
**The Contribution of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association in
Developing Intercultural Understanding: A Case study of IOU Respect
as an International Exchange Programme**

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Abstract:

Hostelling International (HI) is a youth organisation that provides opportunities for young people to participate in international exchange programmes. One of its initiatives is the IOU Respect Programme (I Owe You Respect), which seeks to develop friendship, peace and respect between participants from some Islamic countries (Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon) and some western countries (United States, France, and Germany) through two-week residential sessions hosted in one of the programme's participating countries.

Data collection involved: a questionnaire survey of applicants to the programme; in-depth interviews with representatives of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association (EYHA); internet survey of participants who had participated in the programme before; participant observation in the IOU Respect programme held in Egypt in 2008, at the Ismailia Youth Hostel.

The paper recommends that the marketing techniques used by the EYHA need improvement as the Egyptian applicants were exclusively from Cairo due to poor marketing across the rest of Egypt.

Key Words: Youth Hostels, IOU Respect Programme, Hostelling International

Introduction

Tourism is considered as an effective way through which youth hostels can achieve their goals. Youth hostels were established to facilitate and encourage travelling by young people. Tourism provides young people with the opportunities for: developing inter-cultural understanding; discovery; coping with risk; entertainment, which can help them to acquire self-confidence and patience. Nowadays, the importance of youth hostels has increased; many have developed travel offices inside the hostels to help young people to organize trips to remote destinations inside a country. In addition, these offices develop exchanges between various youth associations, where a seminar is held annually between experts and

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supervisors at these offices, in order to execute the appropriate touristic programmes that can be implemented by the youth hostel associations to create greater coherence between the youth of different nationalities all over the world (Hassan, 2013).

The youth hostels movement is a major youth movement globally, contributing to preparing youth through providing inexpensive overnight accommodation for young people during their travels. The philosophy of the youth hostels movement is to promote interaction between different nationalities in all corners of the hostels: sleeping in cabins; in the restaurant and in other public spaces, given the importance of creating a spirit of understanding and friendship among young people of different nationalities (Les Auberges de Jeunesse, 2012).

The mission of youth hostels is to help people, especially young persons, to gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling. The mission is accomplished through an extensive network of hostels offering a wide range of programmes and activities (Hostelling International USA, 2014c).

Youth hostels provide appropriate programmes to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation between young people worldwide. These programmes build bridges of friendship and trust and encourage young people to travel and raise their interest in: studying the environment; working on scientific research; training them on self-reliance and obedience; participating in public service; working with the community (Hassan, 2013).

One of the most valuable programmes that Youth Hostels provide for the youth is the IOU Respect Programme (I Owe You Respect Programme), which is an international exchange programme that prioritizes dialogue and learning opportunities to increase tolerance and respect in its participants. Through a series of engaging, fun and challenging workshops and time spent living and exploring the country that will host the programme (Edric, 2007).

Research Question

The current research was designed to answer the following research questions: first, “to what extent does the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association promote intercultural understanding through the IOU Respect Programme?”; second, “Are marketing methods adequate for spreading the concept of IOU Respect in Egypt (or not)?”

Review of Literature

This section reviews the historical background of youth hostels, the establishing of HI, the EYHA, the programmes implemented by youth hostels. It also reviews the IOU Respect Programme as a programme promoting intercultural understanding, the historical background of the

programme, its aims and objectives, the participants at IOU Respect Programme, as well as the process of IOU Respect Programme.

a) Background History of Hostelling

The concept of youth hostels started in Germany by German schoolteacher Richard Schirrmann at the beginning of the 20th century. Richard Schirrmann, who is known as the father of modern hostelling, created a "wandering school" on weekends by taking students on educational field trips to the countryside, away from the industrial city (American Youth Hostels, 2013). These trips gave students the ability to experience the countryside and to learn about it developing knowledge.

The idea of youth hostels came to Schirrmann, when he and his students were caught in a thunderstorm during an excursion on 26th of August 1909. They finally escaped into a school, where the headmaster allowed them to use a classroom, and a farmer gave them straw to sleep on and milk for their dinner (Les Auberges de Jeunesse, 2012).

In 1912, Schirrmann opened his first hostel in an old castle in Burg Altena, West Germany. The hostel was equipped with dorms with three-level bunk beds, a bathroom, a kitchen and a washroom (The WeHostels Blog, 2014). In 1919, the youth hostels movement spread across Germany, and developed into the German Youth Hostel Association.

The Youth Hostels network extended quickly, and thousands of hostels opened over the next two decades. By 1932, Germany had more than 2000 youth hostels, recording more than 4.5 million overnight stays annually (American Youth Hostels, 2013). In addition, hostels were established in various countries, including: Switzerland; Poland; Netherlands; Norway; Denmark; Ireland; France; Belgium; United Kingdom, adding another 600 hostels to the European network (Les Auberges de Jeunesse, 2012).

b) Hostelling International

At the beginning, the youth hostels associations in the various countries had little contact with each other, but that changed in 1932, when the first international youth hostel conference was held in Amsterdam, Netherlands. At the conference, the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) was established to co-ordinate Youth Hostel Associations across Europe with Richard Schirrmann as president.

In the summer of 2002, at its 43rd Biennial Conference in Budapest, the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) launched a global Youth Hostelling for Peace and International Understanding initiative (YHPIU). The IYHF initiative was created in the belief that hostelling can contribute towards building a better life (Edric, 2007). In 2006, the IYHF evolved into HI (Les Auberges de Jeunesse, 2012).

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Nowadays, HI is an international non-profit organization and a global network of Youth Hostel Associations covering 71 Member Associations and 8 Associate Organizations (International Youth Hostel Federation, 2010). It involves 38 million overnight stays a year through more than 4000 hostels in over 90 countries worldwide, and about 3.7 million national members (Hostelling International USA, 2014b).

HI's hostels were much more than just places to stay. They were about: discovering new places; learning about new cultures; and making lifelong friendships. With more than four million members worldwide, HI is the only global network of Youth Hostel Associations (Hostelling International, 2014). The hostels offer a friendly meeting place for people of all races, nationalities, colours, religions, genders, classes and political opinions (International Youth Hostel Federation, 2010).

HI also supports National Youth Hostels Associations to organise activities that maintain its mission. This is done via funding, sponsorship and the sharing of best practices. The various mission-based activities include: youth rallies; youth forums; international exchange programmes; and other activities specifically targeted towards people with limited means (International Youth Hostel Federation, 2010).

C) The Egyptian Youth Hostels Association

The mastermind who developed the youth hostel system in Egypt was George Nikola, one of the founders of the Bar Association. In September 1954, through the efforts of George Nicola, the EYHA was created. The EYHA is an independent non-profit body grouping together all of Egypt's hostels (Al-Ahram Weekly, 2004).

In 1955, the EYHA applied to join the IYHF, and was approved as a temporary member – this was the first time temporary membership was granted to an association less than a year after its inauguration. In the Seventeenth International Youth Hostel Conference held in Chrissadol, Scotland, in 1956, the conference agreed to grant full membership to the EYHA (Hassan, 2013).

Nowadays, Egypt has 15 hostels, located mainly in tourist hubs (such as Cairo, Alexandria, Sharm El-Sheikh, Hurghada, Ismailia, Port Said, Luxor and Aswan), "see Table 1". The Sharm El-Sheikh hostel was chosen by the IYHF as one of two Middle East hostels designated as centres for world peace and international understanding. Selected as part of the Youth Hostelling for Peace and Understanding Campaign organised by UNESCO, Sharm El-Sheikh hostel has hosted a number of international events (Egyptian Youth Hostels Association (2014)).

Table 1: Youth Hostels in Egypt

No	Name	Address	Beds
1	Cairo	135 King Abdul-Aziz Al-Seoud Manyal, Tel (202) 364 0729	185
2	Al- Ismailia	Emara Road, Tel (2064) 922 850	278
3	Alexandria	32 Port Said St, Shatby, Tel (203) 592 5459	200
4	Sharm El-Sheikh	Hadabet Om Al-Sayed, Tel (2069) 662 497	160
5	Hurghada	New Tourist Centre, beside Hurghada Aquarium, Tel (2065) 500 079	160
6	Port Said	Corniche St, In Front of the Port Said Stadium	145
7	Luxor	16 Karnak Temple St, Tel (2095) 372 139	70
8	Aswan	96 Abtal Al-Tahrir St, Tel (2097) 302 313	84
9	Suez	Horreyia Road, next to Suez Stadium, Tel (2062) 339 069	60
10	Marsa Matrouh	Matrouh Youth Hostel, behind the agricultural building, Tel (2046) 493 2331	52
11	Assuit	Lux Buildings, Elwaleedya, building 3, Tel: 088/2324846	39
12	Fayoum	Lux Buildings, Elhaddeqa, building 7	24
13	Dmanhour	9 El-Rahebat School Street, Tel:045/3290580	30
14	Sohag (Old)	5 Port Said Street- Sohag, Tel:093/2324395	28
15	Sohag (New)	The High way Sohag- Assuit, Tel: 093/2311430	60

Source: Egyptian Youth Hostels Association (2014).

D) Programmes designed by HI

HI offers chances for young people to contribute to formal international exchange programmes. The number of programmes and their location varies from year to another, but all are generally planned to afford opportunities to young people from different countries, religious backgrounds, cultures, ethnic heritages, etc. to come together to know about each other, to develop friendships, respect and peace on a personal level (Hostelling International USA, 2014b). Some of these programmes are listed below:

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1- Cultural Kitchen Programme

Cultural Kitchen is an educational programme that allows young people to discover the world around them. Through the programme, young people learn about hostelling, the culture of a country of their choice, work together to cook a meal from that country to share with people from around the world, and have the chance to present their learning to international viewers (Hostelling International USA, 2014 a).

2- Community Walls Programme

Community Walls is an educational outreach programme that asks young people aged from 11 to 17 years old: "What is it like to live in your community?" The programme utilizes original artwork to assist young people to: achieve greater cultural understanding; define their community; express what it is like to live there; build pride in their culture. The artwork programme is coordinated by local hostelling, international hostels, and councils and is displayed in hostel buildings and administrative offices for public viewing. Students learn cultural awareness and research skills as they prepare to share their daily experiences with others through creative expression (Hostelling International Chicago, 2014).

3) I Owe You Respect Programme (IOU Respect)

IOU Respect Programme is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sanctioned Programme (Delaware Valley Council, 2007), which brings together Islamic and Western young people for a two-week personal journey (Hedge, 2014).

3. a- Historical Background of IOU Respect Programme

The IOU Respect Programme was born in the aftermath of 11th September 2001 to attempt to bridge the perceived gulf of misunderstanding between Western and Islamic cultures. There was a clear need to exercise the HI mission of building peace by bringing people together in order to close the gap between youths from Western countries and those from Muslim countries (Mc Cabe, et al, 2012).

In launching IOU Respect initiative, the IYHF president Harish Saxena stated that:

Youth hostels feel that they too must find a response to the dramatic, violent conflicts that tear cultures and nations apart. Our responsibility is to make our own contribution to intercultural dialogue and to educate for peace (Rouanet, 2009, p.1).

In the summer of 2004, the first IOU Respect Programme was held in Dachau, Germany. In collaboration between multiple national hostelling associations, the programme was the embodiment of the YHPIU initiative and was the beginning of what has become an ongoing series of exchanges between multiple countries (Johnson, 2012).

The IOU Respect Programme started with four hostelling associations, the United States (HI-USA), Germany (DJH), Egypt (EYHA) and Tunisia (ATATJ). Later France (FUAJ) and Morocco (FRMAJ) joined the programme to become six countries. In 2012, Morocco was replaced by Lebanon (LYHF). These six associations take turns in hosting the IOU Respect Programme annually (Hostelling International USA, 2014b).

3. b- Aim and specific objectives of IOU Respect Programme

The main aim of the IOU Respect Programme is to build a new generation of global citizens, unburdened by stereotypes, emboldened by open minds, appreciative of their own heritage and understanding of other heritages, through dialogue and education that comes through hostelling. This aim is underpinned by nine specific objectives, as follows (Rouanet, 2009):

- 1- Increase knowledge about other cultures;
- 2- Develop intercultural communication skills;
- 3- Foster attitudes that promote mutual understanding;
- 4- Encourage action for constructive intercultural exchange beyond the life of the programme;
- 5- Make new and lasting friendships that cross the divide of cultural differences;
- 6- Learn to be open to different perspectives and ways of doing things;
- 7- Know about the values of hostelling;
- 8- Gain a common understanding of the meaning of respect;
- 9- Learn about each other's country, especially the host country.

3. c- Participants at IOU Respect Programme

Participants in the programme are selected by each HI National Association based on their demonstrated inspiration and motivation to support and live the philosophy of intercultural education, respect, tolerance and understanding. The programme is an intensive two-week experience living, sharing and learning together in an effort to link cultural divides (Edric, 2007).

The following inclusion criteria were agreed by the six associations for participants in the IOU Respect Programme:

- 1- Aged 18-23;
- 2- Has not participated in HI exchange programme before;
- 3- Fluent in English;

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- 4- A citizen of Egypt, France, Germany, Lebanon, Tunisia, or the United States;
- 5- Curious to learn other cultures;
- 6- Not employed by HI;
- 7- Personal charisma and team skills;
- 8- Willingness to work in a creative way;
- 9- Youth hostel member.

In order to maximize the outcomes of the IOU Respect Programme, the chosen participants are expected to complete some preparatory work before departing to the host country. The participants contribute to one or more orientation and training sessions in their home countries prior to the programme (Hostelling International USA, 2014b).

d- The process of IOU Respect Programme

Participants are expected to meet the goals and objectives of the IOU Respect Programme in the following ways (Johnson, 2008):

1- Pre-Exchange - Participants from each country involved in the IOU Respect programme are required to create a photo display of their country and its people to share with other participants; plan for a cultural night, including food and activities from their home country; and create a presentation on their country to deliver to fellow IOU Respect participants during the exchange.

2- Exchange - Early in the exchange, participants share their prepared country presentations with the wider group; regular dialogue sessions serve to educate participants about participating countries, cultures, people, religions, stereotypes and more; multi- national teams will work together to create projects that show their learning; sightseeing excursions and social outings will foster unstructured communication and opportunities to learn about the host country; and shared accommodation at the hostel will promote interaction among participants.

3- Post-Exchange - Participants create a plan for staying in touch and ensure that all participants will be able to share best practices for promoting understanding and peace at home.

e- Intercultural Understanding among participants at IOU Respect Programme

The IOU Respect Programme encourages participants from different cultures to interact with one another, learn and grow together; build relationships and

become transformed, and shaped from each other's experiences (The United Church of Canada, 2011).

It is necessary for all participants to develop and maintain a high level of respect and open-mindedness through the IOU Respect Programme, even while encountering major differences in thought, opinion, and cultural norms (Johnson, 2008).

Throughout the IOU Respect Programme, all participants should be changed through the intercultural process: some of them through intercultural interaction with other participants, others through examining their own culture more deeply, and some through learning more about what it means to be part of a community (The United Church of Canada, 2011).

During the IOU Respect Programme, all the participants must learn about the different cultural norms in the participating countries; cultural norms related to meeting and greeting others are explained below (Powell, 2005, pp 25-39).

- 1- In Egypt, men take each other's hands, and place the left hand on the other's shoulder and kiss each cheek. However, more westernized men use a simple handshake. Any kissing should only occur between members of the same sex. This also applies in Tunisia and Morocco.
- 2- In Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon, punctuality is not as much of priority as it is in the United States.
- 3- For people from North Africa, personal space is very close. Don't back away if you feel your personal space is being invaded because this will be interpreted as coldness or rejection.
- 4- Don't use the "OK" sign. It means 'zero' in France, and can mean worse things in other parts of the world.
- 5- Germans, use a firm, brief handshake upon meeting someone. Hugging and kissing on both cheeks is common only among good friends and family members.
- 6- In most European countries, the correct way to wave hello and good-bye is palm out, hand and arm stationary, fingers wagging up and down. While in the United States, an American waving means no.
- 7- Avoid pointing in North Africa. Gesture should be made using the whole hand.
- 8- When in doubt about how to greet someone from France, just shake hands. Don't initiate a kiss on the cheek, especially with a member of the opposite gender.

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Methodological Approach

This study sheds light on the contribution of the EYHA in developing intercultural understanding, through focusing on the IOU Respect Programme as a case study of an international exchange programme.

The main research method involved: analysis of a questionnaire survey of applicants who joined the IOU Respect Programme in 2014; in-depth interviews, which were conducted with some decision makers of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association, as well as an internet survey of IOU Respect participants, who had participated in earlier iterations of the programme. As a secondary method, personal observation was conducted, which included participating in the IOU Respect programme held in Egypt in 2008 at Ismailia youth hostel for two weeks.

A questionnaire survey was conducted of applicants to the programme aimed at seeking the feedback of applicants about the IOU Respect programme. The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section was designed to gather profiling information about the participants (name, gender, age, governorate, educational level, and level of English language). The second section focused on: their feedback about the IOU Respect programme; what they hoped to learn by interacting with young people from different countries; their ability to engage in the programme; the skills they had that might be useful during the international exchange programme.

The questionnaire forms were directed to 110 Egyptian applicants to the IOU Respect programme in Egypt. The responses of the applicants towards the different questions in the questionnaire were varied.

Research findings

I- The results of the questionnaire survey that applied for the applicants to join the IOU Respect programme revealed the following information:

a) The applicants' governorate

All the applicants to the IOU Respect programme lived in Cairo.

b) The gender of applicants who to the programme

Sixty percent of the applicants (66 applicants) were males, while 40% of them (44 applicants) were females.

c) Applicants' date of birth

A 90% of the applicants (99 applicants), who applied to the IOU Respect programme were aged from 18-23 years old, while 10% of them (11 applicants) were above 23 years old (some of them had reached 25 years old).

d) Ability for the applicants to speak English as an official language

A 23% of the applicants (25 applicants) were beginners in the English language, 57% of them (63 applicants) were intermediate, 17% of them (19

applicants) were advanced in the language, and only 3% of them (3 applicants) could speak English fluently.

e) Educational level for the applicants

A 70% of the applicants (77 applicants) were university graduates, 28% of them (31 applicants) were currently university students, and 2% of them (2 applicants) were currently in school.

f) Previous stays by the applicants at youth hostels

An 80% of the applicants (88 applicants) had not stayed at a youth hostel before; 20% of them (22 applicants), had stayed at a youth hostel before; from the last mentioned group, (6 applicants) had stayed at youth hostel abroad.

g) The applicants' knowledge about the IOU Respect programme

A 55% of the applicants (61 applicants), to IOU Respect, indicated that they had known about it from the Internet (mainly through Facebook). 30% of them (33 applicants) had learned about the programme from relatives and 15% of them (16 applicants) had learned about the programme from friends.

h) Regarding the applicants' thoughts about interaction with youth from other countries

All the applicants explained that they expected that interaction with young people from other countries would help them to: increase their knowledge about other cultures; develop intercultural communication skills; foster attitudes that promote mutual understanding; make new friendships that crossed the cultural divide; learn about each other's country, especially the host country (Egypt).

i) The applicants' willingness to contribute to all the programme sessions

All the applicants confirmed that, they were willing to engage in all the sessions in the IOU Respect programme, as well as listening to the experiences and ideas of other participants from different cultures.

j) The special skills of the applicants

A 35% percent of the applicants (39 applicants) had artistic skills (drawing, dancing, reading, etc...). 45% of them (49 applicants) had musical skills. 15% of them (17 applicants) had writing skills, and 5% of them (5 applicants) had other skills, e.g. video production, and web site development.

k) The applicants' experience of travelling abroad

A 90% of the applicants (99 applicants), had not travelled abroad before, while 10% of them (11 applicants) had travelled abroad, mainly to Gulf countries.

II) Regarding the in-depth interviews with some decision-makers of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association

The in-depth interviews that were done with some decision-makers at the EYHA revealed that the IOU Respect Programme encouraged tourism within the host country, as the participants had visited many of the most attractive

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destinations in the country hosting the programme. When the programme was held in Egypt, there were opportunities for the participants to visit attractions in Cairo: the pyramids; the Egyptian museum; the Khan El-Khalili area; old Cairo. In addition, they had visited Alexandria, and Ismailia where their accommodation was.

One of the main problems that faced the Egyptian participants in the IOU Respect programme related to getting visas, particularly to western countries (France, Germany, and United States) hosting the programme. In addition, the participants were responsible for the cost of their flight tickets.

III) Concerning participant observation of the IOU Respect programme

Based upon participant observation undertaken whilst hosting the IOU Respect programme in Egypt in 2008, at the Ismailia youth hostel, the following information was gathered:

- 1- It was noticed that IOU Respect programme organizers tried to ensure that all the participants in the programme were very similar, and had the potential to connect and communicate, despite their different religious, cultural and political backgrounds.
- 2- The programme is a very rich experience because of its intentions to develop active global citizens with open minds. The programme included: politics, religion, traditions, stereotypes, communication skills, identity, cultural models, history, and true meaning of respect.
- 3- At the beginning of the IOU Respect programme, participants from each country used to stay with each other away from participants of other countries, whereas by the end of the programme, all the participants had built strong relationships between each other, which were considered as an indicator of the success of the programme.
- 4- During the dialogue sessions, participants used to dive deeply in some topics, particularly those related to in religion, stereotypes, and politics. Although there were some arguments during discussion of these topics, the participants had a common desire to learn from one another with genuinely-open minds.
- 5- At the end of the programme, participants exchanged their email addresses, and mobile phone numbers, in order to communicate with each other on regular basis.

IV) Regarding the Internet survey method applied for the participants who had joined previous iterations of the IOU Respect Programme

A survey was distributed using IOU Respect's "Facebook" page to participants who had participated in the previous iterations of the IOU Respect programme. Respondents included: 155 former participants; team leaders; some members of EYHA. A number of 65 responses (42%) were received to the survey.

a) The gender of respondents to the internet survey

A number of 39 respondents (60%) of the respondents were female, while 26 respondents (40%) were male.

b) The nationalities of respondents to the internet survey

The nationalities of the participants who participated in the survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Nationalities of the participants at the internet survey

	Nationality	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Egyptian	12	18.5%
2	German	9	14%
3	French	12	18.5%
4	American	13	20%
5	Lebanese	3	4.5%
6	Tunisian	9	14%
7	Moroccan	7	10.5%
	Total	65	100%

c) How respondents communicated with other IOU Respect programme's participants

There was an effective communication between participants following their participation in the IOU Respect programme, through different methods including: Facebook (100%), emails (70%), phone calls (45%), travelling to visit other participants (5%).

d) Regarding the acquired benefits of the IOU Respect programme

All the participants explained that they had had a wonderful experience on the IOU Respect programme as is clear in the following comments of the participants.

A French participant, who joined IOU Respect programme in 2013, stated that:

In all my knowledge, I have never interacted with people, who were different from me in religion or culture, than I did in the programme. Through our discussions together, I felt as if we were linked to each other's lives ...

An American team leader, who participated in the IOU Respect programme in 2008, stated that:

I've learned so much from you all and IOU Respect over the years. What a phenomenal programme that brings together such phenomenal people.

While a Tunisian participant, who participated in IOU Respect programme in 2008, explained that:

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Peace and Love, no matters which religion or beliefs are represented. This is absolutely what IOU respect programme is all about.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study sheds light on IOU Respect programme as an International Exchange Programme, through a questionnaire directed to 110 applicants who were seeking to join the programme, some decision-makers in the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association, internet survey method conducted with IOU Respect participants, who had joined the programme before, as well as, from the participant observation undertaken during hosting the IOU Respect programme at Ismailia youth hostel in Egypt at 2008. This leads to the following Conclusions:

- 1- The programme of IOU Respect fosters intercultural understanding and creative ways of thinking through: shared accommodation; educational programmes; community engagement. The programme offers an intensive cross-cultural learning experience to its participants.
- 2- The programme of IOU Respect can be distinguished from other programmes by its international perspective, as this programme brings young people from Western countries and Islamic countries together for a two-week personal journey, aiming to close the gap between the cultures of youth, through engaging the participants in intellectual, fun, and respectful dialogue.
- 3- The marketing techniques must be improved in the EYHA. The only advertisement about the IOU Respect programme, and how to apply to the programme, was through the Internet (Facebook).
- 4- All the applicants explained that engaging in the IOU Respect programme had helped them to: increase knowledge about other cultures; develop intercultural communication skills; foster attitudes that promote mutual understanding; make new friendships that cross the divide of cultural differences,; to learn about each other's country, especially the host country.

As recommendations for future research on this topic of study, the following points are suggested for further exploration:

- Highlight the role of the EYHA in promoting tourism in Egypt
- Evaluate the marketing techniques used by the EYHA and how they could be developed

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Questionnaire distributed to the applicants to the IOU Respect Programme

Dear _____:

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire survey, about the Contribution of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association in Developing Intercultural Understanding: a Case study of IOU Respect as an International Exchange Programme. Your responses are confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

1- Personal Information

- a- First and Last name (Optional).....
- b- Date of Birth.....
- c- Gender.....
- d- Governorate.....

2- English is the official language of the IOU Respect programme. Please state your level of competence in English

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Fluent

3- Level of education:

- Currently in School
- Currently in University
- University graduate

4- Have you ever stayed at a youth hostel before? Where?

- Yes
- No

5- How did you find out about IOU Respect programme?

- Internet (Face book / Twitter, .etc)
- Friends
- Relatives
- Advertisement
- Other... Please specify:.....

6- What did you hope to learn through interaction with youth from France, Germany, United States, Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt?

- Increase knowledge about other cultures
- Develop intercultural communication skills
- Foster attitudes that promote mutual understanding
- Make new friendships that cross the divide of cultural difference
- Learn about each other's country, especially the host country
-

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All of the previous statements

- Other, please specify.....

7- Are you willing to engage in all sessions and listen to the experiences and ideas of other participants?

- Yes

- No

8- What special skills do you have that might be useful during the international exchange programme?

- Artistic Skills

- Musical skills

- Writing skills

- Other, please specify.....

- None

9- Have you travelled abroad before? If Yes, Where?

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Thank You

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Internet Survey Method distributed to the participants who had joined the IOU Respect Programme before (2004-2013)

Dear _____:

Thank you for your participation in this survey which is about the contribution of the Egyptian Youth Hostels Association in Developing Intercultural Understanding: a Case study of IOU Respect as an International Exchange Programme. Your responses are confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

1- Personal Information

- a- First and Last name (Optional).....
- b- Nationality.....
- c- Gender.....

2- What are the benefits that you acquired through joining the IOU Respect Programme?

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3- Do you still communicate with other participants that were in IOU Respect Programme? How?

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Thank You