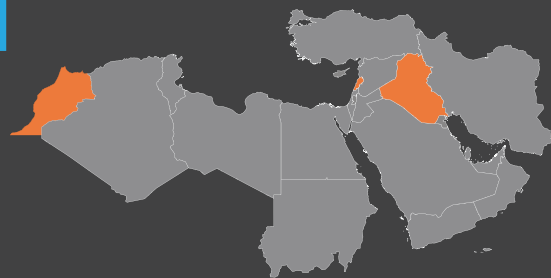# PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Using Rights-Based Education To Build More Peaceful, Inclusive Societies in the Middle East and North Africa

hardwired.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM VIOLENT EXTREMISM

USING RIGHTS-BASED EDUCATION TO BUILD
MORE PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES IN THE
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Lena Smith, Tina Ramirez, Mary Anne Ramirez

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT A GLANCE

Hardwired trained
56
Primary and secondary school teachers of multiple subjects

From
3
countries
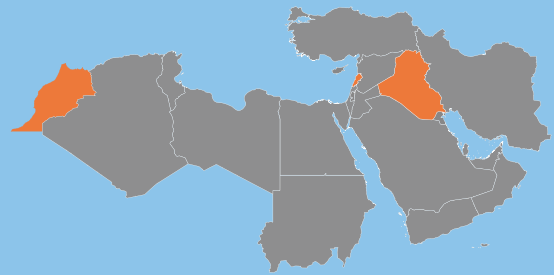
In
46
primary and secondary schools

To educate
1,161
schoolchildren about greater respect for the rights and freedoms of others

Through Hardwired's program, students demonstrated **greater acceptance** of the rights of others, **greater respect** for the equal rights of women and minority communities, were **less intimidated by public expression of belief**, and reflected **greater resiliency to extremist thinking**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The threat of intolerance, extremism, and radical ideology is evident everywhere, and children throughout the Middle East and North Africa are particularly vulnerable to its influence. Schools are often the frontline in any defense against the radicalization of youth, but teachers are not prepared to counter extremist thinking in the classroom or rehabilitate youth who have been affected by it.

As millions of children emerge from the recent conflict in Iraq and Syria, there is an urgent need for educational programs that will address the root cause of the problem – the beliefs, misconceptions and fear of others that make children vulnerable to hateful ideologies and recurrent patterns of conflict – and help them build more peaceful, inclusive societies.

To make children resilient to radicalization and reduce the likelihood that they will repeat the violent extremism they have witnessed or experienced, we must change the way they see and treat others. Therefore, from 2016-2018, Hardwired piloted an educational program among teachers and youth in the Middle East and North Africa that offers an innovative new approach to the problem.

Nearly 1,200 children from three countries were taught to value the dignity and freedom of others through simple lessons that used analogies to encourage them to have tough conversations about their beliefs, misconceptions and fear of others. Children participated in multiple lessons that took only a few hours each over the course of a year. Throughout the year, Hardwired worked with teachers to observe changes in students' attitudes and behaviors.

This report provides an analysis of the program and shows how educating children to value the rights and freedoms of people of different religions and beliefs can influence positive, sustainable changes in their communities. Importantly, children consistently exhibited positive movement in their perspective of and behavior toward others that made them more inclusive of others. For instance, our observations

showed that through the program they became:

- More resilient to the ideas of hate and intolerance that fuel extremism,
- More likely to mitigate conflict through dialogue and understanding,
- More likely to defend and actively engage people of different religions and beliefs,
- More supportive of the role of religion in the public and private life of individuals,
- More likely to support women, girls, and minority groups from discrimination, and
- More empathetic of others, particularly those who were different from them.

Teachers continue to use lessons learned in their classrooms to expand the program and reach more children. Governments, like the Kurdistan Regional Government, are seeking Hardwired's support to expand the program to every teacher in their region, and other countries in the MENA have shown similar interest. As Hardwired continues to work with teachers and observe students who participated in the program, we are continuing to make positive progress toward more peaceful, inclusive societies that respect the fundamental human rights of all.

This pilot has provided the first substantive evidence of the impact that rights-based educational approaches can have in countering the influence of extremist thinking and reducing the likelihood that children will respond violently toward others. Moreover, the program has offered a model that can be scaled more broadly throughout the world to address the underlying root causes of intolerance and violent extremism by building resiliency among youth.

Previous page: *Displaced children from Iraq's Sinjar community receive educational activity booklets designed by Hardwired to teach youth about their rights and freedoms. Photo Credit: Lexii Jaye (@lexjaye)*

"My ideas may be different from yours, but this doesn't make us enemies."

GIVING CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

For many children caught in conflict or exposed to extremist ideas around the world, hate and intolerance are often all they have ever seen and known. These experiences have contributed to fears and misconceptions of others, which will influence their behaviors. And unless children are taught another way to interact with others who believe differently they will be lost to the vicious cycle of hate and intolerance that fuels recurrent conflict in their communities.

The lesson is simple: just because someone is different does not make them your enemy. But this can be new and life-changing. When conflict is all you have ever known, it can be life-saving as well.

When we first met Jamal and Isam they were living in a camp with other families displaced by Da'esh – also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – in northern Iraq. After surviving the 2014 attack, these two Yezidi teachers began working in makeshift schools throughout the various displacement camps, searching for a way to give the children who had also survived the attack a hope for a better future.

Hardwired provided them training to develop lessons that teach children to overcome their fears and misconceptions of people who may have attacked them or other communities different from their own. **For the first time, these severely traumatized children learned that they were valued, regardless of what they believed, and deserved to be treated with respect and dignity.** At the same time, the children were able to work through their trauma and experience positive emotions through the lessons which taught them how to value the freedom of others and live together in peace. It was the first time these two former-teachers-turned-refugees or their students had ever heard these rights-based concepts and how to apply them in practical ways.

These simple lessons brought the teachers and hundreds of children from many different faith communities, all of whom had been displaced by extremists, the hope of a future without violence over religious differences.

The simple lesson that changed the childrens' lives was aptly called The Peaceful Garden. It was just the beginning of a project that has expanded into two other countries in the Middle East and North Africa and helped plant the seeds of peace and freedom in the hearts and minds of many children affected by religious conflict and intolerance across the region, giving them the hope of a future that is inclusive of people of all religions and beliefs.[1]

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[1] As background, Jamal and Isam are members of the Yezidi religious community, an ancient monotheistic faith originating in northern Iraq that was targeted by ISIS because of their reverence for Melek Taus, the peacock angel, who has been confused for Satan by some groups. Because of this, ISIS taught that the group were devil worshippers to justify the killing of their community.

In mid-2014, ISIS attacked communities across northern Iraq and no one was left unharmed – they slaughtered Shi'a Muslims, placing their bodies along the streets into the city as a warning to all who entered. At the same time, the group forced Christian, Shabak, and Turkmen communities out of dozens of villages in less than 24 hours, confiscating all of their wealth as they fled. And perhaps the most horrifying destruction was left for the small Yezidi community.

When ISIS terrorists entered Sinjar, the area of northern Iraq where most of the Yezidis lived, they had no mercy on the ancient religious community, evidenced by the eighteen mass graves they filled with the bodies of young men who were immediately killed to prevent any resistance. They then took nearly 6,000 women and young girls captive as sex slaves to fuel their need for recruits and at least 900 young boys were captured and sent to jihadist training camps where they adopted the groups nihilistic ideology and hatred for their religious community.

For those who remained in areas under ISIS control, life was harsh. Girls were not permitted in schools and young boys were indoctrinated in the group's extremist ideologies of hate, intolerance and violent extremism. Millions were displaced from the conflict in Iraq and Syria, forcing many children into refugee and displacement camps across the region.

THE PEACEFUL GARDEN:
A LESSON IN VALUING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Students participate in a lesson designed by Hardwired-trained teachers promoting greater respect for the rights and freedoms of people from diverse faith backgrounds and communities in the country. Photo Credit: Participant, Lebanon

Jamal and Isam launched The Peaceful Garden lesson near the mountains surrounding Dohuk, a city in northern Iraq. The teachers brought groups of children together in a beautiful garden and invited them to make colorful bouquets of flowers. The children were permitted to pick any flower except those of one particular color. When the children came back to the group with their bouquets, they beamed with pride and excitement over their creations. But when they looked back at the garden, they noticed that it was ravaged and had lost its beauty.

Then, Jamal and Isam shared how the same thing had happened in their country when ISIS came in – they destroyed everyone except for the people that looked like them. At once, the children's faces changed as they recalled how they had fled from Da'esh and lost everything, including many family members and friends.

The teachers offered them a choice – they could remain with a ravaged garden or they could plant seeds to make it beautiful again. The children's enthusiasm returned as they realized they could rebuild the garden. The teachers

paired students from different religious faiths together, handed them a packet of seeds, and asked them to work together to restore the garden.

The children worked diligently to rebuild the garden, not realizing that they were doing something much more significant in the process. As they tended their seeds, they learned something new about one another and began to overcome the fears and misconceptions they had of one another. The experience was not only therapeutic, it was life-changing.

When the children returned to the garden several weeks later, its beauty was restored. One child shared how he learned that not all Muslims were like Da'esh, and that some were forced to flee as well. Another child shared how he realized the importance of protecting freedom for everyone, regardless of what they believe. They learned that they can build an inclusive society where there is room for everyone, regardless of their different religions, beliefs, ethnicities or other differences. And the teachers shared that planting the seeds of peace would be hard, but it will ensure them a future of security and freedom rather than chaos, conflict, and suffering.

URGENT NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO COUNTER THE GLOBAL THREAT OF EXTREMIST THINKING

Jamal and Isam stood on the front line of a conflict fueled by intolerance and radical ideology. But these challenges affect society outside the epicenter of war, and they are not unique to any particular region.

In the course of our work, Hardwired has recently heard two stories that mirror the challenges to preventing and countering violent extremism faced by leaders around the world:

On a playground in San Diego, California, a group of refugee children began fighting. As they were broken up, a teacher overheard one boy say to another that he was part of ISIS and would get him back.

Similarly, thousands of miles away on a playground in Erbil, Kurdistan, a group of children were playing a game where they pretended to be members of ISIS. As their teacher drew close to them, she was horrified to see that they were pretending to behead one of the boys.

Shocked at what they witnessed, neither teacher knew what to do or how to respond. And they are not alone.

These children are acting out what they have seen and heard without knowing the implications of what they are doing or how they are being influenced by the most nihilistic form of religious bigotry witnessed in recent human history. Many of these children are scared and traumatized, surviving in an environment hostile to people of diverse religions and beliefs and neither they nor their teachers have the tools needed to respond.

The threat of intolerance, extremism, and radical ideology is evident everywhere and children are particularly vulnerable to its influence. Many governments and international organizations are working fervently to address growing concerns about radicalization and intolerance among youth, which will have tremendous implications for future regional and global security.

The classroom is, in many ways, the front line of efforts to prevent or counter radicalization and confront extremist ideologies and the intolerant ideas that threaten the security and stability of a community, region, nation, and the world. It is in this context that educators, in particular, have a unique opportunity to counter the ideas which fuel aggression and promote values which foster peaceful and inclusive societies.

Unfortunately, around the world, there is a missing dimension in progress to this end. This led Hardwired to consider two critical questions:

1. How can we build resilience to radicalization among youth if we are unable to identify and address the root causes — the fears, misconceptions, and biases — which fuel extremist ideology and inhibit inclusive environments for people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds to safely participate in public life?

2. How can we ensure teachers from the largest cities to the smallest villages are equipped to respond to these challenges and prepare youth to engage in a diverse and pluralistic world?

Based on research and experience in the field of human rights and education in more than 30 countries, with a particular focus on protecting the rights and freedoms of people of different religions or beliefs, Hardwired developed a new approach to these challenges. We understood that how you teach is equally as significant as what you teach.

With support from the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hardwired designed and tested a program to support governments' and educators' efforts to safeguard youth against radicalization and intolerant ideas which fuel conflict

Teachers from Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco participated in Hardwired's Teacher-Training program.

— not only in the Middle East in North Africa, but around the world.

Following an initial pilot with teachers in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, Hardwired recognized the urgent need to expand the program with support from local officials. As we travelled across the region to meet with educators and officials in the various Ministries of Education, we observed similar challenges in several countries, which are outlined in the following section. The lack of programs to help children respond to violent extremism created an extremely urgent opportunity to test a rights-based educational program, particularly as children would be emerging from the conflict in Iraq and Syria once the areas were liberated from ISIS and needed immediate support to overcome the indoctrination they experienced.

Therefore, from 2016-2018 Hardwired conducted a Teacher-Training Program to equip teachers in three distinct countries in the region – Iraq, Lebanon, and Morocco – with a rights-based pedagogy and educational resources to integrate greater respect for human dignity, equality, and the rights of people of different religions and beliefs in the culture of the classroom. The program sought to help teachers create an inclusive environment of respect for people of different religions or beliefs to help children develop a new framework for how they view others, and ultimately develop the skills needed to challenge intolerant ideas about others.

The countries reflect the diversity of the region and were selected because of the support provided by local officials who were eager to test an innovative new approach to countering violent extremism by building resiliency to extremist thinking and inclusion of others among youth. These countries also provided an opportunity to assess the broader implications of rights-based education on children affected by extremism or related trauma that could be applied across the region and around the world.

This report will explain how the training was conducted and provide an assessment of the observations and findings on its impact with both teachers and children. This includes details about how the program fostered significant development in students' understanding of and respect for the rights of others, promoted positive inclusive behavior toward one another, increased resilience to extremist ideas, and developed students' ability to engage in meaningful dialogue with people of different religions or beliefs without fear of losing their own identity. This and other data will be detailed in each section with final recommendations provided in the report's conclusion.

LIMITATIONS OF CURRICULUM REFORM TO ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND CHANGE BEHAVIOR

Given the alarming rise in violent extremism[2] in recent years, several governments and organizations across the Middle East and North Africa have undertaken efforts to address ongoing concerns about radicalization and the spread of intolerant or extremist ideas among youth. Most efforts have focused on religious education curriculum reform, the promotion of alternative narratives in the religious space, or other forms of civic values education — but reforms alone have not resolved the challenges of radicalization, sectarian conflict, or recurrent social hostilities.

From 2016-2018, Hardwired met with officials from across the region in various Ministries of Education to better understand the reforms to education curricula completed or attempted with varying degrees of success. Some examples of these initiatives include the following:

• In Tunisia, the Ministry of Education reformed its civic education curricula to include greater respect for human rights and diversity as an integral component of Tunisian citizenship.
• In Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government is currently reforming religious education curricula to include the history and cultural significance of all seven religious communities from the region, rather than segregating students to teach them about religion separately. However, groups working on those reforms did not take into account the key misunderstandings about each community that may need to be addressed for people of different beliefs to better understand different religious communities.
• In Egypt, officials and political parties have debated eliminating segregated religious education courses and replacing the curricula with "values" education for all students.
• In Jordan, the Ministry of Education made several revisions to textbooks to promote

Students in Lebanon complete surveys to measure the impact of Hardwired's lessons on their understanding of human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and respect for the rights of others. Photo Credit: Participant, Lebanon

greater cultural and religious pluralism among youth in 2016. However, these changes have yet to be implemented.

• In Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education partnered with the Adyan Foundation and the Center for Education, Research and Documentation to develop a National Strategy for Citizenship and Coexistence Education. The NSCC launched a four-year program to support educational reforms for citizenship and coexistence in Lebanon from 2012-2016 that resulted in a number of related efforts and there is ongoing support for curriculum reforms.[3]

In most cases, officials focused on curriculum reform, identifying problematic religious texts and teachings as a potential cause of intolerance in their schools and communities. However, given the sensitive nature of religious teachings and religious authority, reforms focused on the removal of certain texts have not been well received by members of society — from both majority and minority religious communities — who fear:

1. The religious identities of their children will be threatened by learning about other religions, or

2. Their religion will be misrepresented or taught incorrectly by educators who do not understand their belief system.

In addition to these efforts, there have been several important declarations, action plans, and strategies formulated and agreed upon by governments and leaders across the region. In 2016, His Royal Highness King Muhammad VI of Morocco hosted a conference in Marrakesh in collaboration with H.E. Shaykh

Abdallah Bin Bayyah and the United Arab Emirates-based Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. The conference brought together religious and academic thought leaders from across the world, including both Muslims and representatives of other faiths. The conference concluded with the Marrakesh Declaration which recognized the challenge of discrimination and violence toward longstanding religious minority communities in majority-Muslim countries. The Declaration concluded with a call for "Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies."[4]

Later that year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) hosted a meeting with religious and civil society leaders from across the Middle East and North Africa in Beirut, Lebanon. The meeting built upon the Rabat Plan of Action, another initiative of the UNHCHR that was adopted in 2012, prohibiting the advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that results in incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. Stakeholders across the MENA region adopted the Beirut Declaration[5], affirming their commitment to promote religious tolerance and increased collaboration among religious communities to promote equal rights. The Declaration reaffirmed the Rabat Plan as well by calling for people across the region to "combat any form of exploitation of [differences] to advocate for violence, discrimination and religious hatred."

Despite these significant steps in national and regional commitments to education reform, efforts to mobilize agreements through practical initiatives have moved

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[2] According to the RAND Corporation, terrorist groups increased 58% in the past decade, and according to the Pew Research Center the vast majority of religion related terrorist activities are occurring in the Middle East and North Africa.

[3] For more information, see: http://adyanfoundation.org/institute/policy-making/national-strategy-for-citizenship-and-coexistence-education-nscce/

[4] For more information, see: http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/marrakesh-declaration.html

[5] For more information, see: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/21451/BeirutDeclarationonFaithforRights.pdf

slowly, and members of these movements have expressed an ongoing need for tangible strategies to turn words to action broadly across their respective societies. **Curriculum reforms, while important, are not sufficient for the broader task of addressing the underlying root causes of intolerance and violent extremism or preparing teachers to help children address these challenges in their communities. There is an urgent need for programs that help teachers address the fears, misconceptions, and ideologies that make children susceptible to intolerance and extremism and will encourage a change in children's behavior toward one another.**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RIGHTS-BASED EDUCATION TO BUILD PLURALISTIC AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Various initiatives across the MENA region have established a general consensus that: (1) discrimination and intolerance toward minority religious communities exists, (2) such ideas make them vulnerable to extremist thinking and violence, and (3) to actively combat these ideas and promote religious tolerance, there is an urgent need for educational reform across the region.

It is in this context that Hardwired piloted an innovative program to address the underlying fears, misconceptions and biases held by youth — and by society more broadly — which influence their behavior and perceptions of others.

Given the challenges to curriculum reform across the MENA region, Hardwired recognized the value of working with teachers in three distinct political and cultural environments to test a rights-based educational program that helps them build more peaceful, inclusive societies.

In 2016, with support from the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hardwired launched a program to train teachers in our rights-based pedagogy and support their broader efforts to mitigate intolerance, extremism, and radicalization, and build more inclusive societies. Government officials and civil society partners in three countries — Iraq, Lebanon, and Morocco — collaborated with Hardwired to pilot the program with primary and

Hardwired's lessons use analogies and dynamic group activities to help students undergo the process of conceptual change through incremental progress in the development of positive and inclusive attitudes and behaviors among teachers and students. Photo Credit: Participant, Lebanon

secondary school teachers. Lebanon is diverse and relatively stable. Iraq is relatively diverse and unstable. Morocco is relatively homogeneous and stable.

Based on our observations, intolerance and extremism often breed in environments where there is little space for people to be different from the majority group. **Therefore, the objective of Hardwired's educational program is to provide teachers with tools to build a more peaceful and inclusive society by leading youth toward a greater respect for the dignity and freedom of people of different religions or beliefs, while at the same time helping teachers promote a positive counter-narrative to the ideas that inspire intolerance and violent extremism.** The program is unique in that it must go beyond teaching tolerance and teach children to value others and be willing to defend their right to explore and hold different ideas, even when they disagree with them.

To do this, we could not avoid the religious dimension of the challenges described by local officials and educators across the region. In fact, any discussion of the Rabat Plan of Action, which is based on Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is incomplete without teaching children to value the related provision found in Article 18 of the ICCPR – the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief – which serves as a foundation for preventing the misuse of religion for violence. The protection of individuals from discrimination, hostility, or violence based on religion can only occur in inclusive communities that value and respect people of different religions and beliefs.

Therefore, Hardwired trained teachers to understand the value of the human right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief as defined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the ICCPR as an important foundation for helping students build more inclusive and pluralistic societies that are resilient to the fears and intolerance which fuel violence toward others on the basis of their beliefs.

Our program differs from other approaches undertaken in the region because we train educators in a holistic rights-based pedagogy that can be applied in various social, cultural, religious, and national or political contexts, which is consistent with general guidelines on national action plans for human rights education. Our findings from this pilot illustrate that countries with various degrees of diversity and stability can exhibit significant developments in their efforts to promote greater respect for the dignity and rights of others through rights-based education.

Hardwired's pedagogy is also unique in that it does not require reforms to curricula or any immediate revision of religious education content. Our rights-based pedagogy does not singularly apply to religious education or teach about religion in any way. Rather, our program uses a pedagogy to promote key concepts inherent to Article 18 and related human rights which lead youth toward a greater respect for the dignity of others and a greater appreciation for diversity of opinions and ideas. The key concepts include: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, the human conscience, the expression of beliefs, and the balance of rights and responsibilities that affect how rights may be limited or restricted in certain circumstances to protect the rights of others.

Hardwired's unique training model is based on the conceptual change theory, which refers to the development of new ways of thinking and understanding of concepts, beliefs, and attitudes. Hardwired works to bring about conceptual change in the way individuals view the rights and freedoms of others and reconcile those ideals to their own beliefs. By utilizing the pedagogy of conceptual change, Hardwired is able to ensure ongoing, incremental progress in the development of positive, inclusive attitudes and behaviors among teachers and students toward the rights and freedoms of people of different faiths in several schools in each country. As Hardwired continues to make observations of students and teachers who participated in the program, there is continued evidence that such changes are sustainable and affect continued positive

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."
—Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

shifts in perspectives over time. Moreover, the program established a group of Master Trainers in each country who could develop lessons, train other educators, and replicate the program. These trainers all experienced the process of conceptual change that their students would undergo in their classes. And while the program naturally increases religious literacy as students interact with one another, there is no instruction in the religious content or practices of any specific religion or belief. We believe this has increased the acceptance of the program by religious leaders and the community, as they do not feel their own beliefs or teachings of their religion are threatened.

Hardwired's expertise in rights-based education and the conceptual change pedagogy has been published in the Journal of Social Science Education[6] and employed in schools and with leaders around the world, including in Nepal, Iraq, Nigeria, the U.S. and Canada, with positive results. Hardwired's published research and application of conceptual change theory to work on freedom of religion or belief has allowed a deeper look at the process of conceptually moving from actions based on inherent beliefs to new models of conceptual understanding of others and directly addresses the issues of intolerance, social conflict, and violent extremism.

Importantly, conceptual change is not about changing someone's religion or culture; rather, it is meant to help individuals develop new ways of understanding their religion and culture compared to the rights of people of different religions and beliefs. When individuals develop new ways of seeing people of different religions or beliefs and how they should be treated, they also develop empathy toward them. Their behavior changes as well, which can create resiliency against extremist ideologies and violence against vulnerable populations. Ultimately, these changes in attitudes and behaviors affect their ability to build more peaceful, inclusive communities where there is a safe space for everyone, regardless of their religion, belief, or other differences.

The data collected from the program offers important evidence of the positive impact of Hardwired's rights-based educational program in building communities resilient to the ideas of hate and intolerance that fuel violent extremism and conflict in the region. Our programs have shown that rights-based teaching pedagogy based on conceptual change can help communities create a framework to address the fears and misconceptions they have of one another, reconcile their beliefs with the new understanding, learn how to articulate and defend the rights of people of different religions or beliefs, and mitigate the ideologies that have fomented intolerance. As a result, Hardwired's program established a tangible and practical "next step" to mobilize and apply broader agreements to the communities who are most at risk of radicalization or conflict.

DEVELOPING A SCALABLE MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE RIGHTS-BASED EDUCATION AND TEACHER-TRAINING

The first step to the training component of the program involved identifying professional educators who could serve as Master Trainers in each country. In 2017, Hardwired selected 56 teachers from Lebanon, Morocco, and Iraq to attend an intensive year-long training program, develop lessons to share with students in their schools, and ultimately serve as Master Trainers for others in their community. Hardwired worked closely with ministry officials and local partners in each country — including the Association for History in Lebanon and Hammurabi Human Rights Organization in Iraq —to identify and select participants for the program.

For the program to be successful, it had to establish a core group of Master Trainers that were personally transformed by the material and able to effectively communicate it through a unique pedagogy to their students. Therefore, the program began with a series of two training workshops for teachers from Iraq and Lebanon and one intensive training workshop for teachers from Morocco. Teachers represented various religious and ethnic backgrounds and taught various subjects at both the primary and secondary level, including: mathematics, Arabic, English, physical education, art, history, civics education, biology, media, religion, and literature. The program provided these educators with an important space to identify issues and discuss significant challenges experienced by educators not just in the participating countries, but around the world.

Hardwired's intensive year-long training program included three critical phases for all participating teachers:

1) Conceptual learning on how to respect the rights and freedoms of people of different religions and beliefs in the context of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which involved a simulation that allowed Hardwired's trainers to model how a lesson would be taught with students.

2) Learning about effective pedagogy that helped teachers deconstruct their own fears or misconceptions about others and develop greater respect for human dignity and universal human rights before being able to apply the pedagogy to their own students and make effective observations about how students are moving conceptually from the egocentric to insightful level of understanding.

3) Application of information and new understanding to the development, implementation, and evaluation of new lessons focused on building respect for the rights and freedoms of people of different religions and beliefs with students. The ability to develop lessons and make observations about progress being made takes many applications and requires an ability to recognize one's own fears and misconceptions about people of different religions or beliefs as well as the courage to apply a new pedagogy or methods in the classroom to reach their intended results with students.

Hardwired's workshops are designed to offer intensive instruction followed by ongoing support to participants for the duration of the program. Workshop sessions were structured to meet the unique needs and challenges of participants, and trainers worked closely with participants to adjust activities in order to foster productive discussion and a collaborative learning environment. Following each training and throughout the course of the program, Hardwired trainers served as mentors to teachers by providing additional

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[6] For more information, see: Journal of Social Science Education; Volume 16, Number 4, Winter 2017; DOI 10.4119/UNIBI//jsse-v16-i4-1692
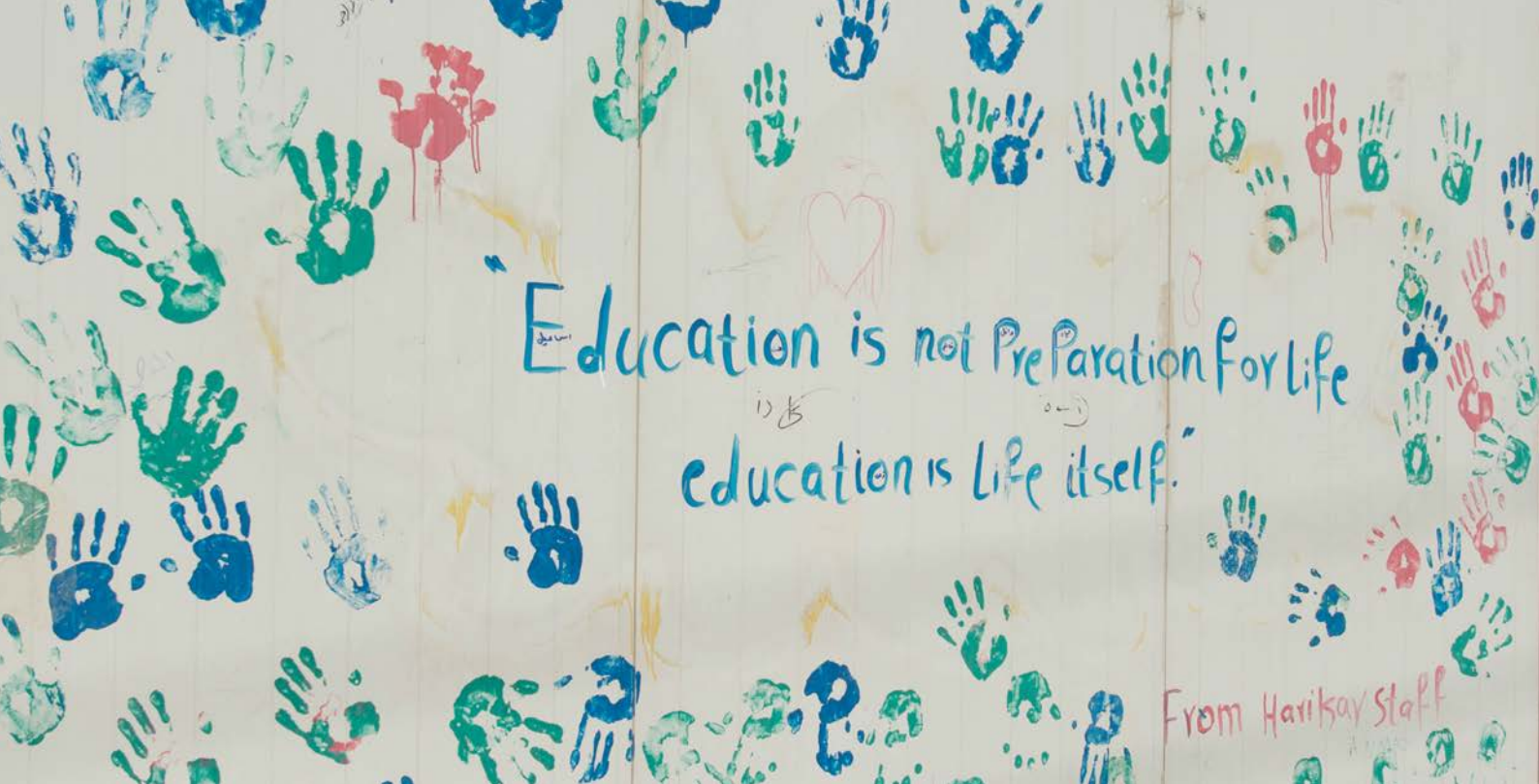
Students and educators at a school in a displaced persons camp convey the value of education on the wall of a makeshift schoolhouse, stating "Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself." Photo Credit: Lexii Jaye (@lexjaye)

opportunities to learn and work with one another during monthly online conference calls. Through ongoing communication and collaboration, we were able to ensure teachers continued to develop their skills and apply what they learned in their classrooms and communities.

"The fruit lessons taught us that we are equal in value and dignity, even if our beliefs or opinions are different from others." —Leila, Lebanon

Hardwired conducted two training workshops for teachers from Iraq and Lebanon in the first half of 2017, as noted above. The first session was an intensive five-day training workshop and included a smaller group of seven teachers from each country. During the first training, teachers were taught how to develop lessons, which were later used by the broader group of participants. The initial group of 14 teachers returned to their schools following the first training and identified two additional teachers from their schools to share the program with and mentor. The core group of master trainers returned for a second training session with the additional teachers they identified and mentored in their communities.

The initial group of teachers applied their new knowledge and worked together to develop age- and culturally-appropriate lessons about how to respect people of different religions or beliefs for their students (see sidebar). The objective of each lesson was to address specific fears or misconceptions students have about one another by teaching key concepts of human rights which lead them to a greater respect for the rights and freedoms of others. These lessons were revised throughout the program as teachers tested them with their students.

These lessons offer a unique perspective into how simple analogies can be used in different cultural, religious, and national contexts to convey the key concepts associated with the protection of the rights and freedoms of people of different religions or beliefs. They can be adapted to any age and taught in any subject, without the need to revise any curriculum or religious texts. The focus is on conceptual change about the human dignity, equality, conscience rights, and general nature of freedom for every person regardless of what they believe. They were developed and used by teachers with students of diverse faiths from the countries represented.

The lessons developed by teachers used simulations, artistic activities, and analogies about common things found in their communities — including birds, rainbows, and picnics — to discuss the sensitive topic of religion and belief in a considerate and safe environment. For people around the world, religion and belief are an important part of the human identity, as they affect one's conscience and decisions about

SANCTUARY ISLAND: A LESSON IN THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION OR BELIEF IN HUMAN LIFE

Sanctuary Island is a dynamic simulation activity that utilizes an analogy to explore the importance of religion and belief in human life through the use of fruit. Through this simulation, participants are able to identify the unique role of religion or belief and the various ways it is expressed by diverse groups in a non-threatening environment, develop empathy for groups who are unable to express their religion or beliefs, verbalize their fears and misconceptions about other groups, consider the rights they require to express their religion or belief freely, begin to work with others who believe differently from them to construct solutions for how diverse groups can live together peacefully, and devise a set of agreed upon rules of behavior that reflect the universal freedom of religion or belief described in Article 18.

The teacher introduces the simulation by assigning participants to small groups and designating each group with a different fruit identity. Participants are surprised to learn they must take on the identity of a fruit, and they are challenged to work together to create a story about their fruit's culture and belief system based on its unique characteristics and qualities. All of the belief systems represented in this exercise are imagined and do not reflect the religion or beliefs of the participants. Participants bring their newly created fruit culture to life by describing their unique qualities on a poster and decorating a piece of their fruit to reflect its culture and beliefs, and they present their creations to the rest of the group.

After participants have shared about their fruit community with the group, teachers introduce a complication: they explain to participants that their fruit community was attacked by another fruit community in their region because they feared or misunderstood something about their unique beliefs and culture. The attack was so strong, the teacher describes, that members of their community boarded a small boat and sought refuge on a nearby island. Participants are met with another challenge: they must think about and articulate how it feels to be attacked because of their beliefs and culture, as well as what they are hoping to find on Sanctuary Island. Together, they consider what it means and feels like to be persecuted

— for some participants, this is their first experience imagining what it would feel like to be attacked because of their beliefs.

In the next stage of the simulation, participants are relieved to discover they landed on Sanctuary Island. However, the teacher introduces yet another complication: participants discover members representing the fruit group that attacked them have also sought refuge on the island. Moreover, each fruit group inhabits a part of the island that holds resources needed by every group in order to survive. In order to stay on the island, fruit groups must come up with a solution to live together with other fruits who represent groups that have attacked them in the past. Faced with this challenge, participants must wrestle with different ways they can respond: will they work with other groups to resolve their issues, or will they return to the danger of their home?

Participants choose to work together to ensure their peace on the island. Members of each fruit group work together with members of the groups which have attacked them or members of groups that have been attacked by members of their fruit community. They express the fears and misconceptions groups have about the beliefs and culture of one another or about how others may treat them, and devise rules of behavior that ensure each community can live on the island in peace and without fear of attack.

Peace is possible in the final stage of the lesson, as fruit groups share the rules they created and agree upon a set of rules for all members of each fruit community. Participants recognize the rules are created to protect the rights and freedoms of each community to practice their unique beliefs and culture without fear of attacks or oppression from others who believe and practice differently from them. These rules reflect the freedoms and protections defined in Article 18 of the UDHR. Once participants create their new framework for freedom, they are encouraged to return to their home communities in order to articulate their rights to others and share their newfound understanding of freedom and respect for the rights and dignity of others.

morality, views about life and behavior, and expression. Through analogies and simulations, teachers are able to explore complex and sensitive issues like the importance of freedom for the human spirit and conscience, respect for the diversity of faiths that exist in a community, and protection for the space in society that allows people to live out their religion or beliefs.

After the students explore an analogy, the teacher helps them relate the elements of the analogy to a key concept inherent to Article 18 and related human rights. Some analogies – comparisons based on similarities – appear to be effective in supporting construction of features of a concept by building on familiar experience or prior models of understanding. Over time through multiple lessons, students not only develop a deeper understanding of their rights and the rights of others, but they learn to apply these concepts to their interaction with others in the classroom and the community. **Importantly, many of the methods used in Hardwired's program are also considered best practices in play therapy for helping children who have experienced trauma in the recovery process.** The simulations, activities, and analogies utilized create a safe environment whereby children can release negative emotions (since the analogy relates indirectly to the traumatic experience) and replace them with positive experiences that reinforce the key concepts, of which most importantly is the concept of their own human dignity.

Hardwired conducted a second phase of training and hosted a two-day workshop for 21 teachers in Lebanon and 22 teachers in Iraq, which included the initial group of 14 teachers and the new teachers they had recruited. The training supported returning teachers' ongoing development and leadership as they helped to facilitate the learning of new teachers. In August 2017, Hardwired facilitated one intensive five-day training for 13 teachers from Morocco.

Following each training, teachers returned to their classrooms to implement lessons and share what they learned with other teachers and administrators in their schools, conduct pre- and post- surveys to measure conceptual change in students, and make detailed observations of student responses during the Spring 2017, Fall 2017, and Winter 2018 school terms. Moroccan teachers implemented lessons in human rights clubs and informal educational settings. Throughout this process, the teachers participated in group conference calls to share best practices, challenges, and to discuss new opportunities that created a strong support network for ongoing collaboration with one another in each country.

During the Spring of 2017, 14 teachers implemented lessons they developed with their students. In the Fall of 2017, all 56 teachers implemented the same lesson, which was also one they had experienced as part of the training course. This enabled Hardwired to make a more accurate assessment of the impact of the lessons on students from different countries. In the Winter of 2018, some teachers had an opportunity to conduct a second lesson with the same group of students to provide additional longitudinal data of the impact of multiple lessons on children.

During the initial workshops in each country, teachers shared various challenges that could affect their ability to effectively implement the program in their schools, including:

- Despite official support, they were concerned that parents and school administrators may restrict their ability to implement lessons on human rights with children, particularly if they are concerned that their children would be learning about ideas that change the way they think about religion.
- Ongoing conflict or unrest in some areas may inhibit teachers' efforts to implement the program in certain schools.
- The closure of various schools and growth of others as displaced people moved in and out of the community shifted the student population and could leave some teachers without students with whom to implement the lessons.
- Students who have experienced trauma from violent extremism in recent years require

intensive psychosocial support, which teachers feel they are incapable of providing without additional assistance.

However, in spite of various challenges, teachers were able to successfully implement their lessons, even in the midst of conflict and unrest. Moreover, several teachers shared how parents and administrators in their schools were extremely supportive and even became involved in their lessons over the course of the program. Students shared that they became more confident, comfortable, and accepted in their own beliefs. And when parents and the community were not supportive, the students were in a better position to challenge their fears, misconceptions and biases against others. (See examples below under Student Developments.) Still, official permission was a critical factor which ensured teachers had the support they needed to effectively implement the lessons in their classrooms. Importantly, the program also provided teachers a unique method of helping children who experienced trauma work through their fears in a safe and indirect environment that contributed to their healing and new perceptions of others.

HELPING TEACHERS COUNTER EXTREMIST THINKING AND BUILD A MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Teachers have the ability to influence the culture of the classroom and children's' behavior beyond it in their communities. As such, they serve as part of the frontline defense against the ideas of hate and intolerance that can fuel recurrent cycles of violence and extremism. **Ensuring that teachers can be effective agents of change in their classrooms therefore begins with addressing their own fears and misconceptions of others, so they can internalize an insightful level of respect that will influence how they teach their students to respect others.**

During the course of the program, Hardwired's trainers made several observations about teachers' fears and misconceptions about the rights and freedoms of people of different religions or beliefs. This enabled trainers to make necessary adjustments throughout the program to create an environment in which teachers were able to confront their own

Young students displaced from the Sinjar region of Iraq completed lessons in a school for internally displaced persons in Iraqi Kurdistan and met with Hardwired staff to share what they learned in the program. Photo Credit: Olivia Blinn (@oblinn)

Throughout the program, lessons provided unique opportunities for students to engage with one another outside the classroom in new types of activities. Photo Credit: Participant, Lebanon

fears and misconceptions and develop a new way of thinking that would enable them to build respect for these rights in their classroom.

In general, most teachers from Morocco and Lebanon felt their school communities had a generally high level of respect for people of different religions or beliefs, while teachers from Iraq were readily able to identify challenges to pluralism and inclusion. For instance, the most common misconception observed throughout the course of the program was the use of "tolerance" to describe respect for the rights and freedoms of people of different religions or beliefs, which is a very narrow or limited interpretation of the rights others require under international human rights definitions. Similarly, the concept of "pluralism" was not well understood. For most teachers, it was associated with diversity rather than a more robust definition which includes the active engagement and participation of people of different beliefs in the community. Several teachers in Lebanon and Morocco thought the separation of religious and ethnic groups in society reflected a high level of positive co-existence. However, their view changed as they engaged in activities that broadened their understanding of these concepts.

During the course of the program, teachers shared more openly that they were frustrated with their inability to address more serious challenges among students in their communities. For instance, in Iraq,

teachers were working with students affected by the trauma of war and did not have the skills to help students respond. The example of the beheading game played by children was not uncommon to hear as teachers reported how children even outside areas affected by the conflict in Iraq were beginning to identify with the terrorist group known as ISIS. And as teachers returned to areas previously under ISIS-control, they were unsure how to integrate students who took part in the violence or had adopted intolerant ideas with victims and other children in their classrooms.

In Lebanon, teachers acknowledged the challenges to pluralism and inclusion created by long-standing separation of religious communities. As mentioned, some teachers had at first thought separation reflected their respect for one another, but as they became more open and interacted with teachers from different communities, they recognized how separation affected respect for people of different religions or beliefs and, ultimately, their ability to build a more inclusive environment where students could overcome their fear and misconceptions of others. For instance, one teacher shared how her father had been murdered by someone in his own religious community when he opposed the forced separation and removal of people from another religion from their city. Teachers began to share observations of how the separation of religious communities was reinforcing fear, misconceptions,

and ultimately intolerance among students more openly throughout the program.

In all of the countries, teachers also recognized how certain laws and policies may reinforce inequality and discrimination of certain minority groups or prevent them from having a prominent voice in the society. They also recognized how the lack of diversity, for instance in Morocco, may affect children's ability to actively engage people of different religions or beliefs and inhibit or contradict what they wanted to teach in the classroom. Teachers overwhelmingly voiced concern that local religious leaders and parents were reinforcing intolerant beliefs among the children and would undermine their efforts. Some expressed concern over working with children from different religious communities that may not respect them or the lessons they shared.

Isam, a Muslim teacher and schoolmaster working with displaced children in northern Iraq, did not believe he would ever be able to return to his village in Sinjar following the defeat of ISIS because of how his former neighbors would view him. Isam shared that a group of Muslims tried to return to their village in Sinjar following the area's liberation from ISIS and were shot and killed by Yezidis from the community who feared they came to continue the terror ISIS had started. He feared his neighbors would associate him with the terrorist group in the same way and they would be unable to live side-by-side once again. Members of minority communities had similar concerns about sharing the lessons in schools or communities with a majority that did not respect them.

In general, as we began, teachers were not optimistic about the usefulness of the program to address serious challenges in their community. However, they recognized their need for tools and strategies to address challenges among their students or deflate tensions and were open to learning.

Teachers emerged from the program prepared to break the cycle of intolerance, hatred and violence in their communities by integrating the new skills

and understanding into their curriculum. Through in-depth instruction in the pedagogy of conceptual change and additional teaching methodologies, as well as the content of key concepts inherent in human rights and the protection of people of different religions or beliefs, Hardwired was able to equip teachers to identify and respond to the fears, biases, and misconceptions which underpin tensions or hostilities among students, learn how to deflate dangerous situations, and help children work through the trauma or confusion they may have experienced. With each lesson, teachers began to build a more inclusive environment in their classroom that students spread throughout their communities.

> *"This [training] helped me get over any issues with anybody — regardless of their religion or faith." —Samy, Morocco*

Isam returned to his school for displaced students in Duhok to implement lessons with students who shared the same fear and uncertainty he felt about the future. However, he was amazed to find students come together through the lesson and share a common desire for peace and security. One student from Mosul in his class shared, "There is diversity in religion [in Iraq] and it is important to learn about this so we can live together. I hope other students will accept each other." Isam was so impressed with his students' response to the program, he expressed his desire to train every teacher in his school.

While Isam has not returned to Sinjar, he is eager to impact educators and students who are preparing to return home and rebuild their communities. "This is the only way we can have peace," he said. While Hardwired trainers provided extensive training in key concepts and methodologies, educators also learned from one another. Ali, an imam in northern Iraq, participated in the first training with other educators from Iraq and Lebanon. By his own example in the training, he corrected fears and misconceptions non-Muslim participants had about Muslims in their own communities.

Samy a teacher in Morocco, did not expect to experience a significant change in his own perceptions of others or the concepts explored through the training — personally and in his teaching capacity. By the end of the first training, he shared, "The perspective that we came with is quite different from the perspective that we have now. At first, I was unsure of this training – what it was going to be and what was the purpose of this training? As we got further into training, the concept of pluralism was expanded more and more, to the point where we could have a big discussion about pluralism and [diversity]. This helped me to get over any issues with anybody – regardless of their religion or faith."

Samy also shared, "The methodologies and pedagogy that I learned here will help me to teach in the future," he said. "These tools will help me convince my students and others to embrace pluralism."

And in spite of their fears and a variety of challenges, every teacher was extremely well received by their students and in many cases, the students wanted the lessons extended. Moreover, students exhibited behaviors that changed the perceptions of the teachers about the impact of teaching them to respect the rights and freedoms of others. The significant positive impact these lessons had on students will be described in the next section.

MEASURING IMPACT: EVIDENCE OF TRANSFORMATION AMONG TEACHERS

While the initial survey used in Spring 2017 did not reflect the conceptual change occurring among teachers from Lebanon and Iraq — possibly due to them overstating their initial conceptions on the pre-survey and then self-correcting on the post-survey — qualitative data collected from group discussions, as well as teachers' comments and observations of students' attitudes and behavior about freedom of religion or belief occurred in all participants. However, we recognized opportunities to strengthen the survey in order to more accurately measure for conceptual change in participants, and

we revised the survey following the first training with teachers from Iraq and Lebanon. When teachers from Morocco were assessed using the revised survey, they demonstrated statistically significant conceptual change during the training, most notably in response to questions regarding non-discrimination and women's rights.

By the end of the program, teachers were not only personally and professionally transformed and empowered by learning new skills that could be translated into other subjects, but they also had a significant impact in their schools and communities more broadly. For instance:

- There was a significant replication rate among teacher trainers. Each of the initial group of 14 teachers identified and recruited at least two additional teachers to participate in the program and impacted many others in their schools.
- Teachers developed professionally and acquired new methods to teach students to value one another and respond to extremist thinking.
- New opportunities to scale the program arose in each country as teachers exemplified the positive impact the lessons could have on students and their schools and communities, evidenced by some fellow teachers and administrators who were eager to share the lessons with their own students and adopt them into the school curriculum.

Teachers are eager to replicate and expand the program and train other teachers in their communities.

- In Lebanon, Hasan is working with his schoolmaster to facilitate a training for other teachers at his school so they, too, can promote human dignity and equality among their students. He is also working with the national agency that provides professional development support for teachers to incorporate lessons developed from this program into their formal teacher-training. Another participant, a

principal, is planning a workshop to train 100 teachers in his school and is working to have the program adopted by the 16 other principals in his school's private association.

• In Morocco, Samy and his colleagues recognize the value of the program as a practical step in implementing His Royal Highness King Muhammad VI's Marrakesh Declaration, and they are eager to develop a booklet to promote respect for the region's religious minorities using Hardwired's teaching pedagogy. Teachers have also adapted the Sanctuary Island lesson into a play that can be used in human rights clubs across the country to reach more children.

• In Iraq, teachers recognize the immediate need for students to exhibit greater respect for others, particularly in a post-conflict setting, and they have overcome significant challenges to implementing their lessons. One teacher of displaced students in northern Iraq was so committed to promoting these values among his students, he traveled to Mosul immediately following the liberation of the city in order to share additional lessons with those who already returned, and several teachers in Mosul are eagerly waiting for the next training opportunity with Hardwired. Teachers in Iraq remain eager to train other teachers and develop materials for distribution to youth across the country. Ali, a teacher and imam in northern Iraq, implemented lessons in the religious school he established in his mosque. As children come to the school to receive religious instruction, they also learn about the importance of respect for people from different religions and the innate human dignity of each person. He identified additional participants to join the program during the second phase of training, and he openly shared about the importance of this program in all of Iraq, including Kurdistan.

In each training, participants worked in diverse groups to complete activities and lesson simulations that introduced them to new concepts and methodologies to teach for conceptual change. Photo Credit: Olivia Blinn (@oblinn)

A teacher from Iraq participates in a training activity about seeing other perspectives. Here, the exercise includes an image of a young woman and an old woman, and participants are encouraged to see both. Photo Credit: Olivia Blinn (@oblinn)

Teachers felt better equipped to face extremist ideas and related challenges in their classrooms and communities.

• Ali, an imam from northern Iraq, shared, "I am a religious teacher, and I can feel the danger in our society. I understand how important it is to spread this freedom and protect the rights of everyone. In Kurdistan, we suffered in the past. Because of this, we take this work and mission seriously. This training gave us new tools and materials, and we must apply them across all of Iraq."

• Khalid, a Yezidi teaching students who were displaced by ISIS in northern Iraq, never imagined he would have an opportunity to share these concepts with his students. The training was particularly important for Khalid and his colleagues who are teaching youth who have been severely traumatized and displaced from their homes. Many of these teachers lack the training and resources they need to respond to religion-related conflict, but Hardwired was able to provide useful tools and strategies that teachers could use immediately with their students. "I never expected we would be able to teach about Article 18 in a formal way to our students," he said. This training was the first opportunity he had to come together with other teachers from different regions to better understand issues they all shared but rarely discussed. "The training program has showed us how to create a dialogue with students and speak to them directly at their level of understanding, so they can

learn," he said.

• In a meeting with the Ministry of Education, teachers from Lebanon shared how innovative the program was, both in content and in pedagogy. Many shared how they had never been given skills in a professional development course that they could implement and utilize immediately following it or adapt to their subjects in a variety of ways.

Teachers reported growing receptivity and interest in rights-based lessons from students, other teachers and school administrators.

• Following the training sessions, teachers were eager to share their new skills and findings with others in their community. Sara, a teacher in Lebanon, invited the schoolmaster and other teachers to observe the lesson during the Spring 2017 term. "When the schoolmaster observed how the students responded to the lesson, she said she wanted to make the lesson an obligatory part of instruction for all teachers at the school," Sara said. "The schoolmaster proposed teachers conduct a lesson to encourage pluralism and diversity among students once a month."

• In Lebanon, Hasan, a secondary school teacher, submitted the lesson he created through the program to his school administrator to be included as a permanent component of his school's curriculum. He reported many teachers and students were interested in his lessons and asked him to share it with other classrooms. While one lesson has a significant impact

on teachers and students, Hasan recognizes teachers and students will benefit from multiple lessons and learning opportunities. He is working diligently with colleagues and officials to develop and provide training opportunities and learning resources to eachers and students in Lebanon.

Hardwired also observed the following based on an analysis of how students responded to the lessons implemented by the teachers:

• Teachers transformed the culture of the classroom over time, which was evidenced by higher rates of positive change in students who received more than one lesson or worked with teachers who attended more than one training.

• Students were transformed, excited, responded well to teachers, wanted to participate in more lessons, and wanted to work together in their community and school to build respect for people of different religions or beliefs.

Based on these observations, there is a critical need for professional development among teachers, particularly in pedagogy. Moreover, teachers need multiple training and professional development opportunities because the more experience they gain, the greater the impact they will have on their students.

TRAINING TEACHERS TO EFFECTIVELY ASSESS CHANGES IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

As teachers shared lessons developed through the program with their students, Hardwired worked closely with teachers to collect quantitative and qualitative data from students participating in the program to help them evaluate their students' progress. Teachers reported they used various standard methods to assess students' knowledge of information, such as standardized testing or questionnaires throughout the lesson to check for understanding. However, most recognized they lacked the formal training in evaluation and observation methods necessary to formally assess changes in attitudes and behaviors, which are more difficult to

assess than basic knowledge acquired.

Moreover, teachers' ability to assess conceptual change in students' understanding of the concepts presented and build greater respect for the rights and freedoms of others was limited by their own understanding of the concepts. As the teachers began to better understand the concepts, they were better able to assess their students' understanding as well, which contributed to greater evidence of conceptual change as the program progressed. Teachers used the "Sanctuary Island" fruit simulation designed by Hardwired in addition to other lessons they developed. The simulation generally took three to five hours to complete and other lessons were generally one to two hours in length.

Quantitative data consisted of a scenario-based survey that addressed key concepts relating to greater respect for human dignity and the rights and freedoms of others. These key concepts included: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, the human conscience, the expression of beliefs, and the balance of rights and responsibilities that affect how rights may be limited or restricted in certain circumstances to protect the rights of others. The survey included ten scenarios and was administered prior to and immediately following each lesson. Each scenario reflected a different key concept and assessed how students would respond to situations that affected the rights of women, minority communities, people of different religions or beliefs and ethnicities, and a variety of challenges in society.

Answers to scenarios were based on a scale of egocentric to insightful, measuring students' knowledge of and attitudes toward these concepts and situations. Teachers introduced the survey by explaining that it was not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers. The survey provided an understanding of where students were on a continuum or scale, which reflected their attitudes and likely responses to various scenarios. The survey therefore provided a useful tool for teachers to assess what concepts required greater focus during the course of their lessons and how to assess whether students

EGOCENTRIC

- state, ethinicity or culture determine religion or belief
- focused on protection/ preservation of one's own community
- willing to place restrictions on others' rights
- justifies discrimination, inequality against others

- exhibits fear, hostility toward others
- hold many misconceptions of others
- willing to dominate or coerce others
- justifies violence, intolerance and hatred of others
- vindictive, may seek retribution against others
- feel threatened by other beliefs or groups

NAIVE

- religion or belief is associate with one's identity
- easily intimated by beliefs or practies of others
- limited tolerance of others
- limited engagement or awareness of other groups
- fearful or intimidated by new groups
- seek to preserve and protect dominant

- communities in culture, not new or different ones
- seek to keep groups seperate to preserve peace
- little interaction with others
- wants rights for some groups but not all
- Willing to place some restrictions on others and limit some rights

INTUITIVE

- beliefs reflect an individual's own conscience
- recognizes equal rights for others in private
- aware of different groups and diversity
- values role of religion or belief in culture and individual lives
- recognizes restrictions in laws and policies and how they affect different groups

- some engagement with different groups
- tolerant toward different groups, acceptance of some differences
- exhibits empathy toward some different groups
- willing to discuss difficult issues related to belief and morality

INSIGHTFUL

- does not associate religion or belief with ethnicity or nationality
- seeks to dialogue with others
- high level of empathy toward diverse groups
- defends equal rights for all
- able to balance rights and freedoms with limitations needed to protect others' rights

- actively protects and encourages space for people of different beliefs to express themselves
- resilient to fears, misinformation or bias toward others
- promotes pluralism
- deflates social tensions and corrects misinformation

Figure 1. Model of Conceptual Change in Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs

better understood those concepts by the end of the lesson. Figure 1 on the next page shows the conceptual understanding one would expect a student with egocentric, naïve, intuitive, or insightful knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs to use in a scenario. Since the model is based on conceptual change, it is not expected that every element at one level is expressed at a single time. Some students may hold attitudes, ideas, and perceptions that cross two levels as they are developing new understanding and ways of thinking about the key concepts.

Hardwired analyzed quantitative data from the pre-post survey by the use of a t-Test on aggregated data from all participants in the student groups and separately for the teachers. It was then analyzed by individual teacher class, gender, and religion. Comparative analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a difference in results by gender, religion, or homogeneous classroom makeup.

In addition to the survey, qualitative data was an essential tool for assessing conceptual change among students and helped explain changes seen in the survey. Teachers were trained to make observations of student comments and behaviors throughout the program. Teachers shared feedback in monthly reports to the trainers and discussed their observations of student responses. As students began to change their modes of thinking and seeing people of different religions or beliefs, teachers reported what inspired those changes and examples of how their behavior reflected the application of their new ideas and understanding.

Hardwired's teachers implemented lessons with students in the Spring and Fall of 2017 and Winter of 2018, reaching a total of 1,161 students throughout the year. During Fall 2017, every student went through the same lesson in each country, which allowed for the comparison of data across countries. In Winter 2018, some students received instruction in an additional lesson, which provided an opportunity to measure the impact of multiple lessons over time. Based on the initial survey and teacher observations, they were able

to provide a benchmark for how students perceived people of different religions and beliefs which was important for how they engaged students throughout the lessons shared with them.

In general, most teachers recognized that the greatest challenges for their students were the lack of diversity or engagement with people different from them, and the reinforcement of negative perceptions by their families, culture, and society. In some cases, schools were the only place where children of diverse religions and beliefs interacted. In many cases, communities were so isolated from one another that schools were also segregated. Teachers made the following observations about their students in light of the lack of interaction with people of different religions or beliefs:

- Children have many incorrect ideas about the beliefs and practices of others who believe differently.
- Children often exhibit less or no respect for others who think differently than them.
- Children often do not trust people from different faiths or interact with them.
- Minority students feel like they are unable to share their experiences with others and majority students believe they are superior to minority students.

During the Fall 2017, teachers utilized the "Sanctuary Island" simulation described above with all students. The simulation enabled teachers to create a more diverse environment for students to explore different perspectives through the use of different fictitious religious communities represented by fruit.

In addition to these observations, we assessed the general fears and misconceptions children have of others. While student behavior and challenges differed by country and even by region within each country, the underlying fears, biases, and misconceptions influencing student opinion and behavior remained consistent with what Hardwired has observed in more than 30 countries around the world.

Table 1. A list of the most common fears teachers reported among students

A. FEARS YOUTH HAVE ABOUT OTHERS	HOW YOUTH RESPOND TO FEARS AND MISCONCEPTIONS
1. Being judged or mistreated by people who believe differently from them or because of their religious identity.	Mistrust, shame about their beliefs, hide their faith publicly, feel threatened and powerless to defend themselves, feel excluded or marginalized, humiliated, misjudged by their own faith group
2. Being attacked by others who justify violence against them based on their religion.	Uncertainty about the future, insecure, unsafe, vulnerable, feel discriminated against or harassed, hopeless
3. Retribution because they are associated with a group that was violent.	Insecure, misjudged, ashamed
4. Being dominated by other groups and forced to change their religion or lose their religious identity.	Insecure, hide their beliefs publicly, discriminated, ashamed, threatened, limit interaction with others, unable to celebrate their holidays
5. Being considered as too conservative or religious for how one expresses their faith: people who wear religious clothing like a headscarf, fast, and express their beliefs in other ways in public may be considered as too religious and people who do not wear religious symbols like the headscarf or do not participate in religious practices like fasting or prayer as too liberal or secular.	Misjudged, confused, frustrated, angry
General: Youth also expressed general fears about being unable to respond when attacked. They feel unprepared to defend themselves, their beliefs and their rights, they feel that there is little space for minorities, that others won't listen to them, and like they may be blamed by society for problems.	
B. MISCONCEPTIONS YOUTH HAVE ABOUT FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT BELIEFS	HOW DOES THIS REFLECT A MISCONCEPTION?
1. Some religions can justify intolerance, extremism or violence toward others.	Religious beliefs cannot be used to justify violence or taking away the rights of others.
2. The majority will never accept minorities or people who dissent from the majority.	Minorities may feel excluded by provisions in laws, policies or by society, without reinforcement from the state and other groups that they have equal rights.
3. Segregating religious communities will protect peace and freedom for all.	Separation reinforces misconceptions and bias toward others that leads to intolerance whereas active engagement with others encourages respect.
4. The freedom is used to coerce others to accept their beliefs.	The freedom can never be used to coerce others to change what they believe or how they express those beliefs. Rather, the freedom protects an individual's right to live according to their own conscience.
5. The freedom of religion or belief will protect religion and religious ideas from being attacked or challenged.	The freedom protects the individual and their right to hold a belief and practice that belief; it does not protect religion or ideas.
6. Religion is a private matter and should not be expressed in public.	Freedom of religion or belief includes the right to express one's beliefs in public and in private because beliefs naturally affect one's behaviors and external religious obligations.
7. If they are tolerant of others, then they respect their rights.	Tolerance, or to tolerate someone, is not the same as respecting the equal inherent rights of others regardless of whether you feel they are right or wrong. True freedom defends the space for others to believe differently.

Table 2. Paired t-Test results Pre-Post Survey Aggregated Student Data

Fall 2017	The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.
Winter 2018	The two-tailed P value equals 0.0001 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

MEASURING IMPACT: EVIDENCE OF RESILIENCY AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS AMONG YOUTH

Throughout the course of the program, students consistently demonstrated ongoing and significant conceptual change in their understanding and acceptance of key concepts inherent to Article 18 and related human rights. Evaluation of pre- and post- survey data indicates students entered the program primarily in the egocentric and naïve stages of understanding. Within a short period of time, students increased by at least one and often two levels of understanding, with the vast majority reaching an intuitive stage of understanding, indicating a statistically significant level of conceptual change about the many fears and misconceptions they have regarding others, and thus resiliency to the ideas of hate and intolerance that make them vulnerable to radicalization and violence.

Paired t-Test on aggregate student data indicated that the pre-post change was extremely statistically significant, with a P value of 0.0001 (data is considered significant at 0.05). This suggests that conceptual change in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs occurred at a significant level for all students, which was reinforced in the qualitative data assessed as well.

Data from the lesson teachers conducted in Fall 2017 with 674 students indicated they demonstrated extremely statistically significant changes in questions relating to non-discrimination (questions 2 and 9), conscience (question 1), expression (questions 1), and balance of rights and limitations (questions 1 and 2).

The average pre-score placed students in the egocentric to naïve level on the conceptual change continuum. The average post-score placed students

Figure 2. Religious Demographics of Students for the Fall 2017 Term: Christian (Orthodox, Catholic, Maronite, Assyrian, and Chaldean), Muslim (Sunni and Shi'a), Yezidi, Druze, and Unspecified.

- Christian
- Druze
- Muslim
- Unspecifed
- Yezidi
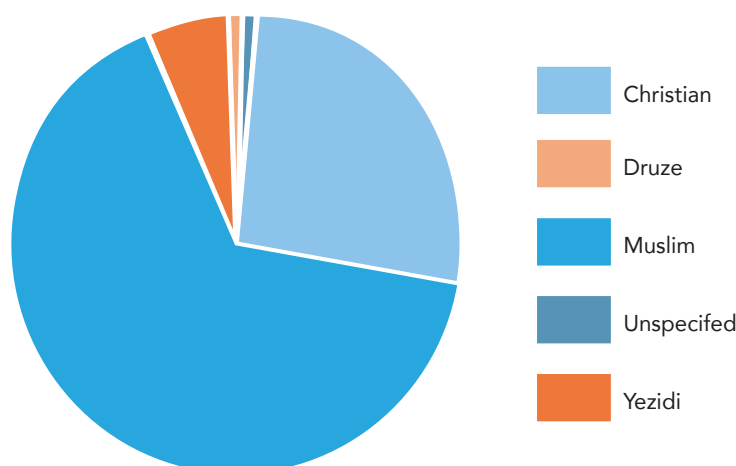
in the intuitive level, with some students reaching the insightful level. Upon a closer look at each question, there is significant movement among students from the egocentric level to higher levels of understanding in a short period of time. Since this movement is one of the most significant leaps among the different levels, it is explored further in Table 3 and in the examples below. Analysis of Winter 2018 data indicates that this trend toward greater understanding and resiliency continues with additional lessons over time.

Shift in Responses to Discrimination and Attacks on Religious Identity

In Question 2, students are asked how they will respond to a hypothetical situation where they are being discriminated against by teachers and students at school. The situation posed is uncomfortable because it is an attack on their religious identity and beliefs. The responses range from acting in retribution and anger to dialogue and understanding. It is significant that students responded in the pre-survey with a negative reaction and in the post-survey, they responded in a more measured approach that sought to deflate the situation and build bridges and understanding in the school among people of different beliefs. **Of the students who originally scored in the egocentric level, 50% of them experienced a positive change in the post survey.**

Similarly, 50% of the students who scored in the naïve level on the pre survey experienced a positive change in the post survey. Instead of responding to the situation by calling for greater restrictions on what others say, the students overwhelmingly opted for responses that opened the door for meaningful dialogue and avoided the slippery slope of retribution which often leads to greater restrictions on or threats to everyone's freedom over time by creating a hostile and vindictive environment. Importantly, the largest shift in perspectives of others occurred among girls and one out of every two students that had an egocentric or naïve initial response exhibited a more measured non-violent approach in the pre survey after only one lesson.

Shift in Perspectives of Gender Equality

In Question 9, students were asked how they would respond to a hypothetical situation involving discrimination against girls in the classroom. The initial responses reflected common attitudes that force girls to be quiet observers in the classroom and not learn how to speak up for themselves because they are considered more emotional or less capable than boys. However, those attitudes were significantly changed over the course of the lesson so that post-survey responses reflected attitudes whereby girls would be given equal opportunities in the classroom and be considered for classroom responsibilities based on their abilities rather than gender. **Of the students who began with an egocentric response on the pre survey, 62% of them experienced a significant shift to a more intuitive and insightful response about the discrimination of girls.** Three out of every five students who began the program with a very egocentric view ended after only one lesson with a significantly more respectful view of girls. Importantly, the largest shift in perspectives occurred among boys. Again, the lessons did not directly teach about religion or gender; rather, by focusing on key concepts such as human dignity, they influenced perceptions of others more broadly.

Shift in Response to Public Expression of Religion or Belief, Diversity and Pluralism

In Question 1, the concepts of conscience, expression, and balance of rights were all considered. The hypothetical scenario involved someone sharing an inspirational story from their faith on their social media. Students were asked how they felt about public expressions of faith like this. Initial responses showed a lack of support for the public expression of different beliefs and even discomfort about such diversity in the public space. However, on post-surveys, student attitudes shifted, and they increasingly supported the sharing of personal faith in the public square and did not feel threatened by it. For instance, 57% of students who began with a egocentric response to this scenario exhibited significant movement toward a more intuitive understanding by the end of the lesson. This shift, coupled with the quantitative data

described below, exemplified a movement toward greater pluralism and respect for diversity in their communities.

Importantly, the growing comfort in hearing and learning about the different ways people express their beliefs did not change students' own beliefs. One of the teachers expressed this well when describing what she observed in her classroom. She said, "Students realized they didn't have to change their religion."

Shift in Attitudes About Inclusion of Girls and People of Other Religions or Beliefs

Students demonstrated a smaller, but still significant, positive change in two questions relating to non-discrimination (questions 5 and 7). Both questions involved acceptance and inclusion of girls or people of different religions and beliefs in the life of the school and community. The average pre-score was relatively high at the intuitive level, which is positive.

This suggests students were either overrating their attitudes in the pre-survey or they were genuinely more intuitive in their understanding of the concepts addressed in these questions. Post-score averages placed students slightly higher in the intuitive level. Students moved significantly from the naïve to intuitive level of understanding.

On question 5, three-percent of students remained at the egocentric level of understanding. Between Fall 2017 and Winter 2018, the percentage of students scoring at the intuitive level dropped from 75-percent to 58-percent, and the percentage of students scoring at the insightful level increased from 17-percent to 28-percent. At the same time, 100% students who began with an egocentric response to Question 5 moved to an intuitive response, which is an increase of two levels of understanding. This suggested that students were moving in a positive direction from the intuitive to insightful level of conceptual change.

Table 3. The Percentage of Students Experiencing Positive Movement in Responses From Each Level in Pre '17 to Post '17.

CONCEPTUAL CHANGE LEVEL	Q1	Q2	Q5	Q7	Q9
1. EGOCENTRIC	57% (to 2, 3, 4)*	50% (to 2 or 3)*	100% (to 3)*	87% (to 3 or 4)*	62% (to 3 or 4)*
2. NAÏVE	52% (to 3, 4)	50% (to 3)	50% (to 2 or 3)*	69% (to 3 or 4)*	56% (to 3 or 4)*
3. INTUITIVE	41% (to 4)	27% (to 4)	13% (to 4)	50% (to 4)	26% (to 4)
4. INSIGHTFUL					

*Indicates a shift among students of more than one level from pre to post response.

On question 7, which addresses the rights of women, only seven-percent of students remained at the egocentric level of understanding. However, the percent of students scoring at the intuitive level increased from 19-percent to 30-percent after the second lesson. And, importantly, 87% of the students who began with an egocentric response to question 7 moved to a more intuitive or insightful response after

only one lesson. The data was analyzed to determine movement in conceptual change over time as indicated in Figure 2. The pre survey in 2017 showed most students in the naïve (40%) to intuitive (53%) range, with roughly seven percent of students in the egocentric range. However, on the post survey many had moved from egocentric to naïve and intuitive, with the egocentric range dropping to only two
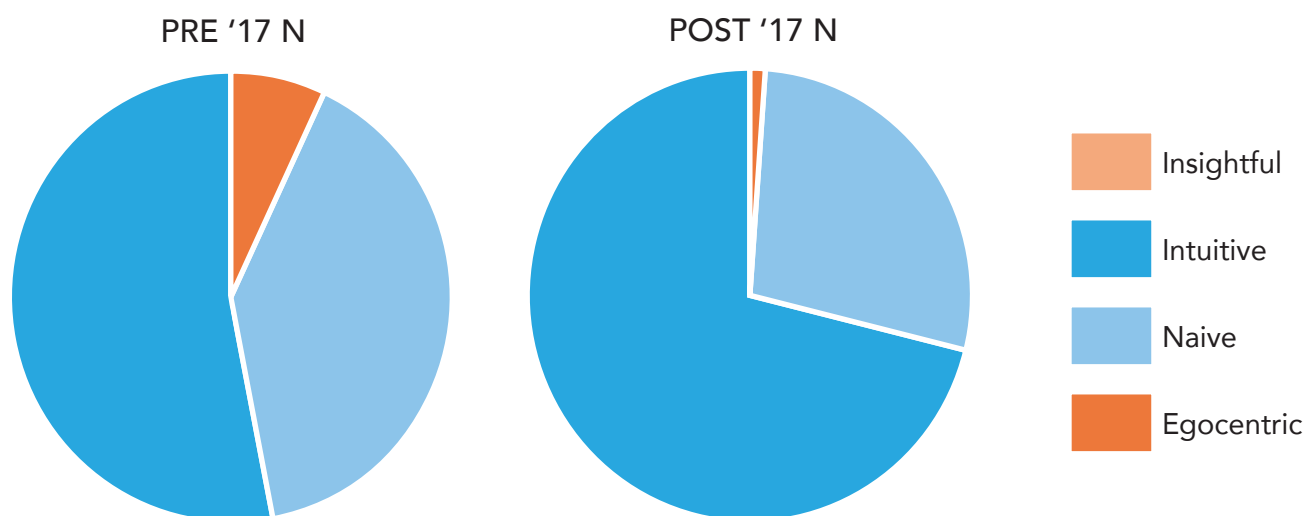
PRE '17 N

POST '17 N

Insightful

Intuitive

Naive

Egocentric

Figure 3. Comparison of Conceptual Change Movement Pre to Post '17 Shows Positive Movement Away From Egocentric and Naïve Levels to Intuitive Level.

percent of students and the intuitive range growing to 68% of students. Since it is common for participants to over-estimate their initial conceptions, pre-scores may be overestimated which would make the increase in post-score movement more significant.

Data from the second lesson teachers conducted in Winter 2018 indicated similar results. After the second post survey in 2018, more students had moved into the intuitive range and a few even into the insightful range on individual questions. Students demonstrated significant conceptual change

on all questions, especially by progressing from the naïve to intuitive level of understanding and moving out of the egocentric and naïve conceptual change categories. While overall students did not show insightful levels on aggregated data, individual students did score in this range on specific questions, including questions 5 and 7 noted above. Finer analysis within each category also showed movement. That is, while a student may have stayed within Category 2, they, for example, moved from a 2.0 to a 2.6 indicating movement in conceptual change understanding.

Figure 4. Conceptual Change on Post '18 Survey Indicating Positive Movement Toward Intuitive-Insightful Level of Understanding of Freedom of Religion or Belief and Positive Movement Away From Egocentric and Naïve Levels.

POST '18 N

Insightful

Intuitive
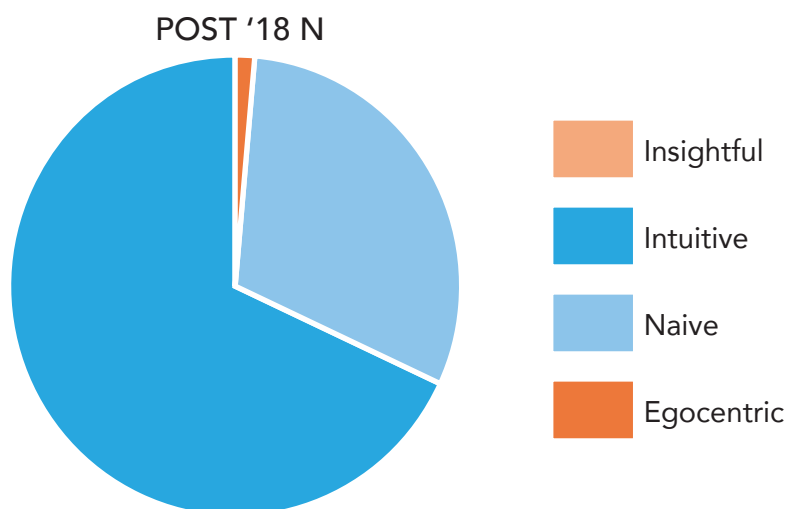
Naive

Egocentric

Overall, students moved from the egocentric and naïve-developing levels into the intuitive levels at significant rates in a short period of time that appears to be self-sustaining when reinforced through multiple lessons (Table 4 and Figure 3). For instance, 77% of students who scored at the egocentric level in the Pre '17 survey experienced positive movement toward a more naïve understanding. As such, nearly three out of every four students who began at an egocentric level of understanding, ended with a more naïve understanding of the rights and freedoms of others. And when those students experienced a second lesson, there was a dramatic shift away from the egocentric levels. Similarly, 25% of students who scored in the naïve level on the Pre '17 survey moved to a more intuitive level by the Post '17 survey. As such, one out of every four students beginning with a naïve understanding of this freedom experienced a positive movement toward a more intuitive understanding through one lesson. And the number of students experiencing a more intuitive understanding increased as well, with 22% or one in every five students experiencing a positive movement toward a more intuitive understanding following one lesson. Importantly, these changes along the continuum from egocentric to insightful occurred with only a few hours of instruction in the material. Students that received additional instruction, even in lessons that lasted only a few additional hours, exhibited continuous growth in their understanding of the key concepts. This may also be in part due to a change in the culture of the classroom, which can be a result of additional teacher training as well.

The data is showing a significant movement toward greater respect, tolerance, and acceptance of people of different religions and beliefs and active engagement with them through a few hours of instruction and this change is proving to be sustainable as additional lessons are applied. Consequently, each lesson is producing greater resiliency to the ideas of hate and intolerance that fuel violent extremism. In the course of one lesson, egocentric views of others and their rights are drastically reduced, and nearly vanish with a second lesson.

Table 4. The number (N) and percent of students who scored at each level Pre, Post '17, and Post '18.

CONCEPTUAL CHANGE LEVEL	LESSON ONE		LESSON TWO
	Pre '17 N (percent of total students)	Post '17 N (percent of total students)	Post '18 N
EGOCENTRIC	43 (7%)	10 (2%)	2 (1%)
NAÏVE	264 (40%)	199 (30%)	48 (28%)
INTUITIVE	347 (53%)	445 (68%)	122 (71%)
INSIGHTFUL	0	0	0
N (number students)=	**654**	**654**	**172***

Post '18 N scores for 172 students derived using an un-paired t-test with Post '17 N data.

STUDENTS DEVELOPMENTS: EVIDENCE OF CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Evidence of students' development toward greater respect for people of different religions or beliefs extended beyond analysis of quantitative data. Teachers reported observable and significant behavioral changes among students through even just one lesson. The primary indicators of behavioral change occurred in the following areas:

- Growing understanding and inclusion of people of different religions or beliefs in the community.
- Increased awareness of human dignity and openness to discussing rights of diverse groups.
- Greater respect for girls through education that fostered respect for people of diverse faiths.
- Reduction in violence and ability to overcome fears and hostility.
- Students' attitudes, perceptions and behavior dramatically improved with only a few hours of instruction and showed continued improvement with a second lesson.

Human Dignity, Equality and Inclusion of Religious Diversity: Students demonstrated greater respect for and inclusion of women, girls and members of minority communities in the classroom.

Data from survey questions reflected an increase in conceptual change about the concepts of human dignity and equality related to greater acceptance and inclusion of people belonging to different religions and beliefs living in their community throughout the program. This data was also reinforced in the observations made by teachers.

For example, Sara implemented a lesson among Christian students in a community with a significant Syrian refugee population. "There is a group of Syrian refugees in the village who are Muslim, and the [Christian] students at the school did not often interact with them or include them," she said. "In fact, they would refuse to participate in activities together. After the lesson, we had a large celebration. My students wanted other children from the refugee community to participate in the celebration. They said, 'We learned we need to be together.'"

Teachers also reported that lessons created an opportunity for students to apply the key concepts of human dignity and equality to discussions on other associated rights — including the rights of women and gender equality, individuals of different sexual orientations, and ethnic minority groups — in a safe a non-threatening environment. Many teachers reported this was the first time they heard their students speak openly and honestly about these often sensitive issues. Teachers observed that, as their students developed greater respect for their peers on the basis of their human dignity, they exhibited greater empathy for others regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity. In this respect, we found that the program supports greater respect for and inclusion of women, girls, and members of minority communities in the classroom.

"We learned we need to be together." —Student, Lebanon

Gender and Religion: The most significant positive conceptual change in how students saw others occurred in mixed-gender and mixed-religion classes.

In each country, **male and female students made significant developments in their understanding of the key concepts about respect for the rights and freedoms of people of different religions or beliefs.** Table 5 shows the results to the t test on pre-post surveys where all female students and then all male students were aggregated for Fall and Winter. Responses to survey questions on non-discrimination, particularly in the area of women's rights, yielded the most significant positive change. Male students from all classes showed the most significant change in this area. This reflects an important relationship between education in the area of pluralism and women's rights.

Table 5. Data Analysis by Gender

GENDER	FEMALES	MALES
Fall 2017	P = 0.0001	P = 0.0001
Winter 2018	P = 0.0001	P = 0.0003

Classes were both mixed-gender and single-gender as well as mixed-religion and single-religion. Analysis of student responses indicates that single-religion or single-gender classes exhibit less conceptual change than mixed-religion and/or mixed-gender classes. Students in these classes often over rated their pre survey understanding and then either stayed the same or moved lower on the conceptual change continuum. More significant gains in conceptual change were noted in classes where there was mixed-gender, mixed-religion, or both mixed-gender and mixed-religion. This is likely because there is greater exchange of ideas and challenges to misconceptions and ideologies, which in turn allows for greater conceptual change and development among students.

Mixed-religion classes exhibited similar conceptual change to single-religion classes, and there was no significant difference among the various religions represented in single-religion classroom data. In Winter 2018, we recognized a positive trend toward more significant conceptual change among single-religion classes. This is likely because students tested during Winter 2018 had completed a second lesson within a six-month period and exhibited significant positive conceptual change as a result of the multiple learning opportunities. There was no statistical difference in all-Muslim and all-Christian classes.

We found that mixed-gender and mixed-religion classes exhibited the most significant positive conceptual change. This supports our belief that the program has the greatest effect in an environment where students with different experiences, perceptions, and ideas can challenge each other and listen to one another.

Table 6. Data Analysis by Religion

RELIGION	MIXED	ALL MUSLIM	ALL CHRISTIAN	ALL OTHERS
Fall 2017	P = 0.0001	P = 0.0001	P = 0.0076	P = 0.0001
Winter 2018	P = 0.0033	P = 0.0025	P = 0.0001	*

*There was only 1 student who was listed as a Yezidi. Some classrooms may have had all of one religion or a mixture; therefore, when different religious groups were compared, they exhibited a similar statistically significant change. Data is significant at 0.05.

This data was reinforced by the qualitative data collected. For instance, following her second lesson, Sara observed students exhibit greater respect for the practices of others who believe differently from them. "I observed students having more respect for girls who wear hijabs than before," she said. "They did not just respect them, but they accepted them."

Moreover, Sara reported greater respect for gender equality in her classroom. She observed, "Boys listen to girls more and their voice is equal."

Displacement and Conflict: Students displaced by conflict responded equally as well to the lessons as other children and demonstrated the most significant conceptual change in learning environments with religious and/or gender diversity.

The program had an equally significant impact on children who experienced direct trauma from religion-related conflict, exhibiting the usefulness of the program for children's psycho-social recovery. Internally displaced and refugee students exhibited

significant conceptual change, most notably in mixed-religion and mixed-gender classrooms. This is likely because diverse settings enable students to challenge one another and share new information, which supports positive conceptual change. Students made significant developments in their ability to share their experiences and understand the experiences of others. This development is particularly valuable in classrooms in which students are displaced because of conflict, particularly among students with different religions or beliefs who were segregated as a result of conflict in their communities.

Khalid implemented lessons in a school for students from mixed religious and ethnic communities displaced by ISIS in northern Iraq. Prior to the lessons, students in the school had congregated with other students from their own religion, and there was a distinct separation between religious and ethnic groups. Khalid had shared his concern over whether students would be able to overcome their deep-seated fears of one another, including the fear of retribution among Muslims, and fear of continued violence

Teachers and students participated in a simulation called Sanctuary Island (see page 13) which utilizes an analogy to explore the importance of religion and belief in human life through the use of fruit. Photo Credit: Olivia Blinn (@oblinn)

among the groups targeted by ISIS. However, during the lesson, Khalid was surprised and impressed by how open students were with one another.

After the lesson, he noticed students started to engage with others who were different from them, both inside and outside of the classroom, which had not happened before. The lesson broke down barriers between students from different religious groups who were fearful of one another, particularly in the wake of ISIS. Following the lesson, some students returned to their homes, including one Yezidi boy who returned to Sheikan with his family. He was amazed when Muslim and Christian students wanted to visit their Yezidi friend in his home, and asked Khalid if they could arrange a class trip to Sheikan.

> *"I observed students having more respect for girls who wear hijabs than before. They did not just respect them, but they accepted them." —Sara, Lebanon*

Another teacher, Rabi, implemented lessons in a school for displaced students from Sinjar and Mosul. Prior to implementing the lessons, he shared he was uncertain how students from different religious communities would work together and respond to the concepts. He was surprised to find that students began to break down the emotional and social walls which separated them from others in the classroom, and they started to discuss their experiences with one another.

"We talked about real experiences from life because they are very familiar with conflict," he shared. "Each one had their own individual and personal experience." For many students from the majority religious community, this activity was the first time they had ever considered the experience of the students from the minority community. These breakthroughs lasted even after the lessons finished. He shared, "There is no longer any kind of

discrimination between them."

Violence and Religion: Students became more empathetic toward people of different beliefs and exhibited greater resiliency to the ideas of hate and intolerance that lead to violent extremism.

Data collected from the survey indicated that students exhibited a conceptual change in empathy toward others through how they responded to a variety of situations. Initial responses to scenarios on the pre-survey in many questions reflected students' desire for retribution, fear of others, desire to remain separate, and disinterest in standing up for others when they are attacked or discriminated against. The initial responses also exhibited a general inability to dialogue, which is an important factor heightening fears and tensions among different communities. Lack of understanding in situations has been an important factor in the cycle of intolerance and contributed not only to hostility and violence, but also to students' susceptibility to the ideas that lead to extremism. Students' marked growth in empathy to others was reflected in the highly significant changes between the pre- and post-survey, coupled with the behavioral changes exhibited in the classroom and their ability to dialogue and mitigate tensions, even when personally offended or hurt. **These are important indicators of the likelihood whether they will respond out of fear and violence or understanding and peace when faced with difficult challenges or extremist ideas.**

For example, throughout the program, Khalid observed his students become less violent toward one another. "Following the events of ISIS in 2014, students were shocked and had negative ideas about others," he said. "They hated one another and wanted to retaliate against others with violence." Khalid was able to use his newly acquired skill of teaching for conceptual change to bring in examples throughout the history of his community which illustrated how the groups who hated one another had lived together and worked together peacefully in the past. These examples showed students what was possible for their communities.

"It was as if they forgot how life used to be before ISIS, but they realized it was possible to live alongside one another in peace," he said. "Through the lessons we implemented with them, they changed their ideas. Now my students have a positive view about diversity of religions and they want to share with others."

"We must respect our brothers and sisters and fellow students as we have learned to respect others through these lessons."
—Student, Iraq

Ali, an imam who taught students in his religious school, observed changes in his students' behavior as well. For Ali and his students, these lessons provided the first opportunity they had to learn about key concepts inherent to freedom of religion or belief and other rights. Within just a few hours of instruction, students developed more respect for others, and their interest in these concepts grew even after the lessons. "After we implemented these lessons, they felt a sense of respect for others," he said. "They exchanged their ideas and continued discussions about pluralism and respect for these rights even after the lessons were completed."

Moreover, students were able to explain how their newfound understanding could be shared and impact, not only other students, but society more broadly. He shared, "Students said, 'If we apply what we learn not only with each other, but with the people we meet in coffee shops and restaurants, we can change society.'"

One student in particular exhibited dramatic changes in his behavior. The student was known to the school as a tough student, both physically and socially. After just two lessons, other students and even his parents were shocked by his transformation. The student said, "We have to respect each other. We must respect our brothers and sisters and fellow students as we have learned to

respect others through these lessons."
Other teachers from Iraq went to great lengths to visit schools in the recently liberated areas of Mosul to share the lessons with students there. At first, they were also frightened by how students would receive them since the children had been living under ISIS for more than three years and had been indoctrinated in their hateful ideology. One teacher, Amir, reported a significant difference between his experience in Erbil and his experience in Mosul. Amir conducted lessons in Erbil during the program, but recently returned to Mosul following the liberation of the city and works in a school for students who lived under ISIS-control.

In Erbil, students responded positively to the lessons. He said, "When we implemented these lessons, they were introduced to another way of thinking about others. I observed how they cooperated with one another."

But in Mosul, he acknowledges several challenges. He reported that both parents and students in the community challenge his work and students are negatively influenced by the ideology of their parents.

"Now in Mosul, I work in a school in a community influenced by ISIS's thoughts," he notes. "The environment is not good – they are uneducated and uncivilized. Children want to act or imitate heroes and strong men, so they idolize ISIS militants. They are inspired by ISIS."

"When we implemented these lessons, they were introduced to another way of thinking about others." *—Amir, Iraq*

This inspiration can lead to violent attacks on others. Amir reported, "Just today one student attacked other students in the school with a knife. No one was killed, but they were injured. This is a bloody society now."

This example tells us that although the program is making progress in some areas, there is still much work to do. In addition, the teachers we have trained need sustained support to continue their work and expand their reach to the students who are in urgent need of support.

Students' understanding, respect, and empathy for the rights of others increased through multiple lessons over time.
Students continued to exhibit positive conceptual change over time. **While average pre-post scores indicate a positive conceptual change for all students through each lesson, evaluation of data from students who completed more than one lesson suggests ongoing learning opportunities foster cumulative development along the conceptual change continuum.**

Data from Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 from classrooms with paired students was compared to measure conceptual change. Due to time constraints, only data from five classes was collected in time for accurate comparison. When comparing the post survey for the second lesson to the post survey of the first lesson, four out of five of the classes showed significant change.

This suggests that 78% of students who experienced a second lesson exhibited greater understanding and respect for the rights and freedoms of people from different religions or beliefs. It also leads to the conclusion that students need to engage with the key concepts during repeated sessions over time. It is expected that, while the average score on the second post survey placed students in the intuitive to insightful level of conceptual understanding, as students engage in more lessons over time, they will continue this positive conceptual change movement.

Teachers continue to use lessons learned in their classrooms to expand the program and reach more children, which has allowed Hardwired to make ongoing observations about the sustainable impact of the lessons on children over time.

Children at a camp for displaced persons in northern Iraq participate in a group painting activity and receive educational booklets about their dignity, human rights, and freedoms. Photo Credit: Lexii Jaye (@lexjaye)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
BUILDING MORE PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

The data collected from this program offers significant evidence of the positive impact rights-based educational approaches can have in building more peaceful, inclusive societies, beginning with helping them address the root causes of religion-related conflict and then providing teachers the tools they need to respond on the front-lines with children, thereby ending recurrent cycles of intolerance, hatred, and violence in society.

Importantly, children are exhibiting significant changes in attitudes and behaviors about their view of others across multiple levels after only a few hours of instruction and are maintaining these changes over time. Children who participated in the program are emerging empowered to act as more inclusive agents of peaceful change in their community. Overall, they are:

- More resilient to the ideas of hate and intolerance that fuel extremism,
- More likely to mitigate conflict through dialogue and understanding,
- More likely to defend and actively engage people of different religions and beliefs,
- More supportive of the role of religion in the public and private life of individuals,
- More likely to support women, girls, and minority groups from discrimination, and
- More empathetic of others, particularly those who were different from them.

Hardwired's innovative program was the first ever attempt in the region to utilize a rights-based approach grounded in the freedom of religion or belief and the theory of conceptual change. The program provided evidence that such programs can equip teachers with the pedagogical training and resources needed to positively influence students' behavior toward one another, strengthen their resilience to extremist ideas, and enable them to have meaningful dialogue with others who are different from them without fear of losing their own identity.

Perhaps the most significant finding of this program

is that all of these developments were achieved without addressing the content of religious education or undertaking broad curriculum reforms.

Moreover, students in diverse educational settings and in diverse cultural, social, and political contexts experienced similar statistically significant conceptual change and development in their respect for the rights of others. Even students in single-religion or single-gender classes can overcome the lack of diversity needed to challenge preconceptions of pluralism and inclusion through lessons like the Sanctuary Island simulation that present opportunities for teachers to incorporate diverse scenarios into the classroom. The program can easily be adapted to a variety of environments and local contexts. In addition, the program can be integrated into any subject area and is not limited to religion classes.

And, importantly, the program has the same impact on children affected by the trauma of conflict as much as children indirectly influenced by the ideas of hate and intolerance that lead to violence and extremism.

In short, our program has shown that rights-based education can influence significant social developments in a short period of time where curriculum reform and broad coalition efforts could not. It can be applied to any cultural, political, or social framework — in the Middle East and North Africa and more broadly around the world. Such evidence supports the need for greater resources allocated to education in countries affected by religion-related conflict as a sustainable, long-term solution to building resiliency against the ideas that foment recurrent cycles of violent extremism and global instability.

The program provided significant, substantive evidence of the impact rights-based education can have in building more peaceful, inclusive societies. For example, teachers reported students developed greater appreciation for the rights of others who believed differently from them in a way that transcended tolerance. In many cases, students

recognized that greater respect for others, when embraced widely in a community, ultimately ensured their rights and freedoms were also respected. Moreover, their expanded understanding of pluralism included recognition of the importance of active engagement with people of different beliefs as a way to better understand one another. The increase in dialogue, recognition of the religious other, and understanding alleviated fears and misperceptions, and led students to trust one another more. And contrary to their initial concerns, actively engaging others did not threaten their own beliefs, but rather helped them become more confident and comfortable with one another.

Students' perceptions of and behavior toward one another were transformed. Rather than forming their ideas or actions according to biases, misconceptions, or fears they had about others, they responded to one another with empathy and respect.

These developments are vital for youth in Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, and around the world, who stand at a critical juncture in history. As the world becomes increasingly connected, youth need a framework through which they can dialogue with others with resilience in the face of intolerance, radicalism, or extremism.

Through intensive teacher training and development of teaching resources for students, educators in various settings can play a significant role in preparing youth for a diverse and pluralistic world, strengthen their resilience to extremist ideas, and ensure greater protection of the rights of all people.

Hardwired recommends Ministries of Education in the Middle East and North Africa, and more broadly around the world, invest in a rights-based pedagogy which promotes greater respect and protection for the rights and freedoms of all people in their respective countries.

Our program provides a strategic and practical framework for governments to integrate greater respect for human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and empathy into the culture of the classroom, teaching pedagogy, and educational curricula across all subjects and age levels.

This approach can be applied to any context. A successful program requires:

- Investment in the training of Master Teacher-Trainers who are skilled in Hardwired's pedagogy and prepared to train educators broadly across the country;
- Training of educators at various grade-levels and across all subjects in Hardwired's teaching pedagogy and framework for conceptual change;
- Development of teaching resources — including activities devised by Hardwired-trained educators— to promote key concepts inherent to rights-based education in classroom curricula and culture;
- Opportunities for mixed-gender and mixed-religion classrooms where possible or exchanges with diverse classes to increase active engagement and dialogue that contributes to conceptual change; and
- Official support from local and national education officials for implementation of lessons and replication in schools.

The success of our pilot program has gained interest by educators and officials in additional countries, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. The Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq issued a letter of intent to partner with Hardwired to train its teachers to promote greater respect for the dignity and rights of all Iraqis through the new religious education curricula and distribute activity books promoting these values to 1.8 million students in the region — an exciting and important next step in the region's effort to secure a safer and more stable future for its children.

This is a step all governments can take to ensure the same for their next generation.

Hardwired's program has been shown to increase childrens' respect for the rights of others.

75%

of children who held negative views of others **were willing to defend others.**

100%

of children who excluded minority groups from leadership **became inclusive of them.**

100%

of children **supported girls' equality in education.**

60%

of children willing to discriminate against girls **learned to support girls.**

50%

of children who would react with violence or extremism **made a positive change in their behavior.**

78%

of students who experienced a second lesson exhibited **greater understanding and respect** for the rights of others.

KEY FINDINGS

Our program has shown that a rights-based teaching pedagogy based on conceptual change can be adapted to various social, cultural, religious, national, or political contexts to help both teachers and students create a framework to address the fears and misconceptions that have of one another, reconcile their beliefs with new understanding, learn how to articulate and defend the rights of people of different religions or beliefs, and mitigate ideologies that have fomented intolerance in their communities.

The data collected from this program offers significant evidence of the positive impact rights-based educational approaches can have in addressing the root causes of religion-related conflict and providing teachers the tools they need to respond on the front-lines with children. Such evidence supports the need for greater resources allocated to education in countries affected by religion-related conflict as a sustainable, long-term solution to building resiliency against the ideas that foment recurrent cycles of violent extremism and global instability.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this study provided significant evidence of the critical role teachers can have in transforming the culture of the classroom and building resiliency among youth to the ideas of hate and intolerance in the community.

Teachers are eager to replicate and expand the program to train other teachers in their communities:
• Teacher-Trainers recruited two additional teachers to participate in the program (from 14 to 56 total), demonstrating a sustainable model that can be self-replicated.
• Other teachers, school administrators, and principals became involved in lessons and were extremely supportive of the program.

Teachers feel better equipped to face extremist ideas and related challenges in their classrooms and communities:

• Teachers are now able to: identify and respond to the biases, fears, and misconceptions which underpin tensions and hostilities among students, deflate dangerous situations, and help children work through trauma or confusion they experience relating to key concepts in the program.
• Teachers were well-received by students and often received requests from children to repeat lessons or share lessons with students in other classes.

Teachers reported growing receptivity and interest in rights-based lessons from students, other teachers and school administrators:
• Teachers transformed the culture of their classrooms over time, which was evidenced by higher rates of positive change in students who received more than one lesson or worked with teachers who attended more than one training.
• Teachers reported their colleagues and school administrators are interested in supplying resources broadly to other teachers in the community and adding lessons to the formal school curricula.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this study provided significant evidence of the impact rights-based education can have in building resiliency among youth to the ideas of hate and intolerance in the community.

Students demonstrated greater understanding and acceptance of the rights of others:
• Students demonstrated extremely statistically significant conceptual changes in questions relating to non-discrimination, conscience, expression, and balance of rights and limitations.
• Students demonstrated a significant, positive change in questions relating to non-discrimination against women and girls or people of different religion and beliefs.
• On one survey question, three out of five children who began with discriminatory views of women and girls exhibited greater respect for their equal rights following one lesson, with the

largest shift occurring in boys.

• And on another, similar question, 100% of students who started the program thinking that only boys from the majority faith should lead others in learning the history of their country shifted by the end, and they recognized the rights for all groups and genders to participate and lead.

• On another question, 87% of students who were willing to let girls face discrimination and not be permitted to attend school in the beginning of the program shifted to a positive response whereby they would actively support the rights of girls to receive an education by the end of the program.

Students were less intimidated by public expression of belief and open to dialogue with others.

• More than half of students who did not support the public expression of different beliefs and diversity at the beginning of the program exhibited strong support for pluralism and diversity by the end of the lesson.

• Students were far less afraid of coercion, or that others' beliefs would affect their own beliefs, and more open to public dialogue and exchange of ideas with others.

Students' respect and empathy for the rights of others increased through multiple lessons over time:

• Three out of four students who began the program with a very limited respect for the rights of others experienced a positive change in their acceptance of others.

• Four out of five students who completed more than one lesson, even if that lesson lasted a few additional hours, exhibited cumulative development along the conceptual change continuum, which reflected greater acceptance of the rights of others over time.

• Ongoing learning opportunities and participation in multiple lessons over time enable students to experience continuous growth in their understanding of key concepts and resilience to the ideas of hate and intolerance that fuel violent extremism.

Students' responses reflected greater resiliency to extremist thinking and support for more measured, non-violent reactions to conflict

• Students were less likely to respond out of fear and misunderstanding toward others.

• Half of the students who responded to situations with a negative or violent reaction on the pre survey experienced a positive change in their attitudes following one lesson.

• Students were more likely to seek peaceful solutions than retribution toward others when attacked or threatened, which often leads to greater restrictions on or threats to everyone's freedom over time by creating a hostile or vindictive environment.

Teachers reported observable and significant behavioral changes among students in the following areas:

Human Dignity, Equality and Inclusion of Religious Diversity: Students demonstrated greater respect for and inclusion of women, girls and members of minority communities in the classroom.

• Students exhibited greater acceptance and inclusion of people from different religions and beliefs throughout the program and more willing to seek actively engage others.

• Students were more open to discussing other associated rights and exhibited greater empathy for others regardless of their gender, religion, or ethnicity.

Gender and Religion: The most significant positive conceptual change in how students

Children walk through the streets of a displaced persons camp in northern Iraq. Hardwired-trained teachers conducted lessons among students forced to flee their homes when ISIS overtook their communities in 2014. Photo Credit: Lexii Jaye (@lexjaye)

saw others occurred in mixed-gender and mixed-religion classes.

• The program has the greatest effect in an environment where students with different experiences, perceptions, and ideas can challenge each other and learn from one another.

• Both male and female students in each country made significant developments in their understanding of key concepts. Mixed-gender classes exhibited more significant conceptual change than all-male or all female classrooms.

• There was a positive trend toward more significant conceptual change among single-religion classes among students who completed a second lesson.

Displacement and Conflict: Students displaced by conflict responded equally as well to the lessons as other children and demonstrated the most significant conceptual change in learning environments with religious and/or gender diversity.

• Internally displaced and refugee students exhibited significant conceptual change, most notably in mixed-religion and mixed-gender classrooms. While all students exhibited conceptual change, those classrooms with only one gender and/or one religion exhibited the least significant positive movement.

• Students made significant developments in their ability to articulate their experiences with others and dialogue with students from different religions or beliefs who were previously segregated as a result of conflict in their communities.

• Students who experienced trauma found the program to be a useful tool for their psycho-social recovery, particularly in areas of direct conflict.

Violence and Religion: Students became more empathetic toward people of different beliefs and exhibited greater resiliency to the ideas of hate and intolerance that lead to violent extremism.

• Students exhibited greater empathy toward others, and they were more likely to respond to situations with dialogue and respect than fear and violence.

• Students are better equipped to dialogue with one another to mitigate tensions, even when they are personally offended or hurt, rather than respond out of fear, violence, or desire for retribution.

AUTHOR BIOS

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Everyone deserves the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief — it's how we are hardwired — and we work to make it possible for every person to experience this freedom around the world by establishing leaders who can help them attain it.

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Front cover photo: Children participate in a coloring activity in Souda refugee camp on Chios in Greece. Thousands of children sought refuge with their families on the Greek Islands since 2015, many of whom are fleeing conflict in Syria and Iraq. Photo credit: Olivia Blinn (@oblinn)

Pages 6 and 14 photos: Northern Iraq. Photo Credit: Lexii Jaye (@LexJaye)

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