Family Tzedakah Funds, and the Alan B. Slifka Foundation, for their financial contributions that have also helped support this project.

We are very glad and fortunate to have collaborated with the Cambridge Community Television and Creative Narrations groups during our second institute to produce ten digital stories of the youth leaders from Israel and Jordan. Storytelling Producer Natasha Freidus, and Production Coordinator Sean Effel were extremely forthcoming and enthusiastic in providing us with all the training and facilities we needed in this regard. These same colleagues were again very helpful in the spring of 2004 when Mohammad Sawalha of Palestine created his digital story.

Chris Kingsley and Pamela Smith at the Center for Youth and Communities at the Heller School of Social Policy and Management played a very important role in this work for their invaluable insight and guidance in creating a clear framework of goals for the project during its planning stages in the first institute. Chris undertook an enormous task in the documentation and evaluation of the project through this report, and has done a very remarkable job.

We would like to thank former Brandeis International Fellow, Farhat Agbaria, for his help in facilitating the first institute, and Derek Burrows for his beautiful performance at a workshop and a ceremony held during the second institute.

Finally, we are very grateful to all the staff at the Ethics Center for their help, especially Lesley Yalen for the work she did in coordinating and organizing all the details of the project. Thanks also to Stephanie Gerber, for her help with facilitating initial communication between the partner organizations, and to Hima Chintalapati, Jared Matas and Tova Neugut for their assistance during the second institute.

The relationships and projects that begun during this project have continued since November 2002, the end of the period covered by Chris Kingsley in this report. Hima Chintalapati compiled information on progress that has been made on the project between the end of the 2002 Institute and June, 2003. Her update can be found in the next section.

In June, 2004, after several postponements related to curfews, closures and delays in securing a visa, Mohammad of the Palestinian House of Friendship was finally able to return to Brandeis University to learn the digital story technology and complete a digital story. A report on his visit is included as an addendum in attachment 5.

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## UPDATE, NOVEMBER 2002-JULY, 2003

After the 2002 Institute, the staff at Brandeis worked with CCTV to further edit and polish the digital stories created by the youth leaders. Video and CD versions of the ten finished stories were sent to all key participants, and are also now hosted for public viewing on the following website:

<http://www.cctvcambridge.org/stream/qt/chyme/index.html>

Upon returning home, some of the youth leaders wrote back to Brandeis responding to questions about their activities related to the project after the 2002 Institute. To begin with, they wrote of their mixed feelings at having to face a deteriorating state of events in the Middle East right after a very encouraging and productive conversation with the “other side”. Nadia wrote, “Returning from such meetings is very difficult, because right away there is a reality check ... our time together at Brandeis seems like it is from another era.” Yosi too expressed being caught between his excitement of showing his digital story to all his friends and family, and his shock at the increase in terrorist attacks and killings. He wrote, “I am actually busy with the question of whether I will survive the bus that I will take to the university tomorrow morning.”

Most youth leaders reported having shown their stories to their family, friends, colleagues and the youth, and having received positive feedback from them. Nadia wrote that she was asked by everyone as to why the Palestinian stories were missing. The youth who saw Khaled’s stories were a little disappointed that much of their work was not used in the story’s content, but were very appreciative of the technique itself and agreed to work with him in the future to develop other narratives of success and achievement among the youth in their network. Other youth leaders also continue to work with the digital storytelling. Bashar managed to train three refugees at a Palestinian refugee camp at Amman in the technique, despite being faced with various technical difficulties. These three young men had previously participated in a workshop he developed entitled, “Using Drama in Conflict Resolution.” He has informed Brandeis that the digital story he created with them may soon be posted on the Internet. Nadia has purchased the necessary software to produce digital stories, and has started thinking about different topics for more stories.

In December 2002, the Jordanian delegation of the 2002 institute were invited by the U.S. Ambassador to Jordan to a Iftar-Ramadan banquet at the Marriot Hotel in Amman.

In February 2003, Leslie Rule, an associate at the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California who heard about the MEYLEP program from Natasha Freidus at CCTV, met with five members of the Israeli delegation at Givat Haviva. She led a small workshop and discussion on the use of digital stories as teaching tools and group facilitation, in which they were introduced to the “Appreciative Inquiry” approach to

digital storytelling. This approach places responsibility on the storyteller to recognize the best in the people, communities, and societies, that his/her story portrays, using the story itself as a medium to explore, discover and affirm their strengths.

After this workshop, Leslie worked with Suha to send an application for the 2003-2004 Brandeis International Fellowship program, *Recasting Reconciliation Through Culture and the Arts*, in which they proposed a project that would use digital storytelling as a means to promote tolerance and reconciliation among communities in the Middle East. The staff at the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at Brandeis were also very pleased to receive a team application for the same fellowship from Bashar and Rania in Jordan. Their proposed project included workshops for youth from Palestinian and Jordanian backgrounds living in Jordan, in which they would encourage the youth to explore the conflict between their communities using creative movement and theatrical exercises. Although neither of these teams was awarded a fellowship, the Slifka Program intends to keep them in the network of artists and peacebuilding practitioners interested in promoting reconciliation through culture and the arts.

Shimon is currently supervising a collaborative project between Givat Haviva and the Maccabi Tel Aviv-Barkai School of Soccer, called "Goals for Peace." This program, which will commence in September 2003, will bring together Israeli and Palestinian youth to a soccer camp where they will also be trained in the process of storytelling. 2 teams of twenty Israelis and twenty Palestinians (all aged between 14 and 16) have already been recruited for the program. The teams will meet twice a week, for two or two and a half hours each time, for a full year. There will be 4 facilitators selected in each team. In the first 10 meetings, they will participate in workshops that encourage them to explore and discuss the different aspects of the conflict between their communities. Depending on budgetary constraints, there may be room for 25 more meetings in the year, during which these youth will work through the process of creating stories. They will first spend time working on the story script - this would involve deeply reflecting on their individual feelings about and involvement in the conflict, and discussing their script with members of both teams and using their feedback. Then they would be encouraged to collect other components for their story - music, images, etc. These stories will eventually be made into Powerpoint slide-shows with audio features. Shimon's friend from Tel Aviv will be in charge of the technical training and coordination, while Shimon will be responsible for supervising the facilitators. During this time these teenagers will also be playing a lot of soccer together. The project thus promises to be a lot of fun, but will also challenge the participants to know their soccer mates at a deeper level as a result of being asked to reflect on the conflict between their communities.

Shimon has also informed us that Givat Haviva now has about 50% of the funds that they need to start another new project - a digital storytelling lab in Jerusalem. Shimon hopes that this can be implemented by mid-November. It would involve 10 Israeli and 10 Palestinian youth meeting once every week or 2 weeks to work on creating stories about their communities. Shimon hopes to ask some of the Israeli youth leaders who participated in the MEYLEP to help with coordinating this project.



In Nablus, Mohammed has continued to face many challenges to his work. With the help of Khaled in Jordan, Brandeis was able to send him a computer equipped with the software necessary for digital stories. However, the destruction of the economic and political infrastructure has made organization of any kind quite difficult. He has also been detained briefly a couple of times. In spite of this, Mohammed has continued to work with youth, maintains regular contact with Brandeis, and is committed to producing digital stories. Brandeis too remains determined to adding the Palestinian perspective to this collection of stories from the Middle East. Plans are underway for Mohammed to visit Brandeis in the fall of 2003, to train him in the technique of digital storytelling and to help him produce 2 or 3 stories about youth in the Nablus area. Natasha at CCTV and Leslie at the Center for Digital Storytelling have agreed to coordinate with Brandeis to facilitate his training. Leslie has been in touch with Mohammed regarding the creation of a digital storytelling center with a mobile lab in the Middle East since December 2002 and plans to visit Mohammed in August 2003.

The staff at the Brandeis Ethics Center are concerned about Abd-El-Hadi, who has been held without charges in an Israeli prison for over a year. We hope that soon we will hear news of his release.

-- Hima Chintalapati, July, 2003

**A retrospective history, analysis, and evaluation of  
COMMUNITY HISTORIES BY YOUTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST (CHYME)**

**Introduction:**

With the support of a grant from the U.S. Department of State, *Brandeis University* joined in partnership with several Middle East-based organizations – *Givat Haviva* in Israel, *Crossing Borders* in Jordan, and *The Palestinian House of Friendship* in Palestine – to plan and implement an ambitious, youth-oriented initiative known as the “***Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program***.” With the consent of the partners, the project’s name was later changed to “Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East” (CHYME).

This report documents the story of that initiative, evaluates the extent to which the initiative achieved its goals, and conveys an array of key lessons from the experience that may assist others who embark upon similar efforts in the future.

**Evaluator’s summary:**

Although this initiative did not achieve all that it set out to do, it did, despite sometimes overwhelming odds, achieve many of its key goals:

- Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders and the young people in their charge conducted an impressive array of community research activities and created a set of “digital stories” (e.g., electronic collages that convey a message and/or tell a story through sets of visual, slide-show images accompanied by audio narration) that can be used to tell their stories to others in the Middle East.
- Although the Palestinian partners could not produce digital stories during the same period, the possibility exists that they could deliver the same results before the end of the grant period.
- As a result of this initiative, strong and often new relationships have been developed across Brandeis and the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian players.
- There now exists an especially strong relationship between Brandeis and the Palestinian House of Friendship.

**There is considerable reason to hope that the foundations of friendship created by this initiative among Brandeis and the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian**

**participants can continue to develop in positive ways over time. Strong potential exists for impressive collaborative work among them in the future.**

This initiative brought together a group of organizations; and hence, one might expect this report's descriptions to typically incorporate statements such as, "Organization X did this" and "Organization Y did that." However, the reality of this initiative is much more about a collection of very committed **people** than it is about their very worthy organizations.

Therefore, the reader should recognize, especially in the "*Story*" section of this report, that it was the **people** who made this initiative happen. The *Story* is very personal. The reader will repeatedly hear about the heroes of this saga: most particularly Shimon in Israel, Khaled and Nadia in Jordan, and Mohammad and Abd el-Hadi in Palestine. Other Middle East Youth Leaders will also be acknowledged for their fine work.

**There is an inherent danger in providing the Middle East participants' full names. People who work toward peace and coexistence in the Middle East regularly find themselves threatened by others who do not share their views. Therefore, in the paragraph above and throughout this document we will use only the first names of the Middle East participants.** (Note: The full identities of Middle East participants will generally not be available. However, reviewers who for grant or other purposes must have the full identities of those individuals may contact Dan Terris or Cindy Cohen at Brandeis University.)

Brandeis staff including Cindy Cohen, Dan Terris, Lesley Yalen, and others went beyond the call of duty to coordinate a very difficult and ever-changing initiative.

**This report uses several controversial terms:**

When dealing with any multi-cultural initiative, language is important. The ways in which one describes events, places, and people are not necessarily neutral. Among parties in places of major conflict such as the Middle East, words can carry unanticipated connotations and can be politically charged.

For the purposes of this report, we have tried to be conscientious about our use of language. Yet we will use several terms that might raise "red flags" among some readers. Our choices of the terms that follow did not come without considerable debate:

- **"Palestine"**: In this document, we often use the term "*Palestine*" rather than "*the Palestinian Territories*" to refer to the geographic area of the West Bank and Gaza. While all of the terms used to describe this area are controversial, and somewhat imprecise, we use "Palestine" because it is the term used by our Palestinian partners.
- **"Intifada"**: At times, we use "Intifada" to refer to the heavy increase in violence that began in the Middle East in the fall of 2000 and unfortunately continued thereafter. It is a problematic term both because it carries with it a connotation that the violence comes only from the Palestinian side and also because it is a Palestinian term found objectionable by

some Israelis. We use this term at times because it has become a commonplace way to refer to the period of increased violence over the past two and a half years.

**This report uses the initiative’s first official name:**

We note that this program started with one name and ended with another:

- When originally proposed, this initiative was called the “*Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program.*”
- Later, through a unilateral decision by Brandeis, a new name was developed for internal marketing purposes. The initiative became known as *C.H.Y.M.E.* (e.g., an acronym for “Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East”).
- In this report, we will occasionally reference “*CHYME*”; however, in general we will stay with the initiative’s original name.

**This report sequences “country-based” discussions alphabetically:**

In general, the descriptions in this report of the experiences of our three Middle East partners are given alphabetically. That is, we typically start with the Israelis, move on to the Jordanians, and then discuss the Palestinians.

**The balance of this report is organized as follows:**

Part One:	The Story
Part Two:	Goal-Driven Evaluation
Part Three:	Lessons
Part Four:	Attachments

## **PART ONE: “THE STORY”**

### **EARLY HISTORY AND FORMATION**

#### **How did the Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program come about?**

The initial impetus for the *Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program* derived from conversations between Dan Terris of Brandeis University’s *International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life* and Sarah of Israel’s *Givat Haviva*. *Givat Haviva* had already been involved in two peace initiatives with the U.S. Department of State, and wished to explore another involving a partnership with Brandeis University. Both parties agreed that it might be interesting and fruitful to create “some sort of exchange project” that would bring together people from the Middle East at Brandeis and with Brandeis support. Subsequently, many telephone conversations, emails, and other communications ensued as ideas and assumptions around the issues of peace were discussed.

#### **What were the key assumptions driving the Program?**

As discussions deepened, a number of key assumptions, philosophies, and strategies played out that would eventually drive much of the program design that resulted:

**Assumption:** Attainment of peace in the Middle East will be a long-term process; therefore, young people (as the next generation that will be called upon to lead and deal with what their elders have “handed them”) need attention now.

Indeed, too many Arab and Israeli young people are being brought up in cultures of ignorance, myth, distrust, violence, and even hate for the “other.” These negative concepts are being inadequately counterbalanced with accurate information and positive alternatives. Furthermore, too many young people in the Middle East neither receive strongly attractive messages supporting peace; nor are they introduced to ideas, strong arguments, and attractive and safe vehicles through which they might promote or promulgate more positive options in the direction of peace.

**Assumption:** The most successful long-term peace and conflict prevention strategies are those that call upon participants to work together on substantive issues affecting their daily lives.

Many peace-seeking programs for young people successfully engage participants in recreational activities and dialogue groups that can break down barriers in the short term. But the need exists for local, professional youth workers (who, for the purpose of this report will be called “**Youth Leaders**”) to develop projects that allow young people to work in teams over sustained periods of time, both to deepen their relationships with each other and to produce visible models of successful collaborative work which they can share with their communities. Such projects must be sufficiently robust to challenge participants to grapple with inequities and differences while learning to respect their common humanity.

**Assumption:** Long-term peace depends on a shared sense of “commonality” with the “other” among participants (Youth Leaders and the young people with whom they work).

All people in a conflict face some similar problems and can benefit by cooperatively working together across borders to understand and address these problems. However, few opportunities exist for young people from Israel, Palestine, and Jordan to work together to understand the nature of the common issues that they face.

For example, most young people in the region must deal with intergenerational issues within their families and communities, particularly conflicts between the traditional values of their parents and grandparents and the values of modernizing societies. It was felt that an Arab-Israeli partnership project should introduce youth professionals and teenagers to the benefits of exploring such issues in cross-cultural perspective.

**Assumption:** The initiative should enable Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian Youth Leaders to develop skills, tools, and ways of relating that contribute to peace and to violence prevention using approaches drawn from the field of “community research and documentation”.

Community research and documentation involves sustained attention to issues of local importance through ethnographic and journalistic tools such as interviews, oral histories, photography, videos, archival research, writing, publication, and the arts. Through engagement in these processes, participants come to better understand particular issues confronting local communities.

Like “participatory action research” which is often used in the international context, community research, more commonly used in the U.S., is research conducted in league *with* the community and not “on” or “about” the community. Often, community research is initiated with a particular social action goal in mind. It is almost always conducted with community groups. It fosters development of civil society by building skills such as listening, suspending judgment, learning from community, and using new ways of relating. It has proven to produce ancillary results to the actual research such as new social relationships and trust. Its purpose in this initiative was to develop sustained cross-communal relationships and to demonstrate the possibilities of collaborative work.

The Brandeis University Coexistence Program's experience suggested that the process of team-based community research by young people could contribute to conflict prevention for the following reasons:

- The process of team building and conducting joint work would allow youth from different backgrounds to work intensively together, candidly exploring differences, while gaining new knowledge about each other and developing strong personal bonds.
- Team-based research on youth issues would provide youth leaders with the information and the desire to become engaged *together* as civic activists for change in their communities.
- Publications and products emerging from these research projects would have potential to engage the larger public in youth issues and stimulate important conversations across ethnic and political divisions.

**Assumption:** Collaborations and partnerships ideally occur between both organizations and individuals.

As such, people must have a variety of opportunities through which they can meet each other, relax together, share their stories, listen, and communicate in comfortable social ways. They must have time to realize their personal and organizational areas of common ground and differences; communicate about difficult professional, political, and personal topics; and discuss, debate, and negotiate together. They must determine how they can work together.

### **Who were the early partners?**

As early discussions played out, it became immediately clear that an initiative based upon the above assumptions would require an expansion of the array of partners to include additional Brandeis players and several more Middle East organizations. Eventually, the formal set of participating organizations became:

- *The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life* at Brandeis -- which brought academic and practical expertise in coexistence and international peace and justice issues, facilitation, and community research and documentation.
- *The Center for Youth and Communities* at Brandeis – which brought strengths in youth development, policy, and evaluation, as well as an extensive set of connections with youth organizations in the United States. The Center for Youth and Communities was brought in to facilitate a documentation and evaluation process that would be integrated into all aspects of the project and would ensure that the project was accomplishing what it set out to do, including the sustainability of the collaborations.
- *The Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva* (based in Northern Israel)– which had engaged thousands of Jewish and Arab-Israeli teenagers in productive dialogue and joint projects and had an extensive network of contacts among youth and peace-seeking organizations throughout the Middle East.

- *Crossing Borders/SHAMS* (based in Amman, Jordan) – which had successfully begun a process of involving young people in writing and publishing about pressing issues that cross national lines.
- *The Palestinian House of Friendship* (based in Nablus, Palestine) -- which had a record of facilitating productive exchanges among Palestinians, Israelis, and others, and had engaged Palestinian youth in publication projects.

### **What was the initial program strategy, model, and design?**

With these partners on-board, Brandeis University responded to a request-for-proposals from the U.S. Department of State’s “Israel-Arab Peace Partners Program” that was seeking to fund exchange programs focusing on pre-emptive dispute resolution, peer mediation, and conflict prevention and management in the context of school, community, and youth organization activities.

Brandeis proposed what it then called the “***Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program***” as a vehicle to build capacity within a cohort of exemplary Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian youth leaders, enabling them to design and implement cross-border community research projects involving young people. The program’s purpose was to demonstrate how Youth Leaders and young people from regions in conflict could enhance their commitments to and capacities for peace through collaboration in a set of connected, cross-border community research projects. With facilitation, training, and support from Brandeis and other partners, Youth Leaders and young people in the Middle East would explore commonalities and differences, discuss conflicts productively and with open minds, and then produce a set of connected stories.

An important, politically fraught question that immediately arose was: who should attend the first institute at Brandeis. Should the number of Jews equal the number of Arabs? If each delegation brings the same number of participants, would that be balanced? After extensive consultation with its partners and the U.S. State Department about the appropriate composition and size of the delegations, Brandeis proposed to work with its three Middle East partners to identify 18 Youth Leaders (six each across the three partners). They would be between the ages of 19 and 35, would be professional youth workers or advanced college students, and would work regularly with teenagers from Israel, Jordan, and Palestine. Our Israeli partner would be free to decide on the composition of the Israeli delegation in terms of the balance of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

Next, the initial design incorporated a series of sessions that would bring together all partners:

- an initial, formal planning and orientation meeting at *Givat Haviva* in Israel during the spring of 2001 in which the players could come together regionally to meet each other, tackle differences, hammer out next steps, etc.



- a ten-day “Summer Institute” at Brandeis in July 2001 at which all parties could visit the United States; participate in workshops, and have a retreat facilitated by Farhat (of *Givat Haviva*) during which they could get to know each other better, tackle difficult issues, and move forward.
- two subsequent Middle-East-based meetings during which all parties could again come together to handle whatever issues were necessary to move forward with the initiative. The first would be a mid-point review meeting in late 2001 in Amman, Jordan. Then there would be a final summary gathering in early 2002 in Nablus, Palestine.

It was envisioned that these exchanges would provide the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian Youth Leaders with new tools, skills, and strategies for their work with youth.

Between the institutes, the Youth Leaders would use these tools, skills, and strategies in and across their respective home countries. Upon return to the Middle East, cross-border Youth Leader teams would put into practice modest community research projects, working with each other and with teenagers from their communities, collaborating as community researchers exploring common issues or problems of common concern.

At the final meeting, the products resulting from the community research projects would be presented to a wider audience as successful models of working on cross-border issues together. Projects would also be published in various media, including the Web.

### **What happened after the initial proposal was submitted?**

Brandeis’ proposal was submitted approximately two weeks before the start of the current “Intifada.” As the situation on the ground became increasingly violent, many of the proposal’s concepts as described above moved quickly from realistic to idealistic to unrealistic.

At this point, Brandeis assumed that its proposal would prove non-fundable or at least would be postponed. Surprisingly, the U.S. State Department approved the proposal, encouraged Brandeis to “run with it”, and offered some room for flexibility in its plan and implementation to allow for difficulties caused by violence in the region.

Encouraged by the State Department’s apparent flexibility in making program adjustments, a Brandeis representative (Dan Terris) traveled to the Middle East to connect personally with the three regional partners. Meetings were possible with the Israelis and Jordanians; however, representatives from the *Palestinian House of Friendship* could not attend due to violence associated with the Intifada and Israel’s incursions into the West Bank.

The political violence in the region continually affected all of the partners. In particular, it constrained the freedom of movement of the Palestinians throughout the initiative. Their inability to attend sessions became a pattern repeated several times during the initiative. The absence of the Palestinian contingent required them and all other partners to make significant adjustments to all aspects of the initiative.

Subsequent work began at Brandeis to determine how the *Palestinian House of Friendship* could be kept as a valued Palestinian partner – seeking ways to keep the Palestinian contingent engaged despite the many barriers to their active participation and/or personal presence.

### **What major adjustments had to be made due to the worsening situation and violence in the region?**

How to move forward amidst the deteriorating situation became a key question. Brandeis began a lengthy process of redesigning the initiative around many limits. Discussions across all delegations ensued. This often difficult communication work resulted in a revised approach that:

- maintained as many of the proposal’s original goals as possible;
- incorporated a new, mutually-agreed-upon timeline;
- created an agenda and process to move the initiative forward that all accepted, albeit, with some misgivings.

It was evident that the Middle East regional meetings described in the original proposal would not be possible because people could not cross borders. Therefore, a new program design included two Institutes to be held at Brandeis (one in 2001 and another in 2002). In addition, it was hoped that all partner organizations would be creative in finding ways to communicate and work with each other in lieu of the originally-planned regional meetings.

Prior to the Intifada, Brandeis and its partners had thought that teenagers in each Middle East area would be able to conduct cross-border community research projects in their own and each other’s communities. However, as the regional situation deteriorated, Brandeis had to work with its Middle East partners to sustain their relationships and to figure out how they might engage youth in community research within the constraints of the intensifying conflict (i.e., How might face-to-face meetings across young people from Israel, Jordan, and Palestine be possible? Were they impossible? If face-to-face could not happen, how could young people communicate their stories to each other?). These were difficult questions that would be worked out as the program progressed.

We note here that the idea of having Youth Leaders and their teams of young people producing *digital* stories was not part of the original design. Rather, this idea came up much later as Brandeis was designing and organizing its first Summer Institute and was considering Boston area youth organizations that could be site visits for the youth leaders. Jane Sapp, an artist affiliated with the Brandeis Ethics Center introduced Brandeis to the idea of digital stories and recommended that Brandeis approach Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) – a Boston area organization specializing in video/technology approaches to community work. After exploring this idea with the youth leaders who attended the first Brandeis institute, it was decided that digital stories would be a great

way for youth in the region to communicate meaningfully with each other during violent periods when people could not easily cross borders.

## THE OCTOBER 2001 BRANDEIS INSTITUTE

### **Who attended the 2001 Institute?**

In its original proposal, Brandeis had suggested that eighteen people from the Middle East might attend a July 2001 Brandeis Institute: five “young professionals” (“Youth Leaders”) plus one “Delegation Leader” from each of the three groups. However, it quickly became evident as the Middle East situation worsened that this approach would not be feasible, and the plan of action outlined in the proposal was unrealistic. It was also impossible to convene a planning meeting in the region.

Ultimately, it was decided that two representatives each from Israel, Jordan, and Palestine should visit Brandeis in October 2001 to collectively revise the project plan. These were representatives chosen by the local Middle East partner organizations:

- [Israel] Givat Haviva: Shimon and Olga;
- [Jordan] Crossing Borders/SHAMS: Khaled and Nadia;
- [Palestine] Palestinian House of Friendship: Mohammad and Abd el-Hadi.

### **What was the 2001 Institute agenda?**

The original proposal set out an array of agenda topics and approaches conceived prior to the deterioration of the Middle East situation. It became necessary to make adjustments. Brandeis attempted to retain the essence of its original Institute plan. It had to drop some items while adding new ones. Eventually, with input from facilitators and each delegation, Brandeis developed a draft Institute agenda that would provide the (now smaller) Middle East delegations with opportunities to:

- meet; get to know each other; and explore their feelings, fears, hopes, assumptions, and opinions about the Middle East conflict;
- explore possibilities and risks of cross-border collaborations;
- review the overlapping and unique goals of the delegations;
- discuss other key issues pertaining to the conflict;
- learn the philosophies and approaches involved in doing community research;
- consider what might be the themes of young people’s research and story-sharing;
- learn basic principles of program evaluation and data collection;
- develop and reach consensus around a “logic model” for the initiative;
- explore the ethical dilemmas of doing such work;
- plan and make decisions about the program now and in the future;
- visit several Boston-area youth-serving organizations;
- visit Cambridge Community TV (CCTV) to explore the concept of “digital stories;”

- consider how to bring back what they learned in the Institute and apply it to their individual situations at home.

### **Who were the key facilitators of the 2001 Institute?**

Depending upon the subject, aspects of the Institute were facilitated by

- Cindy Cohen and Dan Terris from the Brandeis Ethics Center;
- Farhat from Givat Haviva;
- Chris Kingsley, Pam Smith, and Andrew Sokatch from the Brandeis Center for Youth and Communities.

### **What happened during the Institute that is particularly noteworthy?**

Difficulties in obtaining visas and traveling to the U.S. via Amman delayed the Palestinian delegation's arrival until three days into the Institute. Therefore, during those first few days, Israeli and Jordanian delegations spent time getting to know each other, reaching a basic understanding of their perspectives on the conflict, and working on related issues while knowing that the Palestinians were absent during these discussions. The Jordanians tried at times to represent the "Arab perspective." Both groups had to "imagine what the Palestinians might say." This created a major void in the discussions (moving them to the hypothetical), although certainly good work was still possible across the two delegations that were present.

When the Palestinian delegation arrived, the group had to convey to them what had already transpired and to go through an accelerated group-building process. The Israeli and Jordanian delegates and Brandeis facilitators also needed to hear the stories of the Palestinians' very trying journey to the U.S. Indeed, the Palestinians had endured a difficult trip that included having their papers and videos confiscated at a checkpoint. Furthermore, new relationship building across the three delegations had to occur because the Israelis and Jordanians had already "bonded" somewhat prior to the Palestinians' arrival. All delegations needed time to get to know each other. Surprisingly, these processes went reasonably smoothly, although they were quite complex.

With all delegations present, there was then the question about how the Institute should proceed. Given the limited remaining time available, should its agenda be devoted to continued relationship building and dialogue around the conflict? Should the agenda focus on action planning and moving forward with the program? Or might both be possible in some way?

The Brandeis team decided to focus on the development of a "Logic Model": a structured strategic-planning and decision-making process in which delegations would negotiate the details of the year-long initiative. Who would the initiative serve? What are the operational and philosophical assumptions? What are the key strategies and activities we want to employ? What outcomes are we seeking? What are the long-term impacts that ideally could result from the initiative? These questions are all addressed through the consensus process of developing the Logic Model.

In making this choice, Brandeis hoped that the process of reaching consensus around the Logic Model might stimulate relationship building and discussion of the conflict, thereby addressing both agendas. In retrospect, this process produced mixed results.

On the positive side, delegations developed and reached consensus about a Logic Model and accompanying action plan. In doing so, they developed stronger relationships and addressed some aspects of the conflict.

On the negative side, there is little doubt that all participants would have valued and gained much from considerably more time devoted to relationship building and discussions of the conflict. For example:

- The first driving question in the Logic Model development process was, “Who should we serve?” All delegations quickly agreed that their “target populations” were both the “Youth Leaders and the youth.” They also agreed upon most of the characteristics of these Youth Leaders and youth. However, disagreement arose about whether or not the initiative should work with Youth Leaders and youth living in Israeli Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Participants debated this issue for quite a while during the Logic Model process. The Israeli delegation leader argued strongly that Youth Leaders and youth residing in the Settlements might be the most important people this initiative could reach. He argued that because the settlers tend to have more right wing views, they might have the most to gain from a peace initiative in which they could hear the stories of people on “the other side.” In contrast, the Palestinian delegation leader argued passionately that the Settlements are illegal and are a personal affront to the Palestinians, and that people living within them should not be recognized at all and should not be included in this initiative. Eventually, the Israeli delegation leader was willing to back down on his argument, and it was agreed that Settlement residents would not be included in this initiative. This is an example of a difficult issue that might have been better addressed through an earlier, more in-depth dialogue than through a tangent in the Logic Model process.
- The second question in the Logic Model development process was, “What assumptions drive our initiative?” Participants brainstormed and reached consensus around a set of assumptions about the conflict (see list of assumptions on page 15). However, many of these assumptions were controversial and could have served as the basis for lengthy and very important discussions. Time was not devoted to such communication, and many of these assumptions were left “unpacked.” Participants’ different interpretations of these assumptions at times had a direct or indirect impact on the strategic and action planning processes. Furthermore, a nearly universal theme among delegates after the Institute was that they would have valued more time to deal with the “hard issues.”

Participants *did* move efficiently through an array of difficult topics and planning steps. They worked through all aspects of their Logic Model and reached consensus around an action plan. They agreed upon what they hoped the initiative would do, look like, and result in. They liked what they had developed, but wondered whether their Logic Model and action plan would prove realistic over the long run. They foresaw that future events in the Middle East might play out in ways that could adversely affect their work.

The Brandeis group was left wondering: Amidst a political context in which events beyond the control of the participants are likely to interfere with people's abilities to fulfill even the best laid plans, what are the benefits and costs of investing time in a detailed action plan versus investing time in deepening relationships? One of the benefits of the latter might be that participants would have stronger relationships and hence greater facility in adjusting group plans as unforeseen events unfold.

### **KEY OUTCOMES OF THE 2001 INSTITUTE:**

The three delegations reached consensus around their Logic Model, as follows:

#### **Who should the initiative serve in the Middle East?**

Delegations reached consensus about the characteristics of both the Youth Leaders and the young people who would be involved in the initiative upon their return to the Middle East. They agreed that they would recruit 5 to 6 Youth Leaders in each of the three countries (15-18 total) and that each Youth Leader would recruit a team of 3 to 6 youth.

Delegations concurred that Youth Leaders should be:

- Palestinian, Jordanian, and/or Israeli (Jewish and/or Arab)
- ages 18 to 30
- adept at working with young people
- committed to peace, equality, and mutual respect
- committed to the values and philosophies of this program
- from a wide social and economic spectrum
- able to access computers and internet.

Could be:

- youth-work professionals already adept at working with youth on issues of peace, *or*
- youth-work professionals who support peace philosophically but need training/support to become adept at working with youth on peace issues.

Could **not** be:

- residents of the settlements.

Might be recruited from among groups or professions such as (although not limited to):

- young journalists
- university student council mentors
- young teachers
- community center leaders

- workers at non-governmental organizations.

Delegations concurred that young people served by the initiative should be:

- Israeli, Jordanian, and/or Palestinian youth
- 13 to 18 years old
- a diverse group
- representative of all spectra of society in the 3 “countries.”

Could be, but were not limited to young people who were:

- leaders in their communities
- from marginalized and/or “weak” communities
- from poor families
- ethnic minorities
- weak or handicapped.

Could **not** be:

- residents of the settlements.

### **What should be the initiative’s driving assumptions?**

Drawing from their discussions during the Institute and as part of the Logic Model development process, delegations brainstormed a set of assumptions and philosophies that would guide many aspects of the Program. As mentioned previously, given time limitations, these were not discussed to the extent anyone would have liked. However, the statements themselves were generated with little disagreement across the delegations:

- We in the Middle East need peace and justice.
- Peace is the only option for the Middle East conflict.
- We stand against racism of any kind.
- We respect human rights.
- Self-determination for all is a key priority.
- The current situation is not good.
- Israelis (Jewish and Arab), Jordanians, and Palestinians have much in common.
- Exposure can often “beat” stereotypes.
- The more one knows about the “other,” the less one might hate the other.
- Meeting, working with, and having dialogue with “the other” will foster mutual understanding.
- Youth are a large percentage of the Middle East population and need opportunities.
- Youth are the future.
- Youth have a lot of potential.
- Education and awareness of the concepts of peace, equality, democracy, and justice will create empowered youth.
- It is worthwhile to reach out to youth who have had no previous peace work experiences.
- We must all acknowledge and try to meet the needs of all participating communities.
- We must all be sensitive to any vocabulary, issue, action, or symbol others might have.
- We have a track record that we can build upon.
- The basis of our work is equality in the ability to pursue our goals.
- As we strive for mutual actions we might take, we must also deeply communicate our experiences and acknowledge our differences in the process. However, we must not focus so much on our conflict that it prevents us from acting in a positive way.

### **What should be the outcomes for Youth Leaders?**

Delegations defined a series of outcomes it was hoped Youth Leaders would achieve/attain. Upon completion of the initiative:

- Youth Leaders will have gained the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.
- Youth Leaders in each community will have “met” each other in person or at least on the internet, and will be joined through a mutual network.
- Youth Leaders will have gained new techniques for facilitation, community building, and peace building.
- Youth Leaders will achieve for themselves the same outcomes stated for youth (see below).

### **What should be the outcomes for young people?**

Delegations defined a series of outcomes it was hoped young people would achieve/attain through involvement in the initiative:

- Youth will have gained the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.
- Youth across the communities have a hand in producing and agreeing upon a name for the program and a logo that represents this program.
- New relationships have been established within and across communities.
- Youth accept “international legitimacy” as basic philosophy in the mentality of the group.
- Youth believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace.
- Youth from the three communities will have begun to explore their own histories, stories, and values.

### **What should be the formats and themes for each community’s stories?**

Delegations made several decisions about the content and format for the stories that would result from the initiative’s work:

- Delegations’ experiences at CCTV led them to believe that digital stories were perhaps the most effective way to enable Youth Leaders and young people to provide glimpses into each other’s communities during a period when the Middle East situation precluded actual travel across borders.
- Each digital story would involve visuals (an array of photographs, video clips, art work, etc) combined with timed audio narratives connected to those visuals (voice-overs from Delegation Leaders, Youth Leaders, and young people).
- Participants agreed that Youth Leaders and youth could choose topics, write narratives, and collect images and sounds within their countries/communities that could eventually become the basis for a series of stories on the theme, “Our Community: How We Live Today.”
- Participants agreed that each story should address important issues facing young people in their communities, including how they have been affected by the Middle East conflict, and their hopes and aspirations for the future. These stories could then be shared with others on the web, on a CD-ROM, and/or on video.



**IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
BETWEEN THE 2001 AND 2002 BRANDEIS INSTITUTES**

**What were Institute participants' immediate thoughts and actions upon their return to the Middle East after the 2001 Brandeis Institute?**

**Israel:**

Soon after his return to Israel, Shimon (leader of the Israeli delegation) presented concepts, decisions, and tools from the Institute to the managers at his home organization *Givat Haviva*. He asked them to determine what level of effort and space in the organization's workload could be devoted to the initiative. They responded, "The project is here, we should treat it seriously, but other work has to get done too."

There were immediate questions about who should then coordinate the Israeli part of the initiative (i.e., "Should an Arab and a Jew should co-lead?"). From the start, Shimon had been clearly designated as the delegation leader, and there was little question that he would continue in that role. Shortly after they returned to Israel, Olga (the second Israeli Institute participant) left the initiative to spend more time with her family. Farhat (a Palestinian Israeli who had co-facilitated the October 2001 Institute and who was also a colleague of Shimon's at Givat Haviva) initially stepped in to some of the outreach and selection processes. However, soon it became clear that this created an ambiguity and possible compromising of Farhat's role as a facilitator, and he stepped back from the project on the ground. Shimon took over management of the Israeli team on his own.

**Jordan:**

Khaled (leader of the Jordanian delegation) and Nadia (Youth Leader) left the 2001 Brandeis Institute clear about what they wanted to do (e.g., the Logic Model, action plan, etc.), and felt that all was achievable. Khaled moved immediately into the process of recruiting additional Youth Leaders, while Nadia focused on her role as a Youth Leader.

**Palestine:**

Upon their return to Palestine, Mohammad (leader of the Palestinian delegation) and Abd el-Hadi (in a support role) reviewed their notes and determined what potential Youth Leaders and perhaps others should be told about the initiative. The heavy violence in Palestine had been occurring for about one year at the time of the 2001 Brandeis Institute. Indeed, violent incidents occurred in Nablus (10 people killed) while the three delegations were together at Brandeis. These difficult events put a "dark cloud" over the Institute. The Palestinians asked, "What can we do now with Palestinian youth?" and "How might our young people's digital stories show life in Palestine?"

## **How did delegation leaders attempt to recruit and orient Youth Leaders?**

### **Israel:**

As he embarked upon his efforts to recruit Youth Leaders, Shimon asked, “How might one attract Youth Leaders and eventually young people to participate in this initiative given the new violence?” He recognized that marketing peace between Jews and Arabs would be a tough sell during the newly expanded conflict.

Shimon started by trying to recruit Youth Leaders across several municipalities. He sent letters to thirty cities, made numerous telephone calls, and participated in a radio interview. Despite his considerable efforts, there were no immediate responses. In retrospect, Shimon believes that, given the violence at the time, people were not eager to deal with peace and Jewish/Arab participation.

Then he received several calls on the same day. One was from the mayor of a city who had heard the radio interview re: “What can be done to help our situation?” The mayor expressed interest in being involved, and met with Shimon. Then the mayor brought the concept to an advisory group of educators. They too wanted to be involved and offered to provide young people. However, they also wanted to micro-manage and control the project and the content of its stories. Shimon declined due to these dictates.

Shimon also attracted another group; however, they ultimately took a route that was too ambitious. Again, Shimon declined. In retrospect, Shimon believes that they were not serious enough about the initiative and perhaps wanted to be involved primarily because they thought that they might receive computers or other resources if they participated.

So Shimon went “back to the drawing board” and reformulated what he was looking for. He decided that he would seek five people who could eventually set up five small “Program Centers” across Israel. He re-started his recruitment campaign among people and organizations with whom he was already connected. One was the *Center for Jewish/Arab Experience* (originally founded by Shimon in 1996) that focused on coexistence and mutual understanding. This approach proved more successful. They identified six people to interview for his Youth Leader positions. Several other regional organizations provided an additional dozen candidates, including several Palestinian Israelis.

Shimon recruited Farhat as an interviewer. Despite a selection of candidates, it took through the end of January 2002 to find and get all Youth Leaders on board. Eventually Shimon was able to hire four Jewish Israelis and one Palestinian Israeli.

In February, Shimon oriented these Youth Leaders, hoping that they could use the tools he provided and “take the initiative back and run with it.” He provided a program overview, vision, tools, tasks, timetables, etc. He showed them the partial digital story developed by the group during the first Brandeis Institute, and shared the logic model and other materials.

## **Jordan:**

Khaled's attempts to recruit three Jordanian Youth Leaders (in addition to Nadia) took longer than he had anticipated. He sought a diverse group of candidates from across Jordan (some Muslim, some Christian, some male, some female, etc.) who felt that the Middle East situation could be different and who believed that they might be able to play a role in improving it. Furthermore, Khaled wanted people who could "get the job done."

Although she was not directly involved in the Youth Leader recruitment process, as Khaled sought and interviewed candidates, it was helpful to have Nadia's opinions and advice because she had attended the first Brandeis Institute and so had that knowledge and context. She understood the vision and was able to proceed, as a youth leader, relatively independently.

Khaled started recruiting Youth Leaders by contacting individuals and organizations that he had worked with previously across several communities. He received and reviewed CVs, interviewed candidates to whom he explained the initiative, and chose people he considered strong. His chosen Youth Leaders were doing "peace work" for the first time (They were primarily middle class youth workers who were open to peace ideas and concepts, but had never worked on peace-related projects before.) They initially struggled with the initiative's vision, goals, concepts, and approaches. But they possessed the idealism and most of the skills necessary to move forward.

## **Palestine:**

Mohammad's efforts to recruit Palestinian Youth Leaders eventually yielded two female candidates: one a journalist and the other a counselor. Both were told about the initiative, its benefits, connections with like-minded Israelis and Jordanians, and the work to be done. Both were skeptical, but that was acceptable. Communication had begun.

However, between February and April 2002, the Israeli military had moved into many West Bank towns including Nablus, and life in Palestine then deteriorated sharply. As a result, one candidate withdrew after being told by her parents that she should not participate. The other remained interested, still believes in peace, and would like to participate in the initiative. However, throughout the year she could not always be contacted easily; telephone lines were often inoperable, and the continuous curfews made personal contact nearly impossible.

## **How did Youth Leaders recruit and orient young people?**

### **Israel:**

There were some initial problems recruiting young people in Israel. One Youth Leader managed to gather his group with little difficulty, while the others experienced

considerable frustration. Each Youth Leader eventually reached around ten young people, and was able to get commitments from about five.

In some cases, Shimon had to re-orient staff and youth to the initiative's vision, the digital story concept, etc. Even then, the vision still remained vague for some.

The Youth Leaders then had to convince young people of the importance of getting the "others" to see them as people and vice-versa. Many youth had not previously been exposed to the others, their feelings, ideas, etc. This initiative provided insights and new attitudes about how the others might view the conflict.

Some young people immediately grasped the initiative's concepts and believed in the vision. Other young people (especially those from right-wing families) did not like the initiative's vision. They wanted the other to change, placed blame, etc. It took significant effort to get those young people on board. But most eventually made noteworthy gains, and some of their stories are quite impressive. Both young people and Youth Leaders took away some amazing learning and insights from the experience.

Some parents, particularly the Israeli Arabs, were and are worried about how the stories will be used, privacy, names posted on the website, etc. They fear for their children's safety.

### **Jordan:**

Just as "things started looking good for the initiative", the violence in Israel and Palestine increased dramatically. Timelines and schedule changes created problems, the 2002 Brandeis Institute was postponed, etc. This made recruitment of youth difficult and all aspects of the initiative more complex.

Nadia, the most experienced and fully oriented Jordanian Youth Leader (who attended the first Brandeis Institute) found recruitment of young people very challenging. She went through several different groups of young people before a constant group was identified. Numerous factors contributed to her difficulties, many of which were also eventually experienced by the other Jordanian Youth Leaders:

- Whenever a violent act occurred in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, youth dropped out.
- Youth had other conflicting demands upon their time.
- Parents worried about their children's involvement, and/or had little tolerance for or empathy with Israelis, etc.
- Nadia recruited her young people independently from Khaled's existing coexistence-oriented network
- Timelines kept changing.

Nadia had to persuade parents that peace with Israelis was valuable, and that their children's involvement was safe. Through her hard communication work, Nadia managed

to recruit a firm group of five young people who eventually contributed material for a digital story, four of whom had never been previously involved in a peace initiative. One left prematurely.

One other Jordanian Youth Leader was also able to recruit young people through his personal efforts. However, the other two Youth Leaders could not do so, in part due to their inexperience in this field and in part because of objections from the parents of many youth. Eventually, Khaled assisted them, and they recruited young people primarily through his existing network. All of the Jordanian youth leaders worked primarily with young people who were from upper and middle class families from West Amman.

### **Palestine:**

Though they were committed to the initiative, the Palestinian delegation (Mohammad, Abd el-Hadi, and *The Palestinian House of Friendship*), had to put this initiative on a back burner, as other more pressing issues arose amidst the heavy violence in the West Bank. Curfews and other military/violent actions had a profound effect on Mohammad and all other Palestinians, and hindered progress with the initiative. Survival and the provision of education to the community became the key priorities.

The city of Nablus (where Mohammad resides and where *The Palestinian House of Friendship* is located) was hit especially hard. It was invaded by a large number of tanks and soldiers, and was under Israeli occupation for many months. Damage to the city was huge, producing shock among all of the people living there, even among those who believed in peace. During the time in which the initiative was to be implemented, the citizens of Nablus were free to move from place to place for no more than 30 days. There was a continuous curfew for over 107 days during which only 50 hours were open for free movement. Mohammad related:

“This year we did not see spring. We were rarely allowed out of our houses in April, May, or June. Of course, that time had to be spent seeking and buying food and supplies, and trying to connect with other people important to us. Going outside was a gamble; one could be punished, arrested, even killed. Telephones were often inoperable. Even letters and packages were delayed (e.g., A DHL package from Brandeis took 22 days to be delivered).”

Mohammad had difficulty traveling within, to, and from his town. His family ran low on food (e.g., a night with nothing left in the refrigerator except some water and butter). He had to defy the curfew to seek the basic necessities. Other families were in similar straits. Nobody could travel safely.

The survival of *The Palestinian House of Friendship* was and is in question. As a non-governmental organization relying upon its own resources to stay independent, it is suffering. Its building was invaded and heavily damaged during an incursion by the Israeli army (perhaps \$10K in damage). Its doors were blown open, computers were lost, and other structural damage occurred. They are now in the slow process of rebuilding, and have “programs still to run” amidst the obstacles. These challenges often placed and

will continue to place the CHYME initiative at a low level of priority for the Palestinians relative to the other delegations.

Organizational survival aside, Mohammad asked questions such as:

- “What does one do when the populace sees constant killing, destroying of houses, etc.?”
- “What does one do when one regularly considers circles of horror, bloodshed, and craziness?”
- “What can one talk about?”
- “How can one reach and encourage people to look at peace and coexistence?”

Furthermore, Mohammad added:

- “When one tries to say, ‘Not all Israelis are like this,’ one finds oneself alienated.”
- “Luckily, some Palestinian people still believe that peace is the only way, and that the two people’s respecting each other and acknowledging each other’s rights may still be possible.”
- “While most people in the world can send their children to school, many schools in Palestine are closed. As a result, large numbers of young people are forced to stay home and do nothing. What are we supposed to do for our children?”

Not surprisingly, some Palestinians sought “underground” ways to educate their children. Mohammad and *The Palestinian House of Friendship* decided, therefore, that “recruitment” of young people should be focused heavily on education. PHF activities during this time might fulfill the initiative’s goals, but were not driven by them.

### **What did each Middle East group do to engage young people in creation of their digital stories?**

#### **Israel:**

Shimon recognized that digital stories could be a helpful tool. In fact, although he couldn’t completely download the brief sample story the group had generated during the first Institute visit to CCTV due to technical difficulties, viewers were impressed even with that, and it sold some on the initiative.

He worried about how the “others” would interpret the stories created by Israeli young people, and considered story messages very seriously from that standpoint. What should our stories convey? Will the others receive our messages in the way they are intended? He conveyed his concerns to his Youth Leaders, and they proceeded to work with young people to develop stories that kept these considerations in mind.

#### **Jordan:**

The Jordanian experience is best described through two players: Khaled (as delegation leader) and Nadia (as the only Youth Leader who attended both the 2001 and 2002 Brandeis Institutes).

Khaled had to spend much more time than he had anticipated or would have preferred with his Youth Leaders and young people to help them out with questions such as:

- What is this initiative about?
- What is a “digital story”?
- What stories do we wish to tell, and to whom?
- What might be the goal(s) of our stories?
- What subjects might we tackle for our stories?
- What might we be able to convey through a 3-5 minute story?
- How might we introduce our society and stories to others in such a short period of time?

Khaled would have preferred that his Youth Leaders be independent starters, understanding the vision and working to implement the initiative with minimal support and supervision. He knew that Nadia could do so, but was unsure about the rest. He was pleased to find that three, newly recruited Youth Leaders were committed, attended meetings regularly, and were (eventually) able to get young people involved in their digital story projects.

All Jordanian Youth Leaders launched their groups of young people with the theme of “representing Jordan to others.” Eventually the team of Jordanian Youth Leaders worked with their groups of young people to develop a set of ideas for their digital stories.

The approaches used by the Jordanian Youth Leaders fell upon a continuum:

- At one end were “product-driven” approaches. These incorporated traditional, leader-structured experiences aimed at producing the digital stories in an efficient manner. Four of the Jordanian Youth Leaders used this approach. Among the more traditional Youth Leaders, young people chose subjects within the general theme, and conducted some research across subjects within that theme. The level of youth decision-making and involvement varied. All thought that it might take about two weeks to develop the stories; however, it took more like a month. Each of the resulting stories was unique. Across this group of Jordanian story ideas, the viewer:
  - Was introduced to Jordan and Jordanian life, and conveyed Jordan’s image to others.
  - Was oriented to the positive and negative aspects of life among Jordanian young people, and the challenges they face.
  - Learned specifically about what it is like to be a Christian in Jordan.
  - Looked at the lives of four women in Jordan.
  - Considered the issue of “hospitality” in Jordan.
  - Was oriented to decisions that must be made by an individual as s/he grows up that might lead to conflicts between tradition and modernity, values conflicts, etc.
- At the other end of the continuum was the “process-driven” approach. Nadia incorporated significant youth leadership and control. She functioned more as a facilitator than as a leader. Upon her return to Jordan after the 2001 Brandeis Institute, Nadia supported Khaled, but operated somewhat independently with her own group. The young people Nadia worked with worried that, after September 11<sup>th</sup>, “The world thinks badly of Arabs.” They

wanted their digital stories to present, *“Who we are, really!”* Nadia felt that, although difficult and time consuming, pre-story discussions among young people were important and valuable. Her approach to working with young people reflected the following principles:

- Nadia wanted youth to have a real learning experience, to be empowered, and to express their views.
- She viewed delivery of digital stories as a valuable yet secondary product of the initiative. She felt that the process of creating the stories and the learning gained by that process should be primary.
- She facilitated weekly discussions about difficult issues many of which had taken place earlier among the adults who had attended Brandeis’ 2001 Institute. Her group of young people also discussed real problems they were facing as teenagers in West Amman, including the high rate of drug use and attempted suicide among their schoolmates.
- As she worked with her group of young people, she asked them to name any political leaders that they admired. They could not name any. Indeed, the young people had lots of interesting and mature ideas that came forth in their discussions. She took what came out of these discussions and offered her youth group the chance to choose a subject/focus for their digital stories.

### **Palestine:**

Although it was not possible to carry out the initiative to the extent everyone would have liked, *The Palestinian House of Friendship* did implement a very courageous, pioneering project that is worthy of mention. The *Palestinian House of Friendship* secretly ran a “summer camp” for young people, using an abandoned building as their camp. They wanted to give hope and a sense of life. They wanted to show that, “We can still do positive things in tough circumstances.” To attend it, participants (youth and adults) often had to defy curfews and put themselves at risk. It is noteworthy that although 20 young people were expected to participate, 64 were actively enrolled. Mothers especially appreciated the camp.

Some adult volunteers (including students and mothers) had backgrounds in teaching, counseling, and graphic arts. Young people drew and painted, used computers, read stories, participated in recreational activities, expressed themselves, and had opportunities to play. Older youth participated in occasional discussions on subjects such as human rights, life, loss of family and friends, etc.

### **What did Brandeis do between the two Institutes?**

Throughout this implementation phase, Brandeis played the role of “Communication Central.” Staff regularly stimulated dialogue across the three delegations, and attempted to help delegations solve problems that cropped up.

Sometimes Brandeis served as a facilitator of communication, periodically putting the delegations in direct contact with each other and occasionally conveying information



and/or messages between them. At times, Brandeis talked with one delegation, and made suggestions about how it could most effectively communicate with the other delegations.

Inherent in this work was the fact that the Israelis and Jordanians were able to move ahead with the work (although not without significant challenges), while the Palestinians simply could not carry out the initiative at the same speed or level. Brandeis had to regularly help all participants cope with this imbalance.

Complicating this work was the fact that, even when delegations wished to speak with each other, vehicles for communication did not come easily. Telephone and electronic connections were unreliable, and did not operate as all parties would have liked (e.g., One conference call had to be scrapped altogether because Brandeis could not get all of the parties on the line simultaneously.)

### **What happened as Brandeis attempted to schedule the 2002 Institute?**

The 2002 Institute had originally been scheduled for July; however, in one of its more difficult decisions, Brandeis decided to postpone the Institute due to the degree of uncertainty and risk involved for the Palestinian partners to travel at that time.

The decision to postpone the 2002 Institute involved an array of conflicting priorities:

- At the time, all players felt that for the Institute and the partnership to be successful, **all three** Middle East teams should be present.
- Although the Palestinian delegation might, with concerted effort and support from the consulate, have acquired tickets and visas, there was little way that their travel could have been assured.
- A July Institute would likely have precluded the presence of the Palestinian delegation given events in Palestine.
- The Director of the Israeli partner organization suggested that, in addition to continuing efforts to bring in Mohammad and others from the *Palestinian House of Friendship*, Brandeis might attempt to bring in Palestinians from Jerusalem who might more easily be able to travel and participate. Brandeis rejected this suggestion because Brandeis felt that a good faith partnership had been established with the *Palestinian House of Friendship*, and that it was crucial to continue this initiative with the three original partners.
- Although meaningful work might have been accomplished with only Israelis and Jordanians present, meeting without the Palestinian contingent would have felt incomplete and ineffective.

- Yet, postponement of the Institute might reduce the commitment, excitement, and buy-in of the participants. Delegation leaders, particularly in Israel and Jordan, had worked hard to prepare for the Institute. They had recruited, oriented, and trained their Youth Leaders. Those Youth Leaders, in turn, had struggled to recruit and involve young people. Canceling the Institute would feel like a defeat. There were commitments to Youth Leaders who had begun their work and were expecting to visit Brandeis (and the United States).
- The Israeli and Jordanian young people had worked on their stories and were looking forward to hearing their voices, seeing their pictures, and highlighting their families, friends, and communities through their digital stories.
- There still remained hope that events in Palestine would calm down enough so that the Palestinian delegation could attend an Institute at a not-too-distant date in the future.

With considerable regret, Brandeis decided that postponement was the better, albeit unsatisfactory choice. Ultimately, the Israeli and Jordanian delegations accepted this decision, although all were greatly frustrated and disappointed. It was hoped that eventually an Institute might be scheduled that could include the *Palestinian House of Friendship* delegation. The question was also raised, “Might the Palestinian delegation’s leader (Mohammad) attend even if a larger Palestinian delegation could not?” Yet Mohammad was committed to coming to Brandeis at a time when a larger delegation of Palestinians could benefit from the trip.

Possible dates for rescheduling the Institute were proposed and discussed among the partners. Optimism led to proposals for an Institute in the fall of 2002. Pessimism suggested that early 2003 might be more appropriate. In the end, and influenced considerably by the Israeli and Jordanian delegations, it was decided that an Institute must (because of factors listed above and the sense that the initiative would otherwise dissolve) be scheduled for the fall of 2002 even if the Middle East situation had not improved. Inherent in this decision was the uncomfortable fact that the Palestinians might not be able to attend.

As Brandeis attempted to reschedule the Institute, communications were difficult. There were misunderstandings about “proposed” versus “firm” dates. Several participants in the Middle East marked their calendars, adjusted their schedules, and then had to make last-minute changes. Scheduling had to consider not only participants’ family and personal obligations; but also, the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, and American holidays.

After numerous emails and telephone calls, it was established that the Institute would take place between October 27<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002. This decision still carried with it the hope that the Palestinians might be able to attend, and the Palestinian delegation leader (Mohammad) tentatively agreed to this. Unfortunately, rather than waning,

violence in the Middle East increased. Brandeis and its Middle East partners had to reluctantly acknowledge that the Institute would have to occur without the Palestinians present at Brandeis.

### **What happened when Cindy Cohen (Brandeis) visited the Middle East?**

Cindy Cohen visited the Middle East in September 2002, a month prior to the second Brandeis Institute. She spent approximately three days in Israel, followed by five days in Amman, followed by an additional three days in Israel. The purposes of her trip were to:

- Assess the status of the various youth groups' progress and provide support;
- Spend time with the people who had attended the first (2001) Brandeis Institute;
- Meet the Youth Leaders who had been recruited since that Institute and if possible meet with participants in their home communities;
- Learn about the "current Middle East situation" first-hand;
- Identify issues that should be dealt with immediately and/or during the upcoming 2002 Brandeis Institute;
- Continue the process of establishing trust and building relationships among and between the delegations as well as between the delegations and Brandeis;
- Learn about their communities and cultures, and the young people involved in the initiative;
- Prepare participants for the 2002 Institute: especially for meeting the "other";
- Get a sense of their stories and work with participants on preparing their story materials;
- Consider who from each area might be paired with one of the others during the 2002 Institute; and
- Keep embassies and consulates in the loop and update them about what was happening with the initiative.

In retrospect, Cindy considered the following events during her visit to be worthy of note:

- Cindy was able to meet with Shimon (Israel) and Khaled (Jordan) on her first night in Israel. Unfortunately, the timing of her visit was not especially good for many of the Israeli Youth Leaders. Unexpectedly, several had to travel to Tel Aviv to arrange for visas during the time when Cindy had planned to meet with them. However, during her time in Israel, Cindy did meet all of the Israeli Youth Leaders and youth participants from two of the teams.
- While in Israel, Cindy spent time with Farhat (a facilitator at the first Institute) and received invaluable advice regarding the agenda and structure for the 2002 Brandeis Institute.
- The issue of Institute rescheduling was raised during Cindy's visit to the American Embassy. They suggested postponing it again because the

Palestinians would be unable to attend. Cindy explained that most others felt that the Institute had to move ahead, and that further delay might jeopardize the participation of the Israeli partners.

- Although she could not meet personally with Mohammad, Cindy spent considerable time with him on the telephone. Through this contact, Cindy, Mohammad, Shimon, and Khaled (as individuals rather than as representatives of their organizations or of this initiative) jointly composed a letter describing the dire condition of children in Nablus, particularly their inability to attend school. This letter was subsequently sent to an array of organizations and individuals internationally.

## THE OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2002 BRANDEIS INSTITUTE

### **With the new Institute dates established, what attendance issues emerged?**

The Israeli group accepted these new dates, although they were unhappy that the Palestinian delegation would probably be absent. They agreed to send a full contingent to the Institute. They noted that it was important not to lose momentum altogether.

Among the Jordanian delegation, there were questions about whether Jordanians should attend if the Palestinians were not going to be present. At least one member of the Jordanian delegation agreed to attend the institute only after lengthy debate. To some extent, the Jordanians view themselves as “mediators” and/or “brokers” who could sometimes facilitate conversations and negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians (who in the Jordanians’ view “are the folks who have the real conflict between them”). Therefore, they wondered, “If the Palestinians won’t be present, what role will we Jordanians play and what value will our attendance add?”

The Jordanian delegation had numerous conflicting thoughts around whether or not they should attend the Institute:

- “We maintain relationships that are important.”
- “We can try to offer an “Arab perspective.”
- “We have promises to Youth Leaders and young people that need to be fulfilled” (i.e., Youth Leaders visit America, stories get produced, etc.).
- “The Palestinians have not pulled out, but instead are prevented from attending for other reasons, so . . .”
- “We Jordanians, the Israelis, and the Palestinians aren’t that far apart.”
- “The value of our Jordanian presence is often around bridging: bringing the Israelis and Palestinians together to share stories.”
- “We Jordanians serve as a ‘bridge’ group that helps others connect across this and other Israeli/Palestinian initiatives.”

- “If the Palestinians aren’t present, do we Jordanians have a role that warrants our presence?”
- “In the end, it’s an Israeli and Palestinian conflict.”

### **Why did the Palestinian delegation not attend?**

The Palestinian delegation members could not attend this 2002 Brandeis Institute because of an array of obstacles posed by the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:

- Getting a visa posed one difficulty. There was typically a wait of over two months for a visa; and, historically, many who applied were turned down. Despite offers from the US Embassy/State Department to “smooth the process,” there remained the travel barrier. Visa applicants were required to attend an interview in Jerusalem; however, safe travel to Jerusalem from Nablus could not be assured. With the curfew, checkpoints, high security, and other dangers, the Palestinians asked, “How does one safely leave one’s home, much less travel to Jerusalem, to attend such an interview?”
- Furthermore, the Palestinians noted, “Even if one managed to obtain a visa, one would then face the same set of obstacles trying to get to an airport.”
- Mohammad mentioned that it would be difficult to justify leaving one’s family in a “war zone” for any length of time. Obviously the family would be insecure, and perhaps even in danger. In addition, food was in short supply and basic needs were hard to meet.
- The postponement and rescheduling of the 2002 Brandeis Institute made the above processes more complex.
- At the time of the 2002 Institute, Abd el-Hadi was under arrest and imprisoned for reasons and duration yet unknown. We note that at the time of this writing in June 2003, he is still imprisoned.

Moreover, the Palestinian contingent had not yet been able to carry out their parts of this initiative to their satisfaction. Mohammad expressed deep regrets that he and other Palestinians could not attend the Brandeis Institute, but was willing to continue participation in the larger initiative. He wished all to know that the Palestinians’ non-attendance did not reflect upon their commitment to the initiative and what it stands for.

### **Who eventually attended the 2002 Institute?**

The five-person Israeli delegation consisted of one Arab Israeli and four Jewish Israelis. All four Jewish Israelis were of Eastern ancestry (Moroccan, Iraqi, Libyan, and Iranian). All of the Jews spoke or understood some Arabic and one was fluent in the language. Two members of the delegation were women and three were men. One member was an observant, Orthodox Jew.

The Israeli delegation attending the 2002 Brandeis Institute included:

- Shimon, Delegation Leader, from Bat Heffer;
- Yosef, Youth Leader, from Jerusalem/Re’ut;
- Yaakov, Youth Leader, from Ein Hashofet;

- Liat, Youth Leader, from Netanya;
- Suha, Youth Leader, from Dabburiya Village.

Of the five Jordanians, all were from Jordan's middle class, urban sector. At least three had Palestinian origins. Three were women and two were men. The Jordanian delegation attending the 2002 Brandeis Institute included:

- Khaled, Delegation Leader, from Amman
- Nadia, Youth Leader, from Amman
- Bashar, Youth Leader, from Amman
- Rania, Youth Leader, from Tia' Al Ali
- Bissan, Youth Leader, from S'Weileh

### **What input shaped the 2002 Institute agenda?**

The initial agenda was drafted by the Brandeis staff with input from Farhat and the Middle East delegation leaders. Several key suggestions from Middle East participants were incorporated into the agenda, including:

- Given the many priorities for their visit, both the Jordanians and Israelis suggested that the 2002 Institute should include fewer visits to Boston area youth organizations than had originally been proposed. Rather, they suggested that more time be devoted to having participants get to know each other, respond to each other's draft stories, and have time to produce, share, and make revisions to their stories. These suggestions were accepted and incorporated into the agenda.
- Yaakov (an Israeli Youth Leader) expressed an interest in doing something that commemorated the anniversary of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, which coincided with this Institute. Cindy (Brandeis) raised this issue with the Jordanians, and they expressed a preference to do something that would honor all people in the region who had worked for peace. These suggestions were accepted by all, and a special "Tribute to Peace-Makers" evening was incorporated into the agenda.

It was agreed that during most days of the Institute, one or two delegation leaders would call Mohammad in Palestine. Each telephone call would involve different Institute participants, and would thereby enable Mohammad to get to know the participants a bit and vice-versa, and would keep him "in the loop" regarding activities of the Institute. Furthermore, these telephone conversations would enable him to share with the group the daily events in Nablus.

### **What was the 2002 Institute Agenda?**

Given all input, the 2002 Institute agenda incorporated an array of structured and informal activities that enabled Israeli and Jordanian participants to:

- Meet, socialize, build relationships, and have fun together.
- Share, listen to, and refine their digital stories.
- Speak to and interact with members of the Brandeis and Boston communities.
- Connect daily with Mohammad (the Palestinian leader) by telephone, and reflect upon those conversations.
- Learn the technical skills necessary to develop their digital stories at CCTV.
- Work on their stories at Brandeis and CCTV.
- Connect with each other around story-development.
- Create their final drafts of digital stories at CCTV.
- Pay tribute to Middle East peacemakers.
- Tell their parts of the story of this project since the previous Institute.
- Develop a plan of action for after their departure from the 2002 Institute.
- Evaluate the 2002 Institute and provide other input and feedback to Brandeis.

### **Who were the key facilitators of the Institute?**

- Cindy Cohen from the Brandeis Ethics Center;
- Natasha Friedus and Sean Effel at CCTV.

### **With what did participants leave the 2002 Institute?**

In general, participants left the 2002 Brandeis Institute having:

- begun to build relationships with one another;
- engaged in some difficult discussions about the Middle East conflict;
- shared personal stories about their lives;
- broken stereotypes about the “other;”
- worked on and created their digital stories;
- been introduced to and worked with digital story technology.

There were a number of more specific, noteworthy outcomes of the Institute:

- For a number of the Israeli participants, speaking on the telephone with our Palestinian partner (Mohammad) was an important part of their experience. Some had rarely had any contact with Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza. One Israeli participant told us that, without this initiative as the stimulus, she would not have been able (emotionally and because of pressures from her family and community) to speak on the telephone with a Palestinian. She felt safe enough to do so during the Institute and was able to make important personal contact with our Palestinian partner. However, she still felt that she would not be able to call Mohammad or other Palestinians once she returned to her home in Israel.
- In addition to doing intensive work on creating digital stories, participants explored the power of story-telling as a tool for coexistence in a number of ways. Among other things, they shared personal life stories with each other in a facilitated oral history exercise, they read and discussed a children’s book focused on themes of oppression and reconciliation, and they worked with a professional story-teller who performed a number of stories and led discussions. Some participants mentioned that the Institute helped them to see the power of story-telling.

- One pivotal moment in the Institute occurred when, during a serious discussion about the Middle East conflict, one of the Arabic speakers who had been struggling to make herself understood in English began speaking spontaneously in Arabic. The group allowed this, with several members translating for the rest. This woman’s spontaneous decision allowed a number of others to begin speaking in their native languages. From there, the conversation – though slower – was able to go deeper and the Arabic speakers appeared to be empowered by this language change.
- For at least two of the participants, this Institute was the first or second time that they had dealt in any meaningful way with members of the “other” community. For these participants, the Institute had a significant personal impact, really allowing them to break through basic stereotypes and to see the human being behind the “other.” In particular, several of the Jordanians mentioned that interacting and building a relationship with a religious Jew had broken many of their stereotypes about that group.
- In the process of creating their digital stories, some important things happened among the participants. Part of the process involved giving each other feedback about how each story would be received by members of the other community. While, ideally, there would have been more of this feedback time built into the workshops, the sessions that did occur were quite fruitful. On a number of occasions, participants changed aspects of their stories based upon suggestions from members of the other community.

## **WHERE TO GO AFTER THE 2002 BRANDEIS INSTITUTE:**

### **NEXT STEPS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS**

With the completion of the 2002 Institute, Brandeis no longer had significant resources for bringing together and facilitating a process between the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian participants. However, all participants expressed the desire that their good work not end at the Institute. Therefore, on the Institute’s last day, all players planned a series of next steps to be carried out upon their return to their respective communities.

Each person committed to the following:

- Share stories, learning, and impressions with family, friends, and colleagues.
- Share stories with the young people who had participated in the project.
- Communicate with people at home about how the other delegations responded to the various stories.
- Receive feedback from Mohammed (Palestine) regarding the Israeli and Jordanian digital stories.

In addition, Delegation Leaders and some Youth Leaders agreed to:



- Educate young people about the importance of sharing their stories, by whatever methods.
- Introduce additional youth and adults to the use of digital story technology.
- Enlarge the circle of young people involved in youth groups.
- Maintain phone or email contact with Mohammed and/or Palestinian youth.
- Email, telephone, and visit each other.
- Meet in Jerusalem “just for fun.”

The Jordanian Delegation Leader (Khaled) agreed to:

- Arrange for continued gathering(s) of Jordanian Youth Leaders who attended the Brandeis Institute.
- Arrange for additional meetings of Jordanian youth involved in the project.

The Israeli Delegation Leader (Shimon) agreed to:

- Arrange for continued gathering(s) of Israeli Youth Leaders who attended the Brandeis Institute.
- Arrange for additional meetings of Israeli youth involved in the project (including Jewish and Palestinian Israelis).

Brandeis agreed to:

- Circulate an email list and set up a list-serve for the project.
- Communicate with CCTV about digital story corrections.
- Work with CCTV to develop a website and video version of the stories.
- Get discs and videos with finished stories to all key participants.
- Continue to work with the Palestinian delegation to produce digital stories.
- Explore sending a Brandeis intern to the region during the summer months.
- Post stories on Brandeis’ website or provide an electronic link to CCTV.
- Generate a written “history” of the initiative.
- Compile notes of discussion questions and website ideas.
- Communicate with state department and embassies/consulates.

CCTV agreed to:

- Make corrections to digital stories and provide corrected CDs and videos.
- Mount digital stories on CCTV’s website.

In addition, the delegations discussed a series of more ambitious ideas that could not be promised, but were considered worthy of further exploration. Most would require significant prioritizing, planning, and coordination, as well as resource development:

Organizing regional meetings for institute graduates and youth involved:

- Perhaps a large gathering for the summer of 2003;

- Perhaps a gathering for all youth (or delegations) in Aqaba in the future.

Generating resources:

- Arrange for sponsors and donors to enable continuation of this initiative and other programs dealing with youth.
- Write proposals for funding for equipment and meetings.
- Follow up to ascertain whether a connection might be made through Hebrew University or other institutions.

Exploring avenues to make complete technology available at one or more sites in the region:

- Follow up on Tasha's connection to digital story technology in Jerusalem.
- Determine whether Yaakov's school could become a center for teaching digital story technology concepts to others at low cost.
- Explore whether Givat Haviva and Masar might become digital story centers.

Supporting Mohammed and the Palestinians:

- Explore possibility of one or more delegates visiting Nablus to help Mohammed develop the Palestinian digital story.
- Provide feedback to Mohammed on his script from the Israeli and Jordanian points of view.

Publicizing the initiative consciously and cautiously:

- Write an article to be published in *Crossing Borders*.
- Create email lists and use other websites to publicize the initiative.
- Produce a digital story about the whole project.

Developing a website:

- Create a website for this collection of digital stories and supplementary material, and any additional stories produced with or by young people.
- Set up monitored website for digital stories and a discussion forum.

Develop additional stories:

- Perhaps have stories created by 4 – 7 year olds.

## **PART TWO: GOAL-DRIVEN EVALUATION**

The goals driving the Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program evolved over time:

- In its original proposal, Brandeis and its Middle East partners suggested a set of goals and sub-goals.
- Through a series of structured activities and facilitated planning sessions at the 2001 Brandeis Institute, participants from Israel, Jordan, and Palestine discussed, negotiated, fine tuned, and reached consensus about a set of goals some of which were new and some of which were revisions of earlier proposed goals.
- Ongoing Middle East violence brought the realism of many goals into question, and appropriate adjustments were made to the initiative's goals as necessary.

This evaluation has been organized using a three-part formula that repeats itself for each of the initiative's goals:

- **Goal:** a statement of what the initiative sought to achieve accompanied by information about how and when each goal was conceived.
- **Evaluator's Question:** a restatement of the final goal used by the evaluator in the form of a question.
- **Analysis:** the evaluator's judgments and comments about the extent to which the initiative achieved the stated goal, accompanied by relevant background information.

### **1) GOALS FOR BRANDEIS AND ITS MIDDLE EAST PARTNERS TOGETHER**

**GOAL 1a:** As stated in its original proposal and throughout the initiative, Brandeis and its Middle East Partners will create a network of U.S., Israeli, and Arab professionals engaged in peace-building work with young people that will facilitate an exchange of ideas about civic engagement and conflict prevention across borders.

**1a: Evaluator's Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University and its Middle East partners create a network of U.S., Arab, and Israeli professionals engaged in coexistence

work with young people that facilitated an exchange of ideas about civic engagement and conflict prevention across borders?

**1a: Analysis:**

Although not achieved completely, this goal was fulfilled to the extent possible given the violent situation in the Middle East.

The initiative created an important informal network across the three delegations that has potential to endure over time.

Most importantly, the three delegation leaders (Shimon/Israel, Khaled/Jordan, and Mohammad/Palestine) developed relationships of mutual respect that can be expected to carry on over time despite their differences.

Indeed, near the end of the Initiative, the Palestinian delegation leader declared that he “feels the spirit of friendship and relationship” with his fellow delegation leaders from Israel and Jordan. He noted that although he had not seen them for a long time, and although they wrote to each other only a few times, they all were seeking a similar important goal. He felt that they are models and positive representatives of their respective societies. He noted that each wants to reflect on his/her society’s stories and to convey them to the “other.” And he believed that each seeks a just peace for all peoples. He added that he thinks the other people attending the 2002 Institute also supported these beliefs.

Also important were the relationships developed among the Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders that occurred during the 2002 Brandeis Institute.

This Institute represented the first time that most of the Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders had met and spent extended time with each other. When these Youth Leaders had their first contacts, they were uncomfortably courteousness and hesitant with each other. Through a series of structured activities, they heard from, learned about, and gained respect for each other. As they shared social time, they realized that they enjoyed each other’s stories and jokes. Over time, they established a semblance of comfort, trust, and eventually friendship.

Not only did the Middle East partners strengthen ties with each other, but also, links between Brandeis and its partner organizations were enhanced as well. For instance, Brandeis was able to support Mohammad’s application for a fellowship program in human rights here in the states. Brandeis also explored the possibility of placing an undergraduate intern with some of the Jordanian and Israeli partners during the summer of 2003. These sorts of supportive and collaborative relationships are likely to continue beyond the life of the project.

**GOAL 1b:** In its original proposal, Brandeis stated that it and its Middle East partners would extend the network by sharing information via the Internet and publications about the project process, community research results and products, lessons learned, and ongoing problem solving during the project and into the future. *During the 2001 Institute, the goal of having young people conduct “community research” was replaced by a focus on “community histories” and/or “community stories.”*

**1b: Evaluator’s Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University and its Middle East partners extend the network by sharing information via the Internet and publications about the project process, community history/story development and products, lessons learned, and ongoing problem solving during the project and into the future?

**1b: Analysis:** This goal was partially addressed, but more work would be needed to declare a “win”:

By documenting the story/history of and evaluating this initiative, this report represents part of the work toward this goal. How this report is used and disseminated will also play a role in achieving this goal. Indeed, this report contains a great deal of information that might be helpful to others who embark upon similar initiatives. Applicable segments might certainly be disseminated to other organizations.

The work on community story development and subsequent digital stories produced by Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders and young people, (and ultimately we hope by the Palestinians), have been placed on the CCTV website and are linked to Brandeis. These can be accessed at:

**<http://www.cctvcambridge.org/stream/qt/chyme/index.html>**

More supplementary materials such as translations, curricula, events, and educational questions need to be developed for success with this goal.

## **2) GOALS FOR BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

**GOAL 2a:** In its original proposal, Brandeis University stated that it would convene participatory planning and orientation meetings in the Middle East that would provide a basis for problem-solving and group process support among the three partners and Brandeis throughout the life of the project and into the future. *The goal of convening sessions in the Middle East was dropped and the October 2001 Brandeis Institute in Waltham, Massachusetts replaced orientation and planning sessions scheduled for the region.*

**2a: Evaluator’s Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University convene participatory planning and orientation meetings in the Middle East that provided a basis for problem-

solving and group process support among the three partners and Brandeis throughout the life of the project and into the future?

**2a: Analysis:** This goal was partially achieved. In its original proposal, Brandeis wished to convene a series of Middle East-based meetings among the three delegations that would help launch the project. Due to violence in the Middle East and associated travel restrictions, Brandeis did not convene the cross-delegation meetings or Institutes in the Middle East that it had originally proposed and hoped for.

Instead, Brandeis convened its 2001 Institute in the Boston area. Participation was limited to a delegation leader and Youth Leader from each of the three entities. This Institute was attended for its full time by the Israeli and Jordanian delegates, and part of the time by the Palestinian delegates.

The agenda of this institute involved relationship-building, conflict-related discussions, problem-solving, goal setting, and considerable planning and decision-making that ultimately governed what the nature of the initiative would be going into the future.

Also, Brandeis organized and provided conference calls and individual communication and support throughout the year.

**GOAL 2b:** Brandeis University originally proposed to organize forums through which Arab and Israeli Youth Leaders could be introduced to U.S. youth leaders to facilitate exchange of new ideas and problem-solving around common concerns. *This remained a goal, but became less of a priority after October 2001 given that time was needed for participants to learn the process of producing digital stories. In place of an emphasis on visits with American youth practitioners a new, higher priority goal was to connect Institute participants with an organization that could facilitate development of community histories and digital stories.*

**2b: Evaluator's Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University organize forums through which Arab and Israeli Youth Leaders were connected with organizations that could facilitate development of community histories and digital stories?

**2b: Analysis:**

This goal was partially achieved through a series of visits to Boston area organizations.

During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian delegation leaders visited several Boston-area youth-serving programs. But perhaps the most important outcome from these local visits was the visit to CCTV during which participants created a very basic group digital story. This experience eventually led to the decision that digital stories would be a good way for young people in the Middle East to create and tell their personal stories and to share them with young people from other communities in the

region (given that violence in the Middle East would make cross-border travel extremely complicated and in some cases impossible.)

Based upon this decision, during the 2002 Brandeis Institute, Israeli and Jordanian delegation leaders and Youth Leaders spent considerable time with CCTV staff learning the technology of digital story creation, and subsequently at CCTV developing their stories.

**GOAL 2c:** In its original proposal, Brandeis University sought to introduce community research as a particular approach to peace-building and violence prevention, facilitate workshops in community research methods and practice, and introduce Middle East partners to community researchers who work with youth in the greater Boston area and who are also familiar with intra- and inter-communal conflict. *This goal changed in October 2001. Instead of community research, the focus became “community histories” and it was decided that digital stories would be created as a tool for cross-border communication around the theme of ‘Our Community: How We Live Today.’*

**2c: Evaluator’s Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University introduce digital stories as an approach for cross-border communication about ‘Our Community: How We Live Today’?

**2c: Analysis:**

This goal was partially achieved. During the 2001 Institute, delegation leaders from Israel, Jordan, and Palestine learned from CCTV and others about the concepts of oral history and community history as well as about the tools for making digital stories.

The group listed three criteria that all of the stories created for this initiative should include:

- Voices of young people;
- Reflections on how the conflict affects them and their communities; and,
- Their aspirations for the future.

All delegates discussed and agreed upon the themes and parameters for such stories.

However, some of the Youth Leaders seemed to absorb more from a sample activity presented during the 2001 Brandeis Institute prior to the arrival of the Palestinians. In that earlier activity, the Youth Leaders present were asked to create a collage and tell the story of a person they admired. The Israeli delegation leader and several other Israeli Youth Leaders used this activity as the basis for their work with young people, asking the young people about members of their communities whom they admire.

It should be noted, that participants at the 2001 Institute did not necessarily work directly with all of the young people to develop their stories. Upon returning to their home

countries, the 2001 Institute participants recruited new Youth Leaders and oriented them (based upon their own understanding) to the concepts and tools of digital stories, and then hoped that these Youth Leaders could independently and strongly move forward and guide their youth in preparing the materials for digital stories.

Not surprisingly, Youth Leaders tackled this work without adequate understanding or preparation for the work at hand. In general, they gathered ample and interesting materials for their stories, but not without considerable confusion about the process and goals of the initiative and of digital stories.

**GOAL 2d:** Brandeis University originally sought to facilitate workshops focusing on group processes, the ethics of peace-building, youth empowerment strategies employed in the U.S., and project management. *This goal shifted slightly toward the end of the 2001 institute, as it was decided that digital stories would be the main focus of the initiative for its duration.*

**2d: Evaluator's Question:** To what extent did Brandeis University facilitate workshops in group-facilitation, the ethics of peace-building, youth empowerment strategies employed in the U.S., and project management?

**2d: Analysis:**

This goal was partially realized. Issues such as the ethics of peace-building and youth empowerment strategies were not formally addressed. In their place, participants devoted time to planning and developing strategies and parameters for the digital stories. On the other hand, participants did receive some experience with project management (via the development of the Logic Model during the 2001 Institute) and some group process approaches were addressed. Each step of the way, the facilitators described the processes they were using hoping that participants would be able to use similar processes in planning sessions they might lead in their home communities. But in retrospect it should be noted that participants were so heavily focused on planning their own initiative that they may have not absorbed the “meta-goal” of learning the process.

**GOAL 2e:** Brandeis University sought to convene planning sessions during the Brandeis Institute where participants would collaboratively develop work-plans for the initiative.

**2e: Evaluator's Question:** To what extent did Brandeis convene planning sessions in which participants collaboratively developed work-plans for the initiative?

**2e: Analysis:**

Through a series of structured, facilitated activities, Brandeis staff led participants at the 2001 Institute through the development of a Logic Model and connected action plan that would guide the initiative as it moved forward. This process incorporated and modeled concepts and skills in the areas of group processes, program planning, and program management.



**GOAL 2f:** Brandeis University originally planned to provide modest funding (through the State Department grant) to support bi- or tri-communal teams of youth in doing collaborative community research. *This goal shifted as it became clear that bi- and tri-communal research teams would not be possible. Modest funding was provided for each delegation to work within its own community to help youth tell their communities' histories.*

**2f: Evaluator's Question:**

To what extent did Brandeis provide modest funding (through the State Department grant) to support bi- or tri-communal teams of youth in doing collaborative community research?

**2f: Analysis:**

Brandeis provided the limited funding it promised; however, as stated in the revised goal above, collaborative research across communities was no longer possible. (See Goal 2g below).

**GOAL 2g:** Brandeis University originally stated that it would convene a final Brandeis Institute at which Youth Leaders and teenagers could present the products of their community research before the others, and openly discuss what they had learned and how they plan to continue their work together. *Although the goal of convening a final Brandeis Institute remained, its dates had to be changed and the sub-goal of having young people attend and share their stories became impossible.*

**2g: Evaluator's Question:** Was a final Institute convened at which Youth Leaders and teenagers could present the products of their community research before the others, and openly discuss what they had learned and how they planned to continue their work together?

**2g: Analysis:**

The goal of having a youth-attended, Brandeis-based Institute at which young people could present and discuss their work was not achieved. Though not ideal, in its place was the sharing of young people's earlier-created digital stories by the Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders attending the Institute.

Not surprisingly, the Palestinians could not attend the 2002 Institute. The situation in the region also made attendance by young people from Israel and Jordan impossible. Therefore, no cross-border dialogue among young people could occur during the Institute. Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders did attend, and presented to the "others" the raw material for digital stories that their youth had collected over the course of the

year. The Jordanian and Israeli Youth Leaders then worked together to develop and enhance the final digital stories and they ultimately screened stories together.

A website with the ten digital stories (5 Israeli and 5 Jordanian) now exists. Further sharing of young people's stories can and should still happen. Indeed, at the end of the 2002 Institute, participants stated that future steps might include opportunities for young people to view each other's stories and hold dialogues around them.

### **3) GOALS FOR EACH MIDDLE EAST PARTNER**

**GOAL 3a:** During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, Middle East participants agreed that each partner would recruit, select and prepare a strong and diverse team of "Youth Leaders." The goal in the original proposal was 6 Youth Leaders per delegation. That goal was reduced to 5 Youth Leaders per delegation due to later budgetary and time constraints. These Youth Leaders:

**Must be:**

- Palestinian, Jordanian, and/or Israeli (Jewish and Arab);
- ages 18 to 30;
- people who are adept at working with young people;
- committed to peace, equality, and mutual respect;
- committed to the values and philosophies of this program;
- willing to acquire new skills in leading cross-border collaborative work;
- from a wide social and economic spectrum;
- able to access computers and the internet.

**Can be:**

- youth-work professionals already adept at working with youth on issues of peace, or
- youth-work professionals who support peace philosophically but need training/support to become adept at working with youth on peace issues.

**Cannot be:**

- residents of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

**3a: Evaluator's Question:** Who were the Youth Leaders and did their characteristics fit demographic goals?

**3a: Analysis:**

These goals were partially fulfilled – clearly among the Israeli and Jordanian delegations, and perhaps among the Palestinians. Youth Leader characteristics have been described earlier in this report.

The Israelis and Jordanians recruited teams of Youth Leaders that fit many (though not necessarily all) of the criteria set out in the first Brandeis Institute's goals.

Upon their return home after the 2001 Brandeis Institute, the Palestinian delegation worked hard to attract several potential Youth Leaders who fit the agreed upon criteria. From two possible candidates, one was ready to participate. However, due to the political situation in the region, she had to put her participation on hold.

**GOAL 3b:** During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, each Middle East partner agreed to assure that through participation in this initiative, Youth Leaders in each of the three Middle East Communities would:

- (3b.1) gain the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product and gain new techniques for facilitation, community building, and peace building.
- (3b.2) meet and connect with Youth Leaders from across communities -- in person or at least on the internet, and will be joined through a mutual “network”.
- (3b.3) achieve for themselves the same outcomes stated for youth.

**3b.1: Evaluator’s Question:** Did Youth Leaders gain the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product? Did they gain new techniques for facilitation, community building, and peace building?

**3b.1: Analysis:**

This goal was minimally achieved across the Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders. The Palestinian group did not participate in this aspect of the initiative.

Youth Leaders in Israel and Jordan learned some technical aspects of the work they would eventually do through orientations provided by their delegations’ leaders. In turn, Youth Leaders worked with young people to develop ideas and collect material for the stories that they would eventually develop and present.

Was the up-front orientation, training, and skill-building provided to Youth leaders adequate for the work they would eventually be called upon to do? Probably not. Did they carry out their charges? Yes, but not necessarily in the most effective or efficient ways.

**3b.2: Evaluator’s Question:** Did Youth Leaders (in each community, within countries, and/or across countries) “meet” each other in person or at least on the internet, and consider themselves “joined through a mutual `network’”?

**3b.2: Analysis:**

During the grant period, the Palestinian group never managed to move beyond initial recruitment of its Youth Leaders. Therefore, this question does not apply to them.

In both Israel and Jordan, connections among Youth Leaders within and across countries were sporadic at best. Indeed, some Israeli Youth Leaders met face-to-face for the first time at the Brandeis 2002 Institute. The Jordanian Youth Leaders met as a group for the first time during Cindy Cohen’s (Brandeis) visit to the region.

The reasons for this lack of contact during the year appear to be:

- Youth Leaders were recruited across a broad array of communities within Israel, often separated by significant distances that made face-to-face meetings logistically difficult.
- The recruitment and orientation processes were more difficult than expected, and delegation leaders felt rushed to get the initiative up-and-running. The formidable logistics (and expenses) involved in organizing and holding periodic Youth Leader meetings led delegation leaders to consider this aspect of the initiative a low priority.
- There was a lack of understanding across the participants of the importance of ongoing communication and relationship-development within their delegations. In retrospect, this issue seems obvious. However, during the stresses of implementation, its importance was overlooked in key ways by all parties. Among Israeli and Jordanian delegation leaders, leadership styles were not oriented toward process and group facilitation to the extent that they might have been. Rather, they were geared toward implementation and product delivery.
- Postponement of the 2002 Institute led to demoralization and logistical difficulties. In some cases, the Israeli and Jordanian delegation leaders had to recruit new youth leaders when original participants dropped out. In addition, Brandeis staff did not significantly encourage delegation leaders to have more communication within their groups.

Because of the factors above, much relationship and team building had to occur for the first time during the second (2002) Brandeis Institute. Indeed, had more of this occurred earlier in the initiative, the results (the interpersonal relationships, the organizational relationships, and the digital stories themselves) might have been considerably stronger. Most Youth Leaders had struggled as they worked with young people and could have benefited significantly from opportunities to share their experiences, successes, failures, and techniques as the initiative progressed. Youth Leaders noted that they wished that they had had early opportunities to get to know each other and collaborate rather than operating alone. Furthermore, in personal interviews with the Israeli and Jordanian delegation leaders, both expressed regret in retrospect that they (and/or Brandeis) had not conducted more team-building work for Youth Leaders near the front-end of the initiative.

On the positive side, Youth Leaders left the 2002 Institute having developed working relationships, and even some newfound friendships, with their peers in and across countries. These connections may play a role in the long-term sustainability of this effort as people keep in touch not because of this grant, but because of personal connections.

**3b.3: Evaluator's Question:** Did Youth Leaders achieve for themselves the same outcomes stated for youth?

### **3b.3: Analysis:**

During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, each Middle East partner agreed to assure that, through participation in this initiative, young people and hence Youth Leaders across the three Middle East communities would:

- explore their own histories, stories, and values.
- gain tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.
- have a hand in producing and agreeing upon a name for the “overall program” and a logo that represents the program.
- establish new relationships within and across communities.
- accept international legitimacy as the basic philosophy in the mentality of the group.
- believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace.

The Palestinians were unable to address this goal because they were unable to hire Youth Leaders.

In Israel and Jordan, Youth Leaders were initially hired only if they were at least amenable to the concepts of international legitimacy, justice, equality, and the value of peace. Most strongly held these values at the time they were hired. Their experiences with young people then enhanced those beliefs.

During the implementation period, Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders worked closely with young people in addressing most of the other concepts listed above (See Goals 3d through 3f on pages 46 through 48.).

In addition, additional achievement of these goals occurred during the 2002 Brandeis Institute (See “With what did participants leave the 2002 Institute” on page 26, and “Goal 1a” with its accompanying analysis on pages 35 and 36.). During the Institute, Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders also had the opportunity to connect via telephone with the Palestinian delegation leader, and this experience had a profoundly positive effect on all participants.

**GOAL 3c:** During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, each Middle East partner agreed to engage teams of 3 to 6 youth per Youth Leader in practices vital to democratic citizenship and cross-border collaboration, such as articulating questions based on community concerns, collaborative decision-making, public speaking, and sharing views through various media. These youth:

**Must be:**

- Israeli, Jordanian, and/or Palestinian youth
- 13 to 18 years old
- a diverse group
- representative of all spectrums of society in the 3 countries.

**Can be, but are not limited to, young people who are:**

- leaders in their communities
- from marginalized and/or “weak” communities
- from poor families

- ethnic minorities
- handicapped.

**Cannot be:**

- residents of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank or Gaza.

**3c: Evaluator’s Question:**

Did each Youth Leader have one or more teams of young people to work with? Who were the young people recruited to work with those Youth Leaders, and did those young people’s characteristics fit the goals?

**3c: Analysis:**

Among the Israeli and Jordanian delegations, these goals were fulfilled. They were not fulfilled among the Palestinians.

The Palestinian delegation did not reach the point where it could recruit young people specifically for this initiative. Therefore, this question does not apply (Although, note what the Palestinians did in lieu of this initiative as described in the “Implementation” section of this report).

Each Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leader eventually recruited and worked with a small, diverse group of local young people, 13-18 years old, whose general characteristics fit the majority, though not all, of the initiative’s goals. Some of the young people entered the initiative with attitudes amenable to peace and with experience working with “the other”. Other young people had never encountered “the other” directly before.

**GOAL 3d:** During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, each Middle East partner agreed to assure that, through participation in this initiative, young people across the three Middle East communities would:

- explore their own histories, stories, and values.
- gain tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.
- have a hand in producing and agreeing upon a name for the “overall program” and a logo that represents the program.
- establish new relationships within and across communities.
- accept international legitimacy as the basic philosophy in the mentality of the group.
- believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace.

**3d.1: Evaluator’s Question:** Did teams of young people explore their own histories, stories, and values? Did these young people gain the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product?

**3d.1: Analysis:**

These goals were fulfilled to some extent among the Israelis and Jordanians. Each contingent of Youth Leaders and young people explored their cultures, histories, and

values, generated a set of photographs and other images, and wrote narrative descriptions connected to their images that resulted in digital stories.

Israeli youth were interviewed by Youth Leaders, and their digital stories were based upon those interviews.

The Jordanian Youth Leaders used a range of processes to help their youth develop their stories. These processes are described above in the “Implementation between the 2001 and 2002 Brandeis Institute” sections.

**3d.2: Evaluator’s Question:** Did young people in each community establish new relationships across communities?

**3d.2: Analysis:**

This goal has, to date, been unfulfilled. Young people focused their work on their own families, peer groups, communities, and local social structures. They did not participate in any cross-community, cross-cultural, or cross-country activities.

Eventually their digital stories might be shown to people in other communities, and doing so might produce new cross-community relationships via the web or other modes of communication. However, at present, this goal has not been addressed.

On the other hand, potential exists to move forward with this goal. At the end of the 2002 Brandeis Institute, Israeli and Jordanian participants stated that they would like to develop additional activities through which young people could share their stories and find additional ways to get to know each other across communities, cultures, and borders.

**3d.3: Evaluator’s Question:** Did young people participating in this initiative accept international legitimacy as a basic philosophy in the mentality of their group? Did participants eventually believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace?

**3d.3: Analysis:**

There is no evidence available to the evaluator indicating a change in participating young people’s opinions and attitudes toward “international legitimacy.” Indeed, “international legitimacy” was never defined. Furthermore, no data is available showing that, as a result of participation in this initiative, young people believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace. (Absence of data should not imply that change has not occurred. Rather, no data is available.)

**GOAL 3e:** During the 2001 Brandeis Institute, Middle East partners agreed to set up a process through which a more attractive name for the project and an accompanying logo would be proposed by young people in each Middle East area.

**3e: Evaluator’s Question:** Did young people across the communities participate in producing and agreeing upon a name and logo for the initiative?

**3e: Analysis:** This goal was not pursued. Soon after the 2001 Institute, Brandeis proposed the name CHYME, which stood for “**C**ommunity **H**istories by **Y**outh in the **M**iddle **E**ast,” and opened this suggestion for discussion among the delegations. Brandeis received no arguments against this name and thus CHYME became the name of the initiative from that point forward. Similarly, Brandeis had several logo options developed by a graphic designer and then presented those options to the delegations. Participants generally agreed upon one of the logo options and this became the CHYME logo. Brandeis chose these courses of action because most Youth Leaders and young people had yet to be recruited, and Brandeis felt that this step could best be handled quickly and without extensive cross-community negotiation.

**GOAL 3f:** After it became clear that the situation in the Middle East would prevent many of the previously planned activities from being carried out, each Middle East delegation agreed instead to a revised goal: Youth Leaders and young people will collaborate to explore their own histories, stories, and values; and then will develop a series of digital stories that would convey to the “other” something about “Our Community: How We Live Today.”

**3f: Evaluator’s Question:**

Did Youth Leaders and young people collaborate to explore their own histories, stories, and values; and then to produce digital stories that would convey to the “other” something about “Our Community: How we live today”?

**3f: Analysis:**

These goals were achieved across the Israeli and Jordanian contingents, but not yet among the Palestinians.

Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders and teams of young people explored important aspects of their personal, family, and cultural histories and from this research created the visual, audio, and written raw-material necessary to subsequently develop a series of very impressive digital stories.

In the future, it is hoped that the Palestinian delegation might produce similar raw material that, in turn, they or others could convert into digital stories.



## **PART THREE: KEY LESSONS**

Embedded within “The Story” presented earlier, the reader will undoubtedly find many lessons for organizations that might attempt a similar initiative in the future. We highlight some lessons below as particularly crucial to this type of peace-building initiative.

### **IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED BY BRANDEIS AS FACILITATOR:**

#### **Initiatives of this type must focus heavily on individual people:**

On first glance, this initiative involved countries, territories, and organizations. Brandeis University was the apparent American “facilitator/convener” of this initiative involving three Middle East organizations: (Israel’s *Givat Haviva*, Jordan’s *Crossing Borders*, and Palestine’s *Palestinian House of Friendship*).

However, were one to look more closely, one would find that a small number of people at Brandeis served as the real facilitators/conveners of this ambitious initiative. Similarly, although this initiative sought to pull countries, cultures, and institutions together, it was really about a small number of very devoted individuals who come from those countries, cultures, and institutions in the Middle East. These individuals often faced overwhelming odds as they tried to carry out this initiative amidst the possibility of personal threat to their own and their families’ lives.

#### **Relationship- and trust- building must be a high priority:**

An initiative of this type is all about relationships. As people from a conflict situation work together on a project, trust plays a key role. Trust must be developed. If all participants conduct themselves cordially, collegial relationships may form. In some cases, these relationships may evolve into friendships. Yet these relationships are tenuous, often subject to the challenging dynamics of the larger communal and national conflicts from which they emerge. The facilitator/convener must constantly be working to nurture trusting relationships among the participants so that “crises” can be dealt with and difficult conversations can be had.

#### **The facilitator/convener must build trusting relationships with the participants:**

The facilitator/convener organization must have at least one experienced facilitator (at Brandeis, it was Cindy Cohen) who is adept at relationship-building and is trusted by all

parties. This person will need to variously play the roles of listener, confidant, mediator, facilitator, advisor, and prompter. Sometimes, this trusted person can help parties who do not trust each other to build bridges, and eventually improve their trust of each other. This person will have to support and challenge the participants in ways that make them help them to be self-reflective, to build their own listening skills, and to grow.

### **Telephone conference calls can be problematic:**

In any international initiative, conference calls that include all the parties may seem to be a good idea. For this particular initiative, because the participants could not meet throughout the year, conference calls appeared to be an alternative for cross-partner communication.

In retrospect, Brandeis found conference calls linking Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian partners extremely difficult to coordinate and schedule. Furthermore, the quality of telephone service across countries was mixed. Often, especially when one or more parties used a mobile telephone, voice quality was terrible and people could not hear each other. Finally, people could not see each other and therefore lost the contribution of facial expressions and body language that can be crucial to communication.

The conference calls did play a role in keeping the participants minimally connected, and to some extent in building the group identity and shared experience, but they were not ideal for in-depth, substantive communication.

### **Major changes to plans can lead to disappointments:**

One of this initiative's most difficult decisions was the decision to reschedule the 2002 Brandeis Institute, originally planned for July of that year.

Much of the tension came about because Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders had been working with young people on their stories and the young people expected these stories to be produced and presented to others at the Brandeis Institute. In addition, the Youth Leaders were looking forward to the Institute itself as the fruition and reward of their work with the youth and an opportunity to finally meet "the other." Postponing the institute led to considerable disappointment and loss of momentum among these two delegations.

And yet, on the other hand, no one wanted to hold the institute without the Palestinian delegation, and our Palestinian partner did not feel it was possible to come to Brandeis in July 2002.

### **The decision to use digital stories as the primary tool of the initiative carried with it pros and cons:**

The decision to have Youth Leaders in each country work with young people to create story-boards based on their communities' histories and to later turn these into digital

stories at CCTV was a good decision in many ways, which are discussed earlier in this report.

However, in retrospect, there were some drawbacks as well. Primarily, the relatively high level of technological skill required to make a good digital story meant that the participants spent a large amount of time and energy during the 2002 institute learning the technology. If the tool chosen for sharing community histories had been more “low-tech,” perhaps more time could have been spent on relationship-building, skill-building (non-technological skills), and story sharing among the participants.

A fair amount of learning occurred around what was initially a miscommunication of sorts between CCTV, Brandeis, and the Middle Eastern partners. The partners came to the 2002 institute thinking that digital stories were going to be, simply, stories of the lives of the youth they worked with in their home communities. In actuality, CCTV felt strongly that the connecting thread of any digital story ought to be the narrative voice of the individual who produces the story. Thus, participants had to reconfigure their stories so that they told about the lives of youth in their communities, but also incorporated their own (the *Youth Leaders*’) voices and stories. Because of this, some participants created stories different from what they had conceived of at home. This conversion proved difficult for many Youth Leaders – merging the stories from their youth with their own narratives. But for some it was a powerful experience. Some Youth Leaders were afraid of disappointing the young people with whom they had gathered material for the stories and felt that it was not important to have their own (the Youth Leaders’) voices expressed in the stories. But others saw how the “I” could make the digital stories more powerful and learned a great deal about themselves and the meaning of their work by having to add that “I” to their stories.

**Brandeis made a faulty assumption that producing digital stories would be easy to do with multiple groups:**

- During the 2002 Institute, when the Israeli and Jordanian groups came together at CCTV to develop their stories, too many people were present with too many story development projects. It was very difficult for CCTV to work with so many people at once on so many stories.
- Brandeis should have involved CCTV much earlier—possibly immediately after the 2001 institute—in the development of the initiative.

**Administering a federal grant of this complexity was challenging:**

The Ethics Center at Brandeis is a small organization with only a few staff who were “program people.” None were adept at accounting and finance. Despite the State Department’s attempts to be flexible, performing contract management tasks such as changing budgetary line items and dealing with bureaucracy was very time consuming.

## **IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED BY MIDDLE EAST PARTNERS:**

### **Further training and team building among Youth Leaders would have been beneficial:**

Shimon (Israel) and Khaled (Jordan) would have incorporated significantly more up-front time to orient and train Youth Leaders regarding what the initiative was about, what they should know and do, and what they could not do.

As part of this, it would have been helpful if they had easy access to samples of digital stories from CCTV. They would have liked to show these to their youth and Youth Leaders as examples of what they might eventually produce.

Shimon felt that perhaps there was not enough sense of team or group among the Israeli Youth Leaders. In retrospect, he thought that it would have been helpful to have conducted more team-building activities for them up front and throughout the project.

Furthermore, they would have spent more time planning how the initiative would proceed. Although the timing did not permit it (e.g., Youth Leaders were recruited after the first Brandeis Institute.), Shimon and Khaled both felt that it would have been better if the Institute could have involved all Youth Leaders and even youth in the facilitated initiative planning sessions.

Nadia added that Youth Leaders needed to meet earlier and more often throughout the initiative to share ideas and approaches.

### **More contact across delegation leaders would have been beneficial:**

Shimon and Khaled would have had more conference calls and regional meetings across the Middle East players. Mohammad would have appreciated more time with others (the Israelis and Jordanians) to plan, think, and have dialogues.

### **Proposing peace-building to people who feel pain and place blame on the “other” was and is difficult:**

A clear theme played itself out across all three sites:

- Israeli/Palestinian violence and the populace’s reaction to it made work on this initiative considerably more difficult than anyone had originally envisioned.
- Peace between Jews and Arabs was a difficult ideal to discuss during the violence.
- People were not eager to deal with peace-building and Jewish/Arab dialogue given the violence.

- Whenever a violent act occurred, youth dropped out, had other conflicting demands upon their time, had parents who got worried about their involvement, etc.

**Gaining and retaining “commitment” to peace-building projects among individuals and organizations is crucial and sometimes very difficult:**

In Israel, Shimon noted it was difficult to obtain commitment to peace and coexistence with so much violence everywhere. He emphasized that he was and is committed to peace, coexistence, and this initiative. But he stated that he'd had his own moment when his personal commitment was temporarily challenged: He was present when a Palestinian suicide bomber exploded himself at the Hebrew University cafeteria killing and injuring numerous people. Shimon had stepped out of the cafeteria only a few minutes earlier to smoke a cigarette.

Shimon also said that getting commitment from an organization is different than getting individual commitment. Shimon sought commitments from other organizations, but felt that he did not have much to give them in return. He noted that working from a sense of goodwill certainly offered some advantages; however, it also had drawbacks. Shimon's primary offerings and “carrots” were skills to be gained, goodwill, and the trip to the US. Principals at organizations he approached wanted something tangible that they could produce and control. He noted that, “If you can offer little in the give-and-take of an inter-institutional partnership, the principals at the other organization may seek to own and control what gets produced.” Shimon wished that he had had some money to offer organizations to cover their expenses.

Similarly, Shimon asked for a firm commitment from his Youth Leaders, but had little quid-pro-quo, and lost at least one Youth Leader candidate because of this. The trip to the U.S. was not only a nice “perk” for the Youth Leaders, but also, it was helpful in motivating them to do their work. They knew that when they arrived at Brandeis, they would need to have a “product” to show the others, or they would not be able to attend.

Khaled stated that he felt good about the initiative, although he sometimes had moments when he was unsure why he had such a strong commitment to it. He saw positive reasons to be and remain involved. He believes that Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians can survive their differences, can work together, and can produce something together. He also learned a great deal about Jordanian youth by working directly with them.

On the other hand, he noted that tangible rewards for involvement in the initiative among individuals and/or institutions were limited. The initiative took a great deal of effort and the funding/resources supporting it were inadequate and scarce. Furthermore, it was not as easy as he thought it would be to work on this program.

Daily, Mohammad experienced violence that challenged his commitment to peace and coexistence. He had constantly to draw upon his own internal will and philosophical

beliefs. Despite so many difficulties, Mohammad stated that he still believes in peace. He said, “What we are trying to do is good and great. It has kept us committed.”

**Personal safety must be considered:**

Several safety issues that crossed all three delegations:

- There are people who are threatened by and afraid of what we are trying to do.
- We must assure that the names, photographs, and other descriptions of people involved in this initiative or the coexistence movement are kept secret to the extent that the participants request.
- Some participants felt that they might be in danger if their names and/or pictures were publicly associated with this initiative and/or coexistence.
- Some parents of youth worried about how the stories will be used, privacy, names posted on the website, etc. They feared for their children’s safety. Nadia (Jordan) had to work very hard to persuade parents that coexistence with Israelis was valuable, and that their children’s involvement in the initiative was safe. Many parents also had no empathy with Israelis and no desire to pursue positive relationships.
- Mohammad (Palestine) said that he had to be very cautious when discussing the initiative with other Palestinians. Amidst many serious difficulties (the curfews, poverty, unmet basic needs, lack of security, etc), it was difficult to make a persuasive argument for peace-building. It was especially tough to talk peace with Palestinians who had lost relatives and friends. He asked, “How does one tackle this work when Palestinian society’s basic needs are unmet?”

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FINAL THOUGHTS

The “*Middle East Youth Leaders Exchange Program*” was an extraordinarily ambitious initiative that, despite considerable unexpected challenges over which it had little control, managed to achieve many of its key goals:

- Israeli and Jordanian Youth Leaders and young people conducted community research activities and created a set of “digital stories” that are now available on-line and can be used to tell their stories to others in the Middle East and across the world.
- As a result of this initiative, strong and often new relationships have been developed across Brandeis and the Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian participants. They engaged in some difficult discussions about the Middle East conflict; shared personal stories about their lives; broke stereotypes about the “other;” worked together on and created their digital stories; and critiqued each others’ stories. Perhaps most important, there now exists an especially strong relationship between Brandeis and the Palestinian House of Friendship.
- Furthermore, there is considerable reason to hope that the foundations of friendship created by this initiative among all parties can continue to play out in positive ways over time. Strong potential exists for impressive collaborative work among them in the future.

**Brandeis University’s experiences as the initiative’s central broker and convener provide an array of key lessons that may assist others who embark upon similar efforts in the future.**

Brandeis learned that a broker/convener working with multiple groups in the Middle East will need to:

- Dedicate considerable effort to stimulate collaboration and partnerships between both organizations and individuals, acknowledging that major results will only occur when individual people are the priority. It is crucial that a high priority be placed on, and significant time devoted to, relationship and trust building across participants.
- Expect “Murphy’s Law” to repeatedly apply, anticipate that major changes to plan will have to occur, and acknowledge that such changes can lead to disappointments.

- Regularly play the role of “Communications Central” by: regularly stimulating dialogue across delegations, facilitating negotiation and problem-solving, periodically putting delegations in direct contact with each other, occasionally conveying information and/or messages between delegations, and sometimes talking with one delegation and making suggestions about how it could most effectively communicate with other delegations.
- Recognize that telephone and electronic communications can be complicated, disappointing, and unreliable due to faulty connections, scheduling difficulties, and their lack of immediate visual input and feedback.
- Understand and perhaps operate under the assumption that inherent in this work will be the possibility that although some groups (in this case Israelis and Jordanians) might be able to move ahead with the work at hand (albeit not without significant challenges), Palestinian groups may not be able to advance at the same speed or level. The broker/convenor may regularly be to help all participants cope with this imbalance.
- Know that administering a federal grant of this complexity (with its inherent forms, accounting practices, etc.) proved challenging for Brandeis’ Ethics Center, a small organization with very limited staff who were “program/service focused.”

Future efforts of this type may need to anticipate that political violence in the region will regularly impact all of the partners and all of their plans. All participants in this initiative found themselves having to regularly make significant adjustments due to the worsening situation and violence in the region. If their work mimics that of this initiative, future broker/convenor organizations and Middle East partners will probably find themselves asking how to move forward amidst a difficult situation. This initiative experienced difficulties and reacted to them in ways such as:

- Israel’s reaction to Palestinian violence (and vice-versa) constrained the freedom of movement of the Palestinians throughout the initiative. The Palestinian delegation’s inability to attend sessions in the U.S. or the Middle East because of difficulties in obtaining visas and traveling outside of Palestine became a pattern repeated several times during the initiative. The absence of the Palestinian contingent required them and all other partners to make significant adjustments to all aspects of the initiative.
- Brandeis found the process of redesigning the initiative around many unanticipated limits to be an ongoing issue involving numerous discussions across all delegations. Brandeis regularly had to determine how the *Palestinian House of Friendship* could be kept as a valued Palestinian partner – seeking ways to keep the Palestinian contingent engaged despite the many barriers to their active participation and/or personal presence. And regardless



of the alternatives that were eventually pursued and despite the creativity of the delegations present, the Palestinians' absence created a major void in many discussions and processes.

- As the situation in the region deteriorated, gaining and retaining “commitment” to peace-building projects among individuals proved crucial and sometimes very difficult. Brandeis had to work with its Middle East partners to sustain their relationships and to figure out how they might engage young people in community research within the constraints of the intensifying conflict. It was very difficult to conduct communication work as required, as were regular adjustments to the initiative's design and approaches. All partner organizations had to be creative in finding ways to communicate and work with each other.

**The Middle East partners' experiences as they planned their local initiatives and recruited Youth Leaders and young people provide an array of key lessons that may assist others who embark upon similar efforts in the future.**

- Especially at its inception; but also throughout the initiative, all participants (especially the Delegation Leaders and Youth Leaders) would have valued and gained much from considerably more time devoted to relationship building and discussions of the conflict. There were many difficult, controversial assumptions and issues that could have served as the basis for lengthy and very important discussions, but were left “unpacked” without adequate dialogue and closure. Participants' different interpretations of these assumptions/issues at times impacted the strategic and action planning processes. Furthermore, a nearly universal theme among delegates was that they would have valued considerably more time to deal with the “hard issues.”
- Recruitment, orientation, and training of Youth Leaders and young people proved more difficult than anticipated across all three countries. It was difficult to find qualified professional youth workers/practitioners who bought into the initiative's vision for the Middle East. Then, once recruited, it became clear that considerably more training and team-building among Youth Leaders would have been beneficial.
- In turn, when Youth Leaders eventually set out to recruit and orient young people, they found the process more complex than envisioned. Proposing peace-building to people who feel pain and place blame on the “other” was and is difficult. Whenever a violent act occurred in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, youth dropped out. Youth had other conflicting demands upon their time. Timelines kept changing. Youth Leaders had to convince young people of the importance of getting the “others” to see them as people and vice-versa. Many youth had not previously been exposed to the others, their feelings, ideas, etc. Some young people immediately grasped the initiative's

concepts and believed in the vision. Other young people (especially those from right-wing families) did not like the initiative's vision. They wanted the other to change, placed blame, etc. It took significant effort to get those young people on board.

- Furthermore, parents worried about their children's involvement, and/or had little tolerance for or empathy with the "other." Many had to be persuaded that peace with the "other" was valuable, and that their children's involvement was safe. Some parents, particularly the Israeli Arabs, were worried about how the stories would be used, privacy, names posted on the website, etc. They feared for their children's safety.

**Digital stories, although a viable way for youth to communicate meaningfully with each other during violent periods when people could not easily cross borders, were difficult to develop.**

- Digital stories proved perhaps to be the best option available. However, they required a steep learning curve, and were tough to create, especially given that they were not an intended aspect of the initiative from its beginning. As young people worked on their digital stories, there was always the underlying question of how the "others" would interpret those stories. Story messages had to be considered very carefully.
- Youth Leaders approached story development with young people on a continuum of youth control. At one end were the "product driven" approaches incorporating traditional, leader-structured experiences aimed at producing the digital stories in an efficient manner. At the other end was the "process driven" approach incorporating significant youth leadership and control, and placing primary emphasis on the process of creating the stories and the learning gained in doing so.
- Regardless of difficulties and approaches, this initiative provided insights and new attitudes about how the others might view the conflict. Most young people eventually made noteworthy gains, and some of their stories are quite impressive. Both young people and Youth Leaders took away some amazing learning and insights from the experience.
- In addition to doing intensive work on creating digital stories, participants explored the power of story-telling as a tool for coexistence in a number of ways. Among other things, they shared personal life stories with each other in a facilitated oral history exercise, they read and discussed a children's book focused on themes of oppression and reconciliation, and they worked with a professional story-teller who performed a number of stories and led discussions. Some participants mentioned that the Institute helped them to see the power of story-telling.

- [The Palestinian group could not develop stories. Although unable to carry out the initiative as planned, *The Palestinian House of Friendship*'s efforts to secretly operate a "summer camp" for young people demonstrated that they were still able to do positive things in tough circumstances. When sixty-four participants (youth and adults) defy curfews and put themselves at risk so that the young people can learn and play together, it should not go unnoticed.]

**Dealing directly with the "other" will always be a great way to move forward with peace making.**

- Although not the best of ways to connect with the Palestinians, for a number of the Israeli and Jordanian participants, speaking on the telephone with our Palestinian partner (Mohammad) was an important part of their experience.
- Some Israeli participants had rarely had any contact with Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza. One Israeli participant told us that, without this initiative as the stimulus, she would not have been able (emotionally and because of pressures from her family and community) to speak on the telephone with a Palestinian. She felt safe enough to do so during the Institute and was able to make important personal contact with our Palestinian partner. However, she still felt that she would not be able to call Mohammad or other Palestinians once she returned to her home in Israel.
- One pivotal moment in the Institute occurred when, during a serious discussion about the Middle East conflict, one of the Arabic speakers who had been struggling to make herself understood in English began speaking spontaneously in Arabic. The group allowed this, with several members translating for the rest. This woman's spontaneous decision allowed a number of others to begin speaking in their native languages. From there, the conversation – though slower – was able to go deeper and the Arabic speakers appeared to be empowered by this language change.
- For at least two of the participants, this Institute was the first or second time that they had dealt in any meaningful way with members of the "other" community. For these participants, the Institute had a significant personal impact, really allowing them to break through basic stereotypes and to see the human being behind the "other." In particular, several of the Jordanians mentioned that interacting and building a relationship with a religious Jew had broken many of their stereotypes about that group.
- In the process of creating their digital stories, some important things happened among the participants. Part of the process involved giving each other feedback about how each story would be received by members of the other community. While, ideally, there would have been more of this feedback time built into the workshops, the sessions that did occur were quite

fruitful. On a number of occasions, participants changed aspects of their stories based upon suggestions from members of the other community.

**Where to go from here remains up in the air.**

How does one build upon potential? Valuable inter-institutional and inter-personal connections have been created. There are many future tasks identified by participants to carry out that will move this initiative forward. However, new/additional resources will be necessary.

**Part Four**  
**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Agenda for the 2001 Brandeis Institute

Attachment 2: Logic Model for the initiative's implementation phase developed by  
Middle East participants at the 2001 Brandeis Institute

Attachment 3: Action Plan developed at the 2001 Brandeis Institute

Attachment 4: Agenda for the 2002 Brandeis Institute

Attachment 5: Report on 2004 visit of Mohammad Sawalha

**AGENDA**  
**MIDDLE EAST YOUTH LEADERS EXCHANGE PROJECT**

Brandeis University

October 18-25, 2001

<b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>6:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Dinner
<b>7:00 – 9:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Introductions ❖ Preview of the week

<b>FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>9:00 AM- 12:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Deep personal introductions
<b>12:00 - 2:00 PM</b>	❖ Lunch: Picnic and visit to the Rose Art Museum
<b>2:00 - 5:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Discussion of context for project
<b>6:30 PM</b>	❖ Pickup from hotel
<b>7:00 PM</b>	❖ Dinner, film & discussion at Dan's house

**AGENDA**  
**MIDDLE EAST YOUTH LEADERS EXCHANGE PROJECT**

Brandeis University

October 18-25, 2001

<b>SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>9:00 AM– 12:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Discussion of theme
<b>12:30 PM– 2:00 PM</b>	❖ Lunch in Cambridge
<b>2:00 – 5:00 PM</b>	❖ Visit to CCTV: Introduction to digital stories
<b>6:00 PM</b>	❖ Dinner and free time in Cambridge

<b>SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>9:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>10:00 AM – 1:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Evaluation theory and design ❖ Development of "Logic Model" ❖ Reflection
<b>2:30 PM-</b>	❖ Free Time

**AGENDA**  
**MIDDLE EAST YOUTH LEADERS EXCHANGE PROJECT**

Brandeis University

October 18-25, 2001

<b>MONDAY, OCTOBER 22</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>9:00 AM- 12:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Data collection techniques</li> <li>❖ Data instrument design</li> <li>❖ Survey methodology</li> <li>❖ Qualitative interviews</li> </ul>
<b>12:00- 2:00 PM</b> Faculty Lounge	Luncheon with members of the Brandeis community
<b>2:30 – 5:30 PM</b>	❖ Site-visit to Artists for Humanity, youth-serving organization
<b>Evening</b>	❖ Free time

<b>TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>9:00AM- 12:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Action Planning Phase 1: visioning success, defining realities, achieving commitment
<b>1:30 – 4:30 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Developing interview/survey protocols
<b>6:30 PM</b>	❖ Pick-up from hotel
<b>7:00 PM</b>	❖ Dinner in the homes of Brandeis community members



**AGENDA**  
**MIDDLE EAST YOUTH LEADERS EXCHANGE PROJECT**

Brandeis University

October 18-25, 2001

<b>WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>9:00AM- 12:00PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Action Planning Phase 2: identifying key action steps and tasks, developing time-line, achieving commitment on responsibility
<b>1:30 – 4:30 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Addressing ethical dilemmas
<b>7:00 PM</b>	❖ Farewell dinner at Little India

<b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>9:00 AM</b>	❖ Breakfast on campus
<b>10:00 AM– 2:00 PM</b> 60 Turner Street	❖ Review of action planning notes and other products ❖ Data collection ❖ Final reflections
<b>Afternoon</b>	Lunch

**ATTACHMENT 2: LOGIC MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTATION PHASE DEVELOPED BY MIDDLE EAST PARTICIPANTS AT 2001 BRANDEIS INSTITUTE**

FOR WHOM:	GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES:	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES/MEASUREMENTS (BY JULY 2002)	LONG-TERM IMPACTS AND HOPE-FOR OUTCOMES:
<p><b>15 to 18 teams of youth (ages 13-18) and Youth leaders (ages 18-30) distributed among the three countries. Each team connects 1 Youth Leader with 3 to 6 youth.</b></p>	<p>We in the Middle East need peace and justice.            Peace is the only option for the Middle East conflict.            We stand against racism of any kind.            We respect human rights.            Self-determination for all is a key priority.            The current situation is not good.            Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians (Jewish and Arab) have a lot in common.            Exposure can often “beat” stereotypes.            The more one knows about the Other, the less one might hate the Other.            Meeting, working with, and having dialogue with the Other will foster mutual understanding.            Youth are a large percentage of the Middle East population and need opportunities.            Youth are the future.            Youth have a lot of potential.            Education and awareness of the concepts of peace, equality, democracy, and justice will create empowered youth.            It is worthwhile to reach out to youth who have had no previous peace work experiences.            We must all acknowledge and try to meet the needs of all participating communities.            We must all be sensitive to any vocabulary, issue, action, or symbol others might have.            We have a track record that we can build upon.            The basis of our work is equality in the ability to pursue our goals.            As we strive for mutual actions we might take, we must also deeply communicate our experiences and acknowledge our differences in the process. However, we must not focus so much on our conflict that it prevents us from acting in a positive way. [This interpretation by Chris will have to be edited.]</p>	<p><b>Project Coordination and Planning:</b>            Coordinate digital stories            Plan July 2002 Institute            Manage communications between organizations            Manage website development process            Manage overall project budget</p> <p><b>Youth Leaders:</b>            Clarify roles of core Youth Leader group            Recruit and select additional Youth Leaders            Establish communications plan and information exchange among Youth Leaders            Provide workshop(s) for all Youth Leaders            Hold monthly uni-national meetings            Create and implement plan for developing digital stories</p> <p><b>Youth:</b>            Conduct focus groups with youth to help plan project            Recruit and select youth            Meet in teams to do the research and story telling            Uni-national meetings with youth teams            Complete collections of digital stories material            Create storyboards</p> <p><b>Communication:</b>            Determine scope, language and host of website            Write and translate project description            Create logo            Generate/update contact information of Youth Leaders</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b>            Create system to keep log of all e-mails, phone calls and correspondence            Refine evaluation plan            Gather data on youth participants            Design and administer surveys            Manage portfolio development</p>	<p><b>Youth:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth will have gained the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.</li> <li>Youth across the communities have a hand in producing and agreeing upon a name for the program and a logo that represents this program.</li> <li>New relationships have been established within and across communities.</li> <li>Youth accept international legitimacy as basic philosophy in the mentality of the group.</li> <li>Youth believe in, internalize, and encourage the ideas of justice, equality, and the value of peace.</li> <li>Youth from all 3 communities will have begun to explore their own histories, stories, and values.</li> </ul> <p><b>Youth Leaders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Leaders will have gained the tools and skills necessary to work effectively on the agreed theme and product.</li> <li>Youth Leaders in each community will have “met” each other in person or at least on the Internet, and will be joined through our mutual “network”.</li> <li>Youth Leaders will have gained new techniques for facilitation, community building and peace building.</li> <li>Youth Leaders will achieve for themselves the same outcomes we’ve stated for youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepting differences</li> <li>Establishing a basis for understanding and empathy</li> <li>Seeing the 3 communities understanding each others’ histories better</li> <li>Seeing Arabs and Israelis acknowledging each others’ needs</li> <li>Making possible equality between Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis</li> <li>Ending the Israeli occupation in the West Bank/Gaza</li> <li>Involving youth in the making of their futures</li> <li>Empowering youth to be leaders, and make change</li> <li>Having youth believe that peace is the only way for a better future</li> <li>Identifying and developing 20 new leaders devoted to promoting the ideas of equality and justice</li> <li>Spreading the word.</li> </ul>

**ATTACHMENT 3: ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED AT 2001 BRANDEIS INSTITUTE**

	Launch	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
<b>YOUTH LEADERS</b>	<p>Clarify roles of the 6 people who are here</p> <p>Decide process for recruiting youth leaders</p>	Recruit and select youth leaders	<p>Bi-weekly calls with youth leaders (each partner) on-going</p> <p>Establish communications plan for youth leaders and youth (on-going)</p>	<p>Monthly exchange of materials for youth leaders (on-going)</p> <p>Workshop for all youth leaders</p> <p>Monthly meetings with uni-national youth leaders (?) on-going</p>	<p>Create project working plan for and/or with youth</p> <p>Begin gathering data</p>		Each team completes collection of digital stories materials	Each team completes story board	Revision and changes to story boards	
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<p>Discuss what material can be put on the website</p> <p>Decide who is writing the description of the project and translating into 3 languages</p> <p>Discuss scope and language of website</p> <p>Generate list of all e-mail, phone numbers and addresses before we leave</p>	<p>Make sure every youth leader has access to fast computer, internet and scanner (digital camera/internet camera);</p> <p>Software: Photoshop, Frontpage, Premire</p>	<p>Brandeis creates logo for review</p> <p>Send logo to partners</p> <p>Each group sends to others list of additional youth leaders and their phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses</p> <p>Each group translates the description of the project</p>	Partners comment on logo	Find company to host the website (need \$ for the website; approximately \$100 to obtain IP address)					

	Launch	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
<b>PROJECT COORDINATION AND PLANNING</b>	Decide language for digital stories Choose dates for 2002 Institute Determine process to identify common elements of digital stories Brainstorm possible actions for after 7/02	Monthly e-mail updates (listserv?) from each country Submit revised budget to U.S. State Dept. Manage process of developing logo, name, website Set up a partner communications plan (e-mail, chat room, phone calls, reporting) for 7/02	Arrange CCTV workshop Arrange campus facilities for 2002 Institute	Set up digital stories framework (equipment, storyboard outline, etc.) Identify equipment/supply needs	Develop fund-raising plan to buy technology	Arrange visits to U.S. youth organizations for July 2002 Plan and implement pre-institute meeting of all youth leaders (?) Brandeis staff visit to Middle East	Brandeis planning for logistics for 7/02 Make travel arrangement for 2002 Institute	Panic		
<b>YOUTH</b>	Focus groups or conversations with youth to help plan project		Youth leaders decide how to recruit youth (local decisions) Group leaders recruit and select youth Outreach to families		Meetings with youth to do the research and story-telling (in teams)	Uni-national meetings with youth (in each sector)	Uni-national meetings with youth (in each sector): timing is open	Each team completes collection of digital stories materials Each team creates storyboard (as possible)	Send digital story materials to Brandeis	
<b>EVALUATION</b>	Create system to keep log of all e-mails, phone calls, correspondence	Refine evaluation plan Keep file of all e-mails, phone log Profile/enrollment form of each youth participant created Design pre-survey	Give pre-survey to each youth participant Profile/enrollment form administered to each youth	Youth and youth leader participants keep portfolio of all work on project					Survey	(Sept.) Survey of Youth



Community Histories  
by Youth in the Middle East  
A project of Brandeis University

**AGENDA**  
**October 27 – November 4, 2002**

<b>SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	Delegation leader meeting	
<b>Afternoon</b>	4:45 Participants arrive at Brandeis 5:00-6:00 Meeting with whole group	Heller Lounge
<b>Evening</b>	6:30 Opening Dinner/ Reception	Levine-Ross, Hassenfeld Conference Center

<b>MONDAY, OCTOBER 28</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	9:15 Participants arrive 9:30-11:00 Group building session I 11:15-12:30 Group building session II	Heller Lounge
<b>Afternoon</b>	12:30-2:00 Lunch (Khaled and Yosi call Mohammed) 2:30- 5:00 Group building session III	Sherman Cafeteria Heller Lounge
<b>Evening</b>	7:15 Dinner at Dan Terris' House	36 Devens Street, Concord, Mass. Phone: 978-287-4722

<b>TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	8:45 Participants arrive 9:00-10:30 Sharing & refining stories w/Tasha from CCTV 10:45-12:30 Sharing & refining stories w/Tasha	Heller Lounge
<b>Afternoon</b>	12:30- 2:00 Lunch (Brandeis staff call Mohammed) 2:00-5:30 Working on stories/Meeting with Pam & Chris	Sherman Cafeteria Heller Lounge
<b>Evening</b>	5:30-7:00 Dinner 7:00-9:30 Working on stories & socializing with Brandeis' Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group	Sherman Cafeteria Heller Lounge



Community Histories  
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<b>WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	8:45 Participants arrive at CCTV 9:00- 12:30 CCTV	Cambridge CommunityTV (CCTV) 675 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA (Entrance is around the corner on Prospect Street) Phone: 617-661-6900
<b>Afternoon</b>	12:30- 2:00 Lunch at the Middle East (Shimon and Rania call Mohammed) 2:00-5:00 CCTV	
<b>Evening</b>	7:00 Dinner at The Good Life	

<b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	8:45 Participants arrive at CCTV	CCTV
<b>Afternoon</b>	9:00-5:00 CCTV Take-in lunch (Nadia and Yaakov call Mohammed)	
<b>Evening</b>	7:00 Dinner Halloween!	

<b>FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	8:45 Participants arrive at CCTV	CCTV
<b>Afternoon</b>	9:00-5:00 CCTV Take-in lunch (Bashar and Liat call Mohammed)	
<b>Evening</b>	Free evening	



<b>SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	Morning and afternoon free time	
<b>Afternoon</b>		
<b>Evening</b>	4:00-9:00 Reconvene on campus for dinner and work	Heller Lounge

<b>SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	8:45 Participants arrive 9:00-12:30 Follow up to viewing digital stories	Heller Lounge
<b>Afternoon</b>	1:00-2:30 Lunch with members of the Brandeis community (Suha calls Mohammed)	Sherman Cafeteria
	2:45- 5:00 Evaluation and future planning	Heller Lounge
<b>Evening</b>	7:30 Closing dinner and ceremony: Celebration of the Courage to Make Peace	International Lounge, Usdan Student Center

<b>MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Morning</b>	9:15 Participants arrive 9:30-11:00 Evaluation, appreciation, future goals 11:15-12:30 Closing session	Heller Lounge
<b>Afternoon</b>	12:30-2:00 Take-in lunch (Bissan calls Mohammed) 2:00 Goodbyes	

## **ATTACHMENT 5: Summary of 2004 visit to Brandeis University by Palestinian delegation leader**

From the end of the November 2001 institute until the present, we at Brandeis University have stayed in regular communication with Mohammad, the director of the Palestinian House of Friendship. This communication has helped us remain aware of the situation on the ground in Nablus and of Palestinian perspectives on the evolving situation. We offered our on-going friendship and support to Mohammad throughout the difficult periods of closures, incursions and curfews, and to Abd-el-Hadi during his year-long incarceration.

In June, 2004, Mohammad was able to travel to Brandeis University for a twelve-day visit. While here, he received three days of training from Natasha Friedus in digital story technology and produced a story exemplifying both the hardships and the spiritual strength of the children and adults of Nablus. He received feedback on drafts of his story from the Coexistence Program staff and Brandeis students (including one Israeli student).

Although we were not able to replicate the intercommunal process that the Jordanian and Israeli teams experienced in November 2002, we used internet technology to help Mohammad stay in contact with his Jordanian and Israeli counterparts while he was here. He emailed drafts of his script to Shimon, the leader of the Israeli CHYME delegation, and Khaled, the leader of the Jordanian CHYME delegation, who sent both their feedback and words of support.

Mohammad returned home with Arabic and English versions of his story on cd-rom. Some minor technical corrections are being made in his story this month, and as soon as they are complete his story will be mounted on the Ethics Center website along with those of the ten Jordanian and Israeli CHYME participants.

While in the United States, Mohammad visited several local institutions working with youth, including two peace centers. He also consulted with the director of a program for youth at risk, who consulted with him on a summer camp that he was planning for, and has since implemented, at the Palestinian House of Friendship. He gave lectures and engaged in dialogue with students, faculty and staff at Brandeis University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Hartford Seminary.

During this visit, Brandeis University and Mohammad laid the groundwork for future collaborative efforts – in particular on research related to the changing meanings of words in Palestinian society. We are exploring the possibility of his returning to Brandeis as a scholar-in-residence at some point in the future.

- Cynthia Cohen  
- August 2004