



Counterpoint ISRAEL

Evaluation
SUMMER 2012

With Gratitude

Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future would like to thank our partners and supporters who, over the past eight years, have made the magic of Counterpoint possible (listed alphabetically).

- **Congregation Beth El – Atereth Israel, Newton, MA**
- **Sharon and Avram Blumenthal**
- **Doreen and Beryl Eckstein**
- **Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews**
- **Ron Fisher and Lisa Rosenbaum and the Fisher Family Foundation**
- **The Jewish Agency for Israel Onward Israel Program**
- **The Jewish Federations of Central New Jersey and Delaware – Partnership 2Gether/Arad-Tamar**
- **Repair the World**
- **The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation**
- **Larry Z'L and Leonore Zusman**

Counterpoint Israel would not be possible without the openness, graciousness and warmth of our local partners in Israel:

- **Arad** – Mayor Tali Ploscov; Mrs. Nili Avrahami, Director, Partnership 2Gether; Mrs. Racheli Abramson, Director, Department of Education; Mr. Gregory Poznianski, Principal, ORT Arad High School; Mr. Dudi Shusteri, Head of Matnas Community Center
- **Be'er Sheva** – Mr. Dudi Lipshitz, Director, Department of Education; Ms. Gila Bellaish, Principal, Mekif Aleph High School; Mrs. Miri Oved, Principal, Mekif Gimmel High School
- **Dimona** – Mayor Meir Cohen; Mrs. Tzipi Ben Chamo, Director, Ofek Center for Youth at Risk; Mr. Maor Benita, Director of Youth Programs; Mr. Noam Cohen, Director, Matnas Community Center; Mr. Moshe Nachum, Director, Department of Education and Welfare; Mrs. Dorit Peretz, Director, Otzma Program for Youth at Risk
- **Kiryat Gat** – Mrs. Zahava Gur, Director, Department of Education; Mr. Motti Vaknin, Principal, Gruss High School
- **Kiryat Malachi** – Mr. Shimon Amar, Director, Department of Education; Mr. Ohad Asraf, Director, Nachshon Youth Programs; Mr. Eli Cohen, Principal, Amit High School
- **Yerucham** – Mr. Amram Mitzna, Member of Knesset and Former Mayor; Mr. Rafi Abargil, Director, Matnas Community Center; Mr. Chaim Navon, Director of Programming, Matnas Community Center;
- Mr. Rachamim Yosef, Director, Department of Youth at Risk, Ministry of Education, Southern Region; Mrs. Meital Peled, Director of Programs, Department of Youth at Risk, Ministry of Education, Southern Region.





Dear Colleague,

The Counterpoint Israel Summer 2012 report evaluates the seven years of positive impact that Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future has had on Israeli development towns through its Counterpoint Israel Program that services thousands of at-risk Israeli teenagers.

As illustrated in this report, for seven years, Counterpoint has been helping Israeli teenagers enhance their English written and oratory skills and bolster their self-confidence and sense of empowerment. In doing so, Counterpoint has also provided these teens with safe and healthy structures during summer months.

Furthermore, the report demonstrates the role that Counterpoint plays in creating positive systemic change in the development towns that host the program. It also displays the tremendous impact that Counterpoint has on the Yeshiva University students who serve as counselors on the program.

The findings in this report exhibit Yeshiva University's strong and proud commitment to Jewish Peoplehood, to Israel engagement and to creating a strong culture of service and civic responsibility.

Above all, this report displays Yeshiva University's spirit and its passionate student body. Over 400 Yeshiva students have participated in Counterpoint – and thousands more in the various service-learning programs offered by the Center for the Jewish Future.

Yeshiva students' deep passion for Tikun Olam has changed the lives of thousands of at-risk teens in six Israeli development towns. It is with heartfelt pride in our students' passion that we proudly share this report.

A vision cannot be developed and actualized without people who are willing to dedicate their lives to it. At Counterpoint, these people are Counterpoints Directors, **Gila Rockman** and **Kiva Rabinsky**. Their commitment to building emotional, physical and spiritual bridges between Israeli and North American Jews is truly remarkable.

We gratefully acknowledge **Dr. Ezra Kopelowitz** and his colleagues at Research Success Technologies for their careful research, analysis and guidance.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander
The David Mitzner Dean
YU Center for the Jewish Future

Shuki Taylor
Director, Service Learning and Experiential Education
YU Center for the Jewish Future



SIX COUNTERPOINT CITIES AS OF SUMMER 2012

- 1. ARAD**
Population: 23,400
Counterpoint 2011-2012
- 2. BE'ER SHEVA**
Population: 194,300
Counterpoint 2012
- 3. DIMONA**
Population: 33,900
Counterpoint 2008-2012
- 4. KIRYAT GAT**
Population: 47,400
Counterpoint 2012
- 5. KIRYAT MALACHI**
Population: 20,600
Counterpoint 2012
- 6. YERUCHAM**
Population: 9,500
Counterpoint 2006 – 2010



Counterpoint's Approach to Israel-Diaspora Relations

Counterpoint Israel is an immersive Jewish service-learning program. Created and operated by Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future, Counterpoint employs theories and methods from the field of experiential Jewish education and utilizes the principles of Jewish service-learning in an effort to accomplish the following goals:

1. To address the needs of Israeli development towns.
2. To instill a sense of civic responsibility within its Yeshiva University student volunteers.

The combination of these two goals, and recognition of the mutual benefit that results when they are fulfilled, breeds an overarching third goal:

3. To embody Jewish Peoplehood by engaging in true partnership.

Counterpoint Israel's English language summer camps are the cornerstone of the program. The Counterpoint camps are run by a select group of talented, highly trained Yeshiva University student volunteers. These camps service Israeli teenagers many of whom are assessed to be "at-risk."

The camps are developed and run in partnership with Israeli municipalities and other Israeli stakeholders. These partnerships are meant to benefit both the American and Israeli participants and organizers of the program.

Between 2006 and 2012 Counterpoint Israel operated in Yerucham, Dimona and Arad. In 2012 Counterpoint Israel expanded to three new cities. The program currently operates in: Dimona, Arad, Be'er Sheva, Kiryat-Gat and Kiryat Malachi. In total, 300 Israeli teens and 58 American college students participated in the 2012 summer program.

"The Israel-Diaspora relationship must be restructured so as to encourage greatly increased involvement, investment, and contact between equal partners. Its goal should be the development of a non-fundamentalist Jewish renaissance both in Israel and the United States. It should be characterized by volunteer energy and creative entrepreneurship."

BARRY SHRAGE. 1997. "Jewish Renaissance: Toward a New Relationship between the American Jewish Community and Israel." *Journal of Jewish Communal Service.* Jewish Communal Service Association of North America (JCSA).





Research Methodology

Surveys

In 2012, a total of 300 campers participated on the program. Two hundred and forty eight (248) (83%) campers completed the pre-program survey and 213 (71%) filled out the post-program survey. Using an anonymous method for identifying campers, 150 were found to have filled out both the start of program and end of program surveys.

Any analysis that requires comparison between the start and end of program data includes only these 150 campers.

Fifty-eight (58) counselors were sent online post-program surveys. Fifty-one (51) (88%) filled out the survey.

Interviews and Focus Groups

- Three focus groups (one in Arad, one in Dimona and one in Kiryat-Malachi) with a joint total of 15 campers
- Twenty-five (25) telephone interviews and three (3) in-person interviews with randomly selected campers
- Ten (10) telephone interviews with parents of randomly selected campers
- Nineteen (19) telephone or in-person interviews with municipal and regional professionals, parents and former campers from Arad, Dimona, Kiryat Malachi and Yerucham (a development town in which Counterpoint operated from 2006-2010)



Three Areas in Which to Evaluate Success

This report examines each of the aforementioned goals by evaluating Counterpoint's success with regards to:

1. Counterpoint's Israeli teen campers.
2. Counterpoint's American Yeshiva University student volunteers.
3. Implementation through partnership between Yeshiva University and Israel stakeholders.

1. Israeli Teens

Counterpoint Israel operates several three-week summer camps for Israeli teenagers (campers) from low socioeconomic backgrounds, most of whom are regarded by the host-municipalities as "at-risk." The camps have three main goals:

1. **English:** To help campers strengthen their written and oratory English skills. With improved English skills, campers are better equipped to succeed in school and have more career development opportunities open to them.
2. **Confidence:** To bolster campers' overall confidence and particularly their confidence speaking English.
3. **Identity building:** To engage campers in conversations and activities geared towards identity development—specifically, conversations and activities having to do with the self, family and community.

Prior to attending camp, many campers consider English a tedious and boring subject and express little confidence in their abilities to improve their English. To combat this attitude, Counterpoint utilizes cutting edge **experiential education methods**, researched and developed by Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future (YU-CJF). Counterpoint operates on the premise that campers will increase their motivation and confidence to speak English if learning takes place in an **enjoyable and encouraging atmosphere**.

In building **intensive relationships** with American counselors, campers have the opportunity to engage in **meaningful conversations in English**. They speak and write in English while participating in activities that they find interesting and fun, such as interactive classes, field trips and workshops (e.g. art, fashion and breakdance). Many of Counterpoint's activities are designed to introduce issues relating to Jewish values and Israel-Diaspora relations.

2. American Counselors

Counterpoint also runs an intensive educational program for its Yeshiva University student volunteers (counselors). This educational program has three goals:

1. **Skills for and commitment to service:** To increase counselors' knowledge, confidence and skills as educators and encourage them to take interest in future involvement in education, service and communal work.
2. **Jewish perspective:** To help counselors view the educational work they do through a Jewish lens by intensifying their personal connections to Israel; broadening their Jewish horizons; and deepening their personal connections to Jews who are different from them.

3. **Society:** To help counselors understand their work as important to the development towns in which Counterpoint operates and to Israel-Diaspora relations. To achieve this goal, Counterpoint exposes its students to various dimensions of Israel and Israeli society.

The counselors' program is comprised of: actual work in the summer camps, where they gain intensive exposure to Israelis, general Israeli society, Israeli development towns and the socioeconomic realities of the at-risk youth they service; **ongoing learning** sessions in which they explore the significance of their work; and a **post-camp seminar** in which counselors conceptualize their experiences and their implications on their personal and professional Jewish journeys.

3. Implementation Through Partnership

In each municipality, Counterpoint's staff reach out to **key agents within the local educational systems** and to philanthropic and non-profit organizations. They do so in order to cultivate relationships that will allow both parties to develop a program that is "useful" to stakeholders **interested in furthering quality education in the municipality**.

The summer camps are developed and **implemented collaboratively** so that Israeli stakeholders see Counterpoint's camps not as a "gift" from the Jewish Diaspora but as an **indispensable part of their educational systems**, which they should be invested in and committed to maintaining.



Evaluating Counterpoint’s Impact on Israeli Teens (Campers)

Counterpoint has three goals in servicing its Israeli teen campers: To strengthen their English skills, to boost their confidence and to build their sense of identity. To accomplish these overarching goals, Counterpoint uses three modes of engagement:

1. **Relationships** campers develop, and conversations they have, with Counterpoint’s dynamic English speaking American counselors.
2. **Educational activities** that campers consider enjoyable and interesting, in both frontal and experiential settings.
3. **A fun atmosphere** that campers enjoy and want to be a part of.

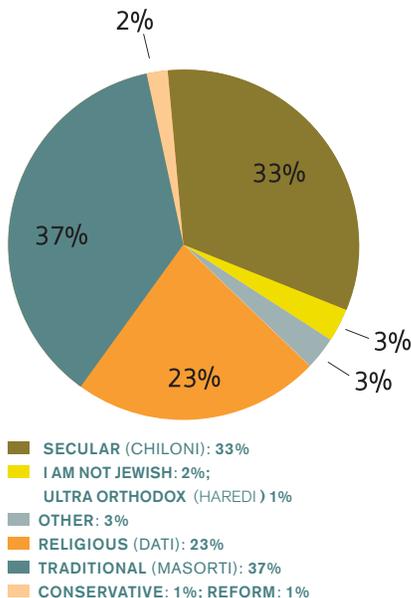
The survey and interview data confirm near universal success in all of these areas.

FINDINGS

FINDING 1: Campers Come from a Broad Variety of Jewish, National and Ethnic Backgrounds

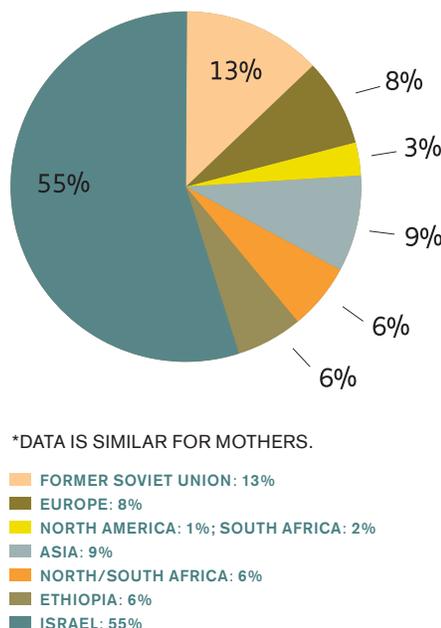
Campers are 36% traditional, 33% secular and 23% religious. There are substantial differences in this break-down from one city to the next. For example, in Dimona, the largest group of campers identifies as traditional, whereas in Be’er Sheva and Arad, the largest groups identify as secular.

EXHIBIT 1: HOW DO YOU DEFINE YOURSELF?



Forty-four percent (44%) of campers’ parents are immigrants. Notably, a majority of campers’ parents in Arad and Be’er Sheva (51% and 61% respectively) are immigrants. In Be’er Sheva, 27% of campers’ parents are from the Former Soviet Union. In Kiryat Malachi, 30% of campers’ parents are from Ethiopia.

EXHIBIT 2: WHERE WAS YOUR FATHER BORN?*



“Before camp, I didn’t like speaking English at all. In comparison to other subjects, I was really bad at English.

At camp, I had a counselor who didn’t know a lot of Hebrew. My friends and I taught her Hebrew words and we were forced to learn from her English.

Before camp, I didn’t feel that I could speak or understand the language. I now feel more self-confident to speak.

Since the start of school this year, I moved up an English level from Gimmel to Bet, a change that is considered significant and shows how much the camp helped me.

In the past, I would fake head pains and cut English class. Today, I enjoy English much more, as I understand what the teacher is saying.”

– 8TH GRADE CAMPER, DIMONA

“Before camp, I thought that learning English was really annoying and now I think that learning English is really fun, if learned in the way it is taught at camp. I liked that I learned in an experiential way especially through the games included in lessons. I felt it was fun to learn English, which was surprising. I most appreciated the field trips, workshops and the hour that everyone was together each day. I did not dislike any part of the camp.

The activities in which we learned words through games were the most enjoyable and helpful. In general, the learning experience made me feel more confident about speaking English as I had a lot of opportunity to speak with the counselors as I got used to speaking.”

– 9TH GRADE CAMPER, BE’ER SHEVA



"I loved the program, where one day we would learn vocabulary and then the next day use the words in a play. I really enjoyed the lessons and the fact that we didn't have to do homework like in school. I felt really comfortable with the counselors. I have a brother that age and it felt like I was talking with him. We spoke with them in English all the time and didn't feel embarrassed."

– 8TH GRADE CAMPER, DIMONA

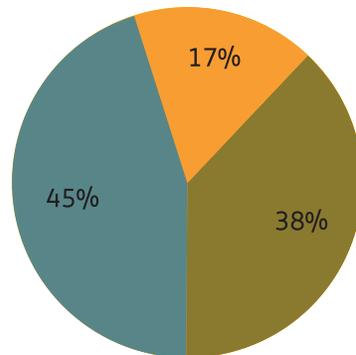
"The American counselors were really special and some were funny. Everyone was interesting and we had many one-on-one personal conversations. I loved them. They mean a lot to me and I was really sad after they left. Many of the kids cried when they had to say goodbye to them. I hope they will come back to camp next year."

– 9TH GRADE CAMPER, BE'ER SHEVA

FINDING 2: One-Third of the Campers Had Never Participated in an Enrichment Program Prior to Counterpoint

Forty-five percent (45%) of first year campers had never previously participated in enrichment programming of any sort, whereas 38% had participated in both English and other types of enrichment programming in the past.

EXHIBIT 3: PARTICIPATION IN ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (FIRST YEAR CAMPERS)

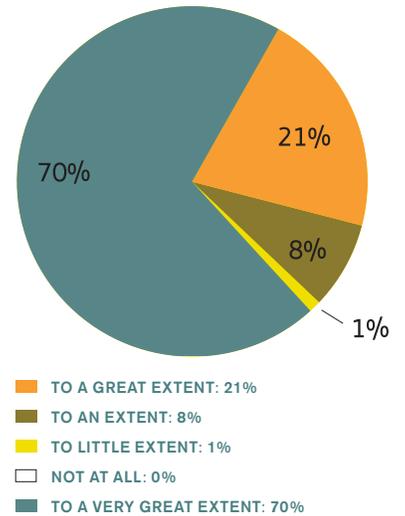


- PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND DIFFERENT ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING: 38%
- PARTICIPATED IN EITHER ENGLISH OR OTHER TYPES OR ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING: 17%
- PARTICIPATED IN NEITHER ENGLISH NOR OTHER TYPES OF ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING: 45%

FINDING 3: Campers Have Fun

In their post-program surveys, 91% of campers report that they enjoyed camp. One hundred percent (100%) of the campers randomly selected for interviews also reported enjoying camp.

EXHIBIT 4: TO WHAT EXTENT DID YOU ENJOY YOURSELF?



FINDING 4: Campers Improve Their English, Their Attitudes Towards English and Their Confidence Speaking English

Seventy-one percent (71%) of campers reported learning new things at camp that they did not expect to learn. When asked to elaborate, campers' most common response was their **unexpected shift in attitude towards English** (ex: "I learned that I enjoy learning English") or their **unexpected improvement of their English skills** (ex: "I improved my English vocabulary").

In response to the open-ended question, "What was the most meaningful part of camp?" the most common answer was learning, speaking and/or gaining confidence speaking English. Variations of this answer were cited more than twice as much (70 instances) as the next most popular answer (relationships with counselors).





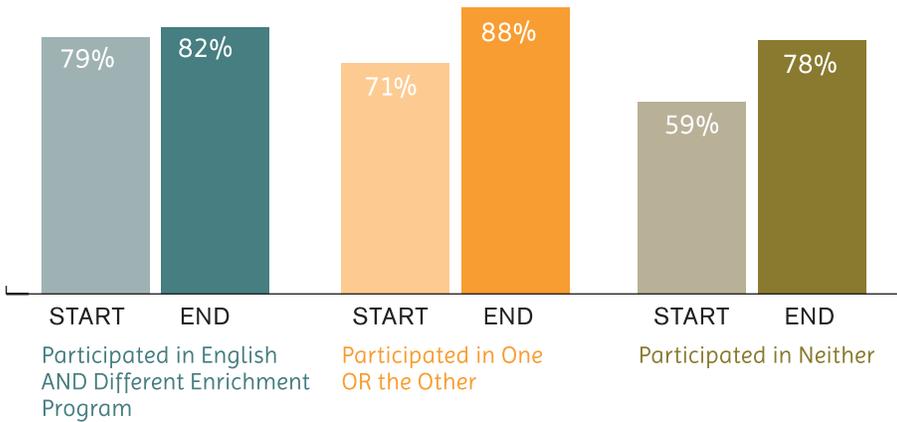
EXHIBIT 5: "WHAT WAS THE MOST MEANINGFUL PART OF CAMP?" (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)

PROMINENT THEME	NUMBER OF INSTANCES (TOTAL = 198)
Learning/Speaking/Gaining Confidence Speaking English	70
Relationship With The Counselors	32
Classes/Workshops	25
Field Trips	24
Camp Was Fun	20
Meeting And Spending Time With Friends	20
Meeting People From America	7

FINDING 5: Campers Gain Confidence Speaking English and Feel Accomplished Because of the New Skills They Acquire

Having enrichment experience prior to camp – or the lack of such experience – impacted what campers got out of their summer camp experiences. Exhibit 6 shows that the percentage of campers who were confident speaking increased across the board. Notably, this increase in confidence was most significant in the group of campers who did not have prior enrichment experience.

EXHIBIT 6: PERCENTAGE OF CAMPERS WHO WERE CONFIDENT SPEAKING TO COUNSELORS "TO A LARGE EXTENT" OR "TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT" AT THE START AND END OF CAMP.

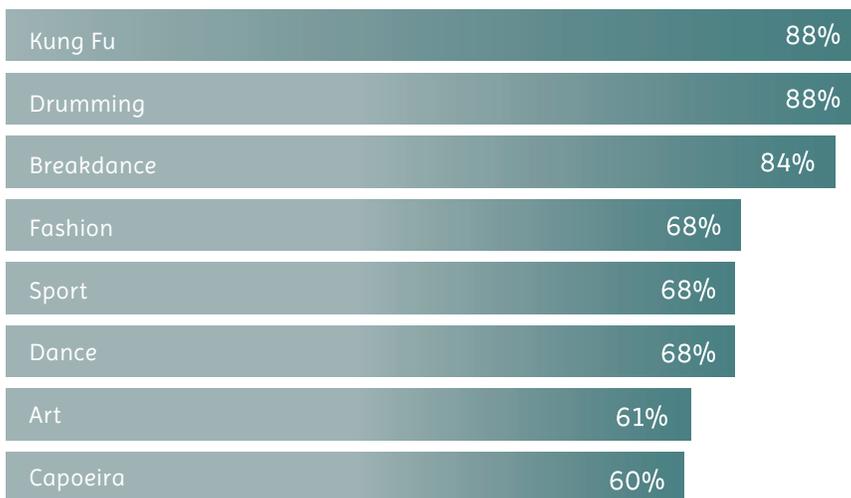


As demonstrated in Exhibit 7, campers also felt accomplished because of the new skills they acquired while speaking English during their learning activities.

FINDING 6: Campers Develop Strong Relationships and Have Meaningful Conversations With Their Counselors

In interviews with campers, we received **overwhelmingly positive**—often effusive—feedback about the **quality of campers' relationships with their counselors**. The quotes found on page 10 represent the overall spirit of the feedback we received.

EXHIBIT 7: DID YOUR TALENTS IMPROVE BECAUSE OF THE CLASS?





"After meeting the counselors, I thought about the similarities and differences between American and Israeli Jews.

The insight the encounter gave me about what it means to be Israeli is that if the American counselors can manage to keep attached to Judaism when they live abroad, then we should be able to do so here in Israel."

- 10TH GRADE CAMPER, DIMONA

FINDING 7: Each Conversation Counts: Campers' Conversations With Counselors Result in Improved English and Exploration of Identity

In order to understand the impact of camper-counselor interaction, we developed an index that measures the amount of spoken interaction a camper reports having with counselors. We then divided campers into three "intensity groups" based on the number of conversations each camper reported having with counselors. Campers in the highest intensity group reported having the most conversations with counselors, campers in the lowest intensity group reported having the least conversations with counselors and campers in the middle intensity group reported having an average number of conversations with counselors.

Exhibit 8 shows the percentage of campers in each of these intensity groups that experienced different components of camp "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent."

Of campers who spoke most with their counselors, 74% reported having learned interesting things about Judaism, as opposed to 15% of campers who spoke least with their counselors (a 59% difference).

Of campers who spoke most with their counselors, 81% reported having improved their English, as opposed to only 33% of campers who spoke least with their counselors (a 48% difference).

EXHIBIT 8: PERCENTAGES OF CAMPERS THAT EXPERIENCED DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF CAMP "TO A LARGE EXTENT" OR "TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT," DIVIDED BY INTENSITY GROUP.

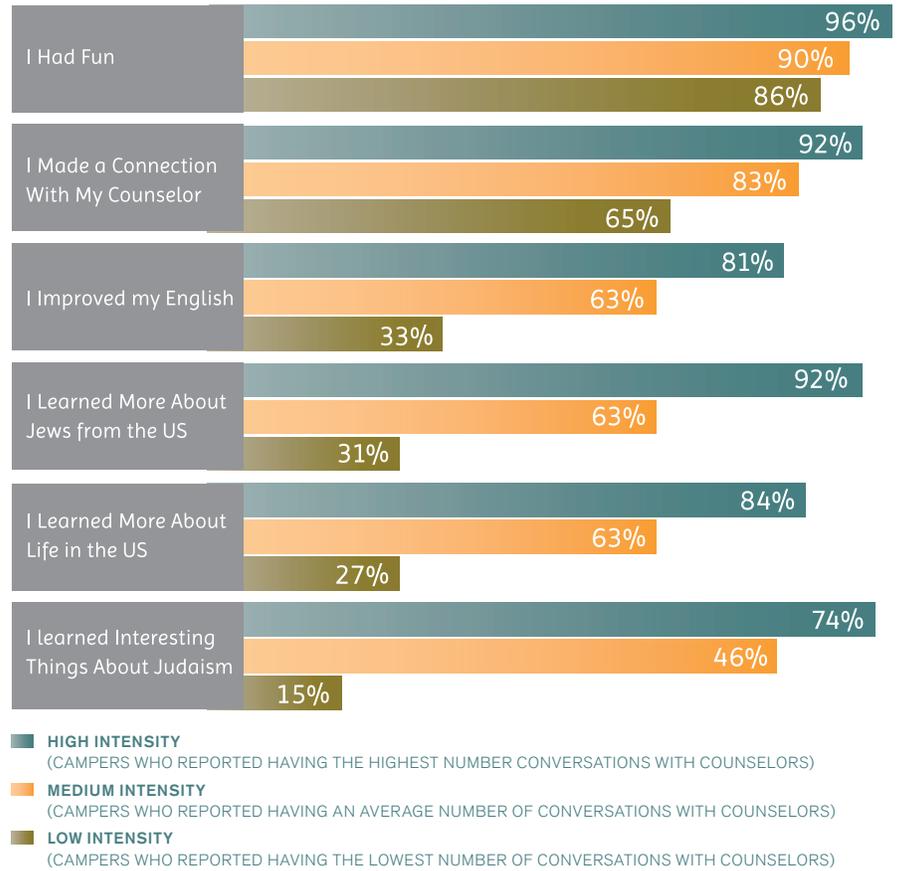


EXHIBIT 9: FOR CAMPERS WHO INDICATED THAT THEY SPOKE ABOUT A PARTICULAR TOPIC WITH THEIR COUNSELORS, WE COMPARE THEIR INTEREST IN THOSE TOPICS AT THE START AND END OF CAMP.

TOPIC	BEFORE CAMP	AFTER CAMP	GROWTH
Topics related to Shabbat	21%	55%	34%
Your life in Israel and their lives in the United States	57%	73%	15%
Your ability to improve your grades the future	52%	64%	12%
The connection between Jews in Israel and the United States	39%	48%	9%
Your ability to improve your study habits in the future	59%	63%	4%
The lives of Jews in the United States	56%	60%	4%
Music in Israel and the United States	70%	71%	1%
Sports in Israel and the United States	50%	46%	-4%
Movies that you like	62%	55%	-7%
Fashion in Israel and the United States	59%	49%	-10%



FINDING 8: Interactions With Counselors Impact Exploration of Identity

As a result of their interactions with counselors, **campers take greater interest in topics having to do with their Jewish identities.**

As demonstrated in Exhibit 9, campers' interest in six topic areas (highlighted in the table) grew from the start to the end of camp. In three areas, the increase was large: Interest in "topics related to Shabbat" grew by 34%, interest in discussions having to do with "your life in Israel and the counselors lives in the United States" grew by 15% and interest in "your ability to improve your grades in the future" grew by 12%.

Notably, camper interest in discussing matters such as fashion, sports, music and movies, which are not directly relevant to Counterpoint's educational agenda, either stayed the same or declined.

FINDING 9: Reach Out to Those Who Need You Most

Counselors speak least intensively with campers who most need to be in conversation with them.

We discovered one particular finding with clear implications for further improving campers' experiences. This finding rests on the distinction between two groups of campers:

- 1. Campers with the greatest prior enrichment experience:** These campers report higher gains in terms of the amount of English they learn at camp.
- 2. Campers with the least prior enrichment experience:** These campers report learning less English. However, they demonstrate a far greater increase in their levels of confidence and motivation to speak.

A reason for this difference emerges when examining how intensively each group spoke with counselors. Campers with the greatest prior enrichment experience report speaking most intensively with counselors and are most likely to report large improvement in English. (Interestingly, these campers also show large jumps in their interest in topics such as Shabbat, life in the United States and Israel and their academic ability).

In contrast, campers with least prior enrichment experience were least likely to report speaking intensively with counselors and were thus least likely to report improving their English. Furthermore, campers who were least likely to speak intensively with counselors also came to camp with the lowest expectations of improving their English.

We conclude that there is a selection bias that negatively impacts the weakest campers' chances of improving their English. Campers with prior enrichment experience have the highest motivation to improve and speak English. These campers seek out their counselors and end up with the most "talk time." Campers who need to improve their English most are the least likely to gain counselors' attention. This indicates a need for counselors to consciously engage campers who do not actively seek their attention.

A 9TH GRADE CAMPER FROM KIRYAT GAT SHARES HER VIEWS OF HER AMERICAN COUNSELORS

GREAT EDUCATORS

"The counselors were incredible. I take my hat off to them. They knew how to play with us, tell jokes, and be funny. They made us laugh. They were dedicated and cared about each and every student. There are no words to describe how amazing they were."

GREAT CULTURAL EXCHANGES

"It was like a culture exchange. We helped one another with each other's languages."

SELF-IDENTIFICATION WITH COUNSELORS

"I felt similar to the counselors personally. It made me really happy to see their sense of unity with the Jewish People."

COUNSELORS' INSPIRATION

"They were so connected to Israel — how they were connected to Jerusalem for example. So much more than I was. How they spoke about Eretz Israel — it was inspiring — I've always been interested in America or France out of interest, but one of them kissed the ground. That is how they value my home."



Yeshiva University Student Volunteers (Counselors)

Counterpoint has three goals with regards to its Yeshiva University student volunteers (counselors):

1. Skills for and commitment to service:

To increase counselors' knowledge, confidence and skills as educators and encourage them to take interest in future involvement in education, service and communal work.

2. Jewish perspective: To help counselors view the educational work they do through a Jewish lens; intensify their personal connections to Israel; broaden their Jewish horizons; and deepen their personal connections to Jews who are different from them.

3. Society: To help counselors understand their work as important to the development towns in which Counterpoint operates and to Israel-Diaspora relations. To achieve this goal, Counterpoint exposes its students to various dimensions of Israel and Israeli society.

The survey and interview data confirm that Counterpoint's educational agenda in this regard is largely met. Counterpoint's counselors report positive service experiences in which they develop meaningful relationships with campers and work successfully as experiential educators

- The Counterpoint experience serves as a platform for counselors to improve their skills as educators and fuels greater interest in experiential Jewish education.
- A majority of the counselors report broadening their Jewish horizons.
- Counselors enjoy developing personal connections with Israeli Jews and strengthening the relationship between Israeli and Diaspora Jewries.



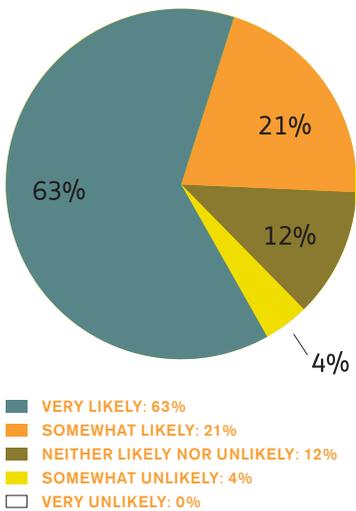


FINDINGS

FINDING 1: High Percentage of Counselors Are Likely to Recommend Counterpoint

Counselors have positive experiences on Counterpoint. Eighty-four percent (84%) state that they are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to recommend Counterpoint to others.

EXHIBIT 10: LIKELIHOOD THAT COUNSELORS WOULD RECOMMEND COUNTERPOINT TO OTHERS



In their written responses explaining why they are likely to recommend the program, counselors most often cited the following three reasons:

- 1. Exposure to Israeli society:** Counselors learned new things about Israeli culture, experienced Israel in a new light or gained greater appreciation for the Negev.
- 2. Impact on Israeli teen campers:** Counselors felt they had positive impacts on the teens and were thus able to give back to Israel.
- 3. Personal growth:** Counselors experienced personal growth and underwent meaningful and rewarding experiences. They had fun on the program and felt challenged at the same time.

Large majorities also cited these three factors when asked about the program’s benefits.

FINDING 2: Counselors Broaden Their Jewish Horizons and Come to View Their Service Work Through a Jewish Lens

Four topics were explored to measure counselors’ growth.

- **Jewish horizons:** Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the counselors feel that Counterpoint broadened their Jewish horizons “to a great extent” (30%) or “to an extent” (28%).
- **Jewish learning:** Fifty-six percent (56%) of the counselors report that the Jewish learning during camp was enriching “to a great extent” (18%) or “to an extent” (38%).
- **Viewing service in Jewish terms:** Fifty percent (50%) of the counselors report that the learning program helped them understand their service work at camp in Jewish terms “to a great extent” (14%) or “to an extent” (36%).
- **Jewish values:** Forty-nine percent (49%) of the counselors report learning more about Jewish values “to a great extent” (10%) or “to an extent” (39%).



FINDING 3: Counselors Got What They Came for – and More

Exhibit 11 (on page 14) compares counselors’ original motivations for participating in Counterpoint with counselors’ actual experiences recorded in end of camp surveys. The left column shows motivations cited by at least 40% of the counselors as “very important” to their decision to participate on Counterpoint.

COUNSELORS GOT WHAT THEY CAME FOR:

We learn that counselors were motivated to participate on Counterpoint because they wanted to **contribute to Israel, serve as role models, undergo meaningful and exciting experiences and develop personal relationships with Israelis.** The right column shows experiences that at least 40% of counselors stated that they experienced “to a great extent.”

The comparison shows that counselors gained what they came to gain.

The five original motivations cited by at least 40% of the counselors as “very important” to their decision to participate were also experienced by at least 40% of the counselors during the summer “to a great extent.”

COUNSELORS GOT MORE:

Furthermore, five additional areas appear to have been experienced to a great extent. For example, less than 40% of counselors were motivated to participate in order to **“strengthen the connection between Israeli and American Jews.”** After the summer, 41% stated they experienced this “to a great extent.” Additional areas that counselors experienced beyond the components that originally motivated them include: **volunteering in a development town, developing a sense of responsibility and learning about Israel.**



EXHIBIT 11:
COMPARISON OF MOTIVATIONS AND ACTUAL EXPERIENCES CITED BY 40% OR MORE OF COUNSELORS:

"VERY IMPORTANT" REASONS TO PARTICIPATE		EXPERIENCED AREA TO A "GREAT EXTENT"	
Contribute to Israel	76%	Volunteer in a development town	67%
Serve as a role model	53%	Contribute to Israel	63%
A personally meaningful experience	51%	A personally meaningful experience	59%
Develop a personal relationship with Israelis	45%	Serve as a role model	55%
An exciting experience	43%	An exciting experience	51%
		A fun way to spend the summer	47%
		Develop a personal relationship with Israelis	47%
		Develop my sense of responsibility	45%
		Strengthen the connection between Israeli and American Jews	41%
		Learn more about Israel	41%

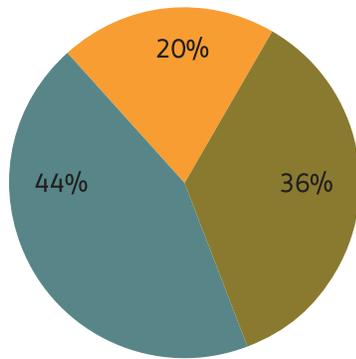
FINDING 4: Counselors Gain Skills and Confidence as Educators

As demonstrated in Exhibits 12 and 13, **counselors report increasing their confidence and ability to work as educators.** Eighty percent (80%) feel that they gained confidence in their ability to work as an educator either "to a great extent" (36%) or "to an extent" (44%). **Seventy-eight percent (78%)** report increasing their skills to work as educator either "to a great extent" (26%) or "to an extent" (52%)

FINDING 5: Counselors' Educational Experiences Lead to Greater Interest In Experiential Education and Communal Work

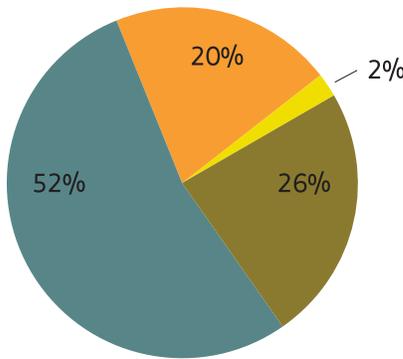
When asked at the end of the program about their future interest in working as educators or communal professionals, majorities of 64% and 60% respectively stated that they are **considering working at Jewish educational or communal organizations** or as counselors on other Israel programs (see Exhibit 14). A substantial minority of 45% see themselves pursuing work in Jewish education at camps, JCC's, Hillels or youth movements. Far fewer, 20%, see themselves working in Jewish schools.

EXHIBIT 12:
COUNTERPOINT INCREASED MY CONFIDENCE TO WORK AS AN EDUCATOR



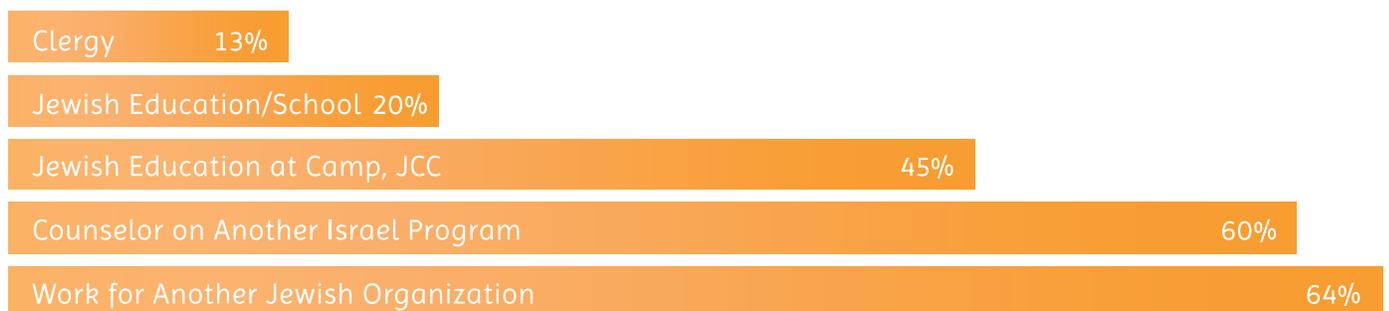
■ I AGREE TO A LARGE EXTENT: 36%
■ I AGREE TO AN EXTENT: 44%
■ I AGREE TO A SMALL EXTENT: 20%
□ I DO NOT AGREE: 0%

EXHIBIT 13:
COUNTERPOINT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED MY SKILLS FOR WORKING AS AN EDUCATOR



■ I AGREE TO A LARGE EXTENT: 26%
■ I AGREE TO AN EXTENT: 52%
■ I AGREE TO A SMALL EXTENT: 20%
■ I DO NOT AGREE: 2%

EXHIBIT 14:
FUTURE INTEREST TO WORK IN JEWISH EDUCATION OR WORKING AS A JEWISH PROFESSIONAL





FINDING 6: Counselors Gain Extensive Exposure to Israeli Society and Form Personal Connections With Israelis

Counselors come to Counterpoint with extensive Israel experience. All counselors visited Israel at least once before Counterpoint and 94% visited two times or more before Counterpoint.

Despite counselors' extensive and intensive prior Israel experience, almost all counselors report a qualitatively different experience of Israel on Counterpoint. This different Israel experience manifests itself in two distinct areas:

1. LEARNING ABOUT ISRAEL

- **Exposure to Israeli society:** Eighty-four percent (84%) report that Counterpoint exposed them to aspects of Israeli society that they were previously unaware of “to a great extent” (60%) or “to an extent” (14%).
- **Learning more about Israel:** Eighty-four percent (84%) report learning more about Israel “to a great extent” (41%) or “to an extent” (43%).

2. PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WITH ISRAELIS

- **Developed personal connection with Israelis:** Ninety-four percent (94%) report developing personal connections with Israelis “to a great extent” (47%) or “to an extent” (47%).
- **Hope to visit campers in the future:** Seventy-two percent (72%) report a desire to visit some of their Israeli campers “to a great extent” (44%) or “to an extent” (28%).







Implementation Through Partnership FINDINGS

Counterpoint's ultimate success can only be achieved if the program works in close partnership with its host municipalities. Counterpoint seeks to work through the municipal system within each city, asking the cities and local institutions to provide human, physical and in some cases, financial resources to support the program. By working through local municipalities and stakeholders, Counterpoint aims to achieve the following goals:

1. **Develop a culture of support for teen enrichment programming within each city.**
2. **Model Jewish Peoplehood** by promoting collaboration between Yeshiva University and the municipalities, in which mutual benefit arises for both parties.

While Counterpoint has been successful in its first goal, further collaboration must be achieved in order to fully exemplify the highest level of Peoplehood.

FINDING 1: Counterpoint Successfully Creates Relationships with Local Agents Who Work to Improve Education in Their Cities

In each city, Counterpoint has **succeeded in establishing relationships with key individuals** who have become advocates for its English language summer camps. These local advocates include people in diverse positions, such as an English teacher in a local high school, the head of a youth-in-need program, the director of a local partnership program and the head of a community center. These individuals share **high regard for Counterpoint's English language summer camps**. They understand that the camps' success depends on the quality of Counterpoint's experiential Jewish education curriculum, its selection of counselors and its intensive counselor training program.



EXHIBIT 15: AN ENGLISH TEACHER IN DIMONA EXPLAINS WHY SHE HAS BECOME A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR COUNTERPOINT.

“Success depends on raising the students’ motivation to want to learn English and realize its importance. There is little opportunity in Dimona to speak to English speakers. There is also little geographical knowledge – for example many of the teens don’t know the difference between England and the United States.

A key goal of the camp is to speak to the campers as much as possible in English, getting them to use words and sentences in context. It is vital to speak about something that is interesting to them, everyday topics...

Counterpoint is outstanding in all of these areas! The teens love the American counselors. They are cool people, not teachers. The kids want to be their counselors’ friends. They are not pre-judged, they see people who really respect them and want to help. Many of these kids are used to having teachers who yell at them. At Counterpoint, they find themselves in a different environment.”

FINDING 2: Local Stakeholders Value Counterpoint for a Variety of Different Reasons

Below are excerpts from the interviews we conducted, in which local officials and educators attest to Counterpoint’s larger impact on their municipalities.

MAJOR BENEFITS CITED BY COUNTERPOINT’S ISRAELI STAKEHOLDERS

1. **English.** All regard English as essential for the academic success of their educational systems. A score of four points (out of five points) on the English high school matriculation exam is required for admittance to university. **Thus, Counterpoint’s English language camps address broader system wide priorities.** Moreover, these important academic priorities are addressed in fun environments that teens want to be a part of. Many of those interviewed cited the teens’ attraction to Counterpoint and the fact that Counterpoint’s camps **are consistently oversubscribed and could easily expand.** Several expressed their desire to see such expansion take place.



2. **Kids Off The Street**
The camps’ low cost and its various supplementary financial aid offerings make them accessible. Many of those interviewed expressed that the camps are **indispensable in providing teens with structure and keeping them occupied** and on normal schedules. Otherwise they are sleeping late and then hanging out with their friends all night on the streets causing problems.

3. **Role Modeling**
All those interviewed were impressed by Counterpoint’s counselors. They see the counselors as a unique and distinguishing feature of the program. The following is a typical assessment, from the youth supervisor for the Kiryat Malachi school system: “The counselors are very polite, which impacts the teens. They also see that the counselors came to volunteer, which will **influence them to volunteer and contribute in the future.**”

4. **Zionism**
All those interviewed also mentioned the commitment to Zionism and Peoplehood (not their term) ideals exuded by the idealistic American counselors who volunteer out of their





EXHIBIT 16: DORIT PERETZ, HEAD OF MERCAZ OFEK, AN ORGANIZATION THAT CARES FOR AT-RISK DIMONA RESIDENTS, REPORTS THAT COUNTERPOINT HAS SPARKED AN INCREASE IN TEEN ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING.

“The English camp was the first enrichment program for teens and the city saw that it worked. We realized that we needed to provide the teens with additional enrichment programs. Since Counterpoint was introduced in Dimona, several new programs have been introduced by the city:

1. **The city created a weekly evening framework for the kids in the summer:** Layla Lavan (“White Night”); Monday Beit Café; and Wednesday workshops including Chavruta, movies, youth choirs and singers. The city pays for all of these activities.
2. **This year the city created a month-long animal therapy program,** because of what we saw at Counterpoint. The city wanted programs that promote self-confidence and empowerment, and to give the teens a framework. Mercaz Ofek paid for this program.
3. For some kids who were really problematic – a specific group that the English camp can’t accept – **we created a unique program, taking them outside of Dimona.**

Dimona now spends 250,000 shekels on youth programming annually.”

desire to contribute to Israel. Yosef Rachamim, director for the Department of Youth at Risk at the Ministry of Education’s Southern Region, stated: “The American counselors come to Israel to do a good deed and to contribute. For both the counselors and campers, the connection to ‘Am Yisrael’ is strengthened.” Amram Mitzna, Knesset member and former mayor of Yerucham, added: “The summer camp builds connections and bridges and also helps the campers understand what the Jewish community outside of Israel is like.”

FINDING 3: Local Stakeholders View Counterpoint as a Successful Program That is Indispensable to Their Educational Systems

The evaluation confirms that local municipal officials and educators consider Counterpoint’s summer camps an **indispensable and valued part of their summer programming.** We heard unanimous enthusiasm for Counterpoint from all the educators and municipal contacts we interviewed.

In all cases, Counterpoint is seen as an innovative and serious program that

addresses a high priority need for the municipal educational system. The educators and officials we interviewed all agree that **a program of Counterpoint’s quality has not previously been available to teenagers in their cities.** Appreciation for, and willingness to contribute resources to, Counterpoint is strongest where Counterpoint has been active longest.

FINDING 4: Municipalities are Committed to Contributing Resources to Counterpoint and are Inspired to Invest in Enrichment Programming Beyond Counterpoint

In Dimona and Yerucham in particular, all contacts expressed recognition that the Counterpoint camps make an indispensable contribution to their local educational system. Local educators and municipal officials also expressed that due to Counterpoint’s educational sophistication and the quality of its English speaking counselors, the municipalities are unable to replicate the camps on their own. Officials and educators in Dimona credit Counterpoint for sparking larger investment in teen enrichment programming.



Conclusion: Next Step – Developing Partnerships

Much of Counterpoint’s operating strategy seems to be working. Counterpoint has developed relationships with local officials and educators who have become champions of the program. Counterpoint’s **summer camps have the recognition, admiration and support of a diverse group of stakeholders.** The program also receives contributions in the forms of scholarships, venues, transportation and logistical support from local municipalities, programs for youth at-risk and Israel-Diaspora partnership programs.

The challenge is now for Counterpoint to move from a relationship of collaboration with its Israeli stakeholders to one of partnership, as shown in the chart to the right. **To nurture partnership, Counterpoint must make clear that its core asset is its talented English-speaking counselors and the quality education they impart, which is an outcome of YU-CJF’s expertise in experiential Jewish education.** In the long term, Counterpoint must be regarded as the provider of qualified staff, staff training and support and expertise in experiential Jewish education. Counterpoint should not be seen as the provider of a full summer camp.

Once this perspective is adopted, local stakeholders will no longer maintain a beneficiary mind-set and instead pursue a partnering relationship with Counterpoint and begin running the camps with the help of Counterpoint’s expert staff.

In addition, **there is a need for a conscious process of deliberation with local stakeholders to further develop partnerships.**

Counterpoint staff and local stakeholders should examine the core assets each partner can contribute and the broader benefits that will accrue beyond what either partner can contribute alone. Currently, Israeli stakeholders are not sufficiently aware of Counterpoint’s desire for partnership and have not been sufficiently engaged in a systematic planning discussion to that effect.

If these changes are implemented, we believe that Counterpoint will transition from operating outstanding English language summer camps for Israeli teens to modeling exemplary Israel-Diaspora partnership.

Counterpoint’s Theory for Developing Partnerships

“A GIFT”

City views the English camp as a “present” that offers a valuable and needed service to local teens.

Counterpoint works to cultivate locals who will champion the program and realize that it produces mutual benefit for all stakeholders involved.

COLLABORATION

City contributes physical, financial, and human resources to the camp.

With time, key contacts come to view Counterpoint as a product of collaboration rather than as a “gift.”

PARTNERSHIP

The English camp is recognized as an indispensable educational asset.

City takes ownership for promoting summer-time enrichment programming for teens and views YU-CJF as a partner in implementing such programming.

Israeli stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of the principle of mutual benefit for all stakeholders.



BRITISH

AYALA

Harry Styles
= love =
Esseer Ayala
friends for
ever!

Eden
Balay

Daniel
Haimo
Gete
Yael Yael

RACHEL

COUNTERPOINT ISRAEL STAFF

Shuki Taylor

Director,
Service Learning &
Experiential Education,
YU Center for the Jewish Future

Aliza Abrams

Assistant Director,
Service Learning &
Experiential Education,
YU Center for the Jewish Future

Gila Rockman

Director,
Counterpoint Israel,
YU Center for the Jewish Future

Kiva Rabinsky

Director,
Counterpoint Israel,
YU Center for the Jewish Future

President Richard Joel

President and
Bravmann Family University Professor,
Yeshiva University

Rabbi Kenneth Brander

The David Mitzner Dean,
YU Center for the Jewish Future



Yeshiva University CENTER FOR THE JEWISH FUTURE

500 West 185th Street
New York, NY 10033
Phone: 212.960.5263
Fax: 212.960.5450
cjf@yu.edu