



The Harold Hartog
School of
Government and Policy

Leadership in Local Government - The Next Generation Workshop

In cooperation with



British Council
Israel

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A Note from the Head of the School of Government and Policy

Israel is facing a leadership crisis. Many consider the question of leadership as the most acute question in our politics and society, and academics are now paying more attention to the ways in which leaders can be identified, nourished and mobilized. The apparent leadership vacuum often evokes debate regarding the mobility of leaders from local to central government.

At a time when some of Israel's highest elected officials, amongst them the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Housing and Construction are former Mayors, one wonders whether local experience enriched or perhaps impedes material decisions and stature. Nurturing local government leaders was one of the objectives of the Harold Hartog School of Government, when it initiated the annual Local government Conference and in this paper we begin our exploration of the subject.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of our international guests who shared their insights and experiences.

I hope that collaboration between the Hartog School and the British Council will continue and deepen.

Prof. Yossi Shain

Head of the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy



A Note from the Director of the British Council - Israel

The *British Council connects people worldwide with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK and builds lasting relationships between the UK and other countries.* The strategic focus of our relationship building work in Israel is on partnerships that promote positive social change among the next generation of leaders and influencers.

We have been working together with the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy and other local partners in Israel in order to explore how UK experience can contribute to tackling the challenges facing local government in Israel.

The idea to conduct a workshop focusing on future leadership arose from the need expressed by many young people beginning their careers in government and public administration who want to make a difference and are searching for tools to enable them to improve services to citizens and to promote reform agendas at the local and national level. British Council Israel is developing the Governance Futures programme in order to assist them and expose them to innovative models from the UK for turning these needs into new and exciting opportunities for the successor generation of leaders. We are very pleased to have had the opportunity to work together with Tel Aviv University in order to provide a platform for an international discussion around the type of leadership challenges faced by the successor generation when working within more 'traditional' structures.

We would like to sincerely thank the Harold Hartog School, especially Prof. Yossi Shain, Dr. Nachum Ben Eliya and Dr. Gary Sussman and the invited speakers at the workshop, especially our guests from the UK and our partners in Mossawa Center.

Jim Buttery

Director of the British Council - Israel



Profiles of Participants



Muhannad M. Idrees Abdulkader, Taybe City Council

Muhannad Idrees Abdulkader teaches English at elementary and secondary schools in Taybe. He was recently elected to the Taybe City Council.



Dr. Robbert P. Baruch, Provincial Legislator, The Netherlands

Robbert Baruch represents the Labour Party and is the founder and director of Baruch|SCPA, a strategic communications and public affairs company. He is Labour Party whip, and was the Labour Party's campaign manager in The Hague during two consecutive successful elections. Robbert lectures on US-European relations and local consequences of the War on Terror, and writes about local affairs, including the administrative organisation of the Randstad. He is the Chairman of the Pierrot Foundation and a member of the Global Executive of KolDor. Robbert studied political philosophy and public administration at Leiden University, and is an alumnus of Yeshivat Machon Meir.



Sir Jeremy Beecham, Newcastle, UK

Sir Jeremy Beecham has been a Newcastle City councilor since 1967, and led the Council from 1977 to 1994. He was Chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities from 1991 to 1997 and of the Local Government Association from 1997 to 2004. Jeremy played a leading role in a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Modernising Local Government, and is currently Chairman of the Labour Party National Executive Committee. He continues to serve as a councilor for the Benwell and Scotswood ward. Jeremy serves on the boards of numerous public bodies and is a member of Labour Friends of Israel. He became a Knight Bachelor in HM Queen's Birthday Honours in 1994. Jeremy was educated at University College, Oxford, where he obtained a first class honours degree in law.



Dr. Nahum Ben-Elia, Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies

With an extensive background in public policy and public management, Nahum has served as policy advisor and program consultant for a range of national and local institutions in Israel. An associate researcher at the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, he has published a substantial body of studies focused on critical local government issues. His latest book – *The Fourth Generation: A New Local Government for Israel* – (now in its second edition), advances a new conceptual view of local government in Israel.



Caron Sethill, Assistant Director, The British Council, Israel

Caron is responsible for programmes in Science, Governance and Education. She developed and initiated British Council programmes for public sector reform in central and local government in Israel. She is also managing a regional sports project which will culminate in 2012 Olympics due to take place in the UK. She was born in London and has degrees in Business and Computer Studies, and a postgraduate qualification in Organisational Consultancy.



Elana Budwig, The British Council, Israel

Elana Budwig works for the British Council Israel on governance projects. She has also been active in feminist education, and holds a degree in sociology, anthropology, communications and media.



Jim Buttery, Director, The British Council, Israel

Jim became the director of the British Council Israel in 2005 after directing the Council's operations in Kenya. Previously he was Regional Development Manager for the British Council's operations in East and Central Africa, with a special focus on development programmes in southern Sudan. He has also worked on technical assistance programmes in the Palestinian Territories and done development services work in Tanzania. He holds a degree in Arabic, French and Middle Eastern Politics, and has post-graduate qualifications in NGO management.



Michal Chilibon, Deputy Chair of the Student Union, Tel Aviv University

As Deputy Chair of Tel Aviv University's Student Union, Michal Chilibon initiated the Student Union's mediation program, as well as a Jewish-Arab cooperation and leadership program to promote co-existence and entrepreneurship. Formerly, she headed the Union's committees on Dormitories, Scholarships and Social Involvement. Michal earned a BA in political science and the history of the Middle East and is working toward an MA in conflict management.



Solomon (Sol) Cowan, City Councilor, Johannesburg, South Africa

Sol Cowan has been a member of the Executive Mayoral Committee of the City of Johannesburg since 2001. He oversees the five-year turn-around strategy for the Inner City, which includes the development of City Improvement Districts, and the establishment of the Johannesburg Development Agency and of an inner city task force. Previously, Sol was a member of the Mayoral Committee of the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council, where he was responsible for the unification of the tax base for Johannesburg. Sol earned a BA Honours in political science and was owner and director of a number of small businesses.



Tal El-AI, Beer Sheva Municipality

Tal El-AI is a member of the Beer Sheva city council and heads the city's Contract Committee and Ethics Committee. Tal has an MA in Urban Planning from Ben Gurion University. His field of interest is political geography.



Jafar Farah, Mossawa Center, The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel

A longtime activist for the rights of the Arab Palestinian community in Israel, Jafar Farah founded the Mossawa Center. Jafar also founded the Committee for Educational Guidance for Arab Students, which supports and assists Arab students in their effort to obtain higher education. He also helped found the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, the I'lam Center, and the Follow-up Committee for Arab Education. Jafar previously wrote for *Haaretz* online and the local Arabic-language press, and continues to contribute to Hebrew- and Arabic-language media.



Dick Gross, Port Phillip Council, Blessington Ward, Australia

Dick Gross has served as a councilor and three-time mayor of the City of Port Phillip. He has also served as director of the Victorian Local Governance Association and the Municipal Association of Victoria, where he is currently leading a project on the future of local governance. Dick was formerly a corporate investigator with the National Companies and Securities Commission, and helped found and lead the Consumer Credit Legal Service. Dick has authored several books, and has a Bachelor and Master of Laws.



Waffa Heskiveh, Tira City Council



Robin Kramer, Chief of Staff to Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Mayor of Los Angeles

Robin Kramer began her career in public administration in 1976, when she became director of the Democratic Party of Southern California. She was deputy mayor for communications and community affairs under Mayor Richard Riordan, and became the mayor's Chief of Staff in 1995 – the first woman ever to hold this position in Los Angeles. In 2005, Robin joined the administration of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as Chief of Staff. She holds a BA in political studies and journalism from Pitzer College, and an MA in urban studies from Occidental College.



Sir Simon Milton, Leader of Westminster City Council

Simon has represented Lancaster Gate ward for 14 years, and is the current Leader of Westminster City Council, in which capacity he is responsible for council policies and services citywide. He is the author of *Civic Renewal*, the Council's strategy for regenerating the city's physical and social infrastructure. Simon is keenly interested in effective city management, maintaining the vibrancy of city life, protecting residential quality of life, and improving education and school standards. Simon was educated at Cambridge University and Cornell University in the United States.



Michael P. Ross, Council for District 8, Boston

Michael Ross is the youngest member of the Boston City Council and the first Jewish city councilor in over 55 years. Michael has worked to advocate affordable housing, improve residential parking, maintain clean streets, and increase police presence. He is the first councilor from his district ever to chair the municipal Ways and Means Committee. Michael also chairs the Committee on City and Neighborhood Services and the Special Committee on Youth Violent Crime Prevention. He holds a bachelor's degree in government studies from Clark University, an MBA from Boston University, and is currently completing a law degree at Suffolk University, where he is also an adjunct professor.



Etai Pinkas, Tel Aviv-Jaffa City Council

Etai Pinkas is a member of the Tel Aviv Jaffa City Council and is the mayor's advisor on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) affairs. He is also Chairman of the Board of the Dan Region Association of Towns for Environmental Issues and Sewage, the largest association of towns in Israel, serving over 2 million people. Similarly, he chairs the Mei Ezor Dan company, which owns the largest sewage treatment center in the Middle East. Former Chairman of the GLBT Association in Israel, Etai holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from Tel Aviv University



Sharon Rotkovitch, Office of the Ombudsman

Sharon Rotkovitch is senior assistant to the director of the Office of the Ombudsman in a department that investigates complaints against local authorities in Israel. She previously worked for the Central District Branch of the State Attorney's Office. Sharon works tirelessly to strengthen ties between Israel and Diaspora-Jewry throughout the world. She holds a Master of Laws with Distinction from Tel Aviv University.



Alex Weinreb, Deputy Mayor of Modi'in

As deputy mayor of the new and growing city of Modi'in, Alex Weinreb is responsible for environmental protection, preservation of the city's many historic landmarks, and tourism. He is completing an MA in archaeology.



Greetings and Introduction

Jim Buttery:

I wish to welcome everyone to this session of the Second Annual Conference on Local Government at Tel Aviv University, which is sponsored by the British Council.

This afternoon's session will focus on the next generation of leaders. This country is no stranger to young leaders: witness David's efforts against Goliath. As a prelude to a new program that the British Council is overseeing in Israel, this session will examine the place of young leaders in society, and how they interact with the political process. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the local level, where we all feel government most keenly.

In working in Israel, the British Council tries to share creative ideas and experience from the United Kingdom. I'm delighted to report that we have with us today two experienced, creative minds from the UK, who will be sharing some thoughts with you: Mr. Jeremy Beecham and Mr. Simon Milton.

Before they begin, I would like to thank those here with us who have made this session possible. Our friends at Tel Aviv University and at the Ministry of the Interior, in partnership with us, have helped us identify participants and subject areas to discuss today. I wish us all a productive discussion.

Jeremy Beecham:

Thank you, Jim. My name is Jeremy Beecham, and I am the Vice Chairman of the English/UK Government Association, and the former head of the City Council of Newcastle, in the northeast of England. After 39 years as a councillor, I don't know quite why I've been asked to chair a session about the next generation, unless this is a subtle suggestion that I should be handing the reins over fairly soon. Nevertheless, it is a great pleasure to be here. Mr. Simon Milton will begin with the keynote presentation.



Presentations

Simon Milton:

I am a member of the conservative party in the UK, which is currently the opposition party in national government, but the majority party in local government. In other words, we have more councilors and more councils than the other parties. One of my tasks on behalf of the party is to help train new leaders of conservative councils. Today I will share with you the presentation I make to new leaders, which includes tips on how to succeed in their new job.

I tell them ten things. First, you have to set the agenda. What I mean by this is what some people call “the vision thing”. In other words, you have to have a vision for your community. The ideal is to project five years ahead: What will life be like in the community after I and my colleagues have been in control for five years? What will we deliver? Paint a picture that people can understand, so that they know what your aspirations are. I’ll share some copies I’ve brought of the current agenda for my area: “Westminster – One City: Excellent Service in Strong Communities. A White Paper for Westminster, 2006-2011”. We published this in an effort to engage people in discussing our ideas and proposals, in an effort to get feedback, and so that everyone would feel he’d contributed to the discussion of what the city should be like in the next few years.

The second thing I tell young leaders in local government, is that they actually have to lead. They have to lead their colleagues and get them to perform in the way they feel is appropriate. For example, I have a cabinet of ten colleagues. I sit down with them formally, one-on-one, at least twice a year. We review the priorities we’ve set together, the things we’ve agreed they should be delivering through their departments, and examine how they’re progressing, and what their challenges are. You must take an interest in what your colleagues are doing if you’re a leader, because you’re ultimately responsible for everything – even those things in which you may not be personally involved on a daily basis. You must work with your colleagues as a team, and you must lead that team.

Third, but perhaps most important, we have to communicate and listen. Don’t wait for an invitation: Go out and get yourself invited to residence groups, business groups, community organizations, religious organizations. Make opportunities to explain what it is you want to do, and to hear responses to that.

This sounds obvious, but one criticism of politicians that you always hear is that they do not listen. Listening means not just listening to what people tell you, but also finding things out in other ways. The most important day of the year in my local authority is not the day we get our budget allocation from the government, or the day the inspectors rate us on how well we’ve performed. The most important day of the year is the day we get the survey data from our opinion polling company, which tells us whether people are satisfied or not – and if they’re dissatisfied, what they’re dissatisfied with, and what things they think we do well. This is the tool we use to set our priorities. You cannot always be transmitting; you must also be receiving. For many politicians, this is quite a hard message, because we’re used to performing. We’re used to going out and telling people things. Listening and hearing is another matter.

Fourth, be visible. Make sure your community can see you. Your job is not to sit behind a desk in town hall. Of course, sometimes you have to sit in meetings with officials and colleagues. But if you do *only* that, you will ultimately fail. You have to be visible in and to your communities. You have to go out and seek, as I’ve said. Always accept invitations to visit things, to open things, to be present at celebrations and festivals; that way,



people can engage with you. It makes them feel that the city is taking an interest in their lives and their issues. They also feel that you can inspire them. This is as true of your staff as it is of the public. For this reason, every few months we do what we call “a walkabout” in the building – that is, we visit each department every so often, talk to the staff about their problems, take an interest in what they’re doing.

Fifth, all of us have to work with officials. Politicians come and go, but officials tend to stay for a long time. You have to understand that normal officials are out to stop you from doing what you wish to do politically. You must have confidence in the people who support you, although if they do not perform well, you must replace them. But you have to start out on the basis of trust and confidence in the people you work with – and you have to demonstrate this, you have to actually say it.

Recently, I was advising a new leader whose party had just taken control of a council that’s not been conservative for 30 years. The chief executive of the council had been appointed by the elected official’s predecessor, who was from another party. This new leader did not expect that his party would win the election – nor did the chief executive and the other bureaucratic officials in that council. Although this leader, and his party, had been elected on the strength of their promise to cancel a particular transport scheme, the chief executive began to put up resistance, giving all sorts of reasons. So this young leader asked me what he should do. I told him the best thing he could do would be to take the chief executive to the local pub and say, “I want you to know that I have confidence in you, that I believe you will be able to help me run this council well. But you have to understand that I’ve been elected on these priorities, and if you give me support, I will give you back 100% support.” This young leader took my advice. He told me afterward that the change in the atmosphere at the council was miraculous – that all of a sudden, his people were not being obstructed. That the officials realized that, for the next four years at least, they had to work with him and his party.

Sixth, use patronage. What do I mean by this? Well, you in Israel know better than anyone what government by coalition means. This is less common in the UK, but at the level of local government, coalitions are very common, because we have multiple parties, and quite often you don’t succeed in forming an administration with just one party. So, you have to be a diplomat. You have to be able to negotiate. You have to be able to form a coalition. Sometimes you must even form a coalition within your own party, because your colleagues have such different opinions and attitudes. In my experience, the thing that matters most in forming a successful coalition is that people must trust you and have confidence in you. You must be someone who keeps his word, who doesn’t judge what others say, and who doesn’t withdraw or backtrack on promises you’ve made to either your colleagues or opponents – because if you do, you will have a very short term in office. Using patronage is about demonstrating that you are someone with whom others can do business.

Seventh, make sure your public performance is positive. I tell my colleagues that even if they are the most intelligent and brightest and most innovative politicians ever, if they cannot perform in public, if they cannot stand in front of their colleagues and speak with confidence, then the confidence in front of them will just drain away. Public performance is very important: Even if it’s wrong, people form their opinion of you at least in part based on how you perform.

Eighth, when you are in a leadership position, you must analyze yourself critically. You must ask yourself: “Am I someone who can really perform for the public effectively?” If not, you must get help, get training. There are many ways you can do this. But first be self-critical. We’re not all going to be Abraham Lincoln. We are not uniformly brilliant, or brilliant all the time. Nevertheless, you can learn some basic techniques that will improve your performance, and make a difference in the long run.



Ninth, be accessible. What people think of you will in part be determined by how they are dealt with when they try to contact you. My office gets hundreds of phone calls a day from people who are mad, bad and sad – and they're just my political colleagues! Of course, you have the public on top of that. How they are dealt with, whether their letters get answered, will shape their view of you and your effectiveness and responsiveness.

Remember that what we do is provide a service. Are you easy to do business with? Is it easy to contact you? Does your office respond? Will a phone call be ignored, or if someone says they'll get back to a constituent, will they do so? These are the building blocks of your image. This is what signals whether you are someone who listens, who is responsive, and who takes people seriously.

Therefore, reducing your office staff is a false economy. You really must have an efficient, functioning office, whose staff has a good attitude about dealing with the public, with your colleagues, and with other influential people – because this will say something about you and your work.

Tenth and last, all leaders have a shelf life. The saddest thing in politics is when someone doesn't know when their shelf life is up – and those around them do know. I won't say how long that shelf life is – clearly more than 39 years! But the point is that any leader must choose the time of his own departure. You don't want to be forced out; you don't want to stay so long that people get fed up with you and feel you've lost touch. We've seen this in my country, with previous prime ministers; I would also argue that we're seeing it with the current prime minister. Politicians who carry on longer than they should slowly lose their effectiveness and ability to get things done. For any of us in politics, knowing our shelf life and being smart enough and brave enough to leave before the end of that shelf life is the most difficult decision we ever have to make.

However, if you're successful, you can get away with most things. Success conquers all. If you win elections, if you deliver what your community needs, the public will forgive many of your weaknesses – and we all have them. Ultimately, that is what people want from any leader.

Jeremy Beecham:

Thank you, Simon. Those are the Ten Commandments of Local Government, I think, delivered with as much efficacy as Moses did the original ones. We now move on to a transatlantic voice, that of someone who is certainly a young leader: Michael Ross of Boston.

Michael Ross:

Simon talked to you about what to do once you're in office. I'm going to talk to you about how to get there. First, to give you some context, Boston is a very political town. It was the home of John F. Kennedy and still is the home of John Kerry, who ran against George W. Bush and, unfortunately, lost to him. When I was first elected to the Boston City Council, I was 27 years-old. Now, seven years later, I'm still the youngest member of the Boston City Council – although plenty of younger people are getting elected to office.

The most important thing for a young person to do before running for office is to decide *why* he wants to run for office. It's the same question you'd ask yourself before doing anything in life. Understanding yourself is the key



to starting in this business, because if you understand yourself, people will want to connect with you. Sincerity sells. If you can stand up and give a speech that's sincere, even if it's about the most mundane thing in the world, people will want to connect with you. To be that sincere, you have to understand why you're running.

One of the best stories I've ever heard in this regard was about Paul Scapicio, an Italian guy who grew up in the North End of Boston. He was the coach of a Little League team. The reason he decided to run for office was because the water fountains at the team's field never worked. He said, "I just wanted to get the water fountains working." Simon talked about knowing when to get out of the business: after 12 years, Paul Scapicio stepped down from the Council. In his parting speech to us, he said: "You know, I started in this business because I wanted to get those water fountains fixed. We did a whole bunch of other things. So you know what? Those water fountains got fixed. It's now time for someone else to do [the work]." It was absolutely sincere; you could connect with it immediately.

I wanted to run for office because my father is a Holocaust survivor. My sister and I grew up listening to stories about his community and how it broke down. To me, local government is a way of making sure your community doesn't break down. You know, [the Nazis] gave a pound of sugar to anyone who reported that their neighbors were harboring Jews. Sometimes people would set a farm or a house on fire, and kill the livestock. There are terrible stories about where my father grew up. He was given away to a non-Jewish family, but they had to get rid of him, because of that pound of sugar the Nazis were giving people who told on their neighbors. I can't imagine how you can live next door to someone, see them every morning – say "Hey, Bob, how're the wife and kids?" as you head off to work – and then one day report them to the authorities and have them killed just to get a pound a sugar. That madness of the Holocaust made me ask, "What's happening in my local community? How do I get involved?" Even today, even in America, we have to be vigilant.

Local government, city council positions, state representative positions are extremely accessible to young people, unlike Congress or the governor's office and other positions. Local government offers an excellent opportunity to run. I teach a course at Suffolk University in Boston. Two of my students, both of whom are under the age of 21, got elected in their respective towns – one to the school committee and the other to the board of selectmen, which is the equivalent of a city council in a small town. They managed to unseat people who had been in office for many years.

There are about 70,000 people in my district in Boston. Only 10%-15% of the voters actually come out to vote in a local election, so you only need 6,000-7,000 votes. Actually, you only need half that number to win. So with 4,000 votes, you're in. Also in my district in Boston, we have a lot of college students – that is, other young people. At 27, I was only six or seven years older than they were, but about 20-30 years older than many of the constituents I was seeking to represent. I went to the universities and spoke to those young people. My opponent, who really should have won, who had so much more money than I do, and whose family name was associated with the City Council (the chamber we work in was named for her father) – she ignored those kids. At the end of the election, the margin of votes was 300; those 300 votes came from the young people.

Those young people wanted better transportation. In Boston, the train shuts down two or three hours before the bars shut down. It's the most ridiculous thing in the world. It's actually not something that local government controls; rather, state government controls it. Nevertheless, these young people wanted to talk about it, so I promised them I'd do everything I could. Once I was elected, we were able to get that situation changed. Never mind that it was changed back two years later, but that's another story. My point is that those young people proved to be the difference between winning and losing the election.



The only other thing I want to say today is that a lot of young people aren't getting involved because it's easier not to. You can be your own politician without ever getting elected. You can be your own anchorman without ever going on television. You can use the internet and My Space and other new technologies to cause a mini-revolution. It's much less labor-intensive to hop on the internet than it is do follow Simon's ten commandments.

I think local government is the perfect place for a young person to start, if he's thinking about getting involved in office. But you have to know who you are, you have to have a goal and your own vision, and it has to come from the heart. Local government is very passionate. You put your heart and soul into it – we all do.

Before I close, I want to tell you about the Governor of Massachusetts, wants to run for President. We differ on almost everything, but the one thing that I'm most upset with him about, is that he never answers phone calls from constituents. He entered politics at the state level, with the help of lots of money, lots of fundraising. But he's never taken the call from the field. He's never tried to figure out how to help a constituent. I believe it's essential to do that, that every politician should go through it, because that's how you understand everything else. That's the anchor. That's the way to start. I encourage you to start. Thank you.



Panel Discussion

Jeremy Beecham:

We'll now come back from overseas, and hear Etai Pinkas from Tel Aviv.

Etai Pinkas:

I was elected in October 2003. I was active in the University Council in Tel Aviv. I'm 32. I naturally understand what you [Michael] were talking about.

I was elected after a voluntary career with an NGO. As you probably know, there are huge differences among Britain, the US, and Israel. Here in Israel we have a mess with all the small parties, especially at the local level. I was approached informally by a party that is left of center. We had to go through a city-wide primary, similar to the way things are in America. We recruited more people for this political party, and I was successful in the primary and, later, in the election.

I wanted to tell you what motivated and encouraged me. I was a relatively young politician. The political parties in Israel don't formally recruit or cultivate young people. Of course, political parties in Israel do have forums for younger people, but the actual motivation to run comes from the young people themselves – and I'm not sure that's bad. In fact, if you have to encourage someone too much, it means he's not meant for this mission. Unless there's an older politician who has it on his agenda to seek and support young leaders, the motivation has to come from the young people themselves.

Perhaps you can tell me if there's any kind of system in your parties or your governments, local or other, that do this and succeed, because hardly enough younger people are involved in politics in Israel, and even when they are, though they may be chronologically young, they are already old in many ways. Of course, this is not about chronological age, because you can be like Shimon Peres, who at the age of 83 is completely focused, or you can be 30 and already worn out, with nothing to contribute.

Jeremy Beecham:

Thank you, Etai. You've raised some interesting points, which we'll come back to. Now we will hear from Mohammed Idrees.

Muhannad Idrees Abdulkader:

First, I would like to update you on our leadership, and on Arab society. It's very different from what I've seen in America or Israel. In our community, it's often the clan that decides who should lead, based on how well educated he is, his point of view, whether he can help the community. For instance, the members of our municipality were



over 50-60 years old. The young people in my city, who comprise 70% of the population, chose me as a leader based on things I had accomplished five, six years ago; they asked me to be a candidate in the elections that were held on September 15, 2005. I was supported by four different parties, with which members of my clan are affiliated – that's about 1,200 votes. I succeeded in the elections, and am now a member of my municipal council.

I do believe that being a leader has to come from inside, as was said. I've often asked myself, "Why did they choose me?" Gradually, I understood that I do have some of what it takes, though I'm still learning. I have many points of view, and I want others to know them.

I would like to add that the old men don't understand the young men in my society. For the older generation, if the father said the word, it was enough. The father didn't have to take you into consideration; he was at the top of the pecking order. If he chose something, it was enough.

When I first entered office, a young person came to me and said, "Muhannad, I need your help. My father asked the mayor for something that I see is not good for us. We are a modern democracy. You should help us. You should sit on the municipal committees and tell them we need help. You are our candidate, and we will stay by your side until we have help."

I have indeed helped them in many cases. We have introduced many activities in schools, we have improved the streets, we have improved Taybe's reputation. We have many problems in my city – whether it's murder, family honor killings, the education system, or the municipality's financial problems. I don't think I can do everything I thought I should do, but I can teach, and I can fight. God is with me and helps me every time. Indeed, I don't have much experience, I am not a wise person, but I think that if you believe there is a way, you can achieve every one of your goals. I've been in the municipality for about five months, and every day that I'm there I learn more and more. I hope God will help me. Thank you very much.

Jeremy Beecham:

Now I'd like to ask Jafar Farah to give an initial response and then field the other responses.

Jafar Farah:

I think leadership is something people must have in any field. The question is whether the system gives people the opportunity to be creative in different fields. In the Palestinian community in Israel, this is not the case. Whether you look at the school system, the higher education system, or the local council system, you see obstacles. Unfortunately, I will start with one.

Arab women are marginalized. Just look at this panel: all of the speakers on this panel are men. In this case, Jewish women have also been discriminated against. So you say, OK, so what? It's western.



Elana Buldwig:

It's not just that we're discriminated against here. We're discriminated against outside in the world, too, which is why it's hard to find representatives [for a panel like this].

Jafar Farah:

It's very hard. We created a community guide with thousands of names of experts in the Arab community. We're actually learning from women...we're creating a women's guide; a women's organization is creating a list of women leaders in the fields of art, medicine, and so on. Some leaders of marginalized groups come from a very poor neighborhood in Haifa, called Wadi Nisnas. They usually market the city as one of co-existence. There are criminals who are leaders in this city; I was – potentially – a criminal leader. But I had the chance to get an education at the university, and I became the leader of an Arab students' movement. There are two ways of developing leadership. One is to get and create leadership. This is the western way of generating leadership in Third World countries, especially in the Middle East. Take [George W.] Bush's programs, for example; he is creating leadership, instead of taking leaders who already exist, men and women, and giving them the skills to lead, using their potential. There is potential in everyone; the only question is whether we can access it, whether we can motivate this potential for positive action.

When there *are* leaders in a marginalized community, they can be a threat, too. They can threaten how [resources] are designed and used. We face this problem when we ask for equality for Arab local councils. The Jewish councils say that equality for Arab local councils means that resources will be taken away from Jewish local councils and given to Arab local councils. From our perspective, as we try to market our agenda, we see this as an investment in growth, in making a better situation for both Jews and Palestinians in the future.

I think one of the main obstacles we face is that marginalized groups don't have literature on leadership. A marginalized group like the Arabs in a place like Israel also has to deal with two languages. If you want to lead, you need to study, and in Israeli universities you study in Hebrew – but then you need to lead in Arabic...you have to reach communities and families in Arabic. I see now that the US, Britain, and many countries in Europe are going back to family values. Family links are very important; they can help generate cooperation and local leadership that can spearhead change. That is what leadership is about, in the end – the ability to lead change. In Arab/Palestinian human rights organizations, we're also dealing with building the capacity of leaders. We must always look at the resources we have, including linguistic resources, and develop them so they can be used to change our reality as a whole – not only political issues. We have leaders in hospitals. One thing I propose, is to create a cadre of leaders, women and men, who will work in local councils.

Jeremy Beecham:

I was very conscious of that issue, Jafar, and was going to make the same point. Several of us have spoken so far, none of us women. If you look at the list of speakers, 85 are men and 15 are women. If you look at the guest list, there is only one woman among seven or eight international guests.



Jafar Farah:

We need to introduce gender requirements [quotas], even in the elections.

Jeremy Beecham:

We're beginning to do that in England. This is the situation not only in Israel, but in UK local government, as well. It's probably more true of local and national government in the US, too.

Simon Milton:

I have to say that there are four women on my council, and three blokes.

Jeremy Beecham:

I think we need to hear from one of the women present today.

Elana Budwig:

May I answer? I'll say two things, one about young people and leadership from my own experience, and the other about the feminist perspective on what's happening.

First, as a partner with the university in trying to arrange this workshop, I can say it was really, really hard to find young women in local government. I think this is because women are busy working in other spheres. When I look at women leaders, I see that many of them actually start in NGOs, in work that's grass roots and connected to the community; men are much more likely to go out and show themselves. They're used to relations with the outside world. This doesn't mean there are no women leaders, but when I recall how we tried to approach women to attend this panel – we found there weren't many young women in local government.

It's important to add that this is not about this panel only. It's about reality. As I said, it was really, really difficult to identify people to come to this workshop. There aren't many young people in local government, as Etai said. To give you an example, when I approached people at the conference about this workshop, no one listened to me. I think one of the reasons was because I'm young. If I were older, and I were a man in a suit, and said I were from the British Council, people would have related to me totally differently. In a way, that's marginalization. It's not just that I'm a woman, it's also that I'm young. It doesn't mean I've got nothing to contribute to my community. It just means that people in power have a very different perception.



Jeremy Beecham:

Would anyone else like to speak, particularly but not only women? If not, let's move on to South Africa.

Sol Cowan:

You'll be pleased to know that in our party, it's a 50/50 situation. We had a local government election about three or four months ago. Fifty percent of the candidates were women, and 50% were men. That was a directive of our national leadership. It caused major debate, because we come from a patriarchal society where men still dominate. Gender issues are something we're going to have to really work with, to be able to overcome marginalization. I'm happy to say that women candidates were put up not only because they were women, but because they were effective and could do the job just as well as men.

I want to get back to leadership. Let's define what we mean by leadership. One theoretical definition of leadership is that it's the art of being able to persuade people to accept one's point of view. As previous speakers have said, there are many ways of doing this. How do we promote credible leadership? This is part of society's duty, but it's also part of government's duty. Do we have forums at the school level? Do we have councils, for instance? In Johannesburg we do. We have groups of kids who emulate a real council, and take up issues and do a lot of good work in their own societies, including bringing together communities. The art of leadership is not to marginalize, but to bring communities together under one banner.

Local government, especially, has a role to play. I think universities, student unions, also have a role to play. I think there should be cadet courses, and courses that are structured to bring up leadership in local government. Also, how do we compensate councilors? To say to a councilor, "We're going to compensate you but, sorry, you cannot live off it. You have to have another job as well", is a problem. What it does is ensure that retired or rich people become leaders. Look at the today's world leaders: their average age is 75-80. Half of them can't breathe oxygen, and yet they are telling us how to lead the world! No disrespect, but it is a problem. I see it on our continent with our neighbors. People are way past their date; certain leaders definitely need to step down, move on, let us bring in a credible leadership. It's a responsibility of society but, more important, I think it's the responsibility of our governments, our schools, and our universities to be able to bring together and supply the tools to make good leadership.

Robin Kramer:

The first requirement may be an eleventh "commandment", that is, that existing leadership grow new leaders, make opportunities in the broadest sense. One reason there are so few women in positions of power in governments around the world is that they have no mentors, no women to put their arms around them and say, "Please think about this. We can do this."

In my own country, I recently attended a session on women in government that included women State Senators, our City Comptroller, a woman who had run for office and lost, a City Councilor. Sadly, the conversation turned to money – in other words, how to raise money to run for office, rather than for mentorship and opportunity.



I think that local government – in part because it is less powerful than federal government in most countries – provides a safe and a hard but authentic way for all kinds of people – men, women, people of all colors and language backgrounds – to take hold of their own futures. However, they often need a door opened or a hand extended.

Also, because politics and government are also about the allocation of scarce resources and, at the end of the day, about power, about how they are spent and used and for what end, many women feel uncomfortable with them, either by virtue of how they were raised, how their family is structured, or how these things work in their company or corporation or culture. Women are just as bad and just as good at using power as men. That has been my experience.

So to me, the first requirement of leadership is that it make opportunities for others. Shame on all of us who do not open the door.

Robbert Baruch:

In the past few years, more and more women have become interested in politics. The problem is not so much that women or other groups are less visible in politics; the problem is that they have less access to knowledge and the process, as Robin describes. Using the example of The Netherlands, the south of The Netherlands is generally more Catholic and more poor, and people have less access to university and to money. Twenty years ago, hardly any Catholics from the south were in parliamentary institutions. Now that the Catholics in the south have been emancipated, you see them more often, just as you now see more women in politics, and just as you see more Blacks in office in the US.

This is a natural process, undergone by any group that is getting into power. The question is how to get there. In my opinion, the wrong way to get there is to demand certain rights because you are under-represented. There's a difference between having the right, and getting the right. Does that make sense? There's a difference between being right, and getting power to shift to your side. Instead of complaining that you're under-represented, which shifts the discussion from power to representation, it's better to make a claim for just requests, as this ultimately helps the political process as a whole.

Jeremy Beecham:

Now we will hear from our councilor from Beer Sheva.

Tal El-AI:

I hope you'll forgive me, but I want to tell my story in my mother tongue. I will touch on gender issues.

Beer Sheva is a southern city, far south of here; really, it's the capital of the southern region of Israel. Unfortunately, since its establishment, the city has suffered because of this distance – which is physical, and



also reflects a difference of mentality. This distance has resulted in a lack of accessibility to economic, human, and political resources.

Seven years ago, a group of us young people decided to run for office – primarily because we'd watched our peers and siblings leave town as soon as they'd graduated from the university. It didn't take us long to realize that if we didn't take leadership into our own hands, if we ourselves didn't set the agenda for our city and fight to promote our interests, then no one would. And then more and more young people, young families, would get up and leave Beer Sheva.

By the way, I've already "lost" a good many friends to other cities, primarily in the center of the country – not because they necessarily wanted to leave, but because they had no choice. My wife and I and our families struggle every day to hang on – because we, too, could leave. Anyone with a sought-after profession can easily go elsewhere.

We began this process [of assuming leadership] about seven and a half years ago, during the previous administration. A young guy named Rubik Danilovitch ran on the mayor's ticket for City Council. At age 28 he became the deputy mayor; he established an office in the municipality whose sole task was to do what we are discussing here today.

That was all he did for five years. That's all he tried to do – and he succeeded, very nicely, in fact. During the subsequent elections, he established his own political party, all of whose members are young. The oldest of us was 32 when we ran; today I am 32.

We have become the largest political party in local government in Israel – that is, proportionate to the number of residents in our city. We fill seven of the 25 seats on the City Council – in other words, we constitute more than one-quarter of the coalition. We hold over seven posts, most of them in education and other matters of concern to young people. We have begun some substantial projects. I invite you all to come see what we've done. It's only an hour and a half away; by train, you don't even feel the distance!

We've started a quiet revolution. We're not making headlines, but we're getting things done. We're leading by personal example. I can really relate to the ten commandments cited earlier.

I'd like to discuss the issue of gender. When we ran, the head of my party had an idea. As a rule, he has some pretty innovative ideas. He said, let's have a slate that's composed of one woman for every man: woman, man, woman, man. I hope the women present won't misunderstand me, but I said, "Rubik – women don't elect other women. If women were to elect other women, if women were to believe in other women, then there'd already be women in politics." The fact is, women vote for men who promote women.

We spent a lot of time in pubs, talking to soldiers, talking to young people who raised many issues. We were overwhelmed with supporters and volunteers. Promoting women was no gimmick – it's how we ran. Women don't vote for other women, but they will vote for a party headed by a man who will enable women to serve in government. It makes him look good. If a woman were to do the same thing – other women would not vote for her.

It's a shame that that's the way things are, but we ought to think why. (Comment from the audience: Pedagogy of the oppressed.) These are the facts. I'm not saying it's right – absolutely not. By the way, there are many women in the Beer Sheva municipality. The director-general of the mayor's office is a woman. One of the deputy mayors is a woman. There are women in the other parties, too, with the exception of the religious parties. However, you might be interested to know that the director of the municipal Department of Religious Education is a woman. She's a rabbi. [Her appointment] met with a lot of opposition from the very conservative,



chauvinistic, ultra-orthodox Jewish community. We were the first to support her: if she's qualified, why shouldn't she head the department? This was the first time anything like this had happened – in Beer Sheva, at least.

So that's our story. We're looking ahead. We hope that in the next elections, we'll not only be part of the coalition – we'll be heading it. Thank you.

Alex Weinreb:

My name is Alex Weinreb. I'm the deputy mayor of a medium-size town in Israel called Modi'in, the town of the Macabees in the Hanukkah story. I've listened carefully to what my predecessors have had to say. I come from a different place, and I want to give you an idea of future leadership, as I see it.

People have spoken about how to get elected, how future leaders can become involved, how to make future leaders, and what it entails to be a future leader. In my opinion, future leadership should be derived from what people need. People need service. People use all kinds of interesting tricks to get elected. You can have women in every second position. You can have a balloon in the sky with advertising. You can promise your constituents transportation until 3:00 in the morning. You can try all kinds of interesting things, but, as John F. Kennedy said: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". What do people need? They need a different kind of leadership, especially in Israel. People are fed up with the current leadership, which says "A" and doesn't even do "B" – it does "C". It promises this and does that, it doesn't put the common good of the nation, of Jews, Arabs, religious or secular people on its agenda. Rather, it follows its own political agenda.

People are tired of this. People want professional leadership, professional government ministers. There's no reason to have a minister of defense who has no idea about defense. That's just one example. I think the solution is for people to treat their city like a business, to demand service from their municipal leaders, just as they would from a store owner. If you go to a restaurant and the waiter or waitress doesn't give you good service, you won't come back.

Especially in Israel, people get hit in the face but turn the other cheek and ask to be hit again because they're not used to being served. They don't even know what the word "service" means. Future leaders will have to serve people, meet their demand for livable cities. I think future leadership must supply what people need, and not follow a political agenda set by the people who financed their running for office.

I myself ran with my own money. I'm still paying back the loan. I didn't take money from anyone who wanted to offer it, or from any party, so I don't owe any party any jobs; I don't owe anybody anything. I owe 70,000 people a day-to-day answer to all of their needs. The first thing we did after being elected was to fire everyone in the municipality and put out tenders for all of their jobs. People were hired for those jobs because of their qualifications, not because of their connections. This is a new trend. I hope others will run on a platform of using professionals to serve the public. Maybe in the future, my grandchildren will have a government that will be run professionally and not politically. That, in my eyes, is future leadership.

As for women and equality, I personally feel that women can do a better job than men in most ways. They have the tenderness, they have the understanding. Our mothers brought us up; they must know what they're doing. Unfortunately, Israel is a country run by men. In the religious sector in Israel, maybe in Arab society as well, women are at home more than they are out front, unfortunately. Women have less ego than men. In Modi'in, we've passed a few ordinances in this regard. For instance, we recently passed an ordinance, which



states that when assigning names to new streets, 50% must be named for a man and 50% must be named for a woman. There's no reason why 90% of the streets should be named after men. What about the great women of the world? I hope we'll pass more laws in the future, which give women an equal chance. We are encouraging women to go into politics, to serve the public. I feel women can do this equal to if not better than men.

Waffa Heskiveh:

I'd like to touch on two points. The first concerns leadership and the next generation. One reason young people are not entering leadership positions is because they don't see these as challenging, they don't perceive these as offering them a future. They're not interested in this as they start their lives, because everyone knows that politics is a tough business, and that anyone who goes into politics has to forfeit a great many things in his or her personal life.

Another reason is that the national government – beginning with the Ministry of Education – doesn't take the trouble to train people to be leaders. We may not even know about people who are born with the natural charisma to lead, but who are not given the opportunity or freedom to lead – perhaps because their parents steer them on a particular career path. Lastly, politics has to be something you really want, because it is difficult to follow those goals. When one is starting out in life, one thinks of many things, none of which have to do with politics.

The second point I'd like to make concerns women. I am an Arab woman, and a member of my City Council. The situation is difficult for women in the Jewish sector in this country, but it's twice as difficult for women in the Arab sector. It's bad enough that I'm a woman, no less a woman from a minority group. It's difficult for a woman to think about going into politics, to give up other pleasures, give up being at her home, spend less time with her children. Not all families consent to letting their women run in elections. When I was running for office, I'd often come home at four in the morning. My family is liberal, but they weren't overly pleased about that. Everyone else involved in the election was a man. One night I went down to party headquarters to give a speech; there were 400 men there. Unfortunately there was only one other woman there, she knew me and she was waiting for me. I found it very hard, but I "went for it" anyway, because I had a goal. It wasn't so much that I wanted to be a member of the City Council, it was more that I wanted to break down this barrier for other women. When I was elected and went to my first meeting at the municipality, I was the only woman among 13 men. The mayor's legal advisor had to explain to six of these men, who had only completed ninth grade, what a city ordinance was. It really hurt me to see that this was who had been elected, that these were the leaders of my city: men who hadn't a clue. It's not that I feel I am better than they are, but it does bother me that I constantly have to prove that a woman could run the city just as well as any of those men, if not better.

You have to be involved in the community, all the time. You have to attend people's family celebrations, you have to go to all the "in" places, you have to get involved in community work, you have to get involved with the children. Not every woman can do it – leave her own life behind and take this path, expose herself, have no rest.

For four months during the elections, I cut myself off from my girlfriends, forfeited our monthly cup of coffee, gave up seeing them. It wasn't easy. I think society, or local government, or national government, or various organizations – someone should train and encourage women, should create a network of communication for



women from different cities, should support them. Maybe then people would realize that women can lead, and women would begin to take leading seriously. I took it very seriously – that’s my nature – after taking a course offered by local government for Arab women leaders. I’d like to take this occasion to sincerely thank The British Council for giving us the opportunity to take that course.

Michal Chilibon:

I would like to speak in Hebrew. I am the vice chairperson of the Student Union of Tel Aviv University. Close to 30,000 students are enrolled at Tel Aviv University, which has 7,000 faculty. It’s like a small city. The Student Union holds elections once a year, in which each department chooses one representative. The Student Council has 75 members, and acts as a sort of parliament; from among those members, we choose five section heads and a chairperson and vice chairperson, who serve on a committee that functions like the national government. This committee oversees the Union’s academic, cultural, and social activities. The Union as a whole ensures the welfare of students, distributes scholarship money, engages in social action, and so forth – according to the principles of the party that won the most votes.

Student representatives of the various academic departments may or may not be identified with a particular political party. If the elections get heated, it’s usually over partisan issues. Tel Aviv University is not a reflection of national government, however: At the university, the left is in power and has been for several years. I am a member of the New Generation Party, which is actually the young people’s wing of the Labour Party.

I’d like to say a word about young leadership and its promotion. I believe the activities of the Student Union are a form of young leadership. We plan programs that foster young leadership and creativity. For example, we have a program known as “Living Together”, which trains 30 students living in the dorms to be entrepreneurs and leaders. The program concluded yesterday with a big party. This very successful program has been running for five years; we expect to see its graduates involved in the university and the community thereafter.

We encourage students to get involved. Anyone who has an agenda – whether it concerns Arab-Jewish relations or help for the needy – can come to us, and we’ll help them, we’ll give them a budget for what they want to do. We do whatever we can to cultivate student activism.

We are especially keen on promoting student involvement in the community. For example, the Union distributes about NIS 2 million per year in scholarships from its own budget – that’s about US\$250,000. We require our scholarship recipients to volunteer in the community, whether tutoring children so that they, too, can some day enter university, or helping the elderly, or collecting food and clothing for the needy.

Perhaps this kind of leadership is on a small scale, with each student taking the lead in an area that interests him or her, but that doesn’t mean it’s not powerful. For example, if one student tutors another who is having difficulty with his class work, or tutors an elementary or high school student, his efforts may enable those students to progress and reach higher achievements. Even if they never attend a university, they may have more confidence.

As for the issue of women, we are proud to have many women serving in the Student Union – more women than men, in fact. We celebrate International Women’s Day every year. This year, we organized a large event around women in the Israeli music scene, which was very successful. Even men attended this event. It was very meaningful.



As a rule, we work toward equality between men and women at the university, especially since more than 50% of the students at this university are women. This is going to be the Union's primary focus in the coming year.

Sharon Rotkowitz:

Hello, my name is Sharon. My English is not very good, so I'd like to speak in Hebrew. I work for the State Comptroller's Office, in the department that oversees the work of local governments in Israel. I'd like to tell you a little story.

One of the young attorneys in our office asked me to accompany him to a meeting with the head of a local authority. After the meeting, at which I was a passive observer – I went primarily to support the new attorney – we received the protocol of the meeting. It read, "On such-and-such a date, you arrived at the meeting with your secretary." In other words, if there's a woman present, she must be somebody's secretary.

This brief tale would undoubtedly sound familiar to many women in Israel. I agree that we have to do something about the commonly-held perspective of women in Israeli society. Israeli society is traditional; changing this perspective will be no easy task. I disagree with my predecessor who said we should let this happen naturally. I believe the opposite is the case. If we sit and wait, change may or may not happen, and in any case it will take a long time. We want to make this change happen soon and happen fast. We can do this by educating even very young children that women are just as good as men, just as capable, just the same. We must raise the consciousness of adolescent girls. We must cultivate young women leaders.

Dick Gross:

It's incredibly uplifting talking about leadership and young people, particularly when you hear about leadership from oppressed and minority groups. I noticed that all of the Jews are on this side [of the room], and the Arabs are in one corner. Is that correct? I thought I'd break it up. It's interesting body language, that's all, interesting how your place in the room can affect deeper things.

Leadership is very uplifting. Leadership also sometimes has some very sordid aspects. It's about personal ambition as much as anything. I used to be very troubled by that, but I got over it. The three times I've been mayor, I've had to crawl over the dead bodies of my opponents. It is something you have to evaluate, because you are pushing yourself forward. I ask myself all the time, "Why do I push myself forward? Are there qualities about me that make me deserving of leadership?" Often there aren't, but I go ahead anyway, and I do feel a bit guilty about it. It's the ugly side of leadership. So, while leadership amongst young people is incredibly uplifting, there is this other aspect of it, which should be acknowledged.

The other thing is that leadership is often about compromise. Leaders are often vilified or disliked by their communities when they compromise. It is a corrupting process, and you have to be prepared to be opportunistic, at times sleazy, at times dishonest – I've done it, we've all done it; at times, it leads to long-term change. I would



tell young leaders that there are temptations along the path. A true and genuine leader is the sort of person who, as Simon said, has a vision with integrity, and sticks to it. Such people are rare. I want to say this particularly to Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, women, and members of the gay and lesbian community – we haven't talked about it, but gays and lesbians are in every community. I think it's really exciting to see leaders from these groups, and I welcome them. I just wanted to tell them that, as they commence their journey through the political process, there is this difficult issue of strength, integrity, ambition and compromise. It's very hard to steer an honorable course and remain politically active throughout your career.

Jeremy Beecham:

I'm going to ask Simon to respond in a minute. I just want to throw out one or two thoughts to which you might like to respond, in addition to what's already been said. Simon began by talking about what one does as a leader. Michael spoke about the first step on that road: how to get elected. It seems there are some issues we need to think about.

There is a question – isn't there? – about what people entering politics actually need – that is, support, how to combine a professional career with a career in government, given that, at least initially, you won't be able to make a living if elected. What kind of support is needed to enable people to get to where Simon and I and others in this room are, that is, to actually become a leader? I don't mean just administrative support, I also mean training, external support, experience that you can be exposed to or share along that way. We've developed some systems in the UK, which Simon will talk about, because he's in charge of improvement in government in our association. We have an agency that is a leadership center, with peer review and so on, which helps build and extend experience in leadership. I'm not sure, but from conversations it seems that perhaps there's a bit of a vacuum in Israel in this regard. Certainly, conversations with Israeli Arab friends here today have revealed a capacity problem. Etai talked about how political parties don't seem to play a sufficient role in encouraging young leaders. My experience in the UK would echo that, as well.

So, how do we facilitate the process? It isn't just a matter of personal politics, which are important and crucial, or of the techniques we've discussed. It's how the system fosters and encourages involvement in leadership. We don't have time to explore that in detail today, but we need to think about it. We'll hear briefly from Nahum Ben-Elia, and then again from Simon.

Nahum Ben-Elia:

I would like to start with a reactionary push. Why do you need young leaders? We need leaders, by why young? Not for formal reasons, OK? We need young leaders because we believe that they have the potential to effect change, to inject new ideas, to represent new segments of society.

I would like to distinguish between two kinds of young leadership. The first is political, and the second is professional. In Israel at this time, we have very few young political leaders. Why is this so? I could hypothesize



about it, but it seems that if you want to get into the political scene, it is better to be in the national league than the global league. I think there is young professional leadership. I've seen a lot of bright, superb young professionals in local authorities. I don't see them as members of government.

The second distinction I would make is between localities like Tel Aviv, where young people can come with a particular agenda, such as that of the Green Party, and can try to move the local authority toward particular goals. Then there are communities such as Beer Sheva, large Jewish local authorities serving about 200,000 people, where you're not talking about change within the local authority as such, but rather within the community. This poses a special challenge for young leaders: the problem is not how to change the local authority, but how to change the type of society. This is a much more complex issue than that of young leaders in a local authority.

Simon Milton:

This has been a fascinating discussion. Thanks again to the British Council for facilitating it. We began by talking about the characteristics of leadership, and quickly moved on to a more engaging discussion of the obstacles to getting involved in politics and political leadership, if you are not a member of the majority.

I'd like to demonstrate to our Israeli colleagues, both Jews and Arabs, that they are not alone in this situation. We do a lot of studies in the UK about the average councilor, and each time there are elections, we refresh the study. The average candidate in the UK is a 57-year-old white male. That is not at all representative of the UK population. It's not representative of my authority and in fact, we're not typical. We have a lot of young people in my council. We're very, very unusual because of it.

We, too, have under-representation of women. We have under-representation of young people. We have under-representation of many different ethnic minority communities which, in some cities, may constitute 30%-40% of the population. If we don't change political representation, we will not truly be representing everyone who lives in an area.

What do we do about this? As Jeremy has said, we're looking to use various agencies in local government to change this. I'm a director of the Local Government Leadership Center, which is about to start a project to recruit new people to come into local government and politics. It's not enough to say there are equal opportunities for everyone. We know that the people who typically take advantage of those opportunities are the same middle-aged white males who currently dominate the system.

You may offer opportunities, but women are still not taking advantage of them, nor are young people. Thus, having opportunities is not enough. You have to pro-actively find people, nurture them, cultivate them, work with them, encourage them, mentor them so that they will consider politics and local government as a worthy path. As we've heard from some of our women colleagues, there are so many other things you can be doing, in NGOs and communities as well as in your personal life – so why on earth would you prioritize politics?

We have to market our field. We're in competition with a whole range of other fields. In the UK, we are constantly looking to involve people in the judicial system. We're fishing in the same pond for active citizens who are prepared to do things for their community. As local government, we do not market ourselves as effectively as do other branches of public life. Therefore, we're looking very closely at what we can do to market ourselves, so as to remove some of those very real obstacles that stop people from getting involved. This has to do with the way meetings are held, the time commitment, the amount of support you need, the kind of training and



development you need – very practical things, which will lower those barriers, and make government leadership a viable alternative to other forms of community engagement and activism. If we fail, local government will slowly become less relevant; its reputation will decline. What justification will we have to make decisions that affect people's lives if we are no longer relevant to or representative of those we serve?

This is a crucial question, not just for Israel, but for most democracies: how do we create opportunities to get involved in politics, and then help people take them? We've heard very clear reasons why young leaders are important in politics, in business, in public life. It's in all of our interest to help people seize those opportunities.

Jeremy Beecham:

Thank you very much, Simon. It's been 30 years since I was part of the "next generation" of leaders, so it's a bit of a paradox that I'm here today. Another paradox occurred to me, which is that we're sitting in a country where the Pensioners' Party won a number of seats in the Knesset in the recent election, on the strength of the votes of young people. There's something more going on in Israel than we thought. Perhaps it's something that will catch on elsewhere, too.

Today has been a rather interesting day. I'd like to thank all of our lead speakers. Also, virtually everyone in this room has contributed to the discussion. I think we've all got things to think about and talk about in the future. Simon and I have a particular interest in government association, and we'd be happy to talk to colleagues in Israel and in Israeli local government. I'm sure colleagues from abroad would likewise be happy to share their experiences and encourage the constant flow of new people and new ideas into local democracy, into citizen-centered government – which is what we must all be interested in. Thank you very much.



(l-r) Jim Buttery and Simon Milton



(l-r) Waffa Heskiveh, Dick Gross, Jafar Farah and Muhannad Idrees Abdulkader



(l-r) Rubbert Baruch, Alex Weinreb and Robin Kramer



(l-r) Sol Cowan, Michal Chilibon, Tal El-AI and Robbert Baruch



(l-r) Michael Ross and Dick Gross