**Self-Reflection session: A summary**

Edgware nov. 11, 2012 by Dina Ben Ezra

***INTRODUCTION:*** The session started with the reading of Wiesel quotation from “The Night” stating the importance and the power of questions (see attached file).

The **goal of the session** was to take time ***to ask question and reflect*** ***upon*** ourselves, our practice, our community and on the learning process of L.E.T.

The **rational of the reflective practice** was presented, being the reflection the two folded link between the practice and the meaning, as follows:

REFLECTION

ACTION MEANING / IDENTITY

Two types of reflection were presented: Reflection ***on*** action and reflection ***in*** action.

***THE THREE REFLECTION PHASES***

1. **First phase of reflection: Self-reflection.**

Two by two, the participant were asked to ask each other the following two questions, trying not to stop at the first answer, but to go deeper in their questioning:

1. What is for you being Jewish?
2. What motivates you to be active in your community?

Then, each partner was asked to share with the group one thing that he has learned from his partner that he particularly liked or that he particularly found interesting, or that surprised him the most.

From the group sharing we saw that most people focused to the first question, which answers were grouped and “reduced” as follows:

Being Jewish is:

* A treasure, a gift that you receive.
* A choice you make and assume
* A performance, practicing Judaism into every aspects of the living experience
* An identity shaped by the historical context of the Jewish people
* Transmitting values to children and future generations
* Being together, sharing, relating to people
* Daring to ask questions
* Being tolerant and pluralistic
* A responsibility
* Assuming a whole set of values
* Torah and tradition
* An universal heritage
* Having and performing a culture
* Being connected to Israel

And for the motivation to action: I am active in my community because:

* for making the community survive
* I Like activism in general
* I am interested in education and children
* To foster pluralism
* To be able to ask questions and learn
* To feel at home in the community
* To give back to the community what it has given to me

It was argued that whilst working in our communities, it is important to understand the meaning of what it is for us being Jewish, as well as our motivations for action, and to question the people of our community on their meanings and motivations. Each person has different meanings and motivations; which might change over time and according to life experiences. Questioning, understanding and relating to the meaning and motivation of each member, will make our actions in the community more relevant.

1. **Second phase of reflection: Reflection on the community**

Two baskets full of a variety of objects were passed between the participants, each of whom had to choose two of them: one representing his/her community (and/or the main challenge faced by the community) and the second being what in his/her opinion was needed in his/her community.

Between the expressed needs of the communities:

* To learn how to grow
* To better involve young people
* To get more people involved
* A proper building (physical and symbolic)
* Shared activities
* Rebuild from ashes
* To go towards the future and its challenges: to continue to be relevant and innovative
* To reflect on own practice and find the essential
* To be light-minded
* Care about each other
* Fight assimilation
* Bring together veterans and young people
* Concrete actions
* Connected to the self

1. **Third phase of reflection: Reflection on the learning process of L.E.T.**

Each participant was given 4 different colors cards with 4 questions regarding L.E.T learning process, and had to answer them individually. Being short of time we shared only question B. All these data will help us in building the training and L.E.T project.

1. I joined L.E.T. project because… (motivations)
2. I would like L.E.T. to help me to… (expectations)
3. What I like in L.E.T. is…
4. What I think will be difficult in L.E.T. is…

Here are all the collected answers:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Motivation to enter L.E.T.**  **“I joined L.E.T. because…”** | **I would like L.E.T. to help me to** | **What I like in L.E.T. is…** | **What I think will be difficult in L.E.T. is…** |
| Learn from other communities experiences | Improve my community organization | Opportunity to know other similar communities | How to implements other experiences into own community with different characteristics and situation |
| Copy successful models for own community | Improve my leading skills, tools and methods | See how they face difficulties |
| Get information about Massorti (structure, leadership) | See how they creates opportunities |
| Meet other communities and other people | Put theory into practice | The method | Keep the relationships we build on the long term |
| Learn how to exchange | Have exchanges with others on the long term | The group |
| Create relations and twinning with other countries | With the transmission (to young people?) | The exchanges |
| How it is organized |
| Build my own community | Know how to build own community | Meet other people | Practice in own congregation |
| Learn from other people |
| Be together | Have new ideas | Sharing ideas | English |
| Bring something to own community | Implementing new ideas | The difference of origins |
| share experiences, respect and enthusiasm | Motivate members to get involved | The energy and enthusiasm of the group |
| Have more members |
| I was invited | Be more involved in the Masorti movement | The share of information among the participants | Do not know yet |
| Interested in meeting people from other communities | Develop projects |
| interested in sharing with others common experiences | Know more about other communities and the way they function |
| Want to get more involved in own community | Make grow own community | the European aspect | Being available for the 6 meetings |
| Want to be more efficient | Give hints to succeed its development | meet new people and communities that think alike | Transportation |
| Opportunity to travel and meet | Exchanging with others |  |
| Bring concrete solutions to community challenges |
| Meet European communities | Find a way to be efficient leaders | Dina! | Teach leadership (it is a practical issue, not theoretical) |
| Learn from other experiences | Get skills to organize own community | Dynamism and commitment of board members | Giving advises that can be adapted to different situations, cultures, stages of dev., countries) |
| Creating a net, at the profit of own community | Meet other European communities | Putting together all the different communities |
| Visiting communities in their own country and environment |
| It opens the mind to larger points of view, European and international |
| Use training in leadership to help ME find their own model | Learn from other communities how to maintain, develop and grow | Opportunity to meet people from other countries | Putting ideas into practice |
| Understand the unique features and the common ones | Develop leadership knowledge and skills |
| Enthusiasm | Wake up own community | Open minded | Bring all the knowledge in own community |
| Share experiences | Increase their involvement | Fight against intolerance |
| Break down barriers of intolerance |
| Help to make the community survive |
| Need help | Get young people involved | The care we have for the participants | Possibility to participate in events like this one |
| Trust in our work | Have a better communication | Care we have for communities |
| Information on how to help communities | Help the community to grow |
| Want to know about other leaders | Best ways to walk on with own community | Open atmosphere | Find a common language |
| Know about others experiences | Being able to share ideas freely | Have an equal part in the program despite differences |
| Feel part of an EU network |
| Others wanted me to | See other people in their local settings, culture. | Visit new places | It will be insufficient |
| To work through new issues the community faces | Grow personally and professionally | The space (emotionally and temporally) to reflect | Lack of content, theory and expertise |
| I thought I should | Better understand how other communities do things | The cultural / national diversity | Translating what learned into action |
| I was asked to | Develop an appreciation of European Jewry | Attending every session |
| I was curious | Logistic: taking time away from family |
| Lack of formal qualification |
| Ensuring the learning is deep and professionally delivered |
| Too many cigarettes breakes |

***FEEDBACK:*** The session ended with an oral feedback of the session. The following points were made:

**Positive aspects:**

* Like appetizers, you get a little taste and you want more.
* Optimal involvement and participation of every participant made possible by the way the facilitator chose to conduct the session and by the restricted number of participant in this session.
* Respect and openness to the experiences and ideas of every participant.
* Gave time and a safe place to reflect on issues that might be taken for granted, but are not.
* Sharing of experiences as interesting
* Gives hope in the future of the communities

**Improving suggestions:**

* Add more theoretical aspects.
* More time for the training, additional training hours on Saturday.
* Start on Friday with sharing personal issues to get to know each other and each other’s community.