

Client: The African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)
Format: Special Data Processing Report
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Date Submitted: February 19, 2024

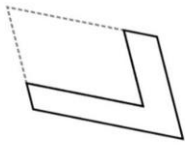
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1) Background

The following is a short report based on data processing on an open question asked of 139 participants in AMEL's training program for activists from across the MENA and Sub-Saharan African regions. This program aims to "empower young activists with practical knowledge and skills so that they can carry out their civil society activism more safely and effectively." As part of their exposure to activist skills and themes, AMEL trainees are taught about the Holocaust and its lessons for human rights defenders—for many, for the first time.

As part of its organizational learning, AMEL elicits surveys and feedback questions from its participants. The present report is based on a three-part open question asked of respondent trainees:

*"What was the most important thing you learn from the genocide/Holocaust lessons?
What do you need to learn more about?
Was this the first time you learned about the Holocaust?"*



Analysis of this question was intended for two purposes:

1. To give AMEL a general 'lay of the land') as to the various types of responses to this question along with preliminary indicators as to their frequency among the respondent group.¹
2. To provide AMEL with a valid format for one or more closed-item ('quantitative') questions that it will be able to ask participants in its program going forward.

2) Methodology

Data from the questions was processed using a grounded method.² Here, recurring participant responses were redefined as wider 'statements' (or 'response types') which were then scored for frequency among the different respondents. In many cases, within prevailing types of responses, there were notable "sub-responses," more nuanced or detailed responses that were provided by several respondents that were worthy of mention. The presentation of these distributions appears in the form of a table for each of the three questions, in which response types are organized by the most popular (or recurring) to the least, as in the example below.

Response no.

1	I had previously learned about the Holocaust	70
1.2	I had previously learned about the Holocaust, but this helped me realize the extent of the tragedy	13
2	This was the first time I learned about the Holocaust	35

Sub-response no.

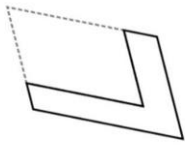
Out of the total above, the number providing this specific sub-response.

2.1) Limitations

Given that the format through which responses were elicited was an 'open question,' response types cannot be statistically scored for frequency (%). Among others, this is because the open format of the question does not require respondents to agree or disagree with a given statement (from which a % might be derived), only to voluntarily provide any response to the question they felt like. (Respondents could respond to one part of the question, or all of it, as they saw fit.) As such, the numeric frequencies provided can only really give a 'lay of the land,' not precise metrics. Use of closed-item derivatives of the question provided in the *Discussion & Recommendations* section will be designed to cull such metrics in the future.

¹ See Limitations, Methodology section.

² Cf. Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2), 77-101. Böhm, A., 2004. "Theoretical Coding: Text Analysis in Grounded Theory", in: Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff and Ines Steinke (eds.) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications: 270-275.



3) Findings

105 of 139 respondents responded to the first section of the question, with roughly 2/3 of those who did reporting that they had learned about the Holocaust prior to studying it in the training program. 1/3 had not. Of those who had studied it before, 13 volunteered that they even though they had previously learned about the topic, they did not realize the extent of the tragedy until encountering it again through the program (see Table 1). Some sample responses follow Table 1.

Table 1: was this the first time you learned about the Holocaust? (N=105)

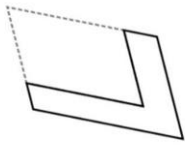
1	I had previously learned about the Holocaust		70
	1.1	<i>I had previously learned about the Holocaust</i>	45
	1.2	<i>I had previously learned about the Holocaust, but this helped me realize the extent of the tragedy</i>	13
	1.3	<i>I had previously learned about the Holocaust unofficially, by reading or watching films</i>	10
	1.4	<i>I had previously learned about the Holocaust, but this made me want to research it further</i>	2
2	This was the first time I learned about the Holocaust		35
	2.1	<i>This is the first time I learned about the Holocaust</i>	29
	2.2	<i>This is the first time I learned about the Holocaust and the term genocide</i>	4
	2.3	<i>This is the first time I learned about the Holocaust, and it made me want to research it further</i>	2

"This was not the first time I learned about the Holocaust, I learned about it in school when I was a child, but I did not really understand the full extent of the tragedy until I took this course, I am grateful for the opportunity to have learned more about this important event, and I am committed to doing my part to prevent genocide from happening again."

"I did learn of Holocaust before but in no way shape or form as vivid and clear to the level provided by AMEL, it actually felt like I was learning of this for the first time."

"This has been my first time to learn about Holocaust and surely I have not been left the same. Thank you AMEL."

As far as main takeaways from the Holocaust, the overwhelming majority of respondents seem to regard it as still very relevant to the present. 76 of those who responded to this portion of the question (N=137) felt that studying about the Holocaust could provide tools and lessons to prevent future genocides, with 16 explicitly indicating that a study of its dynamics could yield important insights in this regard. (Of the 76, 33 respondents specifically referred to the ten steps leading to genocide, coined by Gregory Stanton. 14 of the 61 claimed that remembering and telling history can itself help prevent future genocides.) 50 reported explicitly that the public sentiment from which it derived public legitimacy were still endemic in society; 6 (five of them Sudani) reported that the Holocaust reminded them of what was happening in their own countries. A not insignificant number of respondents also volunteered responses indicating a recognition of the importance of honoring the victims. Just as interestingly, 26



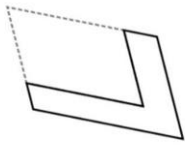
of all respondents volunteered that learning about genocides like the Holocaust were an important part of an activist’s journey (see Table 2). Some sample responses follow Table 2.1.

Table 2: What was the most important thing you learned from the genocide/Holocaust lessons? (N=137)

1	Learning about the Holocaust provides lessons and tools for those who seek to prevent future genocides		76
	1.1	<i>Learning about the Holocaust provides lessons and tools for those who seek to prevent future genocides</i>	14
	1.1	<i>It is important to recognize the stages leading to genocide to be able to prevent it [Gregory Stanton's typology]</i>	33
	1.2	<i>Learning about the Holocaust is important because remembering and telling history can prevent it happening again</i>	14
	1.3	<i>Learning about The Holocaust is important because it is something that could happen again, at any time</i>	12
	1.4	<i>Learning about the Holocaust is important because it must never happen again</i>	3
2	Learning about the Holocaust is important because the prejudice, hatred and discrimination that brought it about are still with us		50
3	Learning about the Holocaust provides important moral lessons		34
	3.1	<i>Learning about the Holocaust reminds us of the importance of sympathy / empathy / tolerance</i>	19
	3.2	<i>Learning about the Holocaust made me think about the human capacity for evil</i>	8
	3.3	<i>Learning about the Holocaust is important because it encourages us to recognize human suffering</i>	5
	3.4	<i>Learning about the Holocaust taught me the importance of hope</i>	2
4	Learning about the Holocaust is a tribute we can pay to its victims		32
	4.1	<i>Testimonials of Holocaust survivors are important because they help understand and relate</i>	25
	4.2	<i>Being able to share stories is a triumph because it shows the survival and resilience of the victims</i>	4
	4.3	<i>Learning about the Holocaust honors the memory of the victims</i>	3
5	Learning about genocides like the Holocaust are an essential part of the activist's journey		26
6	Learning about the Holocaust provides insights into other instances of genocide		16
	6.1	<i>Learning about the Holocaust provides insights into other instances of genocide</i>	10
	6.2	<i>Learning about the Holocaust made me think about what is happening in my country and how to address it</i>	6
7	The Holocaust provides insights into how societies can allow genocides to happen		16
	7.1	<i>The Holocaust provides insights into how societies can allow genocides to happen</i>	3
	7.2	<i>Learning about the Holocaust taught me how the media can foment hate</i>	6
	7.3	<i>Learning about the Holocaust taught me that remaining passive is tantamount to participation</i>	5
	7.4	<i>Learning about the Holocaust taught me how one small seed of hatred can grow out of control</i>	2

Table 2.1 Other/Unclassified Responses

Learning about the Holocaust taught me the importance of holding official remembrance days	1
Learning about the Holocaust changed me	1
Learning about the Holocaust taught me there is no justification for killing	1
Only by recognizing our shared humanity can we prevent the recurrence of events like genocide	1
I find it really difficult to act against discrimination or shut down hate speech when I hear it	1



"The most important thing I learned from the genocide/Holocaust lessons is that genocide is a real and present danger, it is not something that only happened in the past, and it can happen again if we are not vigilant, also I learned that genocide is not just about killing people, It is also about destroying a culture, a people, and a way of life."

"Genocide is the perception of a group of people as less than human, and we can help prevent future genocides by educating ourselves about the past and advocating against discrimination and bigotry in the present."

"The most important thing I learned was the frightening capacity of mankind to commit unimaginable acts of violence and hatred against other human groups. This had a profound impact on me, and prompted me to reflect on the factors that can lead to such tragic events."

"The most important thing that I learn from the genocide/Holocaust lessons was that even if humans can be really scary sometimes there is still hope for this world. It makes me think about how I can use my pen as a journalist to protest against these kind of discriminations and to bring people to be more receptive and open-minded when it comes to diversity and difference."

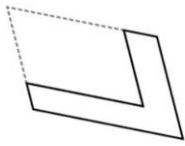
"Sharing stories is a way to say that "We were here once, We are still here". It is a way of reminding us of the Past genocides and challenge us to think of measures to prevent new ones."

"The emotional weight of this knowledge is substantial, but it is essential not to shy away from it. Instead, it compels me to be vigilant against intolerance and prejudice, to be a voice against injustice, and to foster empathy and compassion in my interactions with others. By learning from history and embracing the lessons of the past, we can collectively strive to create a world where such atrocities are never repeated and where humanity can truly flourish."

"As an Arab Sudanese I usually hear from my relatives and my friends racist comments about other tribes, and still in 2023 we hear stories about two couples denied from marriage due to their different ethnicities. This might not relate directly to Genocide but as one of the speakers mentioned in the "process of genocide" that it usually starts by some ethnicities dominating another and I think that's what happening now in Sudan."

"I can't help but related to a recent genocide that happened in my country to compare the stages that drove the deed to happen, and what my role as an activist will be to ensure this won't happen again."

"Another thing disturbing my soul is why countries refused to accept Jews fleeing persecution in Germany. Such acts should be treated as direct involvement and participation in perpetrating crimes against humanity. My key takeaway from the module is how the whole



world participated in persecuting Jews through their 'passive reaction' and the silence they exhibited before, during and even after the Holocaust."

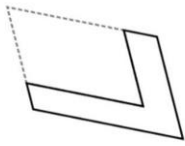
Consistent with the above responses (in Table 2), respondents were most interested in practical directions they could take to prevent genocides from happening. (29 said they would like to learn more about how to build an allyship and foster unity and solidarity as a preventative measure, with several referring specifically to what they had learned about the 'pyramid of allyship'.) In keeping with the recognized importance of these issues to activists specifically and the stated relevance of the Holocaust to the present, 21 respondents wanted to learn about additional genocides. 9 respondents were interested in learning more about the measures in place today to prevent genocide: specifically, the current policies and what current leaders are doing about it (see Table 3). *Some sample responses follow Table 3.1.*

Table 3: What do you need to learn more about? (N=81)

1	I would like to learn more about what actions we can take to prevent genocide from happening		67
	1.1	<i>I would like to learn more about what actions we can take to prevent genocide from happening</i>	26
	1.2	<i>I would like to learn how to build an allyship / foster unity and solidarity to counter or prevent a genocide</i>	29
	1.3	<i>I would like to learn more about how to identify warning signs and prevent genocide</i>	8
	1.4	<i>I would like to learn more about how to foster tolerance</i>	2
	1.5	<i>I would like to learn how to raise awareness about these issues in order to prevent genocide</i>	2
2	I would like to know more about other instances of genocide		21
3	I would like to know more about current policies and ideas regarding genocide and human rights		9
4	I would like to learn more about the Holocaust		7
	4.1	<i>I would like to learn more about what happened to the Nazis after the war</i>	3
	4.2	<i>I would like to learn more of the intricacies of how this happened</i>	2
	4.3	<i>I would like to know whether activism would have made a difference during the Holocaust</i>	2
5	I would like to learn about the long-lasting effects of trauma and ways to heal		4

Table 3.1 Other/Unclassified Responses

I would like to understand how genocide is still happening today	1
I would like to meet with more survivors of genocide	1
I would like to know whether the Nazis ever expressed remorse, and - if so - what made them do it? Is there a way to make the perpetrators feel remorse?	1
I would like to know whether the Jews fought back during the Holocaust	1
I would like to learn more about what - if anything - the Jews have learned from their past, considering the genocide they are committing in Palestine	1
I would like to learn more about femicide and how to prevent it	1
I would like to learn more about the role of modern social media in spreading hate	1



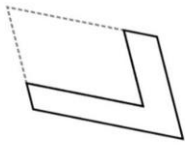
"In my country Kenya, we experienced a post-election violence in 2008. I was young and was not directly in the line of fire, but the trauma lives on. With the country tied down with ethnic-based politics, there is a constant fear that we might go back to the dark days. The lessons have shown me the need to constantly work to fight oppression to avoid a culmination into apparent violence. We must also stand in solidarity with the oppressed and underserved in the society to especially address systemic inequalities and address stereotypes. In that regard, I undertake to learn more about allyship and movement building."

"It also gave me an opportunity to reflect on groups such as the natives of America, Australia and new Zealand. If I could choose what to learn more about it is their histories and the genocide they faced and how it led to normalization of colonialism in the 21st century. I think I also am interested in the effects of cultural genocide Africans faced and also slavery and it's far reaching consequences today. There's a lot of trauma in a world that tells us that since we didn't experience the things our ancestors did it cannot affect us but it does."

"Knowing more about the existing policies and treaties related to genocides and the efforts of the United Nations to tackle this problem would be appreciated."

"I want to know how the trials took place for the criminals and the main suspects in that massacre and why the whole world did not press to ensure that some of the accused did not escape justice"

"I had to stop and search Holocaust and prepare a whole documentary I'm gonna be watching to educate myself more on the topic and explore the stories and experiences of survivors and understanding the long-term effects of genocides on communities and individuals."



4) Discussion

Finding 1: Above all, respondents overwhelmingly reported finding the Holocaust to be relevant to the present.

For most respondents, the Holocaust was clearly appreciated not as an historical curiosity, but as a potent example of trends and phenomenon that could very easily recur in other societies today, including their own. (For several Sudani respondents, their own experiences provided prescient examples of this.) It was from this perspective that many reported wanting to learn more about the Holocaust: As something that could happen again anywhere, and whose warning signs should be diligently looked out for so that it could be prevented in the future.

Finding 2: Respondents also seemed to regard the business of applying the lessons of the Holocaust to the present as being particularly relevant to them and their work.

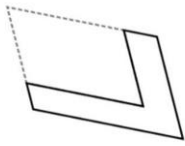
The majority of respondents to the question seemed to regard monitoring and preventing potential genocides as being their job, social duty, moral obligation or responsibility specifically. Most were interested in practical tools, methods or approaches that could help them in this regard. Several wanted to know about the instruments and policies currently in place to address the problem. Many who wanted to know more about the Holocaust wanted to know more specifically with this emphasis in mind: How viable activism or awareness raising are in these instances, what the warning signs are that indicate a risk of genocide. In short, rather than a platitudinous “never again,” respondents seemed to want to develop further tools and strategies to identify the warning signs of genocide which the Holocaust provides, as well as its implications on the efficacy of raising awareness, organizing and other forms of activism. Effectively, applying the lessons of the holocaust to their own local, national and transnational efforts.

Finding 3: Not the first time most had heard about the Holocaust, but for many, nonetheless, something new.

Findings indicate that for most participants (70 of 105) this was not the first time they had learned about the Holocaust, but that for roughly half of those who responded to the question, the focus through the AMEL program nonetheless exposed them to new things they had not appreciated or known before about it. As stated, there were several responses to other parts of the question who indicated that there were specific aspects of the Holocaust that they wanted to know more about, these mostly directly linked to being able to better monitor and prevent genocides.

Finding 4: A unique perspective on the dignity of victims.

A not insignificant number of respondents also volunteered responses indicating a recognition of the importance of honoring the victims. Similarly high numbers underscored the importance of empathy as a direct product of appreciating the universality of the Holocaust as something that could happen anywhere—and to any people. Though the significance of these responses vis—à-vis the wider population is still anecdotal, the evaluator believes that these types of responses are not widely prevalent and may reflect a sensitivity perhaps unique to those participants who know well the enduring scars that genocides and conflict can have on societies—and the long arc societies must go through in emerging from these collective traumas.



4.1) Methodological Recommendations

The general categories of statements assembled through this design can provide a valid basis for pre-operationalized (categorical and scaled) questions in future AMEL surveys. A sample of several such potential questions is appended in the box below.

Box 1. Sample Closed-Item Questions

Was this the first time you learned about the holocaust?

- Yes, this was the first time I learned about the Holocaust
- Yes, this was also the first time I learned about the term 'Genocide'
- No
- No, but I had never realized the extent of the Holocaust before

How relevant do you feel the Holocaust is to the present?

Not at all Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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To what degree do you feel that you have a personal responsibility to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to your own work as an activist?

Not at all Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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Are you interested in further researching or leaning more about the Holocaust?

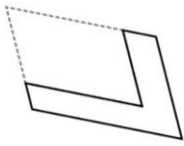
Not really Yes, very much

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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Why is learning about the Holocaust important, in your opinion?

- Because it can provide lessons and tools for those seeking to prevent future genocide
- Because the prejudice, hatred, and discrimination that brought it about are still with us.
- Because it provides important moral lessons on humanity, suffering and our capacity for evil.
- Because it provides us with a way to pay respects to its victims



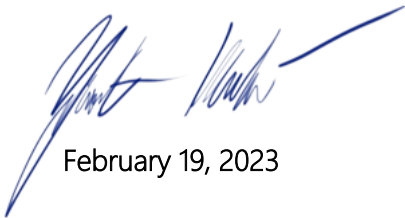
- Because learning about genocides like the Holocaust are an essential part of the activist's journey.
- Because it can provide insights into other genocides which we face now
- Because it can provide insights into how societies can allow genocides to happen

What would you most like to learn more about?

- I would like to learn more about actions, tools and approaches we can use to prevent genocide from happening.
- I would like to know more about other instances of genocide.
- I would like to know more about current policies and ideas regarding genocide and human rights.
- I would like to learn more of the intricate details of the Holocaust itself—how it happened and what happened afterwards.
- I would like to learn about how societies and individuals can heal from the long-lasting effects of traumas like the Holocaust.

5) Evaluator's Statement

I believe the data to be accurately presented and the findings to be reflective of the data contained therein. No data was altered or misrepresented in the process of compiling this report; and it is my estimation that all respondents, upon reading the way their statements were presented, would find them true and accurate representations.



February 19, 2023