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1) Overview

The following is a findings report based on processed data from two designs elicited by the African Middle Eastern Leadership Project ("AMEL") as part of its training program for activists from across the MENA and Sub-Saharan African regions, "the AMEL Institute." AMEL's flagship program, this online academy aims to "empower young activists with practical knowledge and skills so that they can carry out their civil society activism more safely and effectively." Focused on "transferring know-how from experienced activists and experts to young people who are taking action for human rights, pluralism and democracy in the Middle East and Africa (MEA)," the institute works to provide young activists (aged 18-35) with practical knowledge and skills in key activism areas ("so they can more safely and effectively carry out their human rights and civil society activism") and connect activists together "so that they can learn from one another and create lasting networks to further bolster their safety, wellbeing and effectiveness." The institute's program covers issues such as human rights history and advocacy; gender inclusiveness/mainstreaming; activism self-care; genocide history, including the



Holocaust; democracy; peace; communicating for a cause; and activist safety, as well as non-violent movement building. Its topics are taught through pre-recorded video lectures, live online discussions with lecturers and peers, ongoing web forum discussions, quizzes, assignments and additional readings/resources. The base language of the program is English, with mentorship, lecture subtitles and quiz/assignment translations available in Arabic and French.

The designs in question are a 46-item 'Baseline Questionnaire' and a 55-item Final Questionnaire, which were elicited at pre- and post-iterations, the first largely between late June and early July 2022, the second between end August and through to October 2022. The questionnaires poll participants on a range of selection criteria, including contact with activists from other countries and knowledge in key areas pertaining to activism, with follow-up items on the program, their assessment of their own skills, connections they made through the program and their plans for the future. The evaluator was not involved in the development of the design; the unprocessed data was provided directly by the client.

That said, the evaluator finds the majority of survey items to be quite well developed and the data they culled to be highly generative and robust. (Some recommendations for future runs of the design are proposed at the end of this document; see 4.)

2) Summary of Main Findings

The findings show, unequivocally, that the format adopted by the course was extremely successful in achieving the program's aims: Respondents reported that the program helped them become better and more effective activists and leaders, that they felt more connected to one another as a network and that they were able use what they learned through the program in their own lives, including better taking measures to ensure their own safety. If at the start of the program, the majority of activists (68%), reported having had limited amounts of training, as of the close of the program, 88% of respondents reported that they felt able to lead change in their communities.

See p. 9

Surveys of participants' levels of knowledge in every single subject taught in the program were found to have increased substantially between the beginning and the end of the program; in 8 of these subjects, the difference was beyond one standard deviation. The significance of these changes was borne out by paired samples testing, which found that all increases were quite significant statistically (with α scores of 0.00000). Similar levels of significance were found among participants' stated abilities to lead change in their communities (which, scored as a frequency, represented a cumulative average 25% increase, including among weathered activists). The areas in which participants reported the highest increases in knowledge were knowledge of the Holocaust (from an average of 2.96 out of 7 before, to 6.05 out of 7 after), knowledge regarding genocide (3.18 to 6.13) and activism safety (3.48 to 5.98). In this regard, for nearly half of respondents, this was their first time learning about the Holocaust.

See p. 12

Equally significant (and pointing to the same trend), the only grouping variable that was found to be truly significant among participants (after having segmented activists by gender, reasons for joining the program and focus areas for their activism, among others) was years of experience. At the outset of the program,

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activists with more than 10 years of experience outscored activists with less than one year of experience in <u>all</u> knowledge areas (in many cases, well beyond one standard deviation), as would be expected. These differences <u>disappear entirely</u> in the post test. Which is to say, by the end of the program, <u>there was no effective difference between highly experienced activist respondents and those with minimal experience in terms of their reported knowledge of core activism subjects. In other words: everyone got something new out of the program. The high—and undifferentiated—levels of satisfaction from the program (96% of respondents according the program a 5 or more out of 7) bear this conclusion out: 51% rated the program as "life changing" (a 7 out of 7).</u>

See p. 15

See p. 14

See p. 10

Finally, it is clear that the program, in whatever way, enabled participants to expand their networks of people they consider fellow activists from other countries. It is no surprise that participants will exit a program designed to bring together activists from other countries knowing more activists from other countries. In the present cases, pre-program, 21% of respondents said they didn't know any activists from other countries, while only 1/3 knew more than five. At the close of the program those proportions had migrated significantly (χ =0.00015), with nearly 95% affirming that they knew activists from other countries, and more than half knowing more than five. (This shift was effectively a migration of roughly half of participants from knowing two or fewer activists in other countries at the start of the program to knowing more than six.)

See p. 11

The fact that this was done through an online program at the very least seems to suggest that this format can achieve results in these areas as well. The significant numbers of participating activists who reported having limited training at the outset suggests that this program meets a definite need in the field.

A detailed findings report follows.

3) Expanded Data Findings

201 respondents filled out the Pre-Test, while 131 filled out the Post-Test form. Of respondents, 45% were male; 53% were female; 2% preferred not to identify a gender. The majority of participants were young, 40% still pursuing bachelors degrees and nearly 30% identifying as young professionals (Fig. 1). Respondents reported having learned about the program primarily through professional and social networks, specifically via LinkedIn and Facebook. (Alumni referrals were low; only 3% came because of their ties to AMEL; Fig. 2) In terms of country of origin, 65% of respondents came from Sub-Saharan Africa, 24% from North Africa, 5.5% from the Saudi peninsula, 3% from Mesopotamia/Central Asia and 2.5% from other countries. Most respondents (78%) reported having high level English. Activists varied in terms of their experience as activists: roughly half reported being active for between 3-9 years, while roughly a third were relative neophytes, with only 1-2 years' experience. 14% had been active for less than a year. By contrast, 6% reported having been activists for 10 years or more (Fig. 3). In terms areas of activism, nearly half (46%) were interested in human rights, while the remainder were interested in pursuing activities in the policy-making echelons (27%) or in peacebuilding (20%) (Fig. 4).



Fig. 1 What is your current status of education?

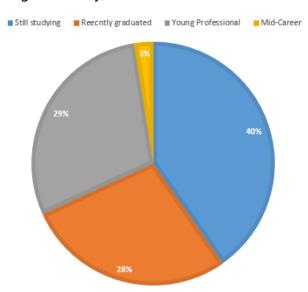


Fig. 2 How did you hear about this program?

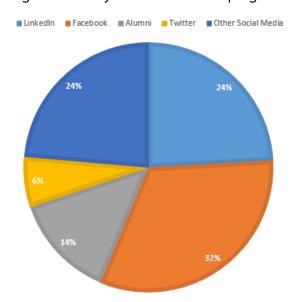


Fig. 3 How long have you been an activist?

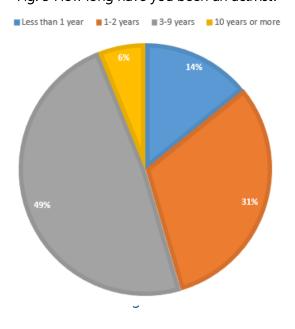
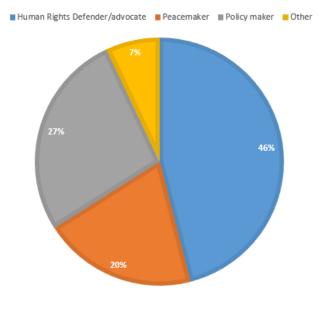


Fig. 4 Which best describes you or your future plans?





Because of the Topics To Network Other

Fig. 5 Why did you decide to participate in the program?

Participants enrolled largely to network (47%), though a quarter enrolled because of an interest in specific topics (See Fig. 5).

On the whole there were no significant differences between reasons to participate in the program among participants with different levels of experience. A chi-squared test ($\chi = 0.21$) found that participants with over 10 years of experience were just as likely to have enrolled for the networking or for the topics as an activist just starting out.

Though activists varied in terms of their years of experience as activists (see also Segmentation by Key Groups, below), the vast majority (97%) stated that their activism was very important in their lives. That said, significantly fewer felt that they were able to lead change in their communities or countries (See Table 1). This disconnect between commitment and current abilities is reflected also in the difference between the relatively high commitments respondents expressed to completing the various components of the program (Table. 2) and their professed levels of knowledge in various areas of competence (Table 3).

Table 1. Additional skills and competencies going in

Question	Average	% answering 5 or More
3. How would you rate your English abilities?	5.58	78%
5. How much activism training have you had?	3.64	32%
6. How important is activism in your life?	6.46	97%
16. To what degree do you feel able to lead change in	5.20	70%
your community/country?		



Table 2. How much of the program respondents were committed to

	Average	5 or More
9. How much of the training program do you plan to complete?	6.78	98%
10a. Watching the video lectures	6.65	97%
10b. Participating in live online discussions	6.23	93%
10c. Completing the quizzes/assignments	6.74	98%
10d Participating in the website discussion forum	6.28	92%
10e Optional readings, videos, etc.	6.31	93%

Table 3. 'Please rank your knowledge (1-7) in the following areas:'

Being an activist	4.24	45%
Mobilizing other activists	3.72	33%
Organizing protests, civil disobedience or other activism actions	3.21	28%
Organizing petitions, social media actions or other online activism		
actions	3.69	34%
Advocating for new/changed government policies	3.56	32%
Organizing/monitoring elections or promoting civic engagement	3.33	33%
Campaigns for political office	2.91	23%

The differential level of experience which activists had were also reflected in the number of activists they knew in other countries. At the outset of the program, 21% said they knew none, while an almost equal number (15%) said they knew 20 or more (see Fig. 7). A Chi-test (χ =0.0011) found these differences to be significantly tied to years of experience (See also Table 4). Of activists, none had ever been in danger (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 Have you ever been in danger? Fig. 7 How many activists do you know in other countries?

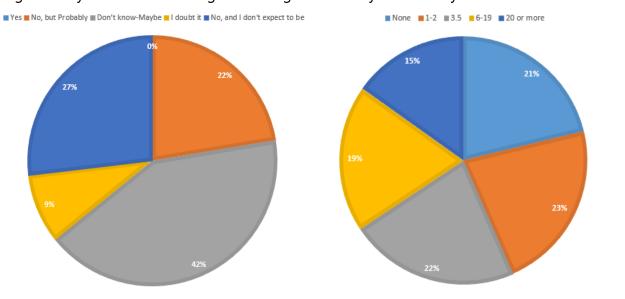




Table 4. Activists, years of experience vs. how many activists they knew in other countries, going in

No. Activists Known					
					20 or
Years' Experience	None	1-2	3-5	6-19	more
Less than 1 year	43%	36%	7%	14%	0%
1-2 years	37%	23%	20%	13%	7%
3-9 years	14%	11%	27%	25%	22%
10 years or more	0%	0%	33%	11%	56%

Table 5. Skills participants most wanted to learn

Table 5. Skills participants mos	1st	2 nd	Cumulative
How to be a better human rights activist	30%	-	30%
How to be more effective in my activism	13%	14%	27%
How to manage conflict and build peace	19%	5%	24%
better civil society activists	10%	12%	22%
How to better advance my cause using communication/media tools and techniques	7%	11%	18%
Communicate and build understanding across lines of difference	6%	12%	18%
How to better advance my cause using communication/media tools and techniques	7%	11%	18%
How other activists are advancing similar causes in their communities/countries	3%	9%	12%
deal with stress and mental health	1%	4%	5%
Prevent mass atrocities, genocides	1%	2%	3%

3.2. Post-Test Findings

Polled again after the completion of the program, 77% of respondents reported having completed all it. Only a small minority (2%) attested to completing less than 'most of it' (see Fig. 8) A chi-squared test of independence (χ =.305) found that this had no relation to years of experience with activism. (In fact,



the only respondents reporting having completed 'some of the course' were relative neophytes, activists with only 1-2 years of experience.)

Fig. 8 How much of the training program did you complete?

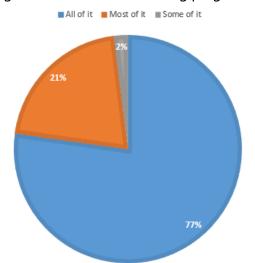
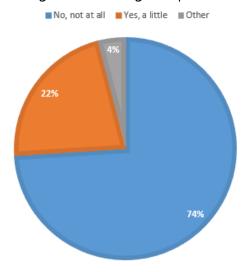


Fig. 9 Was the English a problem?



Overall, participants did not experience significant technical problems in accessing the program, though half did report patchy internet connections. Otherwise, respondents found the program quite accessible, the majority reporting no problem with either its length or its pace (see Figs. 10 and 11).

Table 6. Technical difficulties in accessing the program

	Disagreed	Agreed
7a. The website was hard to use	93%	7%
7b. I had a lot of problems with electricity/power	68%	32%
7c. I had a lot of problems with internet connection	50%	50%
7d. I mostly watched the lectures on the YouTube playlist	70%	30%

Fig. 10 Length of the Program

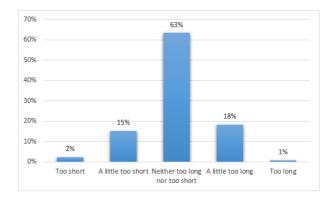
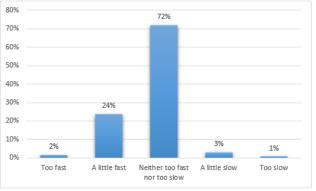


Fig. 11 Pace of the Program





In terms of overall program outcomes, respondents reported that the program helped them become better and more effective activists and leaders, that the felt more connected to one another as a network and that they were able use what they learned through the program in their own lives, including better taking measures to ensure their own safety. Activism safety was only one of several topics respondents reported to learning. Topping the list were issues pertaining to human rights and genocide, including the associated learning lessons from history to identify the warning signals of genocides (Table 8). In this regard, for nearly half of respondents, this was their first time learning about the Holocaust (Fig. 12). As of the close of the program, 88% of respondents reported that they felt able to lead change in their communities.

Table 7. General Outcomes

	Agreed	Disagreed
10a. The program helped me to become a better activist	98%	2%
10b. The program helped me to become a better leader	94%	6%
10c. This program made me part of a MiddleEast/Africa-wide network of		
activists that can help each other	91%	9%
10d. Now that I have participated in the program, I can better protect my		
safety as an activist	99%	1%
10e. Now that I have participated in the program, I am more effective as an		
activist	96%	4%
10f. Now that I have participated in the program, I am more effective as a		
leader	95%	5%
10g. I have used what I learned in the program in my activism and/or life	89%	11%

Table 8. Outcomes – Topics and Skills by Frequency

How to better advocate for human rights	89%
How to make choices that prevent genocides	89%
How to be more safe in my activism	85%
How to learn from history in order to prevent genocides	85%
How to advance gender equality	82%
How to transform conflict and build understanding and peace	82%
How to better deal with stress and mental health	81%
How nonviolent resistance has been effectively used	77%
How to better advance my cause using communication tools/techniques	77%
How to support democratic development	76%
How other activists are advancing similar causes in their	
communities/countries	69%
Other	2%



Fig. 12 Was this your first time learning about the Holocaust?

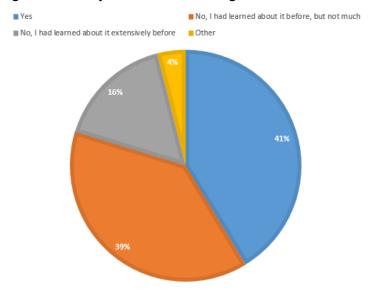


Table 9. To what degree do you feel able to lead change in your community/country?

	Avg.	5 or More (%)	Correlation to Overall Satisfaction	Correlation to Knowledge & Skills
15. To what degree do you feel able to				
lead change in your community/country?	5.88	88%	0.33	0.36

3.3) Correlations to Satisfaction

Reported ability to lead change was only very slightly correlated to overall satisfaction from the program or other knowledge and skills gained. In general, there were almost no tested aspects of the program which correlated significantly either to overall satisfaction from the program or to the degree to which respondents reported gaining knowledge and skills (Table 10). (These too as well were only vaguely correlated to one another, though this was the most significant correlation found.) There were similarly minimal correlations between specific knowledge items mastered (the topics of the program) and either satisfaction or knowledge and skills. (It is likely that other types of questions—on more general outcomes of the program, specifically the outcomes listed in Table 8 (question 12a on the post-test) would have yielded more significant insights as to those aspects of the program most connected with satisfaction and skills (see also section 4 of this report).

Table 10. Correlations to Satisfaction

	Avg.	5 or More (%)	Correlates to Satisfaction	Correlates to Knowledge & Skills
3. Please rate the program overall	6.26	96%		0.56
9a. Did the program help you gain the				
knowledge/skills you most wanted to learn?	6.21	94%	0.56	
6a. How would you rate the video lectures?	6.37	95%	0.54	0.40



6b. How would you rate the live Zoom				
discussion sessions?	5.85	85%	0.59	0.37
6c. How would you rate the discussions on				
the AMEL Institute website?	5.83	87%	0.45	0.40
6d. How would you rate the quizzes?	4.44	48%	0.10	0.00
6e. How would you rate the final				
assignment?	4.81	62%	0.06	0.05
6f. How would you rate the Learn More				
additional resource pages on the website?	6.21	89%	0.17	0.21
6g. How would you rate the assistance of				
AMEL Mentors?	5.64	79%	0.21	0.10
6h. How would you rate the weekly emails				
sent by AMEL Institute?	6.32	91%	0.32	0.19
6i. How would you rate the website?	6.20	93%	0.28	0.25

Table 11. Correlations between Topics mastered and Satisfaction or Knowledge & Skills

	Correlates to Satisfaction	Correlates to Knowledge & Skills
Human Rights	0.24	0.29
Gender Inclusiveness/ Mainstreaming	0.24	0.37
Activism Safety	0.22	0.34
Activist Self-care	0.28	0.28
Genocide processes/prevention	0.32	0.30
The Holocaust	0.10	0.18
Democracy	0.23	0.37
Non-violent movements	0.28	0.34
Conflict transformation & peace	0.29	0.34
Communicating your story/cause	0.25	0.38

3.4) Pre-Post Comparisons

A significant reduction was noted among those who wrote that they knew no activists in other countries (1/5 of participants upon enrolling, 6% at the close of the program), as well as significant increases among those knowing 6 or more (accounting for more than 50% of participants at the close of the program). A chi squared test of independence found these differences to be highly significant (0.000158797).

Table 12. *How many activists do you know in other countries?* (Pre v. Post Frequencies)

PRE	POST						
None							
21%	6%						
1-2							
22%	14%						
3-5							



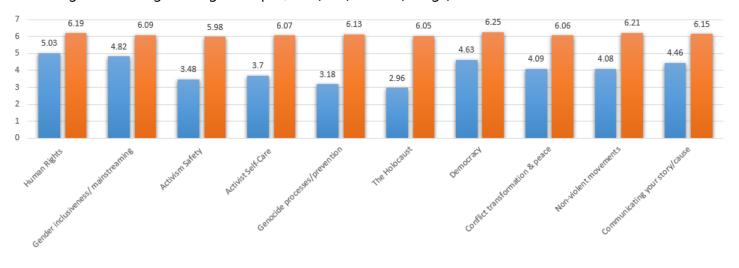
22%	28%			
6-1	9			
19%	27%			
20 or more				
15%	24%			

More dramatically, very significant increases were noted between participants' stated levels of knowledge on all program subjects by the end of the program. In **all** knowledge categories, with no exceptions, respondents displayed increases that were beyond (and in some cases far beyond) one standard deviation. In all cases this was found to be of very high statistical significance (0.00000, which is to say: the chances that these results could be attributed to random error are less than .000%.).

Table 13. Knowledge in program topics, Pre v. Post (Comparison of Means, Paired Samples T-Test)

Please rank your knowledge in the following areas:	Knowledge Before (PRE)	Knowledge After (POST)	Mean Difference		
	(Avg. out of 7)	(Avg. out of 7)			
Human Rights	5.03	6.19	1.15	1.05	0.00000
Gender inclusiveness/ mainstreaming	4.82	6.09	1.27	1.17	0.00000
Activism Safety	3.48	5.98	2.50	1.30	0.00000
Activist Self-Care	3.70	6.07	2.37	1.33	0.00000
Genocide processes/prevention	3.18	6.13	2.95	1.24	0.00000
The Holocaust	2.96	6.05	3.09	1.41	0.00000
Democracy	4.63	6.25	1.62	1.21	0.00000
Conflict transformation & peace	4.09	6.06	1.97	1.29	0.00000
Non-violent movements	4.08	6.21	2.14	1.30	0.00000
Communicating your story/cause	4.46	6.15	1.68	1.31	0.00000

Fig. 13 Knowledge in Program Topics, Pre (blue) v. Post (orange)





These differences were also reflected in one of the main outcome indicators for this program:

Table 14. Ability to Lead Change, Pre v. Post (Comparison of Means, Paired Samples T-Test)

	Knowledge Before (PRE) (Avg. out of 7)	Knowledge After (POST) (Avg. out of 7)	Mean Difference	Standard Deviation	Statistical Significance
16. To what degree do you feel able to lead change in your community/country?	5.14	5.85	1.28	0.72	0.00000

Though within one standard deviation, these differences are nonetheless quite dramatic.

3.5) Important Segmentations (Significant Groups within the Sample)

Over the course of data processing, four variables were recognized as potentially significant predictors of different outcomes among participants. These were: (1) gender, (2) reasons for joining the program (3) main topics of interest and (4) prior years of experience as activists,

Not many differences between genders were found. The most significant of these was a differential experience with political campaigns, men scoring higher. In general, on the few differences that were noted, men scored higher on two knowledge items ex post (i.e. following the program) and on several ratings of the program's components. Women tended to report higher levels of prior knowledge of gender issues and activism safety than men. On all these, all differences between averages were within one standard deviation (Table 15).

Reason for joining yielded two statistically significant between group differences, both within one standard deviation (Table 16). For the first, those who came because of the program topics claimed that they planned on doing more of the optional reading at the outset (a predictable, but not particularly interesting finding). For the second, those who enrolled for 'other reasons' tended to report having more experience mobilizing others prior to enrolling in the program; the "other" category, however, is an artificial composite (further sub-groups were too small to be considered as vying groups).

Main topics of interest tended to segment between those with an interest in politics (who tended to know more activists in other countries—though most prominently in comparison with another composite 'other' category— and who tended to know more about conflict transformation) and those with an interest in peacemaking, who tended to report higher knowledge regarding genocide, both prior and ex post. Here too, all differences (save that between those with an interest in politics and those with 'other' interests) were within one standard deviation (Table 17).



The only real significant groups that were identified were those based on years of experience (Table 18). Those with over 10 years' experience in activism going in scored significantly higher in terms of skills and knowledge on the pre-test, generally beyond one standard deviation and often outside two. (Though this makes much sense, these findings are nonetheless important to note, since they both validate the reliability of the survey designs while showing the relative insignificance of most of the other between group differences identified). What is most interesting with regards to these findings is that, save ex post knowledge of the Holocaust (which segmented differently in any case, between those with less than one year of experience and those with 1-2), these between-group differences disappear entirely on the post-test, indicating that prior experience ceased being an operative category for differences in terms of what participants got out of the program. All experience-based differences in knowledge categories disappeared by the end of the program.

Table 15. List of Noted Differences on Program Variables, by Gender (Independent Samples T-Test)

	Male	Female	Sig.	Std.	Range
Prior Experience with political campaigns	3.48	2.33	0.00	1.92	-1.15
Prior knowledge of gender issues	4.48	5.08	0.01	1.33	0.6
Rating of course quizzes	4.85	4.24	0.02	1.59	-0.62
Ex post ability to lead change	6.13	5.69	0.02	1.07	-0.44
Rating of AMEL's Mentors	6.02	5.44	0.03	1.68	-0.58
Rating of AMEL's Website	6.43	6.07	0.03	1.02	-0.36
Prior experience in organizing/monitoring elections or promoting civic engagement	3.69	3.09	0.06	2.02	-0.59
Ex post knowledge of democracy	6.42	6.14	0.07	0.95	-0.28
Prior knowledge of activism safety	3.23	3.64	0.08	1.54	0.41

Table 16. List of Noted Differences on Program Variables, by Reason for Joining (ANOVA)

	Topics	Networking	Other	Sig.	Std.	Range
Do you plan to do the optional readings?	6.66	6.04	6.48	0.01	1.01	0.62
Experience mobilizing others	3.97	3.31	4.09	0.07	1.669	0.78

Table 17. List of Noted Differences on Program Variables, by main Topics of Interest (ANOVA)

	Human Rights	Peace- making	Politics	Other	Sig.	Std.	Range
Number of activists known in other countries	2.87	3.18	3.22	1	0.02	1.413	2.22
Prior knowledge of Democracy	4.28	4.79	5.3	5.5	0.02	1.458	1.22
Ex-post knowledge of Genocide	6.13	6.54	5.61	6	0.01	1.006	0.93
Prior knowledge of Genocide	2.93	3.79	3.13	3.5	0.08	1.458	0.86
Prior knowledge of conflict transformation	3.66	4.79	4.48	4.25	0.01	1.603	0.82



Table 18. List of Noted Differences on Program Variables, by Years of Experience (ANOVA)

Table 10. List of Noted Differences of 1	Less than 1 year	1-2 Years	3-9 Years	More than 10 years	Sig.	Std.	Range
Prior experience in being an activist	2.29	3.87	4.87	5.89	0	1.619	3.60
Prior experience mobilizing others	2	3.4	4	5.22	0	1.669	3.22
How much activism training have you had?	1.86	3.3	4.11	5	0	1.761	3.14
Prior connections with activists from other countries	1.93	2.3	3.3	4.22	0	1.413	2.29
Prior experience in monitoring elections	1.79	3.47	3.51	4	0.02	2.003	2.21
Prior experience in policy advocacy	2.36	3.33	3.79	4.56	0.02	1.871	2.20
Prior experience with protests	1.79	2.9	3.54	3.89	0.01	1.906	2.10
Prior experience with petitions	2.36	3.4	4.22	4.456	0	1.817	2.10
Prior knowledge of gender issues	4.57	4.43	4.87	6.33	0	1.325	1.90
Priori knowledge of activism safety	3.07	3.23	3.56	4.67	0.06	1.529	1.60
Prior plans to be involved in the discussion forum	5.64	6.47	6.24	6.78	0.08	1.152	1.14
Prior knowledge of the holocaust	6.79	5.87	5.97	6	0.07	1.137	0.92
How important is activism to you?	6.14	6.4	6.57	6.89	0.08	0.752	0.75
Rating of the Zoom sessions	6.2	6.35	5.63	6.13	0.07	1.224	0.72
Rating of the lectures	6.5	6.63	6.22	6.89	0.06	0.905	0.67

4) Additional Considerations and Recommendations

The significance of the above findings is discussed in findings summary section, above (see 2).

Having reviewed the designs used to produce the above data, the evaluator has a few summary recommendations for the improvement of the design to assess this program going forward:

1. The lack of significant correlations to program satisfaction indicates that the specific aspects of the program most bearing on satisfaction have still to be mapped out with further resolution. This could be addressed either by adding additional—or more specific—questions on specific aspects of the program or its sub-components or (more recommended) other, more general questions on social and other aspects of the program. Qualitative feedback from participants (within the survey) indicates that they most liked (1) the opportunities to network which the program provided, the fact that (2) the online format of the program allowed them a great deal of flexibility in accessing the material and (3) that the program was clear and well organized. The need to further differentiate topics like networking in order to better identify correlates to satisfaction is that networking, like mentors, fulfils a number of functions. It might have been



- the professional ties, the personal relationships, the camaraderie or the support which most mattered to participants—and these are worth knowing.
- 2. It is recommended that future surveys further map levels of engagement and involvement in civil society activity both prior and after the course.
- 3. It is recommended that future surveys include 1-2 questions as to whether (and by what frequency) participants are still in touch, especially with colleagues from other countries.

5) Evaluator's Statement

I believe the data to be accurately presented and the findings to be reflective of the data contained therein. No data was altered or misrepresented in the process of compiling this report.

February 17, 2023