CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

IMAGINE is a conflict resolution educational program that engages students and young professionals from two countries in conflict: Armenia and Azerbaijan. IMAGINE arranges various projects to build trust and to take steps towards conflict resolution. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants.

The study focused on three research questions:

1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?

2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?

3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

Background of the Study

Azerbaijan and Armenia have had conflict over the territory known as Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict was started in 1988, with the proclamation of independence from
Azerbaijan by the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Guluzade (1998), the reason for the proclamation of independence was Armenia’s intent to unite the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh with the republic of Armenia. Ethnic Armenians comprised the majority of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

 Armenia began a series of offensives in 1992 that were backed by Russian weapons and resulted in the occupation of almost 20% of Azerbaijan territory, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts. Consequently, Azerbaijan has approximately one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were forced to flee for their lives. A cease-fire was negotiated in May 1994, but all diplomatic attempts to negotiate a settlement have failed (Guluzade, 1998, p. 55).

 IMAGINE was established by American, Armenian and Azerbaijani conflict resolution practitioners to address the issues that separate the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan (http://www.imaginedialogue.com/, 2009). IMAGINE’s founding team included the Armenian Co-Director, Phil Gamaghelyan; the Azerbaijani Co-Director, Jale Sultanli; and the American Facilitator and Outdoor Programs Coordinator, Chris Littlefield. The founders of IMAGINE were determined to bring together representatives of two countries to have open conversation about positions, needs, concerns and fears and to search for mutually acceptable positions.

 The IMAGINE program, funded by the US Department of State, invites young professionals and students from Armenia and Azerbaijan to participate in dialogues and workshops. In May of 2007 IMAGINE hosted the first event known as IMAGINE07. Six young professionals from Azerbaijan and six young professionals from Armenia
participated in a ten-day dialogue and retreat program in Maine. In May of 2008 (IMAGINE08), IMAGINE involved 12 new participants in a similar program in North Carolina. During both events, the participants became better acquainted and explored their feelings and thoughts about the conflict and each other. They also discussed challenges and possible solutions for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The facilitators’ observations during IMAGINE07 and IMAGINE08 suggested that the program achieved many of its goals: 1) participants changed their attitudes towards the conflict, 2) participants developed a greater awareness of the complexity of the problems, and viewed the conflict from a joint perspective rather than a one-sided perspective, and 3) participants learned the benefits of looking into the conflict as a common problem, and received some basic knowledge of the methods employed in conflict resolution.

A third IMAGINE event was composed of a follow-up workshop in August 2008 (IMAGINE workshop), in New Jersey. This workshop hosted participants from both countries who had been interested in joint projects and their joint implementation. One of these projects was a 2009 summer camp for the US-educated undergraduate students residing in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

A Suggested Approach

The subjects for this study were selected based upon their experience and participation in the IMAGINE program and included students and young professionals who were living in Yerevan, Armenia and Baku, Azerbaijan.
Program participants completed IMAGINE evaluations immediately following the conclusion of each event. For this study, an additional questionnaire was completed six to eighteen months following the conclusion of each event. Some participants filled out the questionnaire eighteen months after program completion; others eight months later; others six months later.

Results of the initial program evaluations and follow-up participant questionnaires were used for drawing conclusions about the program’s efficacy.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the study, there are several terms that will be used frequently. This section defines these key terms.

**Armenia**: a former republic of the Soviet Union. It is a landlocked, mountainous country in South Caucasus. It borders Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, and the Nakhchivan enclave of Azerbaijan to the south. The capital is Yerevan.

**Azerbaijan**: a former republic of the Soviet Union. It is the largest and most populous country in South Caucasus. It is bounded by the Caspian Sea to the east, Iran to the south, Armenia to the southwest, Georgia to the west and Russia to the north. The capital is Baku.

**Conflict Resolution**: the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or a conflict; the act of arbitrating differences of belief or opinion about a given set of conditions or circumstances.
Educational Program: a program for providing education concerning certain matters.

IMAGINE: an educational program on conflict resolution that was started by American, Armenian and Azerbaijani conflict resolution practitioners in an effort to address the absence of discussion between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Impact: a strong effect or influence. The large-scale effect caused by a project.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: refers to the conflict over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent regions in southwestern Azerbaijan. The conflict is between ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (backed by the Republic of Armenia) and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Perception: how people give meaning to what happens in the world around them. The set of psychological processes by which people recognize, organize, synthesize, and give meaning (in the brain) to the sensations.

Program Facilitator: a person who helps a group to have an effective dialogue without taking any side of the argument, especially in order to reach a consensus.

Significance of the Study

IMAGINE is a program that is focused on the Armenian and Azerbaijani territorial conflict. There is a lack of research about the impact of IMAGINE. Consequently, this study will examine the IMAGINE participants’ perceptions of the conflict and its resolution. Results of this study will help to make improvements and to build additional support for the IMAGINE program. The results of this research can be
used to evaluate the efficacy of IMAGINE and similar conflict resolution educational programs. One possible continuance of this research is the improvement of IMAGINE program and gaining support from governments, NGOs and society.

Limitations of the Study

No attempt is made to generalize the findings of this study to other conflict resolution programs. Research subjects were selected specifically because of their participation in IMAGINE. Subjects were selected based on their personal relation to the conflict and background knowledge of the conflict. Since the assignment of subjects is non-random, the research design is referred to as a “quasi-experiment.” This increases the limitations because the selection of the participants for the program was subjective.

In addition, due to the political and national conflicts, research subjects may have concerns about the researcher’s ability to maintain privacy and confidentiality. This concern could bias the responses. Data collection was conducted by the program facilitators and by an Azerbaijani researcher. The names of subjects and their answers were to remain confidential. However, the threat to internal validity remains because the subjects may not have been thoroughly open and sincere in their responses. This could limit the objectivity of the study.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program, called IMAGINE, on the program’s participants. IMAGINE engages students and young professionals from two countries with historical conflicts: Armenia and Azerbaijan. This study investigated the role of the IMAGINE program in the lives of the program participants in general and how such a program promotes resolution in the conflicting regions.

The study focused on three questions:

1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?
2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?
3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

The remainder of this study has been organized as follows: Chapter II presents a review of the literature related to conflict resolution educational programs; Chapter III describes the design and procedures of this investigation; Chapter IV presents and discusses the results; and Chapter V summarizes the results, presents the conclusions and implications, and suggests recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. This educational program engages students and young professionals from two countries with historical conflicts: Armenia and Azerbaijan. This study investigated the role of the IMAGINE program in the lives of the program participants.

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1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?

2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?

3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to conflict resolution educational programs. The literature reveals the importance of various characteristics of conflict resolution educational programs. Some of the literature has relevance for studying IMAGINE’s impact on program participants. Literature will be reviewed regarding characteristics of program participants, geographic location of programs,
characteristics of program facilitators, program intervention methods, program evaluation strategies, and program outcomes.

Characteristics of Program Participants

According to various researchers, early exposure to members of other groups may help reduce negative perceptions and nurture acceptance among children (St. John, 1975). Children with contact with other ethnic groups developed positive attitudes and social tolerance (Crain & Mahard, 1982; Inbar & Adler, 1977).

Bekerman (2005) in his critical essay on peace and coexistence education, describing new peace-oriented educational initiative between the Palestinians and Jews, stated the importance of youth participation in such programs:

“The desired product is youth who can acknowledge and respect one another, while at the same time cultivating loyalty to their own cultural heritage…I realize that children, but for their basic biological structures, come into the world as a “tabula rasa”…The prospects for a successful “shaping” of the children’s perspectives, of cultivating tolerance and recognition of otherness, appear to be optimal when “perspectives” are not there in advance? …Throughout the years of my research, and though always cognizant of the fact that they are not adults, I was regularly surprised at their “adultness”…”(Bekerman, 2005, p. 236-237).

According to Bekerman (2005), children’s vocabulary reflected the moods of the parents and their pictures reflected their images of “the other.” Children’s vocabulary was abundant in illustrating the available cultural resources and in depicting discriminative environments (Neuman & Bekerman, 2001). This was a demonstration of how children are influenced by cultural opinions of adults.
Feuerverger (1997) described an educational program, School for Peace (SFP) that brought Jews and Arabs into a dialogue. The SFP (established in 1980) was an outreach program that conducted educational encounters among Jewish and Palestinian adolescents throughout Israel and increasingly from the West Bank. Since 1980, tens of thousands of Jewish and Palestinian adolescents participated in these encounters (Feuerverger, 1997). Program assessment results showed that adolescents who participated in such programs tend to maintain personal, social and national identity and express commitment to the peacemaking follow-up activities.

Iram (1999) speculated on the future of Israeli society by studying the results of democratic and conflict resolution processes among youth in Israel and Palestine. He noted that the successful and peaceful development between the conflicting countries was dependent on the youth’s participation in the matters of conflict resolution:

“The long term success of the difficult and fragile peace process between Israelis and Palestinians now underway is dependant in part on the education of our youth. It requires new philosophical, sociological, and psychological conceptualization. The future of Israel, and the future of all democratic nations, will be determined by the ability of the next generation to internalize an informed understanding of the meaning of human values, tolerance and peace” (Iram, 1999, p. 8).

Programs that invite young participants and their early involvement have shown important results. Leafman (2003) presented his work about Play for Peace (PFP), an international initiative that engaged children and youth from communities in conflict. PFP fostered cooperative play to create laughter, compassion and peace, for young children aged 6-10 years. The PFP participants were actively involved in cooperative play and teamwork. According to Leafman, youth participation in the initiatives for
peace, such as the PFP experiential model of education, would raise a generation of leadership for peace:

“The youth become leaders and role models for intercultural peacemaking. The children have the opportunity to play with their peers from other communities, form new friendships, and, most importantly, to break down generations of barriers between them before they harden into fear, hatred, and violence. Play is the key” (Leafman, 2003, p. 11-12).

Kupermintz & Salomon (2005) described conflict resolution processes that involved youngsters in meetings every weekend, for summer camps and workshops in order to discuss controversial issues. The authors showed that involvement of young participants into such a program brought fresh ideas and revealed youth’s commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Yablon (2007) reported a lack of scientific evidence to confirm the effectiveness of peace educational programs even though most were designed for school students and youth. His study focused on Jewish and Bedouin Arab high school students in Israel.

Some studies revealed the importance of the setting of peace education. Schools seem to be a common setting where students get the initial source of information on conflict retrospectives. Schools played an important role in social integration for students. In schools students had a tendency to spend more time with their ethnic group members. Schools influenced the youngest and the most receptive members of society. They were a good setting for the desegregation and acquiring ability to accept “the other” (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985).

Bekerman (2005) noted that even studying together at a bilingual school, Jewish and Palestinian students had a tendency to divide themselves into different social
categories and had a concrete sense of belonging to their own group only. Students had a habit of naturally playing in separate ethno-national groups.

Court (2006) described in her article an Israeli Arab middle school that had been using multi-faceted curriculum to educate students about conflict resolution. Teachers addressed various issues as a part of the school curriculum, such as peaceful co-existence, values of non-violence, terrorism, suicide bombings and multiculturalism. This program proved to be efficient, since it taught about peace through the lived experience of school.

Geographic Location of Programs

Sponsors have selected various geographical locations for conducting educational programs on conflict resolution. There were three general types of locations: 1) “hot spots,” i.e., territories of the conflicting countries; 2) territories adjacent to or between the conflicting countries; 3) third countries or “neutral countries” not involved in the conflict.

“Hot Spots,” Territories of the Conflicting Countries

Relief International, an international non-governmental organization, conducted its conflict resolution educational programs between Iraqi and American students in the United States in 2008. The United States was chosen for the conflict resolution workshop because it was a country-participant of the conflict.

Play for Peace (PFP) organization’s methodology was conducting peace workshops at the “hot spots” or in the conflicting countries. Thus, conflict resolution educational programs took place in the Middle East, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, South Caucasus, India, the United States and South Africa. The PFP vision was to ignite Play
for Peace learning initiatives in conflicting regions around the globe, and networking as one unified community that contributed to a more peaceful world (Leafman, 2003).

** Territories Next to or Between the Conflicting Countries**

Feuerverger (1997) recorded his observations of the School for Peace (SFP) workshops that fostered cooperation between Jews and Palestinians in Israel. Unique observations were about the parts that described educational workshops’ location:

“The School for Peace is located in a cooperative village in Israel where Jews and Arabs live together within a social, cultural, and political framework of equality and mutual respect. They came together to build a collective vision of peace for themselves and future generations. The village Neve Shalom/Wahat Al- Salam (which means “oasis of peace” in Hebrew and Arabic) was founded in 1972 as an intercultural experiment, and the first families took up residence there in 1978” (Feuerverger, 1997, p. 17-18).

**Third Countries or Neutral Countries not Related to the Conflict**

Another idea for the geographical location of the educational workshops on conflict resolution was the third country or the neutral country that was not related to the conflicting matters. Wheeler & Stomfay-Stitz (2007) reported on the peaceful efforts to conduct summer camp in the United States for Israeli and Arab children. United States was chosen as a third territory for conducting the educational program that would make participants feel more open and comfortable being placed together in the neutral environment.

Sixty-eight 12th-grade Israeli-Jewish students lived in Northern Ireland and studied the Northern Ireland conflict for a few weeks. Then students compared the Northern Ireland conflict with Israeli-Palestinian conflict and wrote essays about their own perspectives (Lustig, 2002).
Characteristics of Program Facilitators

Facilitators of conflict resolution educational programs came from a variety of professional backgrounds and nationalities. The literature showed that primarily young facilitators were involved into facilitating discussions about conflict. Most of them had leadership backgrounds, and were of nationalities of the conflicting sides.

Play for Peace organization trained five hundred and fifty teenagers as youth facilitators for its workshops. In the Middle East, it trained Jewish and Arab facilitators to conduct workshops for the participating youth. Since the program took place in the area of conflict, facilitators had to be aware of the conflict’s dynamics and had to speak local languages. During the past five years, Play for Peace Middle East had trained more than 230 youth facilitators and served 1,700 elementary school-age children. Youth facilitators selected and identified the participants for the organization’s discussions (Leafman, 2003).

The School for Peace (SFP) recruited facilitators that spoke local languages of the participants and each workshop was led by two facilitators; one Jewish and one Palestinian:

“Accordingly, participants always have the opportunity to speak the language they are most familiar with and to identify with the facilitator from their own cultural group. The use of both languages is an important symbol of inclusiveness and mutual respect and has the capacity to construct and convey their commitment toward peacemaking” (Feuerverger, 1997, p. 17-18).

Feuerverger (1997) conducted an analysis of SFP’s workshops. Feuerverger observed that facilitators’ personal stories about their experience as members of the
conflicting countries turned out to be a significant input into the success and the openness of the discussion. Facilitators’ honesty and personal stories, emotions and personal connection helped students to feel support and gave them a desire to provide personal opinions and views on the conflict. Participants were able to identify themselves culturally with facilitators, their stories and experience of the conflict’s negative effect.

In the study conducted by Yablon (2007), facilitators were high school teachers from high schools located on the territories of conflict. They participated in a one-day workshop and moderated discussions between high school students from Jewish and Bedouin high schools. Teachers had good professional background and knowledge on the topics of discussions such as, stereotypes, perceptions, democracy, equality and the importance of inter-ethnic tolerance.

Program Intervention Methods

According to Amir and Ben-Ari (1985), a major consideration in implementing an educational program on conflict resolution was to answer two questions: a) “what” to change and b) “how” to change it. The authors considered the program goals and then recommended techniques that would help to achieve these goals. The methods are important factors for the success of the program. Moreover, goals and methods of attainment might differ depending on the cultural and ethnic groups involved in the program. Also, when designing a program some undesirable effects of the program should be taken into consideration.
When conducting educational programs on conflict resolution, facilitators used different methods, such as interaction, negotiation, peer mediation, contact-based initiatives, and presenting the collective narrative of an adversary. This section describes educational methodology presented in the literature.

**Interaction**

Amir and Ben-Ari (1985) wrote a paper on the educational approaches to conflict resolution. They suggested an educational project for Arab and Jewish students as an optimal model that would foster mutual understanding and cross-cultural study between Arab and Jewish youth. They called learning about other cultures and groups an “intellectual approach” to conflict resolution. Interaction was suggested as an “intellectual approach” in the educational program:

“The success of the intellectual approach may be increased by supplementing it with the interactional approach. The latter is based upon intergroup contact which will, among other things, expose the individual to “life” information about the other group. Such information is more difficult to deny, repress or disregard than abstract information. Indeed, there exists a large body of empirical evidence testifying to the effectiveness of intergroup contact under certain conditions in overcoming prejudice and tension among groups” (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985, p.3).

**Negotiation**

One of the methods widely used in educational programs on conflict resolution is negotiation. Negotiation training courses built self-confidence, negotiation knowledge and skill. There were different negotiation styles that had been used in conflict resolution workshops that taught students to: “a) acknowledge the position of the other party, b) use active listening techniques, c) adopt effective questioning techniques, d) accurately
interpret nonverbal communication, e) use collaborative communications, and f) think creatively to find win-win conflict resolution strategies in lieu of the more common competitive or win-lose tactics” (Burns, Mesmer-Magnus & Taylor, 2008, p. 135).

*Peer Mediation*

Another method used in educational programs on conflict resolution was peer mediation. Conflict resolution training was usually provided for the entire class or group of students. Unlike conflict resolution, peer mediation training would be provided to the small amount of students. It would teach them to mediate conflicts among each other and between other students. Students were generally same age as the participants; they possessed background knowledge on the conflict and had to be impartial. Peer mediation allowed students to settle disputes peacefully (Powell, Muir-McClain, & Halasyamani, 1995).

Aetna Life and Casualty Company (1992) conducted research on mediation in conflict resolution programs. In 1992, there were over 5,000 dispute resolution programs all over the United States according to the National Association for Mediation in Education. Mediation methodology involved a third or neutral party involvement that would help the disputants talk about the conflict and come up with possible options for its resolution. The objectives of involving mediation in conflict resolution were to help students develop a communication and come to the understanding of cooperative conflict resolution.
Contact-Based Initiatives

Looking for solutions to ethnic conflicts, governments came up with contact-based initiatives. Contact with an opposing side and an opportunity to talk to an adversary would involve prejudice reduction. The idea for contact was to go beyond socializing and enter the realm of friendships. Adding the cultural aspects and differences to the contact experience would improve ethnic relations (Donnelly & Hughes, 2006). Other sources suggested that research on contact initiative lacked external validity as the group membership was manipulated by researchers instead of using members of existing social groups. Contact hypothesis attracted criticism because of the lack of attention to the actual “process” of contact.

Yablon (2007) presented a different look at the methodology of contact:

“In recent years less attention has been paid to the study of the conditions that allow successful contact and more attention has been directed to asking what are the reasons for successful contact and how contact between conflict groups actually works. Thus, in addition to the study of when contacts work better, emphasis is given to revealing the underlying psychological process by which intergroup contact between conflict groups enhances positive relationships between them” (Yablon, 2007, p. 55).

Collective Narrative

Another method for the educational programs was acquainting students with the collective narrative of the adversary and presenting the other side’s points of views on the conflict to each other. In order to make a presentation, students changed their attitudes to accommodate the new information presented. Also, they would get acquainted with the
new information that involved the perceptions and the attitudes change. The narrative of the other side would not seem so unreasonable to those who presented. However, the research had not been carried out in the context of intractable conflicts (Kupermintz and Salomon, 2005).

Program Evaluation Strategies

Participant interviews and observations seemed to be the most commonly used method of evaluation. Below is an example of Feuerverger’s methodology for the Jewish-Arab conflict resolution program School for Peace:

“My intention was to document the experiences of the participants and their facilitators in order to present a multi-layered picture of the very complex and arduous process towards coexistence. Field note gathering, journaling, participant observation, and in-depth interviewing were my methodological tools in this qualitative study” (Feuerverge, 1997, p. 19).

Leafman (2003) highlighted the importance of the Play for Peace, international initiative bringing together youth from the conflicting countries. Leafman (2003) used qualitative methodology in his research and conducted interviews with program facilitators that implemented the program in six conflicting regions. He mentioned that “by bringing together people with diverse and historically incomplete backgrounds, values and beliefs through the seemingly simple act of play, seeds of compassion are sown for a more peaceful today and tomorrow” (Leafman, 2003, p. 6).
Program Outcomes

Positive Impact

Analyzing the activities of the Play for Peace (PFP), Leafman (2003) noted that as a result of participation in PFP’s educational initiatives, trust was built and the animosities gradually lessened. Play was the catalyst in building bridges of mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation:

“Through the friendships they form, they “unlearn” their taught prejudices, build compassion, and find constructive ways of managing conflicts as they grow into adulthood and become the community leaders of tomorrow. Play for Peace subtly but systematically develops emotional maturity, integrity, responsibility, compassion, interpersonal communication skills, and understanding and tolerance for individual differences - all essential skills to participate productively in a democracy and in the workplace” (Leafman, 2003, p. 14).

According to Kupermintz and Salomon (2005), different peace education and conflict resolution programs had common goals: improvement of the understanding of the nature of conflict, listening, and empathy. Constant face-to-face encounters and desire to achieve common goals reduced hostility among the participants.

Implementation of educational programs on conflict resolution in schools empowered students with new social and cognitive skills and helped them resist prejudices and peer-pressure. Research on the efficacy of the conflict resolution education proved it to be “a powerful proactive force” (Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2007).

Heydenberk & Heydenberk (2007) found that the level of students’ cooperative interaction significantly changed. The authors considered the biggest achievement to be
increased empathy and reduction of prejudice. Other positive results were tolerance, appreciation of diversity, desegregation and teamwork:

“Students in conflict resolution education classrooms show significant increases in moral and ethical reasoning- the penultimate goal of all educational efforts…Increased cooperation, pro-social attachments, and critical thinking skills give students choices and the ability to navigate the pitfalls of peer pressure and prejudice- a gift to our students, our schools, and our society” (Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2007, p.21).

**Minimal Impact**

There were also articles on minimal influence of the educational programs on conflict resolution on the program participants. Yablon (2007) conducted a study in order to reveal which of the different components of social relationships between Israeli Jewish and Arab high school students improved as a result of participation in the educational programs. Four aspects were measured in Yablon’s study: cognition, emotion, motivation, and behavior. Change occurred only in the cognitive realm.

“Thus, while no differences were found in participants’ emotions toward the other, motivation to engage in contact intervention programs or willingness to interact with members of their conflict group, participants showed less prejudice and stereotyped attitudes toward members of their conflict group” (Yablon, 2007, p. 60).

Analyzing different educational programs, Kepermintz and Salomon (2005) observed positive results and absence of results. A study with 172 Jewish Israeli and Palestinian youngsters, who participated in an intensive encounter, showed that friendships and willingness to associate with other participants from the conflicting side developed (Bar-Natan, 2005). Positive changes were observed on both sides. But, when measures were taken six months later, all of the positive measures appeared
to have vanished. Apparently, the social distance led to the long-term uselessness of the workshop:

“Though errors of measurement and poor validity of the measures might account for some of the disappointing results, it is reasonable to hypothesize that changes in perceptions and attitudes attained following a short peace education intervention cannot remain intact over time without consistent and repeated scaffolding. Two factors play an important role here: time and adverse political events. Though still-unstable friendships between members of the adversary groups may have evolved during the workshop, they could not have been sustained without continued contact and maintenance” (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005, p. 295).

Another unsuccessful attempt was a Fulbright Training program in Cyprus with groups of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. This initiative also failed to find any patterns of friendship between the conflicting sides (Angelica, 1999). Authors argued that if face-to-face encounters and cooperation over joint projects continued among program participants, positive program results would have lasted much longer. Since there was no continuation to programs, positive results were not sustained over time.

Summary

This study investigated the role of the IMAGINE program in the lives of the program participants in general and how such a program promotes resolution in the conflicting regions.

This chapter presented a review of the literature related to conflict resolution educational programs. Literature was reviewed regarding characteristics of
program participants, geographic location of programs, characteristics of program facilitators, program intervention methods, strategies for evaluating programs, and program outcomes.

The conclusions of other research showed that in many instances attitudes of the participants towards the opposite side were changed and the level of trust was raised as a result of the participation in the educational programs on conflict resolution. The research also showed that learning about the opposite side’s views and perspectives on the conflict as well as learning about the opposite side’s culture helps in reaching mutual understanding and creates opportunities for cooperation with the opposite side.

The next chapter will present a suggested method of program assessment to specifically examine the impact of the IMAGINE events.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. The study focused on three research questions:

1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?
2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?
3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

The basic research procedures for the investigation were: 1) to contact IMAGINE participants and invite them to join in the research project; 2) to analyze IMAGINE event evaluations provided by participants and facilitators immediately after the program conclusion; and 3) to administer and analyze IMAGINE event evaluations provided by participants between 6 and 18 months after the conclusion of the educational program. The design for this study was approved by the Minnesota State University, Mankato Institutional Review Board on the Use of Human Subjects in Research. (See Appendix A).
This chapter will describe the design and procedural aspects of the investigation: 1) the population and sample; 2) the IMAGINE educational program that constituted the program intervention; 3) the data collection instruments; 4) the process of collecting data; and 5) the data analysis methods.

The Population and Sample

The Population

The IMAGINE program has sponsored three educational events: one in 2007, IMAGINE07 Azerbaijani-Armenian Retreat and Dialogue and two in 2008, IMAGINE08 Azerbaijani-Armenian Retreat and Dialogue and IMAGINE Workshop: From Dialogue to Action. The subjects for this study were selected from the 24 IMAGINE program participants.

The IMAGINE07 Azerbaijani-Armenian Student Retreat and Dialogue included six participants from Armenia (three males and three females) and six from Azerbaijan (three males and three females). The participants were between 22 and 33 years old and had diverse professional backgrounds. Participants included a journalist, a political scientist, a financial analyst, lawyers, historians and an engineer. The participants came from various locations in their countries: some were from Baku, Azerbaijan and Yerevan, Armenia. Some participants came from other areas of Armenia and Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan. Two of the participants were immediately affected by the war between these two countries. In the Azerbaijani group, there was an internally displaced person (IDP)
from Aghdam, and, in the Armenian group, there was a refugee from Baku (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008). 

The IMAGINE08 Azerbaijani-Armenian Student Retreat and Dialogue included six participants from Armenia (two males and four females) and six from Azerbaijan (three males and three females). Most of the participants included undergraduate and graduate students participating in educational programs in the United States. The participants were between 19 and 43 years old and had diverse professional backgrounds. Participants included a journalist, a political scientist, economists, and educators. The participants came from various locations in their countries: some were from Baku, Azerbaijan and Yerevan, Armenia. Some participants came from other areas of Armenia and Azerbaijan (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).

IMAGINE Follow-Up: From Dialogue to Action included a select group of participants from IMAGINE07 and IMAGINE08. This group met during the final week of August 2008. There were three participants from Armenia (two males and one female) and four participants from Azerbaijan (two males and two females) (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).

The Sample

Subjects were expected to have some college experience, to be of legal age of consent or older (18+), to have had prior experience in program participation, and to be citizens of either Armenia or Azerbaijan.

This study is based on the responses of 10 out of 24 participants, who filled out the questionnaire for the study. The remaining 14 elected not to participate. Ten persons
(five females and five males) from Armenia and Azerbaijan participated in the study. These participants were recruited by email to participate in the study. They all agreed to participate and signed an informed consent form. (See Appendix B). Among the 10 subjects, four were from Armenia and six were from Azerbaijan. Table 3.1 summarizes the demographics of all IMAGINE participants, participants that filled out the initial program evaluation and participants that filled out the questionnaire for the study.

Table 3.1: Sample of Research Subjects from Participants in IMAGINE Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All IMAGINE Participants</th>
<th>Initial Program Evaluation</th>
<th>Follow-Up Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>Armenian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGINE07 only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGINE08 only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGINE07 + workshop</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGINE08 + workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Program Intervention

The IMAGINE programs are focused on teaching and practicing skills of conflict resolution. The programs were supported by the US Department of State. (http://www.imaginedialogue.com/)

*IMAGINE07: Azerbaijani-Armenian Student Retreat and Dialogue*

IMAGINE07 was held on Long Island and on Cow Island, near the coast of Maine. The facilitation team was composed of two “insiders” (Armenian and Azerbaijani) and one “outsider” (American) (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).
The program combined academic dialogue sessions with outdoor team-building exercises and joint living arrangements in a remote area. This methodology was meant to provide the participants with an intense experience where they would have discussions, trainings and outdoor team-building experiences as well as engagement in daily living activities such as cooking, housekeeping and unorganized leisure time. The program was implemented in the following way:

1. **Outdoor team-building exercises (May 25-27, 2007):** This component included a two-day adventure trip. The participants slept in tents and participated in kayaking and rope courses, as well as trust-building exercises and outdoor games. Participants became acquainted, developed personal relationships and built trust and confidence. During this time, the facilitators also led the group through discussions about their expectations for the program and about the ground rules for dialogue. At the end of this component, the participants applied new kayaking skills and paddled back to their island and landed on the beach close to the location for the remainder of the program.

2. **Mediation Training (May 28, 2007):** Participants joined in one-day training on mediation. The training introduced the participants to various conflict resolution theories and specifically on addressing the stereotypes, the benefits of a cooperative approach compared to an adversarial one, as well as specific skills for utilizing these theories. During this training, the participants learned about benefits of going beyond their positions and identifying underlying needs, fears, concerns and hopes.

3. **Dialogue Sessions (May 29-31, 2007):** During the dialogue sessions, the participants analyzed the underlying issues of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The
participants practiced their skills acquired during mediation training. With the help of the facilitators, the participants were encouraged to discuss the conflict as a common problem that needs to be solved jointly and in a way that will meet the basic security and identity needs of all the parties involved. Team building continued throughout the workshop, while the participants had many structured and unstructured discussions that gradually led to the final effort to address the conflict itself. During the last day, the participants discussed an action plan for follow-up work.

*IMAGINE08: Azerbaijani-Armenian Student Retreat and Dialogue*

The second IMAGINE program was held in the United States from May 24-June 1, 2008 at Saluda Mountain Lake Resort in North Carolina. As in the first *IMAGINE*, this program brought together 12 students and young professionals from both countries to explore their thoughts about the conflict and each other, as well as discuss the challenges Nagorno-Karabakh conflict poses for the two societies. IMAGINE08 used the same methodology and program format as that of IMAGINE07 (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).

*IMAGINE Follow-Up 08: From Dialogue to Action*

A selected group of participants from IMAGINE07 and IMAGINE08 met during the final week of August 2008 in the Catskill Mountains, New Jersey to further develop ideas for activities, projects, and events that came out of both retreats. This meeting organized working groups that would be in charge of concrete projects. Participants helped to set goals and develop plans for their implementation. IMAGINE was hoping to
reach and impact many others in the region and become self-sustainable (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).

IMAGINE follow-up workshop was implemented to strengthen the IMAGINE network of young people across Armenia and Azerbaijan, and to plan and implement a number of specific follow up activities. The workshop also intended to improve their capacity to more effectively contribute to the peace building process and to increase the overall impact of the IMAGINE program by continuing to support follow up work implemented by its participants. In addition to implementing the follow up projects, the alumni of this IMAGINE workshop were expected to take active roles in maintaining the IMAGINE website, supporting other participants, facilitating information exchange, organizing local and regional workshops and conferences (Gamaghelyan & Sultanli, 2008).

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected through two program evaluation questionnaires. One evaluation was completed by program participants immediately after the conclusion of the IMAGINE follow-up workshop. (See Appendix C). This invited the IMAGINE participants to compare their post-IMAGINE attitudes with their pre-IMAGINE attitudes. This was termed the “initial program evaluations.” The other evaluation was completed by ten program participants at least six months after the conclusion of the educational program (See Appendix D). This was termed the “follow-up participant questionnaires.”
Initial Program Evaluations

The evaluation forms completed by program participants immediately after the conclusion of the IMAGINE follow-up workshop consisted of the several parts (See Appendix C):

1. Nationality and gender.
2. Expectations for the program before the participation and whether those expectations were met.
3. Level of trust before and after the participation.
4. Acknowledgement of change in opinion about the opposite side.
5. Ratings for usefulness of the program for the acquisition of new skills.
6. Ratings for relevance of the program to personal beliefs about conflict resolution.
7. Ratings for consideration as a part of the IMAGINE network.
8. Ratings for usefulness of the program for the acquisition of new knowledge on conflict resolution in general.
9. Ratings for the efficacy and success of the IMAGINE program.

Follow-up Participant Questionnaires

The follow-up program questionnaires were completed by ten program participants at least six months after the conclusion of the educational program. This questionnaire included nine questions about the impact of the IMAGINE program on the program participants. The questions solicited reasons of the program involvement, expectations before and assessment of results after the participation. Additional questions were asked about the attitudes and trust building level towards the other side before and
after the program participation. The second questionnaire helped to define whether the participant was involved in the IMAGINE follow-up projects and whether the program was considered efficient in the conflict resolution process.

Data Collection Process

The investigator contacted the potential respondents by e-mail. The subjects were e-mailed a consent form, an evaluation and the questionnaire. Subjects signed the consent forms, filled out the evaluation and questionnaire forms and e-mailed them back to the investigator. The identity of the respondents was held confidential, and names were changed to pseudonyms for reporting purposes. The only record of the original name of a respondent is that on the informed consent form to be kept locked by the thesis committee chair.

All IMAGINE program participants filled out evaluation forms after each IMAGINE event. IMAGINE program facilitators filed full reports describing the results of the evaluation forms. The full report of IMAGINE follow-up workshop put together by the IMAGINE program facilitators was used in order to compare its results with the evaluations and questionnaires filled out by the 10 participants for the current research.

Data Analysis Methods

The purpose of the comparison of results was to find out the program’s impact on participants and its sustainability over the certain period of time. For follow up comparisons, this study used the design from the initial program evaluation. There were
11 questions in common between the two studies. Each item in the initial program evaluation and in the participant follow-up questionnaire was analyzed separately to provide information that contributes to the overall picture about the impact of IMAGINE. Data results were summarized as frequencies and percentages.

The results from the questionnaire were analyzed using the qualitative data from nine of the questions. The results were compared to the evaluation results of IMAGINE follow-up workshop.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. Data analyses will be presented in the following chapter.

This chapter described the design and procedural aspects of the investigation: 1) the population and sample; 2) the IMAGINE educational program that constituted the intervention; 3) the data collection instruments; 4) the process of collecting data; and 5) the methods of data analysis.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. The study focused on three research questions:

1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?
2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?
3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

Data was collected through two program evaluation questionnaires. One evaluation was completed by program participants immediately after the conclusion of the IMAGINE workshop (See Appendix C). This invited the IMAGINE participants to compare their post-IMAGINE attitudes with their pre-IMAGINE attitudes. This was termed the “initial program evaluations.” The other evaluation was completed by 10 program participants at least six months after the conclusion of the educational program (See Appendix D). This was termed the “follow-up participant questionnaires.”

This chapter includes the analysis of the data gathered by the evaluation of
the IMAGINE program. The chapter is organized into two major sections. The first section (Findings) describes the study and the results for each of the two evaluation instruments: the initial program evaluation (completed immediately at the conclusion of the IMAGINE program interventions) and the follow-up participant questionnaire (completed from 6 to 18 months after the conclusion of the IMAGINE program interventions). The second section (Results) presents results for each of the three research questions.

Findings

This section presents the subjects in the study and the results for each of the two evaluation instruments: the initial program evaluation (completed immediately at the end of the IMAGINE program workshop) and the follow-up participant questionnaire (completed from 6 to 18 months after the conclusion of the IMAGINE program interventions).

Initial Program Evaluation

Participants in IMAGINE were given program evaluation forms (See Appendix B) that contained both open and close-ended questions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop’s activities and program’s impact on the participants at the end of the workshop. IMAGINE facilitators analyzed the initial program evaluations for three Armenian and four Azerbaijani participants. These participants were involved in either IMAGINE07 or IMAGINE08 plus the IMAGINE workshop. This section presents the overall analysis of the initial program evaluations.
Q3: What were your primary expectations for attending the IMAGINE workshop?

The responses to this open-ended question are below, and the number next to each statement is a number corresponding to the number of subjects who all mentioned that particular point in their answer. Overall, three out of seven subjects mentioned that they came into the IMAGINE event to see the formation of joint projects between the two parties, as well as the creation of new project proposals. Two of the seven subjects also stated that they came in to the workshop with an idea for a project with which they needed help.

Table 4.1: Primary Expectations of IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming/designing joint projects between Armenian-Azerbaijani teams</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting new project proposals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing an increased level of trust among participants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing agreement between both parties on project implementation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding opportunities for dialogue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing conflict resolution skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new ways to initiate dialogue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a network of enthusiastic people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know colleagues from both sides</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving help with project design</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4: Were your expectations met?

IMAGINE participants were asked whether their expectations had been met by the end of the IMAGINE event. The close-ended question could be answered with the options of fully met, mostly met, mostly unmet and fully unmet. Four out of the seven subjects stated that their expectations had been fully met; the other three stated that their expectations had been mostly met. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the results proving that participants expectations were met at the IMAGINE program.
**Figure 4.1:** Fulfillment of Primary Expectations of IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluations

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**Q5:** How would you rate the level of trust before your participation at your first IMAGINE event and after your participation?

This question addressed the issue of building trust among the participants by inviting them to compare their level of trust pre-IMAGINE and post-IMAGINE. The query was applied to the relationship among participants (according to perception of the respondent).

Most of the subjects reported that they had a very low level of trust in those on the “other side” before their participation in any IMAGINE event. Six out of seven subjects rated the level either ‘closed and protective’ or ‘somewhat close.’ At the end of the IMAGINE event, all the subjects who attended at least two IMAGINE events reported having developed “full” or “close to full” level of trust. The only participant for whom the follow-up workshop was the first and only IMAGINE event, answered ‘not sure.’ Figure 4.2 depicts the growth in the level of trust among participants from pre-IMAGINE to post-IMAGINE.
Q6: Did your opinion about ‘the other side’ change because of your participation at IMAGINE events?

This question addressed the issue of opinion change and building trust among the participants by inviting them to compare their opinions about the other side pre-IMAGINE and post-IMAGINE. The query was applied to the relationship between the respondent and the “favorite fellows” from the “other side.”

Six of seven subjects reported positive change of opinion because of the participation at IMAGINE.
Table 4.2: Opinion Changes of IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did your opinion change?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I heard some constructive approaches, and saw that there is increasing willingness and desire from the other side to work on this issue.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The workshop just gave me another chance to get to know people, but my attitude has been somewhat positive to the other side, however I can’t generalize all the people.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Imagine is a very effective program in bringing people together both on personal and professional levels.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It did change because I got the chance to get to know them as people who also want a peace solution of the conflict and saw them as my friends.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Most of the activities required team work that helped in building up the level of trust towards the ‘other side’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q7: Please rate the following aspects of the IMAGINE follow up workshop.**

In this question, participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the workshop and were given statements to agree/disagree with. They were also asked an open-ended question about any feedback they had with regard to the program. Only two of seven subjects provided feedback. The responses were all positive and show that all the goals of the program were met.

Table 4.3: Ratings of Workshop Effectiveness by IMAGINE Participants, Initial
Program Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to get new skills and information on project design and implementation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to exchange ideas with other participants about follow up action and come up with specific plans</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I continued dialogue and building trust across the conflict lines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have developed specific projects that have a good chance of getting implemented</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project developed, when implemented, will contribute to the improvement of relations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian societies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The structure of the follow up workshop was useful and effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content and the topics and sessions at the workshop were useful and relevant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The methodology was relevant and useful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators presented information in a clear and effective matter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop location and logistical arrangements were comfortable and satisfactory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-ended feedback

“I would suggest having more days for the workshop.”
“I wish we had one more day to be able to fully clear up everything.”

**Q8: Do you believe that for you to "win" in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, 'the other side' must necessarily lose?**

This question was a close-ended ranking question where participants had the ability to rate their opinion from 1 to 10, 1 being “one side must lose” and 10 being “both
sides can gain” while a 5 meant “both will win & lose something.” Participants were also asked to rate both their feelings pre-IMAGINE and post-IMAGINE. According to the Figure 4.4, the subjects reported a 50% improvement from a little higher than 4 mean before IMAGINE to higher than 6 mean after the IMAGINE workshop. Results demonstrate change in participants’ perception of the particular conflict resolution with a shift from perception that “one side must lose” pre-IMAGINE to “both sides can gain” post-IMAGINE.

Figure 4.4: Changes in Conflict Outcome Perceptions by IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Imagine</th>
<th>Mean: 4.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Imagine</td>
<td>Mean: 6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall
Q9: Do you consider yourself a part of the ‘IMAGINE network’? If yes, how would you define the ‘IMAGINE network’?

This question had both close-ended and open-ended components. The close-ended questions asked whether participants felt that they were a part of the IMAGINE network and the open-ended questions asked participants to define the network. The open-ended component was answered by four of seven subjects.

Six subjects considered themselves part of ‘IMAGINE network’ and one participant answered ‘not sure’

Figure 4.5: Identification with IMAGINE Network Reported by IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation
Table 4.4: Definition of IMAGINE Network by IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantive List of Participant Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“This is a network working on the improvement of the relationships amongst Armenian and Azerbaijani students, building trust and achieving cooperation that can lead to the transformation of the conflict.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Network of dedicated and open-minded individuals who are willing to work together to reach an agreement and peace in the Caucasus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They consider my opinion and they treat me as part of the team which is very important”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Various projects within the network and people committed to their implementation”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10: Has your understanding of the conflict and its resolution improved in the following areas as a result of your participation at the IMAGINE events?

In this question, participants were asked to rate the change in their understanding of different aspects of conflict resolution process and components. They were given statements to agree/disagree with. As a result, participants agreed that they learned about concerns of the other side, expanded understanding of their side’s concerns, gained better understanding of conflict resolution process and saw the possibility of cooperation with the other side towards the conflict resolution.

Table 4.5: Changes in Understanding of Conflict Reported by IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned about the needs and concerns of the ‘other side’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of the needs and concerns of ‘my side’ expanded</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I learned that ‘my side’ have certain responsibility in the perpetuation of the conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understood the reasons why the ‘others side’ might feel hostility toward ‘my side’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand better what needs to be done to contribute to the sustainable resolution of the conflict</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see a need to work with the ‘other side’ in order to resolve the conflict</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw that there are people on the ‘other side’ who share my values and with whom it is possible to work toward the resolution of the conflict</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q11: Is IMAGINE a successful program?**

This was a close-ended question that offered participants five choices to evaluate the successfulness of the program. Five out of seven subjects found IMAGINE a ‘very successful’ program, while the other two found it to be ‘somewhat successful.’ No one reported ‘not sure’ or ‘unsuccessful.’

Figure 4.6: Ratings of Program Success by IMAGINE Participants, Initial Program Evaluation
Follow-up Participant Questionnaire

In December, 2008, the investigator recruited 10 subjects from among all participants in three IMAGINE events. The purpose of these evaluations was to follow up on the impact on the participants and program sustainability over the certain period of time. The follow-up participant questionnaires were distributed as attachments to e-mails. All 24 participants of three IMAGINE events received the questionnaires. Of those 24, 10 participants responded and are included in this study. Four Armenian and six Azerbaijani subjects filled out the forms. Out of the 10 participants, five were females and five were males. Four subjects have participated twice in IMAGINE events, whereas six subjects have participated just once. This section presents the overall analysis of the follow-up participant questionnaire.

Q3: What were your primary expectations for attending the IMAGINE program?
The distinct answers to this open ended question are below, and the number next to each statement is a number corresponding to the number of participants who all mentioned that particular point in their answer. Overall, five out of ten participants mentioned that they came into the program wanting to learn about the opposing side’s perspectives on the conflict, as well as to present their own views on the conflict to the opposing side. Three out of the ten participants also stated that they decided to participate in order to establish relationships, cooperation and communication with the opposing side, as well as to learn more about the conflict resolution in general. Two out of ten participants wanted to get new ideas on conflict resolution process of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Table 4.6: Primary Expectations of IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the conflict resolution perspectives from the opposing side</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting conflict resolution perspectives to the opposing side</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing relationships, communication and cooperation with the opposing side</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more information about the conflict resolution and its basics in general</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting new ideas on conflict resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to contribute to the conflict resolution process</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making new friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to be more patient</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know colleagues from both sides</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coming into the IMAGINE program, half of the participants were expecting to learn about the other side’s perspectives of the conflict, as well as to present their own perspectives on the conflict to the other side. Three participants out of ten wanted to know more about the basics and process of conflict resolution, as well as to establish
communication and cooperation with their counterparts. Two participants wanted to get new ideas for the conflict resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**Q4: Were your expectations met?**

Participants were asked whether their expectations had been met by the end of the IMAGINE program. The question was close-ended with the options of selecting fully met, mostly met, mostly unmet and fully unmet. Two out of the ten subjects stated that their expectations had been fully met; seven stated that their expectations had been mostly met, and one participant stated that the expectations were mostly unmet.

**Figure 4.7: Fulfillment of Primary Expectations of IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire**

![Bar chart showing fulfillment of primary expectations.]

When asked whether these expectations had been met, seven participants stated that their expectations had at least been *mostly met* – as a matter of fact; two participants stated that their expectations had been *fully met*. Just one participant stated that his/her expectations had been mostly unmet. Since most of the participants’ expectations have been met overall, it is possible to conclude that the IMAGINE activities provide the necessary tools for a dialogue and discussion where the participants can voice their side’s
perspectives and listen to the opposing side’s views of the conflict. They also provided an opportunity to acquire additional information on conflict resolution strategies in general and for the particular conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Q5: How would you rate the level of trust before your participation at your first IMAGINE event and today?

This question addressed the issue of building trust among the participants by inviting respondents to compare their level of trust pre-IMAGINE and post-IMAGINE. The query was applied to the relationship among participants (according to perception of the respondent). Most of the subjects reported that they had a very low level of trust in those on the “other side” before their participation in any IMAGINE event. Seven out of ten subjects rated the level either ‘closed and protective’ or ‘somewhat close’. At the end of the IMAGINE event, four out of ten rated their level either ‘open and sincere’ or ‘nearly open.’

Figure 4.8: Perceived Change in Trust Relationship among IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire
Initially, the participants reported little trust and found the relationships with ‘the other side’ to be closed and protective (4 out of 10) or stated ‘not sure’ (2 out of 10). After their participation at the IMAGINE events, two of participants stated that they now observed their relationships with ‘the other side’ to be ‘open and sincere’ and two participants rated them as at least ‘nearly open and sincere.’ Though three participants were ‘not sure’ of the change and three reported that their attitude remained ‘somewhat close’. Thus, the level of trust in this study was different than in the initial evaluation after the IMAGINE workshop according to the data.

**Q6: Did your opinion about ‘the other side’ change because of your participation at “IMAGINE” events? How?**

This question addressed the issue of building trust among the participants by inviting respondents to compare their level of trust pre-IMAGINE and post-IMAGINE. The query was applied to the relationship between the respondent and the “favorite fellows” from the “other side.”

A majority of the subjects reported positive change of opinion because of the participation at IMAGINE.

Figure 4.9: Change in Opinion among IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire
Table 4.7: Opinion Changes of IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did your opinion change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I tried to listen to them and understand them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“While I’ve chosen the overall somewhat positive option, this is a very relative measure, “the other side” was very diverse and my opinion changed very negatively with regards to certain members.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I saw them as people who also have the same desires and hopes and we shared the same feelings and ideas on how to solve the problem.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Interaction with Armenian students is tenuous. But for this very reason it is also productive- because both Azerbaijanis and Armenians through the pain of discovering their respective limits carry away their small share of national pain.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was open and sincere that helped other participants to feel more comfortable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I saw that there is youth in Armenia who really wants peace that can satisfy both sides’ interests and concerns, not necessarily the needs.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further inquiry also indicated that three participants experienced a positive change in their opinions of the “other side” and four participants experience a nearly positive change. An open-ended query on how the participants’ opinions changed revealed that participants saw the willingness to cooperate in their counterparts and a desire in both parties to see the conflict resolved.

Q7: Please rate the following aspects of the IMAGINE program.
In this question, participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the program, and were given statements to agree/disagree with. The responses were all positive and show that all the goals of the program were met.

Table 4.8: Ratings of Program Effectiveness by IMAGINE Participants,

Follow-up Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to exchange ideas with other participants about follow up action and come up with specific plans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I continued dialogue and building trust across the conflict lines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have developed specific projects that have a good chance of getting implemented</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project developed, when implemented, will contribute to the improvement of relations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian societies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8: Do you believe that for you to "win" in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, 'the other side' must necessarily lose?

This question was a close-ended ranking question where participants had the ability to rate their opinion from 1 to 10, 1 being “one side must lose” and 10 being “both sides can gain” while a 5 meant “both will win & lose something.” Participants were also asked to rate both their feelings pre-IMAGINE and present day. On average, the participants reported a 50% improvement from four before IMAGINE to 6.9 after the IMAGINE participation.
Figure 4.10: Changes in Conflict Outcome Perceptions by IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire

**Pre-Imagine**

![Diagram showing Pre-Imagine changes in conflict outcome perception](image)

Mean: 4

**Present day**

![Diagram showing Present day changes in conflict outcome perception](image)

Mean: 6.9

**Overall**

![Diagram showing overall changes in conflict outcome perception](image)

Q9: Do you consider yourself a part of the ‘IMAGINE network’? If yes, how would you define the ‘IMAGINE network’?

This question had a close-ended and an open-ended component. The close-ended question asked whether participants felt that they were a part of the IMAGINE network and the open-ended question asked participants to define the network. The open-ended component was answered by three subjects.
Seven of ten subjects considered themselves part of ‘IMAGINE network’

Figure 4.11: Identification with IMAGINE Network Reported by IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire

Table 4.9: Definition of IMAGINE Network by IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantive List of Participant Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The group of people who participated in the workshop and are willing to consider working together on a common problem”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Network of people who always share with ideas and what’s going on in the world concerning to the problem”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forum which provides an opportunity to work out the negativity among peoples through discussion”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10: Has your understanding of the conflict and its resolution improved in the following areas as a result of your participation at the IMAGINE events?

In this question, participants were asked to rate the change in their understanding of different aspects of conflict resolution process and components. They were given statements to agree/disagree with.

Table 4.10: Changes in Understanding of Conflict Reported by IMAGINE Participants, Follow-up Questionnaire
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I learned about the needs and concerns of the ‘other side’</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of the needs and concerns of ‘my side’ expanded</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned that ‘my side’ have certain responsibility in the perpetuation of the conflict</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understood the reasons why the ‘other side’ might feel hostility toward ‘my side’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand better what needs to be done to contribute to the sustainable resolution of the conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see a need to work with the ‘other side’ in order to resolve the conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw that there are people on the ‘other side’ who share my values and with whom it is possible to work toward the resolution of the conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q11: Is “IMAGINE” a successful program?**

This was a close-ended question that offered participants five choices to evaluate the successfulness of the program. Four out of ten participants found IMAGINE a ‘very successful’ program, while the other five found it to be ‘somewhat successful.’ Just one participant reported ‘not sure.’
In order to determine IMAGINE’s impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants, impact of the actual program on participants and whether IMAGINE’s impact was sustained over time, data analysis and data comparison had to take place. Below is the data analysis and comparison of data collected by the facilitators’ right after the end of the program and data collected by the investigator at least six months after the program.

In the data analysis conducted by the IMAGINE facilitators, seven participants filled out the evaluation forms, whereas in the analysis conducted by the student investigator at least six months after the IMAGINE events 10 participants took part in
This section presents results for each of the three research questions.

**Did IMAGINE events influence conflict resolution skills?**

Research findings demonstrate that IMAGINE events influenced conflict resolution skills of the participants. Participants from both studies had some similar expectations (question 3 in both studies) of their participation in the IMAGINE program, such as establishing dialogue, learning more information about conflict resolution and its basics, getting new conflict resolution skills and ideas on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. In both studies majority of the participants reported (question 4 in both studies) that their expectations were either fully met or mostly met (seven of seven participants in the first study and 9 of 10 participants in the second study marked that their expectations were either fully or mostly met), which means that they were able to acquire new conflict resolution skills. This finding shows that the program was able to fulfill its initial goals and meet the main expectations of the program participants.

In both studies the participants also displayed an overall improvement in the way they viewed the conflict’s resolution. Their overall opinion shifted from the “one side must lose” in the resolution of the conflict to the “both sides can gain” realm after participation in IMAGINE (question 8 in both studies). In the question about the understanding of the conflict and its resolution (question 10 in both studies), participants in both studies agreed that they learned about concerns of the other side, expanded understanding of their side’s concerns, gained better understanding of conflict resolution process and saw the possibility of cooperation with the other side towards the conflict
resolution. The IMAGINE activities can be said to provide practical conflict resolution skills to its participants.

*Did IMAGINE influence its participants and how were IMAGINE participants influenced?*

Based on the research findings, a conclusion can be drawn that participants were influenced by IMAGINE program participation. According to data, participants acquired new skills in conflict resolution, joint projects design, improved their opinion and level of trust towards the other side, and found the program successful and efficient.

Research findings demonstrate that IMAGINE events improved project design skills of the participants and gave them an opportunity to establish dialogue and cooperation with the other side. Participants from both studies had some similar expectations (question 3 in both studies) of their participation in the IMAGINE program regarding designing joint projects and establishing cooperation. In both studies majority of the participants reported (question 4 in both studies) that their expectations were either fully met or mostly met (seven of seven participants in the first study and 9 of 10 participants in the second study marked that their expectations were either fully or mostly met), which means that they were able to establish necessary for cooperation connections with the other side that they had lacked prior to the program participation.

Both studies showed that the level of trust was somewhat improved. Participants in both studies had ‘closed and protective’ attitudes towards the opposing side, whereas this attitude somewhat improved to ‘open’ or ‘nearly open’ after the program participation (question 5 in both studies). Though results of the data collected by the
facilitators seem better than results collected after at least six months by the student investigator. In the first study six out of seven participants improved their trust. Only one participant was ‘not sure’ about his attitude. In the second study 4 out of 10 improved their trust, whereas 3 were ‘not sure’ and 3 reported that their attitude was ‘somewhat close.’

Further inquiry (question 6 in both studies) indicated that in the first study six of seven participants experienced a positive change in their opinions of the “other side,” whereas in the second study 7 of 10 experienced positive or nearly positive change. Three participants reported of no opinion change. An open-ended query on how the participants’ opinions changed revealed that the overwhelming majority felt that the IMAGINE increased their exposure to the “other side” and that they were able to gain trust by having open discussions and getting to know the “other side” as individuals and as people they could trust.

In both studies data demonstrates that participants found the program generally effective, because it helped them in acquisition of new skills (question 7 in both studies). All participants mostly agreed that the workshop helped them gain new skills for project design and implementation, allowed them to exchange ideas, continue trust-building and that they believed the launch of their projects would contribute positively to the improvement of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. This indicates that the participants of the study understood the benefits of joint, bi-communal work as a way to improve post-conflict relationships.
In both studies participants considered the program either very successful or somewhat successful (question 11 in both studies) with the exception of one participant who wasn’t sure about the program’s success. This is the participant who refused to participate in further joint projects of IMAGINE.

In accordance with the above findings IMAGINE had a positive influence on the participants’ level of trust and opinion change about the other side. It also helped participants to acquire a number of conflict resolution and project design skills, as well as to establish necessary contacts for further cooperation in connection with joint projects.

*Did IMAGINE’s impact show sustainability over time?*

IMAGINE’s impact was not well sustained over time. Data analysis showed that answers given by the respondents from 6 to 18 months after the last IMAGINE events were less positive than answers in the initial program evaluations obtained right after the end of IMAGINE events. In order to check the sustainability of the IMAGINE program’s impact on the program participants, data comparison had to take place. Below is the comparison of data collected by the facilitators right after the end of IMAGINE workshop and data collected by the student investigator at least six months after the program.

Participants from both studies had some similar expectations of their participation in the IMAGINE program, such as establishing dialogue, cooperation and relationships with their counterparts. Participants were hoping to find opportunities to work on joint projects. In both studies majority of the participants reported that their expectations were either fully met or mostly met at the IMAGINE program’s events. This
finding shows that the program was able to fulfill its initial goals and meet the main expectations of the program participants.

Both studies showed that the level of trust was significantly improved. Participants in both studies had ‘closed and protective’ attitudes towards the opposing side, whereas this attitude improved to ‘open’ or ‘nearly open’ after the program participation. Though results of the data collected by the facilitators seem better than results collected after at least six months by the student investigator. In the first study six of seven participants improved their trust. Only one participant wasn’t sure about his/her attitude. In the second study 4 out of 10 reported that their attitude was ‘open’ or ‘nearly open’, whereas six participants out of 10 reported that their attitude remained either ‘somewhat close’ or they were ‘not sure’ about the change in their attitudes. So it seems that with time the level of trust and significance of change started fading.

In the query about the opinion change about the opposite side as a result of IMAGINE program participation, the data results of the first study also seem to be better than in the second study. In the first study six out of seven participants reported of the positive change, and only 1 participant reported of no change. In the second study 7 participants out of 10 reported about the positive or nearly positive opinion change, whereas three participants mentioned that they were not sure about the change.

In both studies participants agreed that IMAGINE program mostly met its goals in the areas of establishing a dialogue between the conflicting sides, creating opportunities for joint projects ideas, creating an environment where trust building is a possibility.
In a close-ended ranking question where participants had the ability to rate their opinion from 1 to 10, 1 being “one side must lose” and 10 being “both sides can gain” while a 5 meant “both will win & lose something,” participants in both studies reported a 50% improvement. The first group improved from 4.1 before IMAGINE to 6.3 after IMAGINE. The second group improved from 4 before IMAGINE to 6.9 after the IMAGINE participation.

Most of the participants from both studies indicated that their understanding of conflict resolution has significantly improved as a result of IMAGINE program participation. Participants specifically rated that they learned about concerns of their side and needs of the other side, as well as that they have developed an understanding of what needs to be done in contribution to the sustainable development of conflict resolution. Majority of the participants from both studies saw that there were people from the other side willing to cooperate and work towards the common goal of reaching consensus in the particular conflict matter.

All participants mostly agreed that the program helped them to exchange ideas, come up with specific projects, and continue dialogue and trust-building.

In the question about whether the participant considered himself a part of the IMAGINE network, in the first study six out of seven answered positively, whereas one wasn’t sure. In the second study 7 participants out of 10 considered themselves as a part of ‘IMAGINE network’, whereas two weren’t sure and one didn’t consider himself a part of the ‘IMAGINE network’. After at least six months some participants got involved into various joint projects implementation, whereas some didn’t. This could be the reason
why fewer subjects replied positively in the second study.

In both studies participants considered the program either very successful or somewhat successful with the exception of one participant who wasn’t sure about the program’s success. This is the participant who refused to participate in further joint projects of IMAGINE.

Thus, both studies demonstrate a positive impact of IMAGINE on program participants. In the second data analysis conducted over time this impact didn’t appear as strong as in the first data analysis conducted by IMAGINE facilitators right after the workshop.

Summary

This chapter reported and discussed the analysis of data for defining the impact of conflict resolution educational program IMAGINE on the program participants. The study reviewed data collected by the IMAGINE program facilitators right after the students’ participation in IMAGINE08 follow-up workshop, as well as the data collected by student investigator from 6 to 18 months after the conclusion of IMAGINE events.

In summarizing the results, it was found that participants have been impacted by their participation in IMAGINE and their level of trust has been improved, as well as opinions about the opposing side. Participants acquired a number of conflict resolution and project design skills, as well as established necessary contacts with the other side for the further joint projects. The subjects considered the program overall successful. IMAGINE’s impact on program participants was not well sustained over time.
Next chapter contains conclusions and recommendations for IMAGINE’s sustainability and further successful program continuation.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution education program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. The study focused on three research questions:

1. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on the conflict resolution skills of the participants of the program?
2. Did IMAGINE conflict resolution dialogues have an impact on its participants and how were they impacted by their participation?
3. Did IMAGINE’s impact on the program’s participants show sustainability over time?

This chapter is divided into the following sections: 1) a summary of the study; 2) conclusions from the study; and 3) recommendations for future program support and for research.

Summary of the Study

The conclusions from various studies show that, in many instances, attitudes of the participants towards the other side were changed and the level of trust was raised as a result of the participation in the educational programs on conflict resolution. The articles also suggested that learning about the opposite side’s views and perspectives on the
conflict has two effects. The first is that learning about the opposite side’s culture helps in reaching mutual understanding. The second is that learning creates opportunities for cooperation with the opposite side.

Although there is research that demonstrates various factors and their roles in different educational programs, there was a paucity of research focused specifically on the impact of IMAGINE, educational program on conflict resolution.

Taking into consideration that IMAGINE program’s activities needed additional funding and the actual program required continuation, there was a necessity for assessment and analysis of the program’s impact on the participants. More specifically, an evaluation procedure was needed to measure the efficacy and the impact of IMAGINE and to ensure a fair assessment.

The study reported data collected by the IMAGINE program facilitators immediately after the students participation in IMAGINE08 follow-up workshop. In summarizing the results, it was found that students’ participation in IMAGINE demonstrated that their trust level had improved as well as opinions about the opposing side. The subjects considered the program overall successful. The program helped the subjects meet their expectations of the program as well as helped them to find colleagues for the work on joint projects.

The study also reported data collected at least six months after the end of IMAGINE events. In summarizing the results, it was found that IMAGINE impacted the
conflict resolution and project design skills of the participants, improved their level of trust and opinion about the other side.

The study also included the comparison of two groups evaluated right after the IMAGINE program and after a certain time period that showed that the immediate program results are different from the program results collected after some time. The program’s sustainability over time seemed to be of a greater challenge.

Conclusions from the Study

IMAGINE program improved conflict resolution skills of the participants, as well as impacted their perceptions of the other side and level of trust. Majority of the subjects stated that their understanding of conflict resolution improved specifically with regard to understanding the needs and concerns of the “other side,” understanding their side’s responsibility in the conflict, understanding the possible options for a resolution and understanding the power of joint projects in conflict resolution. Subjects’ conflict resolution skills were significantly improved as a result of the program participation.

In accordance with evaluation results, it is evident that IMAGINE program’s events are successful and contribute to a change of attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of the program’s participants about the opposite side. As a result of the program participation, participants get new ideas on conflict resolution and find colleagues from the conflicting side willing to cooperate. One of the participants of IMAGINE program voiced an attitude change about the opposite side the following way: “I saw them as people who also have the same desires and hopes and we shared the same feelings and
ideas on how to solve the problem.” This program gives its participants from both sides an opportunity to cooperate and work on educational joint projects which carry the ultimate goal of the conflict resolution as their very purpose.

The other research question was about the sustainability of program results over time. The data suggests that participants evaluated in six to eighteen months after the program participation had not lost the positive attitude, but were not as optimistic about IMAGINE’s work as were the participants evaluated right after the IMAGINE’s events. This finding is in agreement with Kupermintz & Solomon’s (2004) study that a proper hypothesis could be that: “A short peace education intervention cannot remain intact over time without consistent and repeated scaffolding. Two factors play an important role here: time and adverse political events. Though still-unstable friendships between members of the adversary groups may have evolved during the workshop, they could not have been sustained without continued contact and maintenance” (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005, p. 295).

Recommendations
The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a conflict resolution educational program called IMAGINE on the program’s participants. Based on the conclusions and findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Cooperation over joint projects should continue among the participants in order to sustain positive program results over a long period of time.

2. Face-to-face encounters should take place as often as possible to ensure the continuation and presence of dialogue among the participants.
Bibliography


APPENDIXES
Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter
Appendix B

Informed Consent
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research project is being conducted by Minnesota State University-Mankato, as a means to explore the impact of the “Imagine” program on the program participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This research is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you will not be penalized in any way. Since it is voluntary, you may withdraw at any time by stating that you wish to withdraw or by refusing to participate. You will not be penalized in any way or form if you choose not to participate.

The purpose of this project is to investigate what impact educational program on conflict resolution called “Imagine” makes on the participants of the program. One of the pursuits of the project is to investigate what roles educational programs on conflict resolution play in lives of the program participants in general and how such programs can benefit the process of conflict resolution in the conflicting regions. The aim of this project is to investigate whether a particular educational program on conflict resolution plays a role in the change of attitudes, trust building and willingness to cooperate among the participants representing conflicting countries. If the project results show that this educational program does play a role in changing perception of the conflicting participants, they can be used in order to continue conducting workshops of the “Imagine” program.

As a participant in this research, you are being asked to participate because you fit the qualifications that this project entails. You are of age eighteen or older, are a young professional, and have participated in one of the workshops of the “Imagine” program.

This interview will be a one-on-one interview and you will be asked about your personal experiences relating to your program participation. During the meeting, the notes of the interview shall be taken. The information recorded in the notes will be used for further analysis. After the information has been analyzed, the notes will be shredded by one year after the meeting date. Only the primary investigator, Jerry Robicheau and the student investigator, Nargiz Hajiyeva will have access to the information in the notes.

Your real name shall not be used in any reports or other documents relating to this research. Your real name shall only be listed on this informed consent document. On all other documents a pseudonym will be used in place of your name. This particular document shall be safely stored under lock and key by primary investigator, Jerry Robicheau so that your privacy and confidentiality are maintained.
Any views that you may express during this interview are not considered representative of your employer or any other organizations and/or groups that you are affiliated with. You may participate in this research with personal experiences, reflections, and opinions, even if it they are in opposition to what your employer or to anyone else that you are affiliated with may believe. This is a voluntary study. You are free to withdraw later at any time without affecting your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Subject Rights:
- Participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not wish to be.
- You may change your mind at any time and leave the study at any time without giving any reason, and without any penalty.
- A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.
- If you have any questions, please ask them now. If you have any questions in the future, you may contact the primary investigator or refer to the attached form on additional resources that are available to you.

Principle Investigator:

Dr. Jerry Robicheau
Professor
Department of Educational Leadership
328 Armstrong Hall
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone: (507) 389-5091
jerry.robicheau@mnsu.edu

By checking these boxes you:
- Have been read the purpose of this research
- Agree to participate in the interview
- Do not agree to participate in this interview

By signing this document, you volunteer to participate in the research project being conducted by Minnesota State University. This research is part of the study titled “Impact of Educational Program on Conflict Resolution on the Program Participants.”

Statement of Consent: I have read or had the above information read to me. I have asked questions and received answered. I consent to participate in the study during Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. I understand that I may keep a copy of this form.

Participant’s signature: __________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Initial Program
Conflict Transformation Initiatives Planning Workshops evaluation questionnaire

Catskills, New York
August 29 – 31, 2008

1. Your nationality: ___Azerbaijani________ Armeni an

2. What number Imagine event was this for you?
   a. First
   b. Second
   c. Third

3. What were your primary expectations for attending the Planning workshop? Please list below.

4. Were your expectations met?
   a. Fully met
   b. Mostly met
   c. Mostly unmet
   d. Unmet

5. How would you rate the level of trust before your participation at your first Imagine event and today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Imagine</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the dialogue participants in general

- Open and sincere
- Nearly open
- Not sure
- Somewhat close and protective
- Close and protective

Between you and your most favorite fellow(s) from 'the other side'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partial trust</th>
<th>Full trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. Did your opinion about ‘the other side’ change because of your participation at Imagine events?

How?

- [ ] Positive change
- [ ] Somewhat positive change
- [ ] No change
- [ ] Somewhat negative change
- [ ] Negative change

Please explain. Most of the activities required team work that helped in building up the level of trust towards the “other side”.

7. Please rate the following aspects of the follow up (August) workshop (NOT the entire Imagine program) in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to get new skills and information on project design and implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to exchange ideas with other participants about follow up action and come up with specific plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I continued dialogue and building trust across the conflict lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have developed specific projects that have a good chance of getting implemented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project developed, when implemented, will contribute to the improvement of relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
between the Azerbaijani and Armenian societies
The structure of the follow up workshop was useful and effective
The content and the topics and sessions at the workshop were useful and relevant
The methodology was relevant and useful
Facilitators presented information in a clear and effective matter
The workshop location and logistical arrangements were comfortable and satisfactory

Please include any suggestions about any aspect of the workshop that we ask about in the table above. Your suggestions and feedback are welcome.

8. Do you believe that for you to “win” in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, 'the other side’ must necessarily lose? On the 10 point scale below*, which of the statements is more relevant to your personal belief? This should frankly indicate all-in-one your viewpoints, sensations/feelings and overall perception before participating in your first Imagine event and today.

Before your first Imagine event:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One must lose</th>
<th>Both will win something &amp; lose something</th>
<th>No one will lose anything</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One must lose</th>
<th>Both will win something &amp; lose something</th>
<th>No one will lose anything</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No precise score is attached to a precise statement. The lower scores push your believe more towards “One must lose” statement, Higher scores—towards “No one will lose anything, both will win” statement”, etc.

9. Do you consider yourself a part of the ‘Imagine network’?

___Yes ___Not sure ___No

If yes, how would you define the ‘Imagine network’?
10. Have your understanding of the conflict and its resolution improved in the following areas as a result of your participation at the Imagine?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned about the needs and concerns of the ‘other side’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of the needs and concerns of ‘my side’ expanded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned that ‘my side’ have certain responsibility in the perpetuation of the conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understood the reasons why the ‘other side’ might feel hostility toward ‘my side’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand better what needs to be done to contribute to the sustainable resolution of the conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see a need to work with the ‘other side’ in order to resolve the conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I saw that there are people on the ‘other side’ who share my values and with whom it is possible to work toward the resolution of the conflict</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11. Is the Imagine, in general, a successful program?

- Very successful
- somewhat successful
- not sure
- somewhat unsuccessful
- very unsuccessful
12. What improvements and changes would you do to the follow up (August) workshop?

13. What kind of joint programs do you think will be useful to continue cooperation of your group? Please write your suggestions below.

Appendix D

Follow-up Participant
Questionnaire

“Imagine” Conflict Transformation Initiatives Workshops evaluation questionnaire

1. Your nationality: __Azerbaijani___________Armenian

2. How many Imagine events have you attended?
   a. One
   b. Two
   c. Three

3. What were your primary expectations for attending the workshop?
   Please list below.

4. Were your expectations met?
   a. Fully met
   b. Mostly met
   c. Mostly unmet
   d. Unmet

5. How would you rate the level of trust before your participation at your first Imagine event and today?
6. Did your opinion about ‘the other side’ change because of your participation at Imagine events? How?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Somewhat positive</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Somewhat negative</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain

7. Please rate the following aspects of the entire Imagine program in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to exchange ideas with other participants about follow up action and come up with specific plans</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I continued dialogue and building trust across the conflict lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>We have developed specific projects that have a good chance of getting implemented</td>
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<tr>
<td>The project developed, when implemented, will contribute to the improvement of relations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian societies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

8. Do you believe that for you to "win" in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, ‘the other side’ must necessarily lose? On the 10 point scale below*, which of the statements is more relevant to your personal belief? This should frankly indicate all-in-one your viewpoints, sensations/feelings and overall perception before participating in your first Imagine event and today.

---

*Note: The 10 point scale is not explicitly defined in the document, but it is implied that it is a scale used for rating or ranking purposes. The scale's exact nature or implications are not specified in the document provided.
Before your first Imagine event:

One must lose  Both will win something & lose something  No one will lose anything  Both will win

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

Today:

One must lose  Both will win something & lose something  No one will lose anything  Both will win

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

* No precise score is attached to a precise statement. The lower scores push your belief more towards “One must lose” statement, Higher scores—towards “No one will lose anything, both will win” statement”, etc.

9. Do you consider yourself a part of the ‘Imagine network’?
   ___Yes  ___Not sure  ___No

   If yes, how would you define the ‘Imagine network’?

10. Have your understanding of the conflict and its resolution improved in the following areas as a result of your participation at the Imagine?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned about the needs and concerns of the ‘other side’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My understanding of the needs and concerns of ‘my side’ expanded</td>
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<tr>
<td>I learned that ‘my side’ have certain responsibility in the perpetuation of the conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understood the reasons why the ‘other side’ might feel hostility toward ‘my side’</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand better what needs to be done to contribute to the sustainable resolution of the conflict</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see a need to work with the ‘other side’ in order to resolve the conflict</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw that there are people on the ‘other side’ who share my values and with whom it is possible to work toward the resolution of the conflict</td>
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