

**SCHOOL FOR PEACE**  
**WAHAT AL-SALAM/ NEVE SHALOM**

TRIENNIAL REPORT  
2009-2011

The School for Peace projects for 2009-2011 were accomplished by a capable and devoted team who often worked under extremely difficult conditions. They, and all those who assisted with their efforts, find their ultimate reward in the hope that this work will bear fruit in the years to come.

### **The Executive Board**

Ibrahim Khatib

Moris Ben Yeshai

Ohad Lustigman

Ayelet Shalom

Nir Manor

Noam Moses

Fouad Dipsi

### **The School for Peace Staff**

Ahmad Hijazi – Director

Nava Sonnenschein – Training Programs Director

Jacky Sherman – Development and Fundraiser

Faten Abu Ghosh – Office Manager

Avigail Chipani – Bookkeeper

Molly Sharabi – Housekeeper

And our 25 Trained Facilitators

**Editors:** Max Marder and Nava Sonnenschein

**Printed by:** Emerezian Est. East Jerusalem

**Published by:** The School for Peace Research Center: November 2011

# Table of Contents

- From the Director
- Projects
  - Creating Change Advocates
    - Fostering Equality in the Law and the Courtroom
    - Understanding the Psychology of an Entrenched Conflict
    - Planning Policy: From Dispossession to Equality
  - New Change Agents: Cultivating Equality & Justice
    - “What can we do when reality is composed from difficult things?”
    - From Environmental Justice to Social Justice
    - Training the New Generation to be Better than the Last One
  - Psychology Revisited: Continuing the Metamorphosis
  - Capricious Coverage of the Peace Process
  - Partnering Across Borders to Become Advocates for Peace
  - Instilling an Awareness of Human Rights in Israeli and Palestinian Youth
  - Unity and Division in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
  - Learning about the Voice that Isn’t Heard
  - Discussion on the Impact of the University Course Facilitated by the School for Peace and Tel Aviv University
  - Moving Beyond Seeing the Conflict in Black and White
  - Other Projects in Short
- Graduate Activism
  - Eligible to Breathe
  - Putting Two Languages on an Equal Footing
  - Whose Place is this?
  - Not Staying Silent during a Ghastly Festival of Destruction

- Two Graduate's Unprecedented Approach to their Profession
- Conferences & Events
  - Before it's too Late: From Protest to Persistent Activity
  - Uniting in Struggle: Different Groups; Common Goals
  - "Solidarity Now" in Nazareth
  - Instead of Fighting Wars, We Will Read Books
- Future Plans
  - From Grassroots Level, to the Classroom, to the World
  - More Plans to Advance Justice, Understanding and Activism
- Publications
- Acknowledgements

# From the Director

Friends, comrades, supporters, alumni, staff, and especially residents of the village of Wahat al Salam ~ Neve Shalom . . .

For the last three years, I have been Director of the School for Peace. I am proud to offer you a report documenting our activities during these years. As you will see, the work we have done honors the institution and places it at the forefront of organizations working in this field, in terms of the quality, quantity, and diversity of the programming we offer and implement successfully. It is difficult indeed to believe

As we continue to learn from experience and respond to current and changing needs, we have continued to provide programs and to develop them further: the short-term youth encounter workshops, the university courses, the facilitators' courses, and others. Meanwhile, we are continually developing new programs and activities: We currently have an ongoing program for young people dealing with conflict and human rights and dealing with conflict and the environment. We have also developed a program in which university students document the conflict using photography. Additional new projects are ready to launch as soon as funding is found, for example a program for history and civics teachers and one for schools, engaging students, teachers, and parents. There is also a university course integrating dialogue and action in the field through volunteer working with Jewish Arab and other organizations.

The flagship program of the SFP, Change Agents Courses, encourage activists from various professional fields to create change in the workplace, in their own area of expertise and

beyond, as they pursue our shared goal of creating a more humane, egalitarian, and just society which renounces racism and roots out oppression. This program has shown itself capable of creating substantial change amongst participants and their various circles, both near and far. The program grows stronger and more effective, as we continue to gain valuable experience and apply it in fine-tuning our work.

This period has involved more than a few difficulties and challenges, internal and external. There are two central issues which require attention. The first is the political and diplomatic situation, under a national government, more right wing than any of its predecessors, promoting racism, violence, and hostility. Daily manifestations of this include legislative initiatives as well as public pronouncements and actions of many kinds. This position and behavior at the level of government has replicated itself throughout society and its impact is evident in dialogue amongst our participants and even in their behavior. As the government veers further into extremism, the street moves along with it. The result is that we are obliged to spend more time and energy in trying to prevent further deterioration, rather than promoting the positive change so needed in the region. The SFP continues to identify social and political phenomena and consequently adds appropriate additions to our programs, both through dialogue and through action. We have seen that changed awareness does not in itself lead to action for a changed reality. Thus in planning and implementing our programs, we have incorporated a goal of training and encouraging participants to work for change. This is now an integral aspect of many of the projects we initiate. In this regard, we have also seen participants in the field displaying not only potential to take action, but a need and desire to act on what they are learn with us, something we did not generally witness in the past.

To halt the deterioration in the situation we have joined together with other civil society organizations, SFP graduates and others. During the last three years we have initiated three conferences intended to aid us all in understanding phenomena of extremism and racism, while considering and planning ways to counter them.

The second challenge confronting us has been the tough economic situation of recent years. The global economic downturn has affected us, mainly in lower contributions from the Friends organizations in Europe and North America. Since the Friends' contribution to

the SFP support has always been significant, we are engaging in research for alternative sources of income, this is time consuming and uses resources that would otherwise be devoted to programs and program development. Nevertheless, these challenges have not stopped us from continuing to develop and to plan for the short and long term. We will soon be completing some significant longstanding projects while continuing to work on others and to plan for the future.

Our new literary anthology has just been published. It is called "Two peoples writing from right to left." This collection was many years in the making. It offers Palestinian Arabic and Hebrew prose and poetry, with each entry also translated into the other language. The book came into being in response to a need of sharing literature, as expressed by Palestinian and Jewish teachers who participated in SFP programs. Under the leadership of the SFP, the book will be published for use in schools, with dozens of excerpts in both languages which includes brief biographical sketches of all the authors.

Another project which is in process is a collection of interviews with graduates of the SFP from years past. The interviews follow participants a decade or more after they attended SFP courses, examining where they are now and how their experience at the SFP has influenced their lives. This is a very special kind of evaluative project that will demonstrate the results of our work through the personal stories of our graduates. Funding is being sought to complete this project.

Recently the new peace library building was finished, followed by a well attended opening ceremony. We are now working to develop the library's interior and to maintain its operation. The library will provide a space and resources for those working on relations between groups in conflict and associated subjects, including national and ethnic identities, inter-group power relations, neocolonialism, and much more. The development of the library is a long term project and may take many years to finish, but we are motivated to do this. The library will fill an important niche in helping to close the gap between theory and practice still faced by scholars and practitioners in the field of peace studies and conflict resolution.

We are also working intensively to create a community of social and political change activists which will include SFP graduates from previous years. The aim is to assemble practitioners and experts from relevant fields who want to work together under a single umbrella group. The SFP will provide logistical help and professional guidance. Graduates will be encouraged to initiate and implement independent projects as well as join existing projects.

The longstanding dream of Wahat Al Salam Neve Shalom and the SFP to establish an academic program for peace and conflict studies; a Peace College is now becoming a reality. The vision is for the College to eventually be an entirely autonomous institution. Meanwhile, development of the institution is taking place as a joint effort between the SFP and the American Friends in cooperation with other Wahat al Salam ~ Neve Shalom personnel. Tremendous progress has been made in the last six months, formulating cooperation agreements with several academic institutions in the USA. In the near future, we will sign with at least one of these institutions for shared development of a master's degree program; aiming to admit the first group of students in the winter of 2013. Before then we will be offering academic courses and short-duration programs beginning in January 2012.

Finally, I must thank all of you for these successes and especially Dr. Nava Sonnenschein. Our mission could not have gone forward as it has without her fruitful cooperation, unflagging commitment, and dedicated hard work. I would like to thank everyone on the staff of the School for Peace for their devoted efforts – Faten, Jacky, Avigail and Mali. I would like to thank the Interns, who have greatly helped us – Max, Eyleen and Ilana. I also thank the team of coordinators and facilitators and translators who conduct the SFP programs. And thanks, of course, to all the participants for investing their time, energy and faith in us.

**Ahmad Hijazi**  
Director  
School for Peace



# Projects



## **Influencing the Influential: A Ripple Effect for Peace Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action**

The “Creating Change Advocates: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action” program, spanning from September 2007 to September 2009, was run jointly and equally by two organizations enlisted by the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, The School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam and the Hewar Center for Development and Peace in the West Bank. Both had highly trained and experienced facilitators, lecturers, and translators engaged in various parts of the program. The program was supported by the USAID. The program provided 124 total hours training for three targeted professional groups— mental health professionals; lawyers; civil engineers and planners—consisting of 40 participants in each group (20 Palestinians and 20 Israelis, both Jewish and Arab) for a total of 120 participants.

The objective was to train mental health professionals, lawyers, civil engineers and urban planners to become change advocates by approaching their work from a human rights perspective which acknowledges the needs of both Palestinians and Israelis. Through this newly trained lens, participants helped create opportunities for facilitating the conflict between the two peoples in their respective professions and formed a critical mass dedicated to institutional change and reconciliation. Whether via legal institutions such as courts, or via mental health clinics, or via civic institutions dealing

with planning, participants learned skills and designed projects to actively promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Each group experienced a 3-component program that took place over 14 months: Dialogue and Intergroup Process; Exploring the Intersection of National and Professional Identity, comprising a uni-national workshop of lectures and discussions and a bi-national workshop exploring the impact of the conflict and national identity on participants' professional lives and Becoming an Advocate for Change, which included field trips to sites of conflict in the West Bank, lectures from experts in the field, facilitated group discussions, and case study presentations on how participants could create tangible change in their fields.

Participants from the three courses were involved in human rights projects through their professional institutions. They initiated various programs that fight against racism and the occupation, advancing equality in their fields.

Individuals engaged in civil society and institutions are in a unique position to create significant impact at grassroots level, serving as leaders and key decision makers to their communities. The Creating Change Advocates: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action program aimed to empower lawyers, mental health professionals, architects, urban planners and civil engineers to create institutional change by providing them with the tools to become change agents and advocates in their own professional spheres.

Activities were organized in Jordan Aqaba or Aman for the binational meetings. Uni-national activities were held in Ramallah or Jayuss for the Palestinians and Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam for the Israelis.

Field trips were in the area of East Jerusalem, Nazareth, Hebron, Beit Jalla and A Ram: The group of lawyers had a meeting in A Ram, Beit Jalla. The architects group had a visit in Acco, Hebron & East Jerusalem. The mental health group visited Nazareth & East Jerusalem.

In addition to the skills the participants acquired, the programs created major changes in the way participants see themselves as part of the conflict and strengthened their will to play a role in the advancement of dialogue, equal rights and peace.

While each of the three courses consisted of activities that were specifically relevant to the participants' professional field, members of all three groups reported acquiring some similar skills which the course taught them, including: better conflict awareness, increased understanding of the "other's" perspective, the ability to analyze a situation of inequality in their professional field, leadership and organizational skills to design and implement activities creating change, improved day-to-day relations with people from the "other" side and the desire to act systematically.

In addition to the professional skills that the participants acquired, the Change Advocates program fostered new feelings and perspectives in its participants, such as: Moving from the routine of bluntness/dullness of feelings to appreciating the suffering of the other, a motivation to explore one's own role in the occupation through the encounter, having the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as a central part of one's personal and professional lives, moving from a position of guilt to one of responsibility, moving from a position of embarrassment to be confident to express their voice, transforming from fear to change their position to a willingness to be flexible in their belief system, having a deep commitment to equal rights, and the courage to act as a professional to fight for them, and becoming an "ambassador" in their field.

Among the lawyers, 70% of the participants are now practicing human rights law and work in human rights NGOs. In their work they defend the rights of the Palestinians that are hurt by the separation wall, house demolitions, restrictions of movement, lack of a proper health treatment and face severe restrictions to access basic needs.

The mental health professionals learn to treat their clients differently than they did before the course. They take into account the social and political aspects in the treatment process. The longest-term impact was their activism through Psychoactive, Mental health professionals active for human rights, who have arranged conferences for the general public and for the mental health community on issues relating to their profession and the conflict.

The architects, urban planners and civil engineers group now refuse to take part in any planning project in the Occupied Territories. In planning committees in which they participate, they act against confiscating land from Arabs and against policies of

dispossession in planning. In addition their planning projects now take into accounts the rights of the Palestinian residents.

Equipped with the knowledge, skills and commitment to human rights instilled in them by the Change Advocates program, course participants are working to make Israeli society more egalitarian, by fighting for Palestinian rights and cultural awareness.

Participants continued to attend workshops even during the war in 2008-2009. A genuine and meaningful dialogue took place in spite of the difficult situation. Participants are now initiating projects in their fields and the first effects are starting to show in their professional and personal lives. The graduates of the School for Peace's Change Advocates program are successfully creating a more just environment in their fields and advancing equality and respect for the <other.>

*Project Directors: Mohammed Judeh and Nava Sonnenschein*  
*Program supervisor: Deanna Ambruster*



## **Fostering Equality in the Law and the Courtroom**

**70% of the Lawyers from the SFP course pursue human rights law**

The Change Agents Lawyers course had a profound effect on its participants and encouraged them to take a more active role in defending human rights in general and specifically Palestinian rights in Israeli and Palestinian society. The dialogues, lectures, encounter groups and field trips helped participants to see themselves as part of the conflict and motivated them to take responsibility for the occupation in their personal and professional lives.

In their work they defend the rights of the Palestinians on important injustices such as the restrictions of movement imposed by the separation wall, housing demolitions, unequal land rights imposed by the Israeli government, and lack of a proper health care. The course raised participants' awareness about the conflict and strengthened their skills to be change advocates inside and outside of the courtroom.

The course included 14 monthly meetings. Four of them were bi-national meetings held across the border and ten of them were held in uni-national workshops, in which the Jewish & Palestinian lawyers from Israel worked parallel to the Palestinians from Palestine. The Israeli group met at Neve Shalom/ Wahat al Salam and the Palestinian meetings were held in Ramallah.

Usually the meetings were opened by a lecture followed by a group discussion on the topic that was raised. The lectures in the first component were about the conflict on issues related to the conflict. Dr. Adel Manaa gave a lecture on the events 1948 war, known in Israel as the War for Independence and in Palestine as Al-Nakba, or the Catastrophe. Dr. Rabah Halabi gave a lecture on post-colonial theories and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein gave a lecture on identity & conflict.

Later in the second component, the focus of the lectures was on the legal relationship between human rights law and the conflict. The group heard three lectures by Advocate Michael Sfard, a former SFP graduate and one of the most prominent human rights lawyers in Israel today. The first lecture was on international humanitarian law that deals with situations of occupation; the second lecture was on the legal and institutionalized inequality of the rights of Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories; and the third lecture was on the human rights violations caused by the separation wall and the legal policies connected to the targeted killing of Palestinians by Israeli security forces without trial. Since 2000, the Israeli Military Police Investigation Unit has not looked into these cases. The group also heard a lecture by Advocate Avinoam Cohen on international criminal law, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Additionally, Dr. Musa Sayad gave a lecture on the Palestinian legal system and Dr. Dafna Golan gave a lecture on successes and failures in the work of human rights NGOs in Israel & in South Africa. Prof. Michael Kariany spoke on the construction of religion by the state through legislation. Adv. Mohamad Dahleh spoke on laws that are related to land issues in Israel and in Palestine. All of the lectures provided the participants with expert knowledge as well as information for subsequent dialogues.

The group also had a tour of East Jerusalem led by Adv. Sami Arshid to study the impact of the occupation on housing & development in the future Palestinian capital from a legal perspective.

The program encouraged its members to transform their new knowledge into tangible action. In the third component, the group created a project to assist Palestinian farmers in the area of Beit Lehem to protect their land separated from their villages by the separation wall.

The School for Peace conducted interviews with the program's members after its completion. Perhaps the most accurate information about the impact of the program can be gleaned from the participants' own words:

One participant, identified in the interview as K., is a female Jewish lawyer who works in Adam Teva V'Adin. K and another graduate (a Palestinian, N) worked together to defend the rights of Arab students in Shuafat, who were being taught in a school located next

to a factory which was dispelling dangerous chemicals. The two lawyers won the case in the Supreme Court.

“In the discussions in the municipality we faced racist arguments... I felt that the fact that this is a Palestinian school and this affected the whole decision process. They belittled the parents because they were Palestinians. All the time, I told the lawyer of the municipality ‘Imagine that you would send your kid to a school with the 10% pollution rate that they have.’”

K worked on this case with N who works at ACRI and participated in the course. “I think that it was very convenient to feel we see things similarly. That there is a very clear common ground on which everything was built— that our goals are clear to us, that we see the inequality in this case in a clear way... The fact that we knew each other and we knew from where we came contributed to it.”

“I have influence on what will get more public attention and more [financial support] and [for me] the Arab population has precedence. In this environment they were discriminated [against for] many years and their infrastructure was neglected causing environmental hazards.”

For K, the course gave her an appreciation for the inequality in her society, and made her aware of a reality that she could not avoid. “I felt the human suffering is unbearable and it is now with me all the time.” As a Jew, K’s visits to the occupied territories with the Change Agents gave her the confidence and legitimacy to speak about the harsh realities Palestinians face there. “People listen to me more because of my experience. This experience gives me more legitimacy when I speak.”

Another member of the Lawyers course, known as E, is doing a practicum at an office that specializes in protecting human rights of Palestinians in the Israeli legal system. The project which E, an Israeli Jew, is coordinating is dealing with cases of Palestinians appealing against Israeli army soldiers who have shot Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. He is currently dealing with approximately 100 appeals.

“The course... was [my] first encounter with Palestinians from the occupied territories and it made the issue central in my personal and professional lives... The first meeting

in Jordan was after a bomb exploded in Gaza and civilians were killed. . . I learned from that the feeling of powerlessness now when I go to the West Bank and I see that they have no power under the occupation.”

E felt that the course had a humanizing effect on his professional interactions with Palestinian plaintiffs. “It helps in the everyday encounter in the simplest way to understand that there is dehumanization. . . The encounters also helped me to not come from a superior position [when interacting with Palestinians].”

“When I come to represent them I feel I am a goodwill ambassador that expresses a message that there is a chance that something will be different in spite of the fact that I am part of the occupation.”

For E, the course has given him a very different impression not only of Palestinians, but of Israeli society as a whole. “I feel the apathy [in Israeli society] around me [and it] makes me very angry. . . I think that most Israelis have given up on the problem.”

A third participant, B, was a senior advisor for the Minister of Minority Affairs, Professor Avishai Braverman. B was the only member of the Lawyers group who decided to become involved in politics after the course, where he felt he could have a greater impact in defending Palestinian rights and dignity.

“All my adult life I worked on social issues in the Israeli society but I never met Palestinians from Palestine and with the conflict in such powerful encounter...The left try all the time to stick to individualism and to exit from belonging to the Israeliness and suddenly in the course you realize and meet yourself as part of the occupation. . . Even when you are passive, you are identified as the occupier.” According to B, his role is to put a mirror in front of the decision makers and their assistants—to use the perspective he acquired through the Change Agents program to positively influence others’ thinking.

“I learned from N (a Palestinian participant in the course) on the amount of spelling mistakes in Arabic on road signs and what. . . the reason [is] and I spoke with the minister about the importance of the language and [Minister Braverman] agreed. . . this was a way to have an impact.”

“The unique discourse I brought to my work is the change from portraying the Palestinians as an enemy to portraying the Palestinian as a whole and complex human being; to create depth in the image of the other.”





The Lawyers course had a different, but equally meaningful impact on the Palestinian participants. N works at the Association for Civil Right in Israel (ACRI), and worked with K on the case of the School in Shuafat.

According to N, she works, “with two issues: The civil rights of the Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem and the rights of Palestinian women inside Israel.

“Regarding East Jerusalem there is a variety of issues I deal with. There is a lack of 1,000 classrooms and each year, about 9,000 children that can’t go to school because of that.” N also works towards providing services in Arabic and preventing violence against Palestinians. “We succeeded to make the municipality translate 99 forms into Arabic; this is a big success. I also deal with violence in East Jerusalem. Recently the police and the soldiers shot people or injured them and we submit appeals to the unit to investigate policemen.”

As demonstrated by her partnership with K in the Shuafat case, N feels that she benefited professionally from the contacts she made in the program. N is a Palestinian but she is also an Israeli citizen. She and the other Israeli Arabs had a special role in the

group, bridging the gap between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians from Palestine - "We had a special role: we were the heart of the group... Because we live in the two worlds, we understand the two worlds. . . these issues didn't come to the group focus until we brought it. The dynamic that was created was very positive and I saw how much it impacted the [Jewish] participants. . . They gave it a chance and it is amazing. I really appreciate it because this is the only way to advance peace."

While N felt a connection with the Palestinians on the other side of the Green Line, the two groups of Palestinians came from very different milieus. "The main discussion between the 1967 Palestinians and us was on the Israeli influence and the influence of the open modern world on us. . . They said 'You are coming from superior feelings,' but one of us said 'We are not coming from superior feelings;' we said that as people we care, as people who live the two worlds."

For the Palestinians living as citizens of Israel, the course created a deep commitment to equal rights and the courage to fight for them despite the challenge for them socially and professionally. Palestinian participants also mentioned the contacts they have created with the Jewish participants that help them a lot in their work. The encounter with the 1967 Palestinians was unique for them and strengthened their Palestinian identity.

For many of the Palestinians living in Palestine, participating represented a dilemma. Many of their friends and colleagues urged them not to participate because of the military occupation and what the Israeli soldiers do to Palestinians. After participating they thought that taking the course was beneficial.

According to the S, a Palestinian lawyer from Palestine, being able to speak your voice and to be listened to and to influence the Israeli side is a fortifying experience. "I hesitated before coming. My friends and colleagues told me not to do so, not to meet with the occupiers. But after I met Jewish participants and heard their opinions, I spoke my voice and I saw that they were ready to listen to my stories [about the occupation]... I felt empowered from this situation after feeling that the other side was ready to listen."

*Staff: Adv. Mohammad Abu Snina, Maya Rabia, Uri Gopher, and Rana Shaa'er*



## **Understanding the Psychology of an Entrenched Conflict**

### **Mental Health professionals evolve their field and its perspective**

From the three courses we have conducted, the mental health professionals course was the most successful, with the strongest impact on the participants. The way they treat their clients is different from before they attended the course. They do better at taking into account the social & political aspects in the treatment process and not only internal psychological components.

They are socially active with the goal to influence the mental health community and society at large. The longest impact of their new experience is their activism through PsychoActive, an NGO which program graduates founded to bring awareness of the conflict to their mental health colleagues. PsychoActive arranges large conferences for other mental health professionals on issues relating to the conflict. In each conference 300 participants have attended. Conferences have so far taken place in Tel-Aviv University, Haifa University and Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam. So far there have been six conferences. They organize tours in the Occupied Territories for mental health professionals, to bring awareness of the emotional damage of the occupation.

From one of the courses graduates: "In my work (training principals from schools in Israel) I pay attention to the needs of the Palestinian trainees – recruiting Palestinians to the board, publishing materials in Arabic, [and] bringing the issue to the conferences and training sessions."

Another veteran of the program had similar praise for the course: "Today I have a much deeper understanding of the conflict, of the other narrative and of the situation that I didn't have before. I am not afraid to act. I do not care what others would think of me and it enables me to move more freely in the space of this complicated conflict."

The graduates of the program have already begun to make a meaningful positive change in their professional lives by implementing programs and organizing conferences to advance human rights and equality in Israel. Two graduates have initiated a training course to enhance cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural competence among professionals who supervise the students at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. One Jewish participant initiated a course for Arabic for friends and colleagues. Members of the mental health group organized an event in Jaffa to mourn and protest the lives lost in the Israeli offense in Gaza.

The program enabled the Palestinian participants to express their deepest feelings of trauma and indignity caused by the occupation to their Jewish colleagues, preventing the Jewish participants from living with denial any longer. As one Jewish participant described, he moved from a position of guilt to a position of responsibility, from denied discrimination to taking responsibility for their discrimination. From passiveness, the participants have now become activists.

According to one Jewish participant, identified as I, "The encounter with the Palestinian group from 1948 and 1967 put in front of us a painful, difficult shocking mirror [about our society]... The course caused me to get out from the paralyzing experience of despair and guilt to act. It pushed me to learn more, to read more on the narrative of the other side since I grew up within only one narrative."

Another Jewish participant, N, said that the course prevented her from being able to look at her country in the same light as before. "Something very dramatic changed in the way I experience life here or how I feel as an Israeli. The whole way in which I perceive the Israeli reality changed and it challenges me everyday – what do I do with this awareness? It causes me to feel alienated from family and friends."

B, a third Jewish participant, said that the program made her reevaluate the morals of the Israeli State, declaring that "It's possible that you will discover something that will change you. So I say its better that you have a State in which Jews live with Jewish values like love your neighbor like yourself, equality, respect for all people, more than a Jewish state that keeps Shabbat but doesn't stand for those values. So I think in this respect something very significant changed in me."

The Palestinians had a different experience, and many felt empowered by the encounters with their Israeli colleagues, and relished the chance to have their voices heard. Some of the Palestinians, like M, were citizens of Israel. M said that “The course fulfilled my expectations since I came from a place [a mixed town] where I didn’t have a stage to express my inner voice and didn’t have the other side listening to my voice. Here I found both. I felt a process of empowerment in my identity—of feeling more proud in my identity.”

Ultimately, the Palestinian participants were forced to return to the harsh reality after completion of the program, albeit with an enhanced desire to foster change in their society. As H, a Palestinian citizen of Israel put it, “today I walk away with a much clearer and acute picture that I would define as the ability to change. And today I invest more time in order to achieve these objectives and I feel that I have the ability to change. I believe the change starts from something small, like a snowball that can roll and every experience of change can strengthen us and change us even more up until we can think that we are able to change the world, a thought not so inappropriate. . . . In the end we



came here to change something but the political environment around us – which is out of our hands – leaves us with feelings of pain. The reality outside is difficult but my own and the group’s transformations gives me some optimism and hope for the future.”

The course was an empowering experience for the Palestinian participants living in Palestine as well. Their fears of the other started to go away as they started to see the other in a more human form, as civilians, professionals and fellow human beings. They learned not to give up and not to let any of their rights slip away from their hands. Regarding the impact of the course on their work they said the course gave them power to help their people, gave them tools to deal with people who experienced trauma and strengthen their commitment to their brethren.

A Palestinian member known as A. described her thought process during the program in some detail: “I’m a 26-year old Palestinian from Jenin. When I signed up for the joint meetings for the very first time, I didn’t know what to think. . . ‘Are my people going to consider me as a traitor? Are Jews going to kill me as they always do with Palestinians? Are they soldiers? What do they eat or wear?!!’

“I realized that I didn’t know much about the other, and I had to educate myself more, and prepare for the joint meetings, I even started to learn public Hebrew words.

Time passed, and I, as a Palestinian, met Jewish people as civilians for the first time in my life. I guess I would never have had the chance to do that but by joint meetings. At the beginning, I didn’t know how to act, I couldn’t just go and talk to people I considered as my enemies, I needed that wall to be broken, which was done by ice-breaking activities included in the program. With time, discussions, and seeing members of the other group eating and talking during any time of the day, I learned to speak up and to defend what I believed was right. My fears of the other started to go away as I started to see myself equal to the other, and even stronger than [them], at least at the meeting. They weren’t more human than me, that’s what I realized without knowing, they are not only my enemies, and they are humans too!

“On the way home, I saw the others again, but this time in military clothes, as soldiers on check points and barriers. When I came back from the bi-national meetings I was shocked, I felt as I was dreaming. Everything was the same, Israelis killing Palestinians

every day, check-points still in their places, prisoners are still in Israeli prisons, we are not allowed to visit Jerusalem or pray in al-Aqsa mosque, we have no country, only West Bank and Gaza, and refugees didn't come home. . . It was like a period of anesthesia, or a sweet dream in which you get rid of all of your problems, but there is no way to escape reality.

"So, will I do it again? Of course, I will sign up for bi-national meetings every time I can. Why? Because, it is a unique experience, from which I learned about myself and about the other much more than any book I will ever read."

N, a psychologist working in a boarding school in Jerusalem, felt that the course brought a new meaning to her activism. "I feel the course was like an incurable disease for your life. . . I've become a different kind of activist, taking on responsible roles in the projects I am part of, daring - after this long preparation - to "cross the lines" and work closely with Palestinians in the Territories.

"Having such a group in the professional community is extremely significant. It means that within our group of professionals, who meet at conferences and lectures and who have common concepts and terminologies, institutions and publications, there is now a group of individuals interested in political change. . ."

"In a project I currently work on, the human rights organization Bt'selem, asked for our help in building an emotional support program for the participants of one of their projects, "Shooting Back," where Palestinians in areas of friction are given video cameras to document harassments by settlers and the army. . . Another example is a conference currently being organized on the topic of the Naqba, which Psychoactive decided to organize in response to the bill proposal suggesting that commemorating the Naqba should be penalized. The conference organization takes into account emotional factors, such as the anxiety this topic arouses in Jewish Israelis, and deals with psychological topics, such as processes of denial and silencing in society.

"The Mental Health professional community in Israel is a small and tight-knit group, and each additional group of a dozen or two dozen individuals who undergo the Neve Shalom course has a weighty impact."

The participants said the course strengthened their ability to influence their staff in the mental health system, to work with the awareness of social and political aspects of their clients. Also in their personal lives many of them became active against racism and the occupation, for advancing peace and equality. They work towards their goals through NGOs like Psychoactive, through their work places and through their social networks. The group's activism is exemplified by their publication of a booklet in Hebrew for Jewish and Palestinian mental health professionals devoted to dealing with social asymmetry in their therapeutic work. Overall, the Mental Health Change Agents course helped to inject an enhanced sense of political and civic activism, along with an appreciation for peace and equality, into the Israeli and Palestinian mental health professional community.

*Staff: Liron Tal, Muhammad Shbita, Raed Abed Rabouch, Maya Rabia and Maysoon Badawi,*





## **Planning Policy: From Dispossession to Equality**

### **Graduates refuse to accept building projects in the Occupied Territories**

The third Change Agents course involved professional architects, civil engineers and urban planners. The course targeted these professions because of the impact that construction, land confiscation and borders inevitably have on the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The course was made possible by the support of the USAID and cooperation with Hewar operating in Palestine.

Since completion of the course, all participants have refused to take part in any planning project in the Occupied Territories. In planning committees in which they participate, they act against confiscating land from Arabs and the policy of dispossession in planning. The graduates of the course are committed to fighting for equal rights in the planning and construction of new projects. Just like all of the other courses in the Change Agents program, the architects, engineers and urban planners were divided evenly between Israelis and Palestinians.

The participants all mentioned that the first bi-national workshop, in which they first met their colleagues from the 'other' side, was very powerful and meaningful. Also they said that they learned a lot from the three field trips: in Acco, East Jerusalem and Hebron. The participants mentioned they received very valuable knowledge from the written materials and from the lectures they heard, which taught them a lot about the planning systems and the conflict and the connection between the two. They mentioned the importance of meeting with activists from the field like Alon Cohen Lifshitz from Bimkom, an Israeli non-profit formed by planning professions that works for social justice in the planning process, and Advocate Sami Arshid from Ir Amim, another non-profit which focuses on finding an equitable solution to the status of Jerusalem. Bimkom in particular played an important role in assisting the School for Peace with the planning of the content of the course

The participants greatly benefited from the lectures that they heard from planning experts throughout the course. During the first third of the course, which was devoted to learning about the conflict through dialogues and lectures, the group heard three experts. Dr. Adel Mana'a spoke about the events of 1948, known to Jews as the War of Independence and to Arabs as al-Naqba, or the Catastrophe. Dr. Amal Jamal spoke about theories of post-colonialism and how they apply to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lastly, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein gave a lecture on theories of identity and conflict. In the second phase of the course, which dealt with the connection between the participants' national identity and professional identity, the group heard a lecture by Dr. Amir Paz-Fuchs on planning rights in general and in the Israeli-Palestinian context more specifically. Bassem Hawari also presented to the group, and spoke about the planning limitations caused by the occupation, Jewish settlements and the separation wall. Tovi Alafandari also lectured to the group, comparing the planning policy in Arab towns and Jewish towns.

In the third phase, which dealt with activism and tangible pursuit of justice and change, Professor Oren Yftachel discussed ethnocracy and planning as a tool for dispossession, specifically describing the Israeli policy of displacing Bedouins in the Negev desert. All of the lectures that the participants heard provided them with fertile ground for lively and beneficial dialogue.

Because of the long-term impact of construction and planning projects on the conflict as a whole, the School for Peace believes that the long-term benefits of the course will accumulate more tangibly in the coming years. For this and other reasons, the SFP concluded that involving a professional consultant in the specific field of the course would help guide participants more effectively in the process of planning their projects. However, many of the course's graduates have begun to make an immediate difference.

A Palestinian engineer from Jayyus mapped the area so that blue prints will be ready when construction starts. A Jewish participant who wrote a report on the distress of the housing situation in Jaffa was invited and hired by the Tel Aviv municipality to mediate between the municipality, Housing & Land authorities and the Committee of Arab residents of Jaffa, to look for solutions to the planning problems in the city. We can see

that the participants are active with the awareness they got from the course to create change in planning policy through the institutions they work for or the authorities they work with.

The course gave the professionals a heightened awareness of the conflict and what role, as architects, civil engineers and urban planners, they could play in cultivating a more just reality. R, a Jewish landscape architect, said that “There were many times that I came home with guilty feelings and dilemmas. We spoke about . . . the meaning of a Jewish State: on the one hand it is something I believe in, on the other hand I realized that in the definition and the implications of the definition of the State there are racist issues and conflicts. I was exposed to the problems of the Palestinians in Israel, especially since I live in the Galilee and my husband is a farmer. Two weeks ago I was checking if my village sits on a land where an Arab village existed before 1948. I become more aware of the situation of the Palestinians here.”

Sebastian Wallerstein, a Jewish urban planning student, found himself irritated by The Occupation, and his fury has motivated him to become more civically active. Wallerstein ended up writing a compelling report of the housing crisis in Jaffa, which investigated the major wave of eviction and demolition orders facing nearly five hundred Arab homes in the city. “All I did during the course was study and research issues connected to the conflict. I became angrier the more I knew. The discrimination and oppression make me angrier than in the past. In spite of all this anger I think the anger has something positive that makes me . . . active. I also feel alone when trying to influence [the conflict] and here I felt more at home.”

“After writing that report on the stress of housing for Palestinians living in Jaffa,” Wallerstein continued, “me and my supervisor were invited by municipality of Tel Aviv Jaffa to consult and mediate in the forum called “Mishlemet Jaffa” – a round table between the community and the authorities. It is a process that includes professional aspects and mediation aspects between the Arab community in Jaffa in housing issues and between the authorities: the management of land in Israel, housing ministry and Tel Aviv municipality. . . this was one of the recommendations that I wrote in the report because each entity worked separately in the past.”



For the Jewish participants, even for those who defined themselves as leftist, the encounter really moved them to a point of taking responsibility. After the course it was very important for them to make an impact on their surroundings to change the way people talk and think about Arabs. They implemented the skills they acquired in their work missions, in organizing conferences, writing reports and in other various ways.

There were five Palestinians citizens of Israel in this course. Their presence was very impressive; they came from Galilee for all the meetings and were very active in influencing the Jewish participants.

For the 1948 Palestinians it was not the first meeting with Jews but it was a unique experience to meet with Palestinians from the same profession from Palestine. They felt satisfied that they had the ability to influence their Jewish colleagues, which they found empowering.

All participants in the course mentioned the importance of feeling support from each other, Jews and Arabs, even when there were debates in the group. That support helped

them to better deal with the situation in the real world, when they tried to influence others in their professional and personal lives.

Dr. Taleb Al-Harithi who serves as the General Coordinator of the Palestinian Peace Society (PPS) gave his evaluation of the course. He participated as part of the Palestinian group. Dr. Al-Harithi has Ph.D. Environmental & Earth Sciences (Geology); he lives in Idna next to Hebron. Dr. Al-Harithi organized the tour of the group to Hebron.

“In such an atmosphere full of enmity, bigotry and stereotypes, each part carries in mind about the other, only hatred and thinking in terror and killing would obsess the minds of both peoples of Israel and Palestine. Such thoughts proved to be destructive and peace pollutants, not only to the people living in the region but also worldwide.

“The well-planned meetings between the Palestinian and Israeli engineers were an excellent innovative tool that proved to be fruitful and beneficial.”

Dr. Al-Harithi felt that one of the benefits of the course was to break the stereotypes each side had of the ‘other.’ “In the first uni-national meetings many Palestinians doubted very much that any dialogue with the Israelis would have any impact and considered it time wasting and [vane]. After the binational meetings, many of those doubters changed [their] minds substantially and started saying not all ‘beads’ are the same.”

Dr. Al-Harithi continued, commenting that the course allowed participants to understand the concerns, fears and needs of the other side by putting themselves in someone else’s shoes. He observed that participants developed friendships and working relationships with the ‘other.’ “The participants, at last, agreed unanimously that whole issue of dispute should be solved only by sitting together, building mutual trust, taking the others’ interests into consideration and applying the win-win principle in solving all of the ‘scrap.’”

Participants conducted projects individually, among them, Smadar Gordel, a Jewish participant and student in architecture was very active in organizing a conference on Urban Planning Challenges in the Arab Sector in Israel that was conducted in Um El Fahem.

Abed El Rahman Yasin, a Palestinian preservation architect, is working to save historical monuments of Islamic architecture in the mixed town of Acco. UNESCO declared Acco as

a World Heritage site but in fact there is a process of real estate and Judaization of the old city and a process of pushing out its native Palestinian residents.

A Jewish landscape architect and course graduate said that every time she is asked to analyze an area for planning, she insists on mentioning the hidden Palestinian presence there (for example, if there was a village, she mentions its name, and how many years it existed) as part of the landscape analysis with the intention to bring more awareness to the conflict.

In essence, the course not only gave the participants a greater sense of the realities of the conflict, but helped them to connect it to their professional lives. Jewish participants were motivated to pursue justice for the oppressed Palestinian minority and the Palestinian participants were able to find their voice and forge links with their countrymen on the other side of the Green Line. Given the importance of new construction projects and the confiscation of Palestinian land in perpetuating the conflict, it is an encouraging development that this group of architects, civil engineers and urban planners are refusing to take projects in the Occupied Territories and doing their small part to create a more equal, peaceful and respectful Israeli reality.

*Staff: Shireen Najar, Eliana Almog, Rana Shaa'er and Mahayub Abu Rwais.*



## **New Change Agents: Cultivating Equality & Justice** **Palestinian & Israeli women journalists, environmentalists and young** **politicians in dialogue and action.**

The Creating Change Agents program, which began in June 2010 and will run until June 2013, is run by the School for Peace in Israel in cooperation with Tawasul, an organization operating from the West Bank. The Creating Change Agents course was made possible through the support of the USAID. The program brings together Israeli and Palestinian professionals from three separate fields—journalism, environmentalism and politics—to have a sustained dialogue about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the participants' personal and professional responsibility to take ownership of it. The overall goal of the courses is to train influential professionals in Israel and Palestine to become agents for change, justice and equality in their specific fields.

With 40 participants in each of the three courses split evenly between Israelis and Palestinians, Creating Change Agents trains and educates a cadre of 120 Israeli and Palestinian professionals dedicated to cooperation and community-based reconciliation. By providing tools and profession-specific expertise, the program challenges its 120 members to design and implement cooperative projects which help to foster conditions for a constructive peace process.

The 120 key stakeholders in the “Change Agents” program -- women journalists, environmentalists and up-and-coming politicians -- are impacted at the *personal* level, as the intergroup dialogues help them to take responsibility for their role in the conflict by enhancing their understanding of their own group's identity. At the relational level, participants confront and challenge negative stereotypes of the 'other,' develop a mutual understanding of each other's historical narratives and of the impact that national

identities and narratives have on the conflict. At the structural level, participants learn how the dialogue experience is a microcosm of intergroup dynamics in Israeli and Palestinian society, thereby gaining insight into real-world power asymmetries between the two groups. These stakeholders can form a critical mass dedicated to institutional change and equality. By having both uninational and binational meetings, members of the courses can identify and analyze institutional successes and challenges from multiple viewpoints, and learn about what is and isn't feasible.

The program places an added emphasis on psychology, teaching its participants to practice approaches to conflict management that promote understanding and empathy regarding loss and trauma, rather than reinforcing and rewarding feelings of victimization and anger. Group members are taught to understand the asymmetries between Jews and Palestinians within Israeli society and between Israel and the Occupied Territories. With this information group members can better interpret the flawed way in which institutions function and how to change them to work in a more equitable way.

Perhaps most importantly, the program puts a real face and personality on the conception of the 'other.' Israelis and Palestinians end up using their power as allies and partners rather than enemies, to initiate projects in their work, environments and/or communities that reflect what they have learned. Since participants in each of the three courses work in the same professional field, the Creating Change Agents course establishes and then expands an intergroup network for profession-specific cooperation and problem-solving.

Each of the courses takes place over a 21-month period and is divided into three components: Dialogue & Intergroup Process, Becoming a Change Agent, and Building Capacity and Implementing Projects.

The first phase, Dialogue & Intergroup Process, introduces the participants to both their uninational group and binational groups. This component of the course furthers the participants' knowledge of the social and political aspects of the conflict and trains them to take responsibility for their role and engage in actions that promote reconciliation.



As a result of the Becoming a Change Agent phase, participants connect their professional identity to their national identity, gaining knowledge about their specific profession and how it relates to the conflict.

In the final phase, Building Capacity and Implementing Projects, participants finalize the planning and implementation of their projects and present them to the full binational group.

The philosophy behind Creating Change Agents is to influence people who can influence others, creating a wider network of professional understanding and cooperation. Within each professional course is a diverse group of people in age, background, and nationality. By heightening awareness of the conflict and civic activism among women journalists, environmentalists and young politicians, the program creates a ripple effect. Its graduates become ambassadors of goodwill and mutual respect, armed only with the knowledge of the realities of the conflict and the motivation to act to change them.

*Course directors: Ahmad Hijazi, Nava Sonnenschein,  
Fathi Darwish and Mohammed Shbita*

*Program supervisor: Deanna Ambruster*



## **“What can we do when the reality is composed from difficult things?”**

### **Women Journalists, the media, patriarchy and creating change**

It's undeniable that the media plays a large role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sifting through the mass of information on the subject and deciding what stories about it will be read over coffee every morning. To a large extent, the media influences what people perceive about the conflict and about the “other” side, be it Israeli or Palestinian. Because of the media's influence and the School for Peace's priorities in female empowerment, a women journalist course was designed for the Change Agents program.

The Change Agents are motivated, committed and diverse. Among the Jewish participants are Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi (Sephardic) Jews and Ethiopian Jews. The program has Muslim and Christian Palestinian participants. The program features journalists working for important Israeli and Palestinian media outlets like Haaretz, Kalkalist, Channel 1 of Israeli TV Mabat Sheni documentary program, the Jerusalem Post, Y-net, NRG-Maariv web, Palestinian National TV, Wafa, and Radio of Peace in Jerusalem, among others.

As in previous programs, the School for Peace's activities can be unexpectedly hindered by real events on the ground. For the women journalists, potential participants from Gaza had to await permits to attend meeting in Ramallah, and several Palestinian journalists faced sanctions from their unions if they participated in a program with Israeli Jews. The Palestinian journalist union is against the normalization of relations between Israelis & Palestinians and actively participates in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

The course began in October 2010, the ten year anniversary of the start of the Second Intifadah. The events of October 2000 were central to the first dialogue of the group between the Israeli group, compromise of both Jews and Palestinians. The latter spoke about their frustration regarding the deaths of 13 Palestinians citizens of Israel at the hands of Jewish police forces. The opening meeting was affected by the macro processes in Israeli society, and the current political and social reality entered the dialogue immediately.

In the first Palestinian uninational workshop, the group met in the West Bank to get acquainted and talk about their hopes and fears in meeting the Israeli group. The Palestinians didn't want to hide their feelings and wanted to confront the Israeli group over its actions and their complicity as journalists in hiding the reality of the occupation.

In another later dialogue, the Israeli group discussed the topic of land confiscation, which was sparked by an announcement by the Rabbi of Zfat for his residents not to rent apartments to Arabs. In the matching Palestinian meeting, the participants discussed the differences between Israelis and Palestinians ahead of the first bi-national meetings, and expressed fears that the upcoming bi-national meeting in Aqaba consisting of "running away from facing reality." Energized by the dialogues, the group decided to talk more by phone and email outside of planned interaction time.

The course included several lectures by prominent journalists and academics about the conflict. Haaretz columnist Akiva Eldar addressed the group in a lecture about the role of Israeli journalists in situations involving violence and new peace initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians. Later on in the course, the participants heard a lecture from historian Dr. Mustafa Kabaha on the events of 1948, known to Palestinians as al-Nakba, or the Catastrophe. The topic underscored the School for Peace's philosophy that it's important to understand history in order to make progress toward a more just society. The Israeli participants had difficulty processing the new information about Jewish atrocities during the war, which created more than 700,000 refugees. Palestinian participants told them stories of the destruction of their families' villages. Another lecture by the School for Peace's own Dr. Nava Sonnenschein focused on how dialogue

could alter identity, helping the Jewish participants to conceptualize the processes of evolution their perspectives had undergone as a result of the course.

After the first round of uninational workshops, the whole group finally came together in Aqaba, Jordan. The Palestinian participants appreciated that the Israelis made the effort to come to Jordan and be open to hearing from the other side. The Jewish participants admired that many of the Palestinians came in spite of threat to their careers as a result of the BDS movement. The dialogue was very sincere and honest, as the groups discussed the military occupation, housing demolitions, checkpoints, the 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, the siege on Gaza and the situation in East Jerusalem. The Israeli journalists expressed their fears about Palestinian terror, specifically the threat of Qassam rockets from Gaza by Hamas. The Palestinian group countered, imploring the Israelis, as the strongest side, to end the occupation and begin the sequence of events needed to come to reconciliation. As time went by, the dialogue involved less arguing and self-victimization, and instead featured more listening and respect.

After the Aqaba workshop, one Palestinian participant said that she “sent a text message to my youngest daughter who told me that ‘we don’t want you, stay in Aqaba with the Jews’ . . . but this makes me more determined to continue in doing such a thing . . . it’s helpful for us to understand and for them to know our case and our suffering.” An Israeli journalist said that she “came to the conclusion that it is always easy not to hear the difficult things but what can we do when the reality is composed from the difficult things?”

After Aqaba, the Palestinian participants from Palestine experienced several dialogues, lectures and presentations regarding journalism, feminism, Islam and the relationship between them. Mayson Kawasmi, a famous female Muslim journalist discussed women’s role in the media in times of crisis. A Palestinian student followed the lecture with a presentation about feminism in Islam. Another participant led a discussion about Islam and the media around the world, and the negative perceptions that the international media perpetuated about Muslims (Islamophobia). The Palestinian members of the course discussed the difficulties they had to overcome as a result of their choice to dress in the conservative Hijab.

Later on, the Israeli group met in Tel-Aviv, where they wished to participate in a march for human rights. One of the Israeli Arab participants said that on the way back from Aqaba, she was threatened by a taxi driver, who pointed a gun at her. She brought the story to the group, sparking a discussion about racism in Israeli society. Later in the day, the group participated in the human rights demonstration in Rabin Square with 10,000 other. The master of ceremonies of the event was one of the group's Jewish members, Einat Weitzman Diamond.

In a subsequent uninational meeting of the Israeli group the group discussed the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and how they were portrayed in the Israeli media. The conclusion was that the coverage was from an ethnocentric Orientalist approach, mainly concerned with how the push for freedom and democracy in these countries would adversely affect Israel. In the dialogues, current events provided crucial jumping-off points for dialogue between the two sides.

The women in the group are already reporting stories in the media that advance peace. Two participants wrote about the first binational workshop in Aqaba, and one of them also wrote an article in Maa El Hadith about the School for Peace and its director in Arabic. Einat Weitzman Diamond wrote an article in the web site MySay about Breaking the Silence, the organization of Israeli ex-military that publishes testimony about the IDF atrocities in the Occupied Territories. Hadas Shefer published an article in Kalkalist on the Palestinian businessman. As the course went on, the participants successfully internalized the information they gained from the workshop and were able to translate this knowledge into their culture, words, and professional work.

Despite the previously mentioned articles written by the program's members, the participants from both sides complained about the limited control they had over their stories at the second binational workshop, which took place in Beit Jala. Many participants claimed that because of their editors, as well as economic and political forces outside of their control, the best stories often did not receive coverage. The participants discussed the media as a whole and how it covers the conflict, particularly focusing on the relationship between the media and women's voices.



As the course progressed, the women began to plan their projects. As hoped, the group came up with very creative and dynamic proposals. One idea was to make a documentary film about four of the women participating in the course, focusing on the feminist trends in their careers, activism and personal lives. Another was to create a video art about charged concepts or words to which people from both sides respond., like 'land' and 'home,' among others. Another proposal was to make a documentary about the difficulty of the checkpoints which focused on human diversity. The film would be told from the perspective of a Jewish soldier, a Palestinian trying to cross into Israel and a Druz soldier. Another participant proposed making a black comedy film about the absurdity of the occupation. The individuals are continuing to work and develop their projects with the guidance of the senior journalist in Haaretz, Avirama Golan.

Another integral part of the course was the binational field trips. The Israeli and Palestinian women journalists visited Bedouins in the Negev desert, and learned about their experience with displacement. The group visited the destroyed village of El Araqib, and discussed the Prayer Plan, an Israeli government initiative to expel 30,000 Bedouins

from their homes and confiscate their land. The group heard about the joint Jewish and Arab struggle in the Negev to retain their property. Later the group traveled to Lagia, another Bedouin encampment, to hear a lecture and presentation from the women there, who were determined to study despite the limitations of their culture. The women talked about facing double oppression—from the state and their patriarchal society. The tour ended in Jaffa, which excited the Palestinian participants especially, who don't have the opportunity to enjoy the Mediterranean beaches because of the restrictions on their movement.

Throughout the course, the participants continued to publish stories relevant to Israeli-Palestinian peace in the media. Einat Weitzman Diamond published an interview with PM Hanin Zuabi and Avigaile Gertz published two articles about the conflict in Maariv. Another Palestinian journalist had an idea for a report about her position as a Jerusalemite married to a man from the West Bank, which has caused her and women like her to lose residency rights in Jerusalem.

*Staff: Maya Rabia, Bella Sosovsky, Nivin Rizk Allah, Maryam Abdeldayim, Avirama Golan and Shereen Najah*



## **From Environmental Justice to Social Justice** **Reversing the tragic inequality in environmental conditions**

Environmentalists, due to their expertise in topics such as pollution, water accessibility and access to clean living conditions, are another professional group that the School for Peace has identified as potential Change Agents. The sanitation conditions in Arab towns and neighborhoods, where waste and sewage are often dumped, are demonstrably worse than those in Israeli Jewish areas. Through this course, the School for Peace seeks to train and motivate environmentalists to fight for equal living standards and environmental justice for Israeli Jews and Palestinians. By doing this, the environmentalist course graduates can use their specific professional skills to create more just and equitable Israeli and Palestinian societies in general

The Environmentalist course attracted a large pool of applicants because of the lack of similar courses in environmental justice for Israeli & Palestinian professionals. The School for Peace & Tawasul recruited a diverse group of participants in both age and professional expertise. The Israeli members of the course range in age from 23-60, but the Palestinian professionals are much younger than the Israelis since it is a newer field in Palestine. The participants work in activist organizations, government, academia, the environmental media, the environmental business sector, eco tourism, environmental law and environmental NGOs. The Palestinian participants are between 24-45 years old and most of them work in the environmental field for environment organizations. Some of are engineers, employed in both government and the private sector. Many of them are already extremely experienced in their field and all of them are especially knowledgeable about the environment and its impact.



In the first meeting of the Israeli side, the group discussed why more waste is dumped in Arab towns than Jewish ones. The group concluded that the wealthier Jewish towns know the system better, and fill out the required documents more effectively than the less fortunate Arab municipalities. The group surmised that the system was skewed in favor of the Jewish towns. At the beginning of the course, the Jewish participants sought to jump directly into proposals to achieve more environmental justice and focus on tangible issues, statistics and data.

Conversely, the Palestinians felt that they had to put their issues with the conflict on the table first, and establish a connection between the society's asymmetric reality and the environment. The course's facilitators spoke about the need to talk about the conflict first and more specific environmental issues later, emphasizing that the group could not skip the painful dialogue about the conflict. The Palestinians also learned from their first uninational meeting how the situations in nearby countries can affect the conflict. Mr. Ashraf Al-Ajrami, a former prison minister, gave a lecture about how the situation in Egypt may affect the political process between the Palestinians and the Israelis. They expressed concern that Israelis working in the same field as them couldn't understand that pollution and uprooting trees and other environmental issues will destroy all the peace process if they don't stop the Jewish settlers from wreaking havoc.

At the first binational workshop in Aqaba, Jordan, the Palestinian participants connected the discrimination in the water supply and the Israeli government ban on development in Area C of the West Bank as being rooted in the same phenomenon. The Jewish participants felt that poor management by the Palestinians, not The Occupation, was to blame for the unequal environmental conditions.

On the second day of the binational workshop, the Palestinian participants talked about how the settlements were adversely affecting their lives. They spoke about how difficult it was to go to work in Palestine because of the time it takes to get through checkpoints, and how the settlements cut off the cultural and commercial connections between cities in the West Bank. One of the Palestinian participants shared that he had to leave his wife and children for the whole week, because it was impossible to get from his home to his workplace everyday. Some Jews agreed about the settlements while others shifted the blame onto Israeli leaders. The Jewish participants spoke about

their fears from Palestinian terror attacks. The Palestinians explained that, while they don't condone the killing of innocent civilians, that terrorism was a weapon of the weak, that the misery of the occupation and dominance of Israelis left them few options. They rightly asserted that the Israeli army kills far more civilians than do terrorists.

As the Aqaba workshop closed, the Jews connected the separation wall with the need for security from would-be terrorists. The group discussed 'national security' as a justification for using power, control, and the occupation. In the end, the group agreed that it was vital to open the course with dialogue about difficult issues before moving on to how they could help to minimize the conflict as professional environmentalists. The Palestinians in particular felt that the Jewish environmentalists should realize that environmental issues could not be disconnected from the larger context of the occupation. Members of both nationalities spoke about their concern for their children and grandchildren, and reiterated the importance of reaching a lasting peace agreement soon.

As the course continued, the Jewish environmentalists began to undergo a transformation, especially after their first binational workshop with their Palestinian colleagues. The Israeli group discussed the painful reality they were exposed to and mentioned that Israelis were not confronted with the occupation in their everyday lives. The participants talked about the asymmetry of power in Israeli society and the fear Israelis had of losing hegemony in the state, becoming more aware of their society's paternalistic approach towards their Palestinian counterparts. One of the participants commented that it was unfair to restrict the Palestinians' freedom of opportunity and not let them develop and later criticize them for not being developed enough.

At the Palestinian group's unination meeting after the Aqaba workshop, Dr. Ghassan Barghottie sparked a discussion about the water situation in the West bank and Gaza strip. Dr. Barghottie gave the participants a lot of information about the water wells, water distribution, the unequal share of the Palestinian citizen compared to the settlers and the suffering of the citizen of the scarcity of water during the summer.

At a subsequent Palestinian unination meeting, participants discussed the issue of the solid waste and the wastewater, providing maps of areas affected by the settlements and the illegal dumps. Mohammad Saaydah, a participant from Jericho, showed the



participants how he and his team work in the Jericho area on the Eco-Tourism and how much it's helpful for international visitors to explore Palestine from different aspects.

At another workshop, three of the Palestinian participants prepared lectures themselves to present to the group. A participant who works for the Department of Water in Hebron discussed the solid waste in his city and the statistics behind the suffering people in Hebron suffer from because of settlers and the settlements around it. A participant from Nablus reported on the water situation in Palestine, and how the Israeli water authorities prevent Palestinian use of wells and water resources. A third group member gave a presentation about global warming, and what participants could do at home to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Throughout the course, the participants were exposed to a variety of fascinating lecturers. The first of them was Dr. Mustafa Kabaha from Open University regarding the 1948 War, known to Palestinians as al-Naqba, or the Catastrophe. The lecture was followed by an animated discussion between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians from

Israel about the events of 1948 and their importance even today. After the meeting, the participants took the individual initiative to exchange emails about nationality and the history of the Palestinian people amongst themselves.

The uninational Israeli group also heard a lecture from Professor Oren Yiftachel of Ben Gurion University on the concept of ethnocracy. Professor Yiftachel discussed the Israeli government's discriminatory land policy and its implication on the society and the environment. When asked by one of the 1948 Palestinian participants about how he felt about the new information he was hearing, a Jewish participant said that he was deeply disturbed by the inequality, that he would henceforth strive to foster true symmetry, even if it meant giving up some of his property. Another Jewish participant said that it would often take a week or two for the difficult things he learned about during the meetings to sink into his new reality regarding the conflict. A Palestinian participant commented on Yiftachel's lecture, saying that Palestinian areas were surrounded and squeezed, prevented from any expansion or development.

The environmentalists' chief professional concern relates to issues within Israel and Palestine but they are not blind to the events happening in their field around the world. This global focus was exemplified by Nisreen Mazzawi, a Palestinian from Israel, who wrote an article about green energy and atomic energy after the disaster in Japan, which appeared the April-June 2011 issue of the journal *Isha Le Isha*, or "Women to Women."

At another Israeli uninational workshop in NS/WAS was opened by Professor Avner Dshalit, who gave a lecture on environmental issues and their connection to ethnicity, status and nationality in Israel. After Professor Dshalit's lecture, a member of the Israeli group asked why the Palestinian community was undereducated about sanitation and garbage. He thought that there was more garbage in the streets of the poor and Palestinian areas because of a lack of awareness. A Palestinian participant strongly disagreed, and correctly pointed out that the biggest polluters and creators of waste are the wealthiest and industrialized parts of global society. The group discussed the case of a group of Bedouins living near Ma'ale Adumim who were going to be relocated by the occupational authorities to an area adjacent to a garbage dump. One of the Israelis

told the group that he approached the committee in charge and testified that it was not humane to force a group of people to live next to such a facility.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September, the School for Peace and Tawasul conducted the second binational workshop in Beit Jalla. Most of the participants came despite the coincidental overlapping of the workshop with Mahmoud Abbas' address to the United Nations General Assembly. Due to the historic moment, many of the roads in the West Bank were blocked, causing many of the Palestinians to arrive a night early to avoid congestion at the checkpoints. The focus of the workshop was to bring the participants together to brainstorm their environmental projects. However, since six months had passed since the last binational meeting, the participants engaged in a substantive dialogue about their hopes and fears ahead of the statehood bid at the UN. They also discussed the settlers' provocation of the Palestinians in the West Bank.

Later, the group heard a lecture by Professor Danny Rabinovitz, the professional consultant for the Israeli environmentalists, about the collapse of the neoliberalist-capitalist system and its effect on the environmental crisis. Professor Rabinovitz, who lectures at Tel-Aviv University, theorized that the capitalist system, which is driven by private interests, leaves no one to consider the public losses from pollution and other damage to the environment. After the lecture, the group, with the guidance of Waseen Birumi and Keren Dahan, presented their ideas for their projects and began to move from the theoretical to the tangible. They spoke about existing initiatives and what has caused them to succeed or fail. The participants were able to present their ideas and receive constructive feedback from a smaller group of attentive listeners. The project managers made posters describing their projects and detailed what they needed to order to make their projects realistic. The entire group weighed in on the projects, and approved fourteen projects for the group to pursue. There was a lot of goodwill and interaction between participants from both Israel and Palestine. At around 7PM on the workshop's first day, the group's discussions were put on hold so the participants could watch Abu Mazen's speech to the UN on a large projector. The Israeli participants were moved by how emotional the Palestinian group was by the event, and some of the Israelis even joined the Palestinians in dancing in front of the screen after Abu Mazen handed in his request for statehood.

The group also worked outside of the scheduled meeting times throughout the course to advance equality in the environmental sphere. For example, Nisreen Mazzawi, a group participant, invited the rest of her group members to an event on eco-feminist dialogue that she organized at the Women to Women Center in Haifa. At the event, Mazawi and Dr. Edna Goren discussed eco-feminist theories and the relations between nature, culture and society in Israel.

*Staff: Liron Tal, Ahmad Amarna, Waseem Berumi, Hiba Amara, Dan Rabinovitz*



## **Training the New Generation to be Better than the Last One**

### **Dialogues and Encounters with Up-and-coming Politicians**

The third group that the School for Peace identified as vital change agents was young, up-and-coming politicians. Civil society has a crucial role to play in cultivating Israeli society for peace by fostering conditions of equality in human rights, media coverage, access to land, and living conditions. However, ultimately, a final peace agreement will result from dialogue between the political representatives of the Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, the School for Peace, alongside Tawasul, recruited participants, predominately in their thirties, who work primarily as assistants or consultants of parliament members. The group represented a plethora of political parties and organizations, such as Likud,



Kadima, Avoda, Merretz, Hadash, Raam-Taal & Balad. The Palestinian participants worked for several political parties, most notably Fatah, the National Front and Hizb el-Shaab. Furthermore, the SFP and Tawasul enlisted social activists who plan to enter politics from non-governmental organizations such as Koach Laovdim (“Power to the Workers”), Peace Now, the Agik-Negeev Institute, and Zach, Ela. Many of the Palestinian participants worked for NGOs, including Tawasul, Al Quds University, the Youth Council, Safe Trading between Israelis & Palestinians, and Saved Home- Against Sexual Abuse. The hope is that these political leaders of tomorrow can succeed where the politicians of yesterday have failed—in creating a just and equal society in which Palestinians and Jews can live together side-by-side in peace.

Like previous School for Peace initiatives, the up-coming politicians course placed a special emphasis on empowering women. The Palestinian group facilitated by Tawasul was fortunate enough to hear Dr. Najat Abo Baker speak about the role of women politicians in Palestinian society. A member of the legislative council, Dr. Abo Baker inspired the young politicians by discussing the role of women in the recent revolutions in the Arab world, and how their contribution may affect the Palestinian women and society. After the discussion, the Palestinian group drafted a group contract, emphasizing the importance of listening to each other, openness, and tolerance of different opinions and acceptance of conflict topics. The group ended the workshop excited to meet again.

The Israeli group, consisting of Jews and Israeli Arabs, discussed their expectations for the course as well. The participants were interested in engaging in open dialogues, and wished to discuss power relations, the definition of the character of the Israeli state, identity issues, racism, gender discrimination and other contentious topics.

At the second Palestinian uninational meeting, the group discussed some of the main contentious points about the peace process, like refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, peace process, and prisoners. They also discussed their feelings about the upcoming binational workshop. Many of them had never met people from the other side of the Green Line. They were excited to meet Palestinians from Israel but nervous to meet the Jewish participants. One of the members said the Palestinian should try to forge a bond with the Israeli Arabs, and get them to understand how much they'd suffered under occupation. The participant continued that a red line would be crossed if the



Israeli Palestinians did not approve of the Palestinian dream of having a state on 1967 borders with 100% sovereignty. Other group members were more open, and wanted to hear the vision of the '67 Palestinians and their point of view as citizens of Israel. The group decided to meet an extra time before the binational meeting in order to get better prepared.

The group's first binational dialogue in Aqaba, Jordan was impressively honest and many core issues of the conflict were discussed openly, not only during the scheduled sessions but also on breaks between them. Issues such as the military occupation's effect on Palestinians' lives and Palestinian prisoners were discussed. One of the Palestinian participants shared a painful personal story about her brother, who has spent nine years in an Israeli prison. The participants also discuss the issue of defining Israel as a Jewish state. The Palestinians from both sides of the Green Line explained why they could not accept this definition, which would prevent them from ever being considered equals in Israeli society. Some of the Jewish participants tried to explain the importance of the "Jewish" distinction to them, leading to a substantial debate. The Palestinian said that their leaders had recognized Israel, but not as a Jewish state, which would infer preferential treatment on ethnic and religious terms. For their part, the Jews wished that the Palestinians would acknowledge their right to fulfill their national identity. Throughout the dialogue, the Palestinians from Israel attempted to bridge the gap between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians from Palestine.

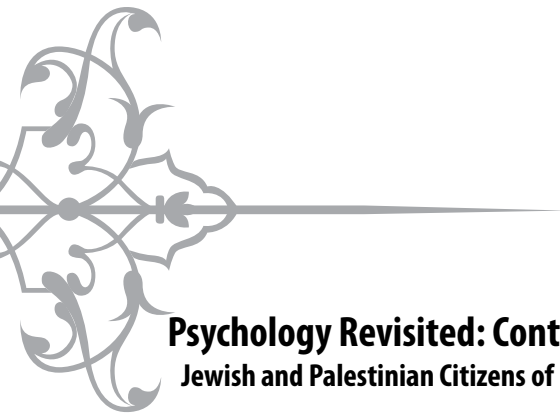
The participants found the dialogue to be very constructive and stimulating. One of the Palestinian participants said that some of the issues they took on weren't even discussed in official negotiations. Another Palestinian participant said that it was important to her that the Israelis discuss their new humanized perception of the Palestinians to the Israeli street. She said that her group also needed to take the picture of the Israeli group, which desperately wanted coexistence, to the Palestinian street. An Israeli Jew said that the dehumanization element was reduced in both sides' minds as the dialogue progressed. Another Palestinian participant said that it was her first time meeting Israelis, and the experience exceeded her expectations. She said that she loved seeing the humane side of people, and hoped that her group could be the future politicians that will bring change to Israel.

After the binational workshop in Aqaba, the Israeli group met by itself. The participants commented on how meaningful the experience was, even though it was very shaking and eye-opening. They spoke about morality and the injustice of the occupation. The dialogues were profound in their levels of depth and in the quality of the participants' analysis. In the second session after watching the film *Nahmani Diaries* by Dalia Karpel they spoke on what the meaning of Zionism is for them and discussed the right of return. They spoke on the responsibility of their generation for the past generations' injustice. A subsequent meeting at NS/WAS opened with a talk from Adv. Abir Baker, a human rights lawyer who worked years in Adalla, on the legal issues between the state and its Arab citizens. Towards the end of her lecture she also spoke about the future vision documents and their suggestions for the future relations between the State and its Arab citizens. Following the lecture the group had two sessions of interesting discussion about the meaning of citizenship and the contradiction between Israel as a Jewish state and a democratic state. The discussion was lively with a high level of involvement from all of the participants.

At a later dialogue in September 2011, the Israeli participants discussed the protests for social justice that attracted over 400,000 people to take to the streets in Tel-Aviv and other cities. While the protests were very popular with the majority of Israelis, several of the up-coming Israeli politicians were critical of the movement. To them, the protest's participants were all Ashkenazi Jews from the middle class and reflected the perspective of the most dominant elements of Israeli society. The protesters in Tel-Aviv, the participants agreed, were more concerned with the social and economic stresses of the middle class than the unjust discrimination against the Palestinians.

The group discussed other critical current events, including Israel's falling out with Turkey and the impending Palestinian statehood bid at the United Nations. Group members expressed their fears about these developments, afraid that they could lead to violence in Israel. While most of the group supported the Palestinians right to go the UN, especially given the hard-line stance of the Israeli government, they felt that uncertain times lay ahead.

*Staff: Sigalit Givon, Ilham Sami, Maysoon Badawi, and Shireen Najah*



## **Psychology Revisited: Continuing the Metamorphosis** **Jewish and Palestinian Citizens of Israel Mental Health professionals**

In 2010, the School for Peace, inspired by the success of its previous course, launched a second program for Israeli and Palestinian mental health professionals. “Creating Change Advocates: Palestinian & Israeli of Israeli citizenship mental health Professionals in Dialogue and Action,” consisted of 120 total hours training. The targeted group included 30 participants (15 Palestinians and 15 Jews, of Israeli citizenship). The group experienced a 2-component program which course took place over 14 months.

The objective of the course is to train mental health professionals to become change advocates by approaching their work from a human rights perspective that acknowledges the needs of both Palestinians and Jews. Through this newly trained lens, participants will help create opportunities for facilitating the conflict between the two peoples in their respective professions and form a critical mass dedicated to institutional change and reconciliation via mental health clinics. The participants will learn skills and design projects to actively promote peace & equality between Jews and Palestinians.

In the first component of the course, “Dialogue and Intergroup Process,” the aim of the encounter we facilitate is to develop the awareness of the participants to the national/ethnic/social conflicts in their society and their role in these. Our goal is to enable the participants to explore and evolve their identity through interaction with the other. In addition, the encounters explore the relationship between power groups and cultural groups in society through the experience in a small group setting. Four facilitators facilitated this part. The role of the facilitators is to help the participants achieve the goal of the encounter.



Participants met eleven times, for six hours each, on a monthly basis. Each meeting was comprised of a lecture followed by a group discussion on the theoretical components. Sometimes we discussed case studies from their work in which they had dilemmas between their professional role and their national identity. Later in the course, we examine initiatives and projects they want to conduct and help them to acquire the skills to facilitate groups in conflict through peer facilitation.

The participants enjoyed receiving several lectures from experts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as experts from their own field of mental health and psychology. Professor Mustafa Kabaha delivered a lecture about the history of the Palestinian –Israeli conflict in critical perspective. Dr. Amal Jamal discussed Postcolonial theories regarding identity & conflict. The School for Peace’s own Nava Sonnenschein talked about Theories of identity & conflict. The Director of the School for Peace, Ahmad Hijazi, spoke to the course members about the intergroup method that the SFP developed for working in groups in conflict.

Dr. Yousef Nashef and Tirza Bar Hanin gave a joint-lecture entitled, “The interaction between the psychological, the social political aspects of their profession: The social political context in the therapist/ client supervisor/ supervisee relations. Hanni Biran

spoke about Theories on group facilitation: Bion, Foulks and the social unconscious. At a later point in the course, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein delivered another lecture, this time on Dialogue challenging identity: Jews constructing their identity through encounter with Palestinians. Dr. Nisim Avisar discussed with participants the Theories in psychotherapy that relate to the social & political aspects of life. Finally, Hani Biran and Dr. Nimer Said led the social dream workshop.

In addition to the 11 meetings the group had 3 site visits to Jaffa, Nazareth and Hebron, organized by Wassim Birumi.

During the 10 meetings the participants learned facilitating skills by practicing peer facilitation on their own group. Participants received feedback from their colleagues and the course trainers. Through the peer facilitation, the participants learned together the following topics: Developmental stages in groups, the intergroup working method of the SFP, Co-facilitation in multi-ethnic groups, Uni-national work, language as a factor in intergroup relations, Gender & nationality, Managing joint Jewish-Palestinian projects and more.

The group had a meaningful dialogue and training sessions, which created strong relationships between them. When we concluded the course, the group kept meeting at NS/WAS once a month for another half year. Graduates of the course became very active and they organized a conference in Nazareth. Some joined Psychoactive. One participant became active in the SFP in guiding creative thinking with participants about projects they want to initiate. Some of the participants will be involved in the near future in a project connect with graduates of SFP's previous courses. In the future, the School for Peace intends to hold a course in the north of Israel in order to enable more Palestinian mental health professionals to participate.

*Course directors: Ahmad Hijazi and Nava Sonnenschein*

*Staff: Maya Rabia and Liron Tal*



## **Capricious Coverage of the Peace Process**

### **Simulating the Israeli and Palestinian media's role in reporting the Arab Peace Initiative**

Between January and December 2011, the School for Peace and the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (CCRR) led a project simulating the media's role in covering the Arab Peace Initiative. The participants in the simulation were 60 journalists and news editors from Israel and Palestine. The media professionals examined the role of the media during the time of the API (Arab Peace Initiative) and simulated what may have happened had the API been adopted by the leaders of the region. The event was mediated by one coordinator from the School of Peace, one coordinator from the CCRR, 5 facilitators, 2 administrative assistants and 3 translators, who echoed the participants' words in both Hebrew and Arabic.

The API was proposed in 2002 at the Beirut Summit of the Arab League by then-Crown Prince Abdullah, who has since become King of Saudi Arabia. The initiative attempted to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and bring a normalization of relations between the entire Arab region and Israel in exchange for a complete withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Recruitment of participants was difficult, given the high stakes and emotional weight of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A Dutch journalist wrote negatively in her blog about the project and also a member of the European Parliament contacted journalists, reprimanding them for their involvement in the project. They claimed that the project was biased, promoting the Arab agenda at the expense of Israel. Palestinian journalists from the West Bank were concerned that this program would be part of a "normalization" process with Israel and the Occupation. In addition recruiting Palestinians was difficult as Palestinian Journalists Unions boycott any collaboration or encounter with Israeli journalists.

The staff researched media coverage during the time of the launch of the API and the period which followed afterwards. A range of articles from the Arab and Israeli media were collated for the journalists. The articles were presented during uni –national meetings to ensure participants would be prepared for the bi-national meetings. The 60 Palestinian and Israeli media professionals that participated in the action were asked to examine the role of the media during times of war and peace in general and to on the time period surrounding the API specifically. Six uni-national and two bi-national meetings were held and the tone of each meeting was influenced by current events. In the bi-national meetings Palestinian and Jewish participants were able to overcome their personal and national differences and work together in a professional manner, with a critical and open attitude. At times the dialogue between the professionals was very tense and emotional, however the excitement and energy for the simulation enabled them to work through their difficulties and build respect for the “other.”

Two workshops were conducted in NSWAS on September 3<sup>rd</sup>: one uni-national meeting for Israeli editors, and one for Israeli Journalists. The other two uni-national meetings took place in Bethlehem, in July and September, on two different dates for editors and journalists, respectively.

By the end of the meetings of the Palestinian group, the participants had a much better understanding of the aims of the project and its expectations. They discussed the highlights of the project and the API from a professional and political perspective and evaluated if they could influence this initiative in the future.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, a meeting was held for Israeli editors and Israeli journalists in WASNS. The participants listened to a lecture on the API by Akiva Eldar from Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper. Eldar is known for his extensive knowledge on the API and at the end of the lecture there was a question and answer session, followed by a discussion session in two small mixed groups.

The joint uni-national meeting in Palestine, with 20 journalists and 10 editors, was conducted on October 30, 2010 and facilitated by Dr Noah Salameh. The participants were divided into two groups and each group discussed the relationship between the editors and journalists within the context of the API as a case study, and stressed how



they dealt with the relationship. After that Dr. Salameh led a discussion about how to improve the balance between the journalists and editors within the profession. The first bi-national workshop in Jordan was for the Israeli and Palestinian editors and lasted for four days from October 7<sup>th</sup> to October 10<sup>th</sup>. The second bi-national workshop in Jordan was for the Israeli and Palestinian journalists from December 16<sup>th</sup> to December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Media professionals from Israel and Palestine brought issues that had arisen during their respective uni-national debates. They discussed the narratives on the API and reflected on the factors that explain why the Initiative hadn't become a public debate. This was followed by discussions on alternative coverage that could have been used to promote the API to decision making bodies. Methods for improving the means of communication between the Israeli and Palestinian media were also discussed.

It was evident that the journalists, particularly the Israelis, were impatient with certain aspects of the program. They did not want to look at the past; they preferred instead to look to the future and determine how they could cooperate and make a difference. The Palestinian journalists were more hesitant of this.



In Aqaba, one of the journalists from Radio Rekaa, an Israeli Russian radio station, participated in a broadcast with six other journalists and discussed the API and this project.

The project took place during a period of intense political activity. Talks about freezing settlements and the prospects of direct or indirect negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, resulting from US pressure, were very relevant. These events distracted the media professionals from the API. The overall feeling was that despite the historical importance of the API, it had become outdated with the emergence of new developments. The general question of the journalists was how we can learn from this past experience to make a difference in the future rather than how can we go back to API and try to awaken it.

As the project entered its second year, The School for peace and CCRR conducted two parallel uni-national workshops lasting one day each between February and June 2011. The first workshop focused on reflecting on the bi-national workshops that took place in Aqaba. Each of the uni-national meetings had some sessions that brought editors and journalists together in the same room, while for other exercises they were separated. The participants spoke about what they learned from meeting their colleagues from the other nationalities, and about how the relationships and the cooperation that were created in Aqaba had developed and improved in the months since the groups met in Jordan. The groups spoke amongst their own national group about how they foresaw the continuation of their relationship with the 'other' side.

The second set of uni-national meetings focused on other peace initiatives and proposals, from both governmental and non-governmental bodies, that were precipitated by the Arab Peace Initiative, such as the Geneva Accord and the Israeli Initiative. During the second phase of the meeting, the journalists and editors discussed the relevance of these resulting initiatives on the political atmosphere for the Israeli and Palestinian leadership and on the current international political climate regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the Arab Spring and Washington and Brussels' economic considerations, the group discussed whether or not these proposals were on the radar of the international community.

In early July, because of the development of the dynamics of the project, we saw the need to hold a bi-national meeting for both editors and journalists at the same time. The plenary sessions of the meeting were inclusive for everyone—both Israelis and Palestinians; both editors and journalists. Other session divided the group between journalists and editors. The most dominant issue of this bi-national workshop was the Arab Spring and the impact it would have in Palestine, on Israeli-Palestinian relations, and on the peace process. The group also discussed the Palestinian Liberation Organization bid for Palestinian statehood at the UN in great detail. Given these exciting and recent developments in Israel-Palestine and the Arab world, it became very difficult for the group to remain focused on the Arab Peace Initiative.

Between the July bi-national meeting and the end of 2011, the School for Peace and its partner organization is evaluating the program based on surveys and interviews with participants. The School for Peace and CCRR will aggregate the conclusions about the project based on the discussions during the workshop and lectures, the questionnaires and interviews from participants, and the testimonies of the groups' facilitators. Summaries of the conclusions and lessons learned from the project will be put together in an upcoming report. We will be able to take the information and conclusions from this project and apply it to future endeavors, in order to make other programs like this one more effective in the future. These outcomes will be shared with all participants and other invitees at the end of 2011.

Even though the final evaluation is still pending, we can safely say that the project was very successful and rewarding for the journalists and editors involved. We learned a great deal about the specifics of the Arab Peace Initiative and the role of media in reporting it, despite the fact that given recent developments it became difficult to remain focused solely on the API. We have learned a great deal about the Israeli and Palestinian media and its performance during times of tension and relative tranquility.

*Project Directors: Ahmad Hijazi and Noah Salami*

*Staff: Sigalit Givon, Elianna Almog, Hiba Amara, Sana Salami, Rechla Yanai, Maysoon Badawi, Jamal Salami and Maysoon Qawasmi*



## **Partnering Across Borders to Become Advocates for Peace** **Israeli and Palestinian Journalist Collaboration**

During 2010 Palestinian and Israeli female journalists were brought together by the School for Peace for a series of workshops. These workshops were designed to bring women journalists from the two sides of the conflict together for meaningful encounters. Participants were able to examine their role as female journalists in the conflict and their ability to contribute to peace in the region. For a number of participants, the encounter provided the first opportunity for them to meet, learn from and know “the other.”

The journalists chose to communicate in English, as the common language they were all comfortable to use.

*Meeting One: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010, School for Peace*

The journalists met for the first time and through a series of facilitated discussions became familiar with the other. The participants followed usual trends for dialogues focusing on the conflict, with participants from both sides attributing blame to the other. Often, exchanges became heated as issues, such as the occupation, check points and day to day life were debated. Journalists examined their identity and discussed their role as media providers in the conflict. They also discussed the possibility and benefit of including the voice of the “other” in their journalism. Palestinians expressed their frustration that Israeli journalists learned about events in the Palestinian Territories from the army spokespeople, rather than going to the field to learn from the Palestinian people themselves. It was the hope of the Palestinian journalists that their Israeli counterparts would work more with the Palestinian people than the army for reporting.

*Meeting Two: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010, American Colony Hotel*

The second meeting was held at the American Colony Hotel, chosen for easy accessibility for the Palestinian journalists. Exchanges during the meeting were honest and painful. Through facilitated dialogue the mood changed from confrontation to cooperation and the journalists began exploring how they could work together on a professional level. Discussions went back and forth between the two groups with each side examining how they could collaborate. Practical issues concerning how Palestinians would be able to appear in the Israeli press were discussed. The Palestinian journalists asked themselves if appearing in the Israeli press would be considered normalization or cooperation with the occupation from the Palestinian audience.

Palestinians asked for feedback from Israeli journalists on their work. The Israeli journalists were willing to give input to Palestinian journalists and offered to feature their work in the Israeli media. Israeli journalists were interested to find out if they would be able to report in the Palestinian media. For the Palestinians this request highlighted the lack of knowledge Israeli journalists have concerning Palestinian media; as they explained much of the Palestinian media comes from Israeli journalists or translations from Israeli journalists. By the end of the second workshop participants realized cooperation was possible; however they acknowledged there were numerous barriers to overcome to make this possible.

*Meeting Three: May 21<sup>st</sup> 2010, School for Peace*

During the third meeting participants agreed that on going communication between the two was essential for their professional development and ability to give the “other” a voice in their journalism; however both recognized the limitations of authoring articles together publicly. All participants were pleased that the channels of communication had been opened and realized the benefit such cooperation could bring to their work and particularly their ability to contribute to a more peaceful climate in the region. The two groups exchanged contact details in order to work together in the future.



The journalists who attended these workshops were experienced, with many years in the field. All recognized the benefit of such meetings for themselves, but also for the new generation of journalists. Discussions ensued as to how and what could be done to help the professional development of younger Israeli and Palestinian journalists. An unexpected result from the Palestinian/Israeli encounter was for the journalists to begin working with each other in cooperation with SFP staff on how to build a program for young media professionals.

*Meeting Four: July 9<sup>th</sup> 2010, School for Peace*

The journalists discussed how to learn from the experience of other journalists and how conflicts are reported throughout the world. They expressed the importance of including journalists from outside Israel/Palestinian Territories to critique their work.

During the final workshop the participants read and discussed an article by Christiane Amanpour from ABC News, concerning reporting from areas in conflict. They discussed ethical dilemmas of journalists involved in the conflict and how to be objective in reporting. The following quote was used as a focal point for discussion. "There are cases in which you cannot stay neutral because neutrality is like cooperation."

Journalists tackled a number of issues concerning peace, war, the role of the media in the conflict and how peace is less attractive than war for media consumers. The journalists discussed how they can take responsibility for changing this phenomenon and how they can positively impact peace initiatives through their reporting. The journalists all voiced their interest in visiting other countries in conflict for their professional development.

### *Evaluation*

Due to shortage of time, the journalists chose to use the sessions for dialogue, rather than listening to lectures from other professionals. Participants described the shared dialogue as extremely worth while on both a personal and professional level. They all acknowledged that these encounters had a huge impact on their view of the 'other' and their role in the conflict.

The participants exchanged information and pledged to continue to stay in professional contact. They are hoping to continue working together in encounters organized by the SFP in Italy in coordination with CIPMO, The Italian Centre for Peace in the Middle East. The journalists hope to produce joint projects during this time.

Another positive outcome from the project was assistance given by the journalists has enabled the SFP to design the Change Agents program for Women Journalists. All of the journalists helped to recruit participants for this program.

The School for Peace would like to express their sincere thanks to the Swiss Embassy for making this project possible.

*Program Coordinators: Ahmad Hijazi and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein*



## **Instilling an Awareness of Human Rights in Israeli and Palestinian Youth**

Beginning in November of 2010, the School for Peace organized a program to raise awareness about human rights among youth. The Youth Human Rights group meetings consisted of four main components: dynamic dialogue between Jewish and Palestinian youths, lectures and workshops on various aspects of human rights, research of human rights violations and distribution of report on the findings being distributed to relevant decision makers and a meeting with a Palestinian group that was working on same issues. The group consisted of 12 Palestinian students and 11 Jewish students between the ages of 15-17, chosen because of their excellent performances in our youth programs.

The first meeting of the group took place on March 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 at the School for Peace in Neve Shalom / Wahat Al-Salam. The participants were eager to meet each other and conducted a productive and open dialogue regarding various topics which are at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, amongst them: The Palestinian Right of Return, The Palestinian Nakba versus the Israeli War of Independence, entrenched racism and oppression, the mandatory army service in Israel, and the absence of equal rights for all. The group was presented with activities that aim at promoting understanding of the concept of Human Rights, and to be able to differentiate between Rights and Needs. The detailed dealt with the evolution of human rights as part of the joint-history of human kind, and how it was developed as major task of the United Nations after World War II into universal values and laws. The philosophy behind the program was that by first integrating the group and conducting dialogue between participants, the group members would better adapted to cooperate during the rest of the program.



The second meeting of the group took place in May 21-22<sup>nd</sup> 2010 in Nazareth. The meeting was dedicated to introducing numerous human rights topics. The weekend's workshops were conducted by Advocate Muhammed Zeidan, director of the Arab Association for Human Rights. Adv. Zeidan presented the group with a general introduction to the topic of human rights and specifically focused on minority rights, women's rights, and the rights of the mentally disabled, and social and economic rights. The group discussed the concept of civil rights in modern democracy, how human rights are interlinked, and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, released in 1948. During the second day of the seminar, we conducted a field trip and learned about human rights in the neighboring Palestinian and Jewish cities of Nazareth and Nazareth Elite.

The third meeting of the group took place on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 at the School for Peace in Neve Shalom / Wahat Al-Salam. In the meeting we watched the film "The Diaries of Yossef Nachmani" and held a discussion on the topics of collective memory and historical narratives. In the second part of this meeting Adv. Zeidan conducted a workshop that was focused on the topic of children's rights. The participants also revisited the topic of minority rights, and how they are violated in the case of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel.



Following the workshops, the participants were split into small groups to perform field research about human rights violations. The topics that the groups chose included freedom of religion, worker's rights, housing demolitions in Jerusalem and the rights of minors in an unrecognized Arab village in the Negev.

In their fourth meeting, the participants presented their field-work to the group and each topic was discussed collectively by the participants. Questions were raised and suggestions were made to the presenters, allowing them to improve their presentations before submitting their findings to appropriate authorities and decision-makers.

Our last meeting took place in December 2010. This meeting was included the Palestinian and Israeli participants of the group as well as the Palestinian human rights group from the occupied territories. The meeting consisted of a political dialogue, a cultural encounter, a presentation of the reports of all the participants and a conclusion and farewell of the group.

*Staff: Keren Segal and Souher Salman Munayer*





## **Unity and Division in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

### **A Photographic Exhibition through the Eyes of Israeli and Palestinian Students**

18 students (seven Jewish citizens of Israel, two Palestinians of Israel and nine Palestinians from Palestine) gathered at the Everest Hotel, Beit Jala to participate in the project: "Unity and Division in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Photographic Exhibition through the Eyes of Israeli and Palestinian Students."

The university students, who studied at universities such as Tel-Aviv University, Hebrew University, Nablus University and Al-Quds University, were able to speak in their native languages, with translators providing explanations to the group in both Arabic and Hebrew.

The School for Peace and the Future Generation Hands Association welcomed the students and introduced the project. The participants talked about themselves and explained their motivation for joining the encounter, becoming familiar and comfortable with one another on a personal level.

Later there was a political discussion which was very heated, with each side explaining their views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both sides were clearly frustrated by the lack of political movement in the region and the discussion provided a strong basis for the students to begin thinking about the photographic images to present to the other side.

In the evening they listened to a presentation by professional photographer, Allah Badarna from Nablus, a freelancer whose work has been published by a number of international agencies. He talked about photography in war zones and places of conflict whilst showing examples of his work. He gave the students expert advice and ideas

of how they could best produce photography which would effectively present their experiences and viewpoints to the other side. Badarna made himself available for future advice and consultation if the participants desired.

The next day the participants continued with their political discussion and began to discuss themes they hoped to present through their photography. In the closing session of the encounter the participants requested to meet uni-nationally before presenting their photography to the other group. The students asked for the bi-national encounter to take place a few months later, once university commitments have been completed.

After their university terms were completed, the second encounter between the Palestinian and Israeli students took place in Bet Jala. During the time between February and July the students had been busy taking photographs.

Once the group was together, they were keen to talk about the political situation, particularly upcoming bid for Palestinian statehood in September. The Israelis were especially interested to listen to the Palestinians and learn about their perspective on the situation. They were surprised to learn there was divided opinion amongst the Palestinian public concerning the Palestinian's leadership approach to independence. Much of the time was spent exchanging views and talking about politics, however time was given to examining each other's photography work and discussing the exhibition. The group divided uni-nationally to choose pictures they would like to display. The Israelis had taken approximately sixty photos, whilst the Palestinians had taken around three hundred! Some of the Palestinians had been helped by a professional photographer. As the groups worked to select their photos, it became clear tension was growing between the Israelis and Palestinians.

The Palestinians had taken photos relating to the conflict and the political situation, whereas Israelis had taken photos which reflected their regular daily and family life. The Palestinians voiced disappointment that the Israelis had not taken the project seriously enough, whereas the Israelis felt the Palestinians were too political in their approach. Eventually the students chose to delegate the responsibility of choosing the photographs to the project organisers and focus more on discussions about their reasons for choosing different photographic subjects.



The encounters provided a constructive forum for the Palestinians and Israelis to meet and befriend each other and they exchanged contact details after the session ended. Overall the experience was more challenging for the Israelis as they wanted to be apolitical and the Palestinians wanted to use the opportunity to engage in political discussions with the Israelis and confront them with their perspective on the occupation.

Sixty photos were chosen for the exhibition, which took place at Al Najah University in Nablus on 12 December, 2011, where they are currently displayed. The exhibition lasted for three full days and was visited by 12,000 people in total. The exhibition was opened by the President of the University, Dr. Rami Alhamdalla. Also in attendance were the mayor of Nablus, Mr. Adle Ya3esh, and the Chief of the Police, Colonel Umar Lebzur. The exhibition was also visited by Deputy Provincial Governor, Mr. Anan Lateri, and the Japanese representative to the Palestinian Authority.

At the time of this report's release, we are still in the process of planning to move the exhibition to other sites. It is our hope that later on, the exhibition will be displayed

in the lobby of the Neve Shalom~Wahat Al Salam Guest House as well as other sites around Israel and Palestine.

*Staff: Royi Silberberg, Muhammad Abu Snina, and Maysoun Badawi.*

### **A Workshop for Israeli Jewish college students to deal with the conflict**

The School for Peace has conducted a weekend workshop for the last 10 years to teach Jewish students from Rupin College. This year, we held our encounter with the students in January 2011. The workshop is a supplementary part of a course in the Rupin College that Dr. Efrat Ben Zeev teaches. The workshop consists of an encounter between the students with Palestinian voices and Jewish voices that usually do not meet in the public sphere. We conduct this encounter through several activities. We have the students watch the film *Yomanei Nahmani* of Dalia Karpel that gives the history of



Tiberius through Jewish & Palestinian testimony. Through the film, the students are exposed to the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 war, or the Nakba. This activity enables the students to develop a different perspective on Arab –Jewish relations. Last year the students were deeply impressed by the film. Some expressed skepticism about the information and others wondered why they didn't get this information while studying in the Israeli school system. Some expressed guilt, self-criticism and understanding of the Palestinian points of view which suddenly seemed more justifiable.

The participants heard other voices in a tour to three villages that were destroyed in 67. The tour was guided by Mr. Omar Agbaria from Zochrot who is also a NS/WAS member. The encounter with this history brought diverse responses including anger. Mr. Agbaria absorbed the anger, listened, and gave the participants information that they could not deny. In processing this experience in small groups, participants expressed despair and felt overwhelmed, not wanting to discuss the issue. After giving space to their feelings and containing their anger they expressed wonder why they didn't learn about this at their schools alongside voices who spoke about not wanting to give up power.

The next activity was a lecture by Ahmad Hijazi, the SFP's director, about the relationships between the state and its Palestinian citizens.

The students expressed in the summary session that we succeeded to make them curious about the issue and motivated them to know more about the Palestinian narrative. Some shared their disconnection to the issue before they came to the workshop and talked about their growing interest to be involved in the issue now. Some expressed the wish to meet with Palestinian university students. This activity, which we've done for many years and will continue to do, is always a fantastic experience, helping Jewish University students to understand the stories, perspectives and histories of the Palestinians.

*Staff: Liron Tal & Eliana Almog*



## **Discussion on the Impact of the University Course Facilitated by the School for Peace and Tel Aviv University**

**By Dr. Nava Sonnenschein (SFP) and Professor Yachiel Klar (TAU)**

During the last three years, we have conducted three courses in Haifa University and three courses at Tel-Aviv University, each lasting one semester. For the last twenty years the course has been administered jointly by the School for Peace and the Psychology Department of Tel Aviv University. The course, offered both in Haifa and Tel-Aviv, is called “The Arab-Jewish Conflict through the Mirror of Theory and Experience,” and includes a predominately experiential process facilitated by one Arab and one Jewish facilitator from the School for Peace. Each meeting lasts three hours. Every third meeting a Uni-national workshop is held. Every fourth meeting there is a lecture given by an Arab or Jewish professor dealing with theories that can be connected to the underlying processes of the group’s discussions, such as national identity, group conflict, group-based guilt issues, dual narratives, and historical/sociological viewpoints of the conflict.

The course in Haifa is led by Professor Ramzi Suleiman from the Psychology Department and the course in Tel-Aviv is conducted by Professor Yachiel Klar. We strongly believe that every Jewish and Arab student in every university or college in Israel should undergo the powerful experience of engaging in dialogue with the ‘other’ before graduation.

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein of the School for Peace met with Professor Klar on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011, to learn about his evaluation of the course and his thoughts about the group processes he had observed. Extracts of the discussion follow:

Nava: For many years, you have been involved with this course. I would like to learn about your experience with these courses. What is unique about this course? What are the lessons learned from the processes that each group undergoes?

Klar: First of all, there are now close to 2,000 Arab students at Tel-Aviv University, I don't think there were more than 100 Arab students when the course started twenty years ago. Although the number of Arab students has grown considerably, most of the Jewish students at the university, in social psychology or in general, have had any meaningful encounters with Arab students other than casual exchanges in class.

There aren't any other opportunities for encounters between the two groups; Arab students are surrounded by Jewish students but they have little to do with them. They are encapsulated in their social groups. A very basic step is to provide them with an opportunity to meet with each other. The "Arab-Jewish Conflict" course provides a distinct opportunity to discuss the major issues of the two national groups living in the country in a structured and intensive manner. This is an extended encounter, so there are group processes involved and the students experience change. It is important to let them experience processes and changes that occur in their opinions, in their feelings and in their affiliation with their own group and their relation to the other group. From the last twenty years we have seen that the encounters have a profound impact on everybody who participates, Jews and Palestinians.

Nava: What kind of impact?

Klar: Well we have seen that graduates of these programs change during the course and come away as more empowered people. Many of them, not everyone, but many in the Palestinian group become activists involved in the political and social sphere. From the first years, many of them became involved in organizations like Adalah and in bilingual and the bi-national Arab-Jewish Schools, Yad B'Yad. But what is most noticeable is what happens to the Jewish students. There are many examples of participants using this course to become their main academic pursuit, studying the conflict, Arab Jewish relations etc. In fact many of the Jewish graduates go on to become academics dealing with the conflict.

Nava: Their focus of interest is on the conflict?



Klar: There are people now at PhD level, they are professors and researchers at universities both in Israel and abroad, which are focusing on either the Jewish-Arab encounter, issues of reconciliation, inter-group relations, and so on. We can easily list the names of more than a dozen of the graduates of the course through the years who are now in full time PhD studies in different universities and research institutions and have become leading experts on these issues. Also, many graduates have become activists involved in different Human Rights organizations and different dialogue organizations. I think this is one of the results of what happens to students following their participation.

Another element to mention is that these groups, which have been meeting for the last twenty years, serve as an ongoing laboratory to analyze and understand the main issues in Jewish Arab relations — between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis and also to analyze what has been changing during the years, for better or for worse, and what remains constant, what remains unchanged, such as the structure of relations and the basic inequality. We think that by observing our participants from the two national groups in our courses we see that the groups are actually reflecting what is happening in the larger societal domain in Israel.

We see that both the problems and types of relations are changing from time to time. We conducted our course before the Oslo process, during the years of the Oslo process, during the Second Intifadeh, and now when there are changes in the structure of the Israeli political system, which as a matter of fact, threatens the very basic conditions for Jews and Arabs to live together. The latest wave of discriminatory laws and law proposals such as the Nakaba Law or the “loyalty” law proposal, directed against the Arab citizens of Israel is reflected in the group; sometimes we can predict those societal processes in the course even before they occur in the large public arena. I think that these ongoing dialogue courses provide important information as a microcosm of what is going on in the country as a whole.

Nava: What are the kinds of dynamics that you see between the two groups? What are the processes that are possible to change and which ones are more in deadlock?

Klar: I think we are interested in using our social psychological research to ease the sense

of victimization. Most groups are coming to these encounters with the feeling that they are the victim. Jewish groups talk about their trauma of the Holocaust. Both sides come together equipped with their sense of victimization and moral superiority. The presence of the other group provides a test for those ideas. Maybe these stances can change. It provides the Jewish participants, who are often totally unaware of the experience of the other side, to understand the nature of inequality, injustices and power structure which surrounds the two groups. The course gives in some sense, for some participants, a way to think about other possibilities for Jewish-Arab relations, which aren't conventional and don't conform to the accepted way of thinking.

Nava: You mean more ethnocentric?

Klar: It's an opportunity to rethink those issues.

Nava: Do you think their sense of superiority is changing?

Klar: Yes, I think that both groups are highly intelligent, highly verbal, and highly eloquent about talking about these issues. The Palestinian group is even more so, since they are more ready to think about the conflict. For the Jewish participants, meeting such a group of students, which they have no opportunity of meeting during their regular university curricula, sometimes causes change. Sometimes the participants are not aware of the type of needs and issues the other group cares about. The consequence is not just about understanding, or a "let's be friends" sort of an ideal, but a more realistic appreciation of the complexities and the depth of the conflict and the mutual relations.

The course leads to less ignorance. I think that most of the Israeli public does not think about these issues and just assumes that someone somewhere else is thinking about it. Just by spending three hours a week during a semester, thinking about these issues, helps. The course also serves as a laboratory to study Israeli society's intelligent young people, whilst they consider the problems and possible solutions. We have few opportunities not many set-ups which operate in this framework of equality out of the regular modes of thinking.

Nava: You think that experiencing a more equal situation has a strong impact?

Klar: Yes! I think even the smallest sign of equality, for example, having a Palestinian facilitator, who makes remarks and observations in Arabic, is shocking for the Jewish students, I mean this is a shocking thing. First of all, they're sitting in their university, in their class, and they don't understand what's going on, this makes some a little frightened. Later on they adjust to this and understand the necessity of it, but at the beginning this is a new experience for them. They are in their home, their university, and they don't understand what is going on. It even creates for some participants a sense of paranoia.

Some gestures, for example, not having a class last week because of Eid al-Adha, was shocking for the Palestinian students. It was very surprising for the students that this was even acknowledged. I don't think that any of the departments, even the departments in which Arab or Muslim students are a big part of the student body, acknowledge the holiday.

Nava: This must be an empowering experience for them.

Klar: Yes, of course. The structure of the group, with bi-national components and uni-national components, is a unique framework. This is very different from the way people usually talking about these issues.

Nava: I know one area of your research is about national historical narratives and about how each side perceives the narrative of the other and acknowledging it or not. Does this have any connection to the course's process?

Klar: Of course. First of all, one of the main ideas in our research is that the narrative of other is always a taxing and frightening experience for everyone in the 'other' group. It's especially taxing, I refer to this as 'ego depleting;' depleting of their mental and emotional resources. It's taxing because the nature of the two narratives so oppose one another. They don't give a place for the presence of the other.

Sometimes they can say that the presence of the other national group is only acceptable because “they are here and we cannot destroy you, we do not believe that your presence is even legitimate, that your identity is real.” This happens with both the Israeli and Palestinian narratives. Even when people are presenting a softer version of their narratives and say “we don’t want to kick you out of this place,” they are still affected by the opposing nature of the narratives and the fact that they don’t leave any real, legitimate place for the presence of the other group. I think that this is the real issue. I think that some understanding is gained during this group but of course the issues remain.

Nava: What enables the change to happen?

Klar: Well, first of all, being exposed to the other side. I mean, this hardly ever happens.

Nava: Well, I mean, they can read about it or—

Klar: There are things that affect our perceptions. When some people came to my seminar and we expose them two short videos (one representing each narrative), they are totally shocked. There isn’t much new there, but they don’t think about the other, I’m talking about Jewish Israelis, they don’t think about the Palestinian narrative, other than as something that rejects their existence. Most of them would not mention the Nakba or the expulsion of Palestinians. . .

Nava: I guess the same response happens in the group process? The Palestinian students talk about the Nakba and the Jewish students are firstly in shock and then what happens?

Klar: They think there is probably some mistake, some error, but then they realize it is a fact of life. They can’t just throw it away and say it never happened. Also the Palestinians have a very vague idea about their history, sometimes no more than family history they learnt from a grandfather or grandmother. Most of them know very little. I’m finding out that most the participants don’t know much about it. It’s an interesting

issue. Sometimes we see, as was the case last year that they become motivated to do more research, to find out more about what they don't know. It is interesting that in some ways, most of the work, if I'm not mistaken, done on this aspect of the Palestinian narrative hasn't been done by Arabs in Israel but by Jews. The Palestinian concern is on a very local basis.

Nava: But in each home I think they tell stories on the day of the Nakba, isn't it very family orientated?

Klar: First of all, there's not much exposure to this because it's not taught in the education system and because of other reasons. Usually they have a very local picture of what happened to their family and so on. It's a fragmented and very partial picture of what happened, like what happened to their family or their village, but the picture is much larger.

Nava: I think that maybe the fact that they're hearing it personally creates trust and relations, and then the impact is stronger.

Klar: They understand that when they talk about refugees, it's not just an issue that concerns people which are really far away from here in Lebanon, but it's something that affects almost every Arab or Palestinian family. They have family members who were driven out or left and they cannot meet, or there have problems meeting or they're estranged and have never met them. They understand that it is an issue that affects almost every Arab citizen in the State of Israel.

I don't think they knew anything about internal refugees or related issues before the course and they don't understand how connected the Palestinian living in Israel feel to the Palestinians living in Palestine or in other Arab countries. This is very basic. We all live in this country and are surrounded by news; yet there is no understanding of basic issues. This also means that a much wider education is needed. These people are really intelligent, they're students, they even elected to come and join this course and even their lack of knowledge about what goes on is actually much less pronounced than other parts of society. We need to understand the basic issues, in order to advance or move. This is important.

Nava: What keep you doing all the efforts for recruiting Arab students and to look for funding for the course for so long?

Klar: This course is a very important part of Tel-Aviv University and is being applied in other universities. I think it is very pertinent to what we're doing in social psychology. My research was not, as a matter of fact, connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until the last six or seven years. But I felt that as an Israeli citizen, as a Jew, and through my work in social psychology it was important be involved with these issues. Not just on the abstract, academic side but with person-to-person and group-to-group contact. In recent years, much of my research has been with these issues, with the issues we have mentioned, with the issue of dealing with the other narrative, and the way we perceive the other group. It's very important that our social psychology students would be exposed to one major problem or issue in Israeli life. It actually affects and overshadows many aspects of life, not just Jewish Arab relations, but everything. This course gives students a very unique and special opportunity to experience this conflict by actually meeting the other side, which otherwise consists of just reading about it in the newspapers.



## **Moving Beyond Seeing the Conflict in Black and White**

### **Youth Encounters with Israeli and Palestinian High School Students**

In the last three years, we've conducted on average 5-6 youth encounter workshops for Jewish and Arab students per year. However, while three years ago we were able to organize 20 youth encounters in a year, the frequency of these encounters is getting less over time because of lack of funding. High Schools with whom we have built relationships with have lost their commitment to these workshops as we've had progressively more difficulty in arranging them.

Conducting these sessions are vital for efforts towards reconciliation, justice and equality. The workshops we've been able to organize have been eye-opening experiences for the youth who participate in these activities. From evaluations conducted, participants have shown that they went through a very meaningful experience, in which they were dealing with important and challenging issues. They also said it's a new and surprising experience to get a better understanding of the complexities of Jewish and Arab relations in Israel. They had previously seen the conflict in a superficial, black and white context. Every high school student, Arab and Jew, should experience such an encounter before graduating and entering adult life, in order to gain a better understand of the 'other' in their society.

When we look at the political atmosphere in which we worked in the last three years, there's been a freeze in the political peace process and a rise in extremism boosted by the right-wing government in Israel. We could see this trend on a micro level in the youth encounters. We encountered more racist and stubborn opinions from both Jews and Arabs in this year's encounters than in previous years. This phenomenon needed to be addressed by the facilitators working to mediate dialogue during the workshops. The



staff dealt with the dilemma of how to challenge the racist opinions of the participants without upsetting the participants or their high schools. Some schools said that they did not want to send their students to future encounters because of such antagonism. We found the teachers at these schools faced similar issues in their classrooms but lacked a framework for dealing with this challenge.

For the coming years, it is important to conduct workshops and engage in dialogues with teachers and principals as well, since they organize the usual activities of the high schools in which we usually work.

*Program director: Maysoon Badawi*

*Staff: Wasim Bairumi, Shireen Najjar, Wafa'a Iben Biri, Daniel Derbi, Natanel Selberman, Maya Rabia', Eliana Almog, Roi Silberberg, Keren Sigal, Suheir Monayer, Hiba Amara, Sharon Komash, Bety Goren, Yonatan Shapira, Yonatan Yakir, and Wasim Abbas.*





## Other Projects in Short

**Training for Local High School Educators:** The SFP gave consultation to the teachers at Zafit high school (Predominantly Jewish school) regarding how to deal with Arab –Jewish relations among the students in the school. Since this school is absorbing Arab and Jewish kids from NS/WAS it is important to give a professional framework to deal with dilemmas the teachers face in everyday work with both populations. The consultation took place in two meeting, each for three hours, in which the teachers brought case studies from their work. The consultation was conducted in 2010.

*Staff: Liron Tal & Nava Sonnenschein*

**Training for Kindergarten and Nursery Teachers:** The SFP gave consultation to the staff of the nursery & kindergarten of the educational system at NS/WAS. The staff met three times, for four hours each, to deal with relations in the staff, with issues regarding communication with parents, bilingualism at an early age and more. The consultation was conducted in 2010.

*Staff: Maya Rabia.*

**Palestinian-Palestinian Encounters:** The SFP conducted three encounters for Palestinian university students from Israel and Palestine, mainly from Al Najah University. The encounters include dialogue sessions and an informative lecture about the Arab Palestinians citizens of Israel and a study tour of Nablus. We noticed how little the Palestinians from West Bank know about the Palestinians in Israel. Despite the fact that almost all Palestinians from Israel have had a chance to visit West Bank cities before, mainly for shopping and/or leisure, the experience of having a different kind

of visit with locals, who told them about the ordinary things and hardships they have to deal with, was shocking for them. Many had no idea about the water problems and trade limits and so on but they also had a chance to see some of the nice things that only locals can point out.

*Staff: Suheir Monayer and Said Tbileh*

# Graduate Activism



## **Eligible to Breathe** **The Students from Shuafat Win the Case**

For an entire year, 800 elementary school students from Ras Hamis School in Shuafat (East Jerusalem) were obliged to study next to a metal casting factory. Many students complained of headaches, vomiting and dizziness. The Municipality of Jerusalem refused to change the situation claiming the air did not exceed legal levels set for pollution. After a struggle of an additional appeal waged by the children's parents and the two School for Peace graduates, the Israeli Supreme Court disagreed and ordered the municipality to find a solution within a week.

Keren Halperin Museri, a Jewish lawyer who works for Adam Teva V'Din, and Nisreen Alyan, a Palestinian lawyer who works for ACRI, have been working in close cooperation to challenge the municipality on behalf of the school children. Ms. Museri and Ms. Alyan met while participating in a School for Peace course called «Advocates for Change: Israelis & Palestinians Lawyers in Dialogue and Action.» The course was conducted by the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam along with the Hewar Center for Peace & Development, with the support of USAID. After a year of facilitated dialogues dealing with the asymmetrical reality in the region, the duo learned how to initiate positive change in their respective local communities. Museri and Alyan were empowered to join forces, work with the children's parents, and help the school.



The 800 students from 5 to 12 years of age in the school were posed with an acute health risk, denied the basic right to learn in a safe environment. For the last year, the children's parents have been asking the municipality to move the school, but to no avail. In reaction, the families initiated a strike to raise awareness. Ultimately, even though the regional court ruled that it is not reasonable to locate a school next to a metal factory, the lower court sided with the municipality.

Finally, with the help of Ms. Museri and Ms. Alyan, and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the parents appealed to the Supreme Court. With the cooperation of «Adam Teva V'Din» – the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, the parents were able to find justice. Supreme Court justices Rivlin, Rubinstein and Naor accepted the appeal and ordered the municipality to find another building in a week that will not endanger the children's health. Judge Eliezer Rivlin said: «The readiness to accept exposure of children to the danger accompanying the inhaling of dangerous materials even for one day is not a reasonable decision and therefore it should not stand.»



## **Putting Two Languages on an Equal Footing** **Arab Students Teach Jewish Children Arabic and Arab Culture**

The following article is written by Royi Silberberg, one of our graduates from an SFP course.

A.M.A.L. is the Hebrew acronym for “Spoken Arabic for all”. In Arabic, “amal” means “hope”. The A.M.A.L. program was conceived in the framework of the British Council’s “Intercultural Navigators” program and is co-sponsored by “Perach” (Israel’s national mentoring program) and The British Council of Israel. Operations started in the summer of 2010. Arab students taking part in the project teach spoken Arabic and Arab culture in Jewish elementary schools.

Our vision is a more tolerant, open minded and non-racist Israeli society in which the popularly accepted equation, Arabic=Arabs=terrorists, is replaced by a new equation, Arabic=Arabs=human beings. In this case, the human beings are regular everyday Arab students, future doctors, lawyers and engineers, reaching out to young Israeli Jews, with the hope of changing perceptions and stereotypes.

We see ourselves as citizens of a modern liberal society, in which Arabic and Hebrew can live side by side in peace and common respect. Jews that don’t speak Arabic in Israel should be the exception, not the rule. Our program makes the linguistic leap a bit easier,



by having it done at a young age, with the help of a young native speaker that the pupils can relate to. The linguistic bridge in turn will make the formation of intercultural relationships easier and by so doing will create a better future for us all.

In addition to exposing Jewish children to Arabic and to Arabs, the program offers Arab students a unique opportunity. By working with A.M.A.L., the students teach in a Jewish school, with Jewish staff and pupils, with all the complexities involved. A.M.A.L. provides the professional and personal support that is needed to learn from this experience. For most of A.M.A.L.'s student, being accepted as equals in a Jewish school is an empowering achievement.

The A.M.A.L. project is operated (directed and managed) by a team of 3 volunteers, while 12 students receive scholarships (from the Perach mentoring program), for 4 hours a week of teaching in the schools. We are currently working with 500 elementary school pupils in 3 schools in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa and Kefar Sava. In the coming years we hope to refine and broaden our operations, so as to reach as many communities as possible.



## **Whose Place is this?**

### **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Between Psychology and Politics**

On March 3, 2009, the University of Haifa was the site of a conference headlined, “Whose Place Is This? The Jewish-Arab conflict: Between Psychology and Politics.”

The conference was held under the aegis of the University’s Jewish-Arab Center with support from the Freidrich Ebert Foundation, the fourth meeting in a series designed for activists and professionals by PsychoActive—Mental Health Professionals for Human Rights. This time around, the purpose was to explore the various connections between psychology and politics and the implications for people working in Jewish-Arab relations.

As reported by one of the organizers, “the conference addressed the question of ‘place,’ or ‘space,’ in its various facets. Perspectives grounded in clinical, research, and educational psychology were incorporated, and we broadened the discussion with additional perspectives from gender studies, philosophy and anthropology. We tried to understand the obstacles that block partnership in a given place. We discussed the emotional and social mechanisms that play a decisive role in nourishing and perpetuating the conflict. We analyzed both the conditions that facilitate dialogue and the positive potential that is inherent in joint work between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians.

Tova Buksbaum, who organized this conference, is a graduate of the School for Peace’s 2006 program called “Change Agents,” which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Buksbaum worked side-by-side with several graduates of the 2008 “Advocates for Change” program, also funded by the USAID.

According to Buksbaum, about three hundred people attended – mostly Jewish and Arab professionals from Israel along with fifteen therapists from the West Bank. People from Gaza who inquired about attending were refused entry due to the government's enforced closure of the Gaza border.

The program included lectures by Prof. Ramzi Suleiman, Hanni Biran, Dr. Maya Mucamel and Lilian Abu-Tabich. Suleiman shared insights on the relationship between psychology and politics on the power relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel and of the State's attitude regarding its Arab citizens. Hanni Biran addressed questions of ownership and belonging in theoretical contexts and in the Israeli reality. Dr. Maya Mucamel analyzed the role of women in perpetuating the national narrative memory. Lastly, Lilian Abu-Tabich described a study on the voices and experiences of Palestinian-Israeli women who, after marriage, were forced to relocate to their husband's village. Abu-Tabich highlighted the sad reality in which the women were victimized twice – once by the State of Israel's land policies and once by the patriarchal Arab society.

The conferences also included experiential sessions: Moshe Alon spoke about a project conducted in a mixed Jewish-Arab high school by the Educational Psychology Services of the City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Khaled Abu Awad and Nir Auron, co-directors of the Israel-Palestine Bereaved Families Forum, talked very movingly about how they are able to transcend the significant emotional burden of the job and harness it for educational purposes, hosting activities which promote dialogue and reconciliation in Israel and in Palestine. Sinai Petar, a director at the Cameri Theater, talked about a play he presented called 'Return to Haifa,' based on the Knafani novella. Petar discussed the storm it aroused in Israel by putting the issue of the right of Palestinian refugees to return home on the public agenda.

"Toward the end of the day, participants divided into discussion groups that enabled them to share their responses to the earlier discussions and talk together about their experience of living in the shadow of this conflict," said Buksbaum.



“The conference was received with enthusiasm by those attending. People said it was instructive, enriching, and moving, and that it had opened new conceptual directions and given them food for thought. Many mentioned that, despite the complexity of the subject matter, the conference retained an atmosphere of dialogue that permitted a range of voices to be heard. The event made waves among mental health professionals and social scientists, and among peace activists and others interested in the conflict and its effect on their lives. Many participants noted that the conference successfully sustained the PsychoActive tradition of providing worthwhile programs for people looking for a way to connect their work in psychology with political work and vice versa.”



## **Not Staying Silent during a Ghastly Festival of Destruction**

### **Mourning and Protesting the 2009 IDF Atrocities in Gaza**

The three-week war in Gaza, which began in December of 2008, was, to many informed observers in Israel and Palestine and elsewhere, avoidable. The large number of casualties among non-combatants—along with massive damage to industry, agriculture, and animals—evoked outrage, sadness and protest among many groups of Jewish as well as Palestinian citizens in Israel.

#### *Seeking a shared response*

On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, the idea for a shared response to the war was raised by participants in the School for Peace's Change Advocates course; a joint social activism training workshop for Israeli and Palestinian mental health workers. The Gaza attack was in progress. The Jews and Palestinians in the program shared a deep feeling of sorrow and sought some way to amplify their voices by demonstrating together. Two women, Maha Sakala-Tali and Sarit Moray, a Jew and a Palestinian respectively, initiated the idea and propelled its implementation. They felt strongly that it was impossible to sit silently, especially given the quantity of civilian deaths, which were continuing to mount.

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at Wahat al-Salam/Neve Shalom, the Change Advocates convened a planning meeting with about 25 people from their own group and several other organizations: the School for Peace proper, SHATIL, OSIM Shalom's "Social Workers Making Peace," PsychoActive, and the Parents Circle's Bereaved Families Forum. At a time when emotions were running high, the Change Advocates were able to bring together a diverse group to plan and promote the joint program. The date for the event was set for

January 17<sup>th</sup>—just a week later. Despite the significant time constraints, the group was very anxious to hold the gathering while the war was still ongoing.

### *A ritual of grieving in three languages*

There was a discussion of what to entitle the event. The name chosen in Hebrew was *Sukkat avelim*—a “sukkah of mourning.” A *sukkah*, a roofed outdoor ritual space, is used by Muslim families in mourning and features in Jewish culture as well. The name chosen in Arabic was *Ha’imat hadad wa’asa*—a “tent of mourning and sorrow.” In English, the event was called “A gathering of protest and mourning.”

During the week of preparation, most of the Israelis and Palestinians in the group worked together intensively to organize the gathering. Everyone took on a different task. The cooperation was smooth and mutually supportive. Some people worked on finding a venue; other prepared black placards bearing the names of citizens killed (and the war was not yet over); others dealt with the media, and still others worked on getting the word out to both communities. While some people created a multi-lingual printed program, other contacted potential speakers.

Jaffa—a city of both Arabs and Jews—was chosen as the site. The group settled on the Jewish-Arab Community Center as a logical setting.

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, three days before the event, the Tel-Aviv municipality issued a letter declaring that the event was “political” and that the city therefore did not approve the use of the community center for the event, despite the center itself approving the use of its facilities.

The organizers telephoned Rabita, the Association for Arab residents of Jaffa, which agreed to rent their premises, a much smaller hall, for the 17<sup>th</sup>.



*An overflowing audience*

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, more than 300 people came to Jaffa to protest and mourn the suffering and loss of life together. The hall was standing-room-only. People stood on the balcony and on the stairs and in the street, where an extra speaker unit was placed to provide sound to the overflowing crowd.

The program opened with an Israeli musician, Yair Buksbaum, on viola. The first speakers were the two MCs: Sakala-Tali from the Change Advocates course and Arnona Zahavi from Psychoactive, a mental health workers activism group. They facilitated the event beautifully. Ms. Shulamit Aloni, former Israeli Minister of Education and perhaps the foremost figure in the history of civil rights in Israel, spoke forcefully as always. She was followed by Professor Ariella Friedman, a psychologist from Tel-Aviv University. The gathering also featured Dr. Ahmad Abu-Tuahin, Director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Center, forced to speak by telephone from Gaza in the midst of the ongoing fighting. The crowd also heard Lt. Col. (Res.) Yoel Peterburg, one of the men who

brought the Apache helicopter unit to the Israeli Air Force, presently a conscientious objector. Peterburg commented on the impossibility of foreseeing the consequences on civilians of a war conducted from the air. Prof. Ramzi Suleiman, a psychologist from the University of Haifa, rounded out the speakers, calling for an investigation of war crimes committed in Gaza to include Israel's senior political and military decision-makers.

Three scheduled participants were unable to attend: Nir Oren, Jewish Co-Chairman of the bi-national Bereaved Families Forum, who was under arrest on grounds of "unauthorized assembly" for participating in a silent protest vigil in Beersheba. His Palestinian Co-Chairman could not attend due to the closure enforced on the West bank. The third, Dr. Abu-Tuahina, as mentioned before, remained in Gaza with its injured, displaced, exhausted and traumatized residents.

When she spoke, Ms. Aloni, a former member of Israel's Knesset and longtime civil rights champion, said that, "given the terrible actions taken in this war, the IDF can no longer be known as the 'Israel Defense Forces.' When I fought in Israel's War of Independence,



we thought we were creating an exemplary society, but our army today is no longer an army of defense. It is a brutal and hedonistic army of conquest.”

Aloni’s address was heard from loudspeakers which were set up for the latecomers standing outside in the cold. Her talk followed the program’s opening, consisting of a brief shared ritual of mourning, a poetry reading, and musical performances on ‘oud and violin. The Change Agents and School for Peace members, along with activists from the previously mentioned groups, managed to set up a list of the names of the civilians, both Arab and Jewish, who were killed in the war to that point. The display in the lobby of the Rabita auditorium was made all the more powerful with each name written in white ink against a black background alongside memorial candles lit in their memory. The afternoon was also devoted to workshops addressing themes such as “From Mourning to Protest” and “The Sacredness of Life as a Shared Value.”

Aloni minced no words. “I’ve heard people saying that ‘we gave them Gaza and look how they behaved.’ But we did not give them Gaza, to our disgrace; instead, we turned Gaza into a giant detention camp with a million and a half inmates, with no way in or out. Those leaving at three o’clock in the morning on their way to work were scrutinized as if they were slaves. People who are incarcerated in a detention camp have the right to respond.

“The IDF. . . spares no thought for families, old people, women and children. The [Israeli] public unashamedly celebrates the killing and the destruction. They rejoice that have a large, strong army—but this army is no longer the Israel Defense Forces. . . Israel has abandoned its values and the values of its Declaration of Independence.”

Aloni was harshly critical of Tel-Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai, who withdrew permission to hold the event at the Jewish-Arab Community Center in Jaffa as originally planned. “I thought Huldai believed in freedom of expression. How disgraceful for Tel-Aviv’s mayor that the city did not provide a venue for this civic gathering of people working for Jewish-Arab partnership and dialogue of peace?” Aloni added, “There is another voice discernible here, but they silence it. I am sure that people will wake up now, and that

this disgrace will be expunged. It will be expunged if Israel opens the gates and helps rehabilitate the terrible destruction it has caused, if it builds hospitals and rebuilds schools and helps rebuild the homes destroyed in this ghastly festival of destruction.”

Psychology Professor Ariella Freidman of Tel-Aviv University, another of the event’s speakers, added that she was “dumbstruck that such a large percentage of the nation thinks this campaign [in Gaza] is legitimate. I don’t think the Jewish people are the worst nation on earth, nor, sadly, is it the best. . . . But the circumstances have turned us into people who perpetuate atrocities and are then silent. I’ve heard people say that this was a ‘successful war’—what cynicism, what spiritual numbness. There is a model here” they begin a war with a grand display of arrogant posturing but without any idea how they want to end it, and people enthusiastically embrace that decision. And afterwards they say ‘there was no choice’—since when did we have no choice?”

“In Israel,” continued Prof. Friedman, “some people want to hang onto their faith in [their] morality at any price while waging war by any means. The price is an extreme separation between us and them. In Israel, the people weep over every citizen killed and there is a tremendous sense of togetherness. Yet how do people respond to the death of a mother and her five children, as happened one night in Gaza? Supposedly we are an enlightened army seeking only peace, doing what we do because we have no other option, whereas the killing that the other side perpetrates is intentional and evil. These are superficial statements that help people to deal with the intolerable situation and not to face the fact that they are committing atrocities against people under their control. That is the only way they can commit evil acts and still feel moral.”

Dr. Ahmad Abu-Tuhina, director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Center, talking with the audience by telephone, said that “the children of the Intifadas have undergone dreadful traumas. In the First Intifada, soldiers broke into homes and abused parents in front of their children. These children were traumatized; they discovered that those who are supposed to defend them have no defense, hence they were obliged to take the initiative to defend themselves. Children who felt lost and abandoned sought some figure to identify with, and they identified with the powerful—with members of Hamas who were fighting for their honor. This situation created a wave of extremism among

the children and adults of both people. . . In Gaza today there is no safe place—no safety at home nor on the street nor even in UN buildings, and the fact that UN buildings are no longer safe is heavily symbolic. The two children who were trapped for several days under a building with their mother who had been killed—imagine what kind of adults these children will grow up to be after such an insane experience. With this war, Israel has nurtured its own enemies and obliterated the prospects for coexistence and peace.”

Lieutenant Col. (Res.) Yoel Peterburg commented that he “helped create the Apache unit in the Air Force which today, with its dreadful missiles, so terrifies Palestinians. I commanded the capture of the ship *Karine A*. My experience is that the Air Force has undergone a steep moral decline, particularly among combat helicopter [pilots]. Until the Second Intifada, were not permitted during a targeted assassination to carry out the mission if within a radius of 500 meters there were ‘uninvolved bystanders.’ If we saw a vehicle approaching the village, we aborted the mission. Now they are launching one-ton bombs at houses when the pilot has no idea who is inside. After a bomb of that size hits, there is no way he can know who was there in hindsight either. Two cornerstones of the IDF code of conduct become irrelevant here—respect for human life and the purity of arms.”

Prof. Ramzi Suleiman had harsh words too. “You called for a gathering to mourn, but I refuse to mourn, not for the dead among my people and not for the dead of another people. Mourning helps keep the dead person among us after their spirit has departed. I cannot go forward yet; today I am still alive and in pain and protesting. I still have enough life left in me that I can look straight at the murderers of children and women and men, look them in the eye, or as someone once said, see the whites of their eyes, and tell them: Murderers, you have killed hundreds of children, women and men, you have destroyed Gaza, a wretched place where a million and a half human beings live.”

Prof. Suleiman enumerated the guilty: the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Foreign Minister, along with the Chief of Staff, and added: ‘When the day comes that these people stand before a war crimes tribunal, I would like to see on the defendants’ bench not just those who gave the orders and those who fired the weapons. I would



also like to see those who 'fired and wept,' the authors and cultural icons who lent sleazy credibility to this terrible crime."

*Advocating nonviolent alternatives to war*

The event was widely reported in the press in Israel. No such gathering can stop a war, but it enables us to say that the war did not pass without protest and mourning on the part of ordinary citizens. Jews and Arabs in the region continue to advocate for nonviolent alternatives to the planned destruction of human life, including noncombatants and children, and of civilian infrastructure like farms, homes and schools.



## **Two Graduates' Unprecedented Approach to Their Profession**

### **Cross-cultural training for Arab and Jewish supervisors of social work students**

Two graduates of the School for Peace's "Change Agents in the Workplace" program for Israeli and Palestinian mental health professionals have initiated a training course to enhance cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural cooperation among the professionals who supervise the students at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare in Jerusalem. The Change Agents course is a collaboration between the School for Peace at Wahat al Salam/ Neve Shalom and the Hewar Center for Peace and Development, which operates in Jayyous, Palestine.

The idea for this new training initiative was raised by two social workers, Yousef Abd Al-Jaffar and Bella Sosovsky, during one of the Change Agents training workshops that they attended together. This particular session, part of a 14-month course for mental health professionals, was held in Jordan in July 2008. It was attended by 20 Jews and Palestinians from Israel and 20 Palestinians from Palestine.

Both Yousef and Bella serve as supervisors for social work students who are training to become therapists at the Paul Baerwald School. The two colleagues, equipped with new knowledge and tactics from the Change Agents program, were brainstorming lessons to pass on to other mental health professionals—particularly in social work, their own field. They were thinking about the nuances of some challenging cross-cultural situations they and their peers encountered in their role as advisers—when an Arab is advising a Jewish student or vice versa.

For example, when a male Arab supervisor is advising a female Jewish social work student who is also a combat soldier in the Israeli army, how may her other identity as a Jewish combat soldier influence the transference and counter-transference dynamics in their interactions as supervisor and supervisee? When a female Jewish supervisor is advising a male Arab social work student who is failing his courses, how should she handle her potential reluctance to give him a failing grade? Yousef and Bella found that these dilemmas were not adequately discussed in the students' classes or in the training given to their supervisors.

The supervisors who assist advanced social work students with their case work themselves attend an in-service course in the fall semester that covers basic issues in supervision. In the spring semester, another course addresses a specific aspect of their supervision work—for example, dealing with hierarchy and authority in the supervisory context or optimal approaches to writing case reports.

Together, Yousef and Bella proposed to the Program Director that the second semester be devoted to issues of Jewish-Arab interaction. Although the School of Social Work encourages students to share their feelings in every area, somehow the ever-present issues concerning Jewish-Arab relations, a constant source of tension and anxiety in Israeli society, are rarely mentioned. In initiating this new in-service course for the advisers, Yousef and Bella hope to see greater legitimacy given to highly charged questions relating to the conflict, to advising and to treatment.

In March 2009, the first such course began. Both Arab and Jewish supervisors participated. The course was taught by Dr. Shafiq Massalha, an Arab psychologist. The university's approval of this innovation in the formal training for supervisors of social work students represents a notable milestone on the path to a more equitable professional milieu and a more equitable society in general.

# Conferences & Events



## **Before it's Too Late: from Protest to Persistent Activity Fighting the Moral Decline Unmasked by the Flotilla**

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, a conference brought together more than 120 activists from peace and human rights organizations to Wahat-al Salam/Neve Shalom in the wake of the flotilla incident off the shores of Gaza which left nine activists dead. It concluded with a call to build a new strategic agenda including activism against the occupation and a joint Arab-Jewish struggle for democratic rights and peace.

Ahmad Hijazi, Director of the School for Peace and one of the conference's organizers, said "The conference opened a process for moving from protest to a persistent political struggle. An additional process is planned in order to formulate and organize a broad Jewish-Arab movement."

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, another of the conferences organizers from the School for Peace, remarked: "We began to formulate an up-to-date agenda that touches on both the struggle against the occupation and for the right to struggle; the struggle for the existence of Israeli democracy and protection of those who dare to disagree and criticize."

*Moments from the presentations*

Professor Neve Gordon, Head of the Department of Governance and Public Policy at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev spoke about Israel's nuanced political domination of the Gaza Strip. "We should awake from illusions regarding the continuance of the occupation in Gaza. Descartes wrote about the 'deceptive demon that caused people to think they know reality, while actually they know nothing.'

"Israel is the sovereign in Gaza. In its hands is the monopoly [of] control of movement through Gaza's borders. Israel claims to have given up its sovereignty and dismantled settlements. In this, it creatively pretends to be a new invention: a sovereign without sovereignty. The construction of this deceptive situation is what causes people to ask: 'We dismantled settlements so why are they shooting at us?' The truth is that Israel remains the true sovereign in the territory. She decides who will enter and who will exit.

"Recently something happened. The flotilla tore away the mask, and revealed that Gaza has no territorial water and therefore, Israel is still the sovereign in Gaza. It is true that [after] the flotilla, in order to appease international criticism, the government permitted many goods to enter. But Israel is responsible for their entry and this responsibility is a form of sovereignty. We shouldn't be confused, since [Gaza] is a place where there is no freedom of movement and even export is prohibited."

Hadas Div, Director of Physicians for Human Rights, discussed the lack of availability of health services in Gaza, and the role of the State of Israel in perpetuating a humanitarian crisis. "Our association deals with the right to health in Gaza. But this exactly why I want to avoid falling into a trap in all that concerns the medical services in Gaza: the humanitarian trap. The Oslo Agreement formally transferred responsibility for medical care to the Palestinian Authority, and since then, the role of Israel was defined as humanitarian consideration and not responsibility for maintaining the rights of the residents.

"In practice, the development of health services in Gaza is prevented. The entry of motorized wheel chairs is prevented for disabled people, except for those whose engine is slow, since this would be a security risk. Radioactive materials are prohibited for the

treatment of cancer due to suspicion of 'dual use.' Student who learned medicine at the University of Abu Dis are prohibited from continuing their studies, and there is a shortage of doctors. Experts in surgery and medical staff training are forbidden entry. Whoever requests to exit to Israel is interrogated by the Shin-Bet. Whoever is involved in anything that could affect security. . . or a family member of such a person, cannot pass into Israel unless he is in critical condition. And today, the loss of a leg or an eye is not regarded as something critical.

"Unfortunately, the international community cooperates with the humanitarian minimum set by Israel, and is entirely occupied with the entry of a few doctors or the rescue of patients in a critical condition."

Knesset Member (MK) Hanan Zoabi spoke about the growing isolation of not only the Arabs in Israel but also the Israeli left. "A determined assault is being waged against our rights as Arabs or left-wing Jewish citizens. The worst thing is the attack on the very right to a public struggle. . . The left should have woken up the moment (Yisrael Beitainu member Avigdor) Lieberman was appointed as a minister. When the government was being established, we called to boycott it, but unfortunately the process went through quietly.

"Now, an era of de-legitimacy is flourishing. Anyone who proposed a bill against Arabs wins sympathy. Any talk of rights is regarded as a provocation. This is the atmosphere in the Knesset: Do not provoke us. Knesset members approached me after the hearing on the revocation of my rights in private conversations that were not captured on camera, saying, 'We won't settle for this; we're not finished with you. We'll have you removed from the Knesset—you won't be here.' And it's not just in the Knesset. Today, Arabs feel alone in Israeli society, and this is sometimes true of the Left.

"The flotilla exposed where things are leading. It showed the decline. It speeded up processes. Instead of a decline over six years, it is taking place now with great intensity. It revealed the bluffs and the self-righteousness and brought about an eruption of shameless racism, instead of the racism that is already inherent in the institutional discourse. There is no shame; there is hatred, which I felt even before the flotilla. And now there is vengeance, both towards me as an Arab and as a woman.

“Now, what has to be done? To take an Israeli flotilla to Gaza. This is the time, and it is important to me to take part in this. This time, it is important to think of a broad political framework, not just Arabs and the Left, to wage a struggle against the rules of the game, and for the right to struggle.

Journalist Gideon Levy, an Israeli Jew, expressed his outrage at the complicity of the Israeli society and the media in the occupation. “I am more disturbed than ever by developments in Israeli society—more even than I am troubled by the occupation. I am less surprised by the increased manifestation of fascist nationalism. What is most disturbing is that all the control mechanisms that are supposed to stop these processes are collapsing before our eyes.

“The struggle should be for the hearts of the paralyzed, silent majority who think that it won’t happen, who know this is terrible but think that it won’t affect them. The silent majority should take action because if this continues, tomorrow’s newspaper won’t be like those of today. Tomorrow’s school won’t be like today’s. Tomorrow’s universities won’t be the same, and neither will the courts. The NGOs will be strangled. It’s already [been] a long time [since] the Knesset. . . put a brake on processes like this.

“From among all the democratic processes, what which most shirks from its role is the Israeli media. Without the help of the media, the occupation could not have continued for 43 years. After all, if there is a collaborator in the occupation, it is the media. It is not that the media has been commandeered. There is no significant censorship or government pressure. The media has decided to censor itself and commandeer itself of its own volition.”

Attorney Abir Bakr of the organization Adalah commented about the Israeli government’s preference for security sometimes trumps legitimate democratic processes. “Today, an effort is being made to criminalize political activity, to transform people into defendants and force them to exculpate themselves. If in the past, Adalah worked to expand rights, today we are forced to focus on defending the rules of the game.

“Indictments are being submitted for problematic offences such as contact with a foreign agent. Today, when I meet Arabs from abroad at an international conference, suddenly I

have to be careful. And this is dangerous because if legitimate political activity is pushed underground, the existing restraints connected to remaining public will be removed. Such a process leads to a slippery slope and reflects the government's march of folly."

Elizabeth Milikovsky of the Sheikh Jarrach dialogue group mentions how nonviolent protesters have been subject to increasing government crackdowns in recent months. "The struggle in Sheikh Jarrach gave birth to a glimmer of hope," she said. "More and more people arrive, see the injustice and discrimination and stand together with people who were subject to discrimination. They understand that such discrimination can also come to us, that these dangerous moves harm Arabs and Jews and affect the future of all of us. People come to Sheikh Jarrach who were never at demonstrations, and these circles are expanding.

"In the past the marches in Sheikh Jarrach passed quietly. But on December 11<sup>th</sup> [2009], the police attacked the demonstrators. There were people who needed hospital treatment and 23 were arrested without cause, other than entering the neighborhood. Since then our struggle moved into a higher gear, and more than a hundred demonstrators have been arrested. Again and again, false arrests have been made and people have been held in detention over long weekends, for no reason. Since December a roadblock has been placed at the entry to the neighborhood that permits settlers and their political activists to demonstrate, hold rallies and celebrate all the Jewish festivals—while we are not permitted to enter. This is a Palestinian area, but the police and the municipality behave as if it is under Jewish ownership.

"The threat to democracy has come home—literally. In March the police showed up at the house of one of our veteran activists while she was having her Sabbath meal and arrested her without cause. A month and a half ago, the police came looking for me at my parents' house because they received a message that I am going to throw Molotov cocktails and immolate myself. In one of the Shin-Bet interrogations a detective said to one of our activists, 'We hate Arabs but we hate people like you even more.'"

Professor Gadi Algazi discussed the imperfect efforts of democracies to protect human rights. "Democratic entities are very fragile. And if there is something that is especially



fragile and delicate it is human rights—even in the United States and Britain. But here the fragility is special. Here basic rights can be erased in a moment, because this is a colonial society, isolated and crumbling, in which there is no recognition of democratic and collective rights of those living here, first and foremost those of the Palestinian minority.

“It is an illusion that you can build liberal and democratic reforms and promote individual rights while there is no infrastructure of collective rights. It is not possible to construct individual rights on the basis of discrimination and collective dispossession, in a reality of occupation and oppression. The rights do not pass the test. When politics is based on hatred and fear, individual rights are fragile and shaky.

“It is true that Israel has achieved to a certain degree citizens’ rights that permit the waging of struggles. But everything is fragile, and existing rights contain the danger of illusion: preoccupation with the freedom of the individual can divide and weaken the struggle. It creates the illusion of individual advancement, at the expense of the demand for social change. If we don’t relate to the collective dimension we will remain within a closed circle.

“The reasons for the murky wave sweeping around us are deep. First, those who fought for the impaired rights of the minority in Israel are a part of the array of powers. The balance of power between Israel and the Palestinians in the occupied territories reflect what is happening in Israel. We are living after the worst defeats in Palestinian history, and since the rights of both people are deeply interrelated, the Palestinian defeat in 2002 reverberates, and the Right makes use of this. It uses this victory in order to impose its own way. This is the moment in which we are living: a moment of defensiveness.

“Second, we have moved from a process of concentration of power to wild privatization. People found themselves helpless because they did not know how to deal with this wave. A person who was had his social rights smashed, with no one to defend him, does not identify with the suffering in the occupied territories. According to my experience with activism in poor neighborhoods, he does not even identify with the person in the next building. The smashing of rights destroys the ability for empathy. ‘If no one helped



me when they took away my guaranteed income allowance, why should I listen to the liberals when they ask me to identify with the suffering in Gaza? This is the main reason why the Right penetrated so deeply into the [base of] the Labor Party and Kadima.

“The Right’s project for the last two years has been to deeply change the rules of the game: not to defeat the adversary but to destroy him, to determine anew what is legitimate. Is it legitimate for there to be Palestinian Knesset members? Academic freedom? The right to demonstrate? Freedom to marry whoever one wants?”

“What can be done?” asked Professor Algazi. “We can point to three ways to change:”

“First, in order for the struggle not just to be for the right to struggle, deployment of human rights and peace organizations needs to be shared by Jews and Arabs. If they do not join forces they will not succeed. Any attempt to promote a single sector is doomed to failure. Alliances are needed.”

“Secondly, if we do not want to make do with defensiveness and helplessness, the goal cannot be just the realization of human rights. We must promote social change. We must form an alliance of those who are discriminated against: Palestinians, Ethiopian immigrants, *Mizrachim*, residents of towns in the periphery, and the rest of those who have been trampled upon. Without fixing this, the Right can use the politics of fear and hatred in order to isolate each time a different struggle. The main task is to build trust between these groups, an alliance between people who are not treated as equal, and who are aware of the differences between them.”

“Lastly, an alternative vision is needed: recognition of the Vision Documents that propose a bi-national Jewish-Arab state in the ‘67 borders; A nation that confronts collective rights and historical injustice. A project like this can unite and galvanize people on both sides.”



## **Uniting in Struggle: Different Groups; Common Goals**

### **Transforming from protest to an on-going activism**

After our first successful conference, the SFP, Shatil and graduates of the SFP's "Change Agents" courses organized a two-day conference in January 2011 in Neve Shalom~Wahat al-Salam. The goal was to construct a common strategy for the forces that struggle against the occupation, racism & oppression.

The conference included a presentation by Shmulik David on the political situation and the work that is done by peace & human rights groups to deal with the situation.

A brainstorm of new ideas to deal with the situation was guided by Keren Dahan followed by a panel presentation by activist organizations like Sheikh Jarach, Not Obeying, the Villages Group and Breaking the Silence. A lecture by Dr. Nachi Alon about principles of constructive non-violent struggle was one of the highlights of the event. After the lecture, the group of about 60 activists divided into three groups and worked on ideas they want to implement. One of the ideas that came out from this conference ended up culminating in our third conference, organized in Nazareth, to create solidarity between the Jewish left and the Palestinian activists' struggle.

A second idea that emerged from the conference was to expand the audience that would be exposed to information and perspectives about the conflict and The Occupation that have traditionally been restricted to the Israeli left. The group wanted to reach more people, to recruit new parts of Israeli society to fight for human rights and constitutional justice.

The third idea was to think about creative ways to support Mahmoud Abbas' bid for Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September 2011. Many innovative ideas were brought the group which can be useful in future demonstrations in the name of recognition, dignity and human rights.



## **“Solidarity Now” in Nazareth**

### **Forging a Connection between Israeli Left Wing and Palestinian Activists**

On June 11, 2011, a conference took place in Nazareth for Jewish and Arab peace activists, with the goal of strengthening Jewish-Arab solidarity. The conference was the result of two emergency conferences that took place during the year in NSWAS, one of which followed the Flotilla incident and a conference to energize the Israeli left in January 2011. The conference examined, among other issues, the partnership between Jews and Arabs in the struggle for peace and human rights.

The conclusions of the participants were lamentable— they found difficulties in the partnership. While much activity of the left focuses on resistance to the occupation, there is too little awareness among Jewish organizations of discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. At the same time, there is a feeling that the Palestinian organizations in Israel are not sufficiently involved in resistance to the occupation, particularly in activities initiated by the Jewish left.

One of the causes of the divergent paths of the Israeli left and Palestinian human rights activists is the shadow of the events of October 2000. Some of the leftist organizations did not adopt a clear position with regard to what happened, and the trust of Palestinian citizens was injured. Following the first conference, a group was gathered that included representatives of NSWAS, Shatil, and a group of Arab graduates from courses run by the School for Peace for mental health professionals.

#### *Aims of the Conference*

We decided to organize a conference that would advance the following goals: rehabilitating the trust and partnership between Jewish and Arab leftist / human rights

organizations; reducing the knowledge gaps regarding the situation of Palestinian citizens of Israel and their struggles with state institutions; and permitting, building and encouraging new partnerships in defined and practical struggles, between varying organizations.

### *Solidarity in Nazareth*

The conference took place in the Mahmoud Darwish Center in Nazareth and about 120 Jewish and Arab peace activists from Jewish and Arab organizations attended, including: Yesh Gvul, Hand in Hand, PsychoActive, Machsom Watch, Hithabrut Tarabut, La Metsaitot, Combatants for Peace, Peace Now, the Association Against Racism, Zochrot, Osim Shalom, Baladna, Women Against Violence, Hirak, Activist Dharma, the Association in Defence of the Individual, Windows and others.

The conference program included opening words by Dr. Shawki Hatib, former chair of the Higher Monitoring Committee and Mr. Ramez Jeraisi, mayor of Nazareth.

The first (plenary) panel dealt with Palestinian society in Israel, local governance, the future vision documents, the outlook of the Arab leadership in Israel towards the future of relations between Jews and Arabs, and the challenges to solidarity. The panel speakers were Mr. Ramez Jeraisi, Prof. Gadi Al-Gazi, Dr. Mary Totry.

### *Words from Conference contributors*

Dr. Shawki Hatib, former chair of the Higher Monitoring Committee, spoke to the conference attendees at the beginning of the proceedings. "I will present how two realities were created in Israel," he said.

"The State of Israel was managed and is managed as an ethnic state of the Jewish population. Therefore, there is one reality for the Arabs and one for the Jews. The State of Israel is very centralized and the state is controlling where to put industry and it's not related to the ability of the mayor. A major industrial area was created north of Nazareth and it was defined in a way that all of the income is going to upper Nazareth [a Jewish town], which gives the perception that the state only belongs to the Jews.

Dr. Hatib spoke about Arab municipalities next. “40% of their budget is coming from balanced grants. In 2003, the Treasury Minister, who was Netanyahu, decided to reduce those grants by 2 million shekels. This act really destroyed the local Arab governance in the country. Wealthy municipalities, which are mainly Jewish, never had the situation in which [they relied on] these balanced grants for 40% of their budgets. This economic policy has continued until today, and it’s created two groups of local governance: the strong ones don’t need the government grants and the weak ones, all the rest, among them the Arab municipalities, which should be partners in deciding about the location of monetary resources, deciding a way of distribution that would be fair to all.”

“This system is creating two levels of services, and is creating an ethnic group that feels discriminated in its own home. And you know that the management of all governments in Israel is a result of power relations between the coalitions and the Parties. There are



racist decisions, Arabs are not a part of it—not in the decision making circles, not in the clerical circles, not in the economy. I don't think in the near future, an Arab party will be a part of the coalition in the government. Although you are from the left, your voices are important and it is important that you reflect the reality, and that you will call to include the Arabs in the Israeli economy and will move from the industry of services to the industry of production.” Dr. Hatib finished by speaking to the audience about a project he is involved in which is creating a 25,000 sq. meter area on which to develop the Arab high-tech industry.

One of the plenary speakers, Mr. Ramez Jeraisi, the mayor of Nazareth, spoke afterwards about the relationship between the Israeli establishment and the Palestinian minority. He was upset that the legal processes weaken the Arab minority in Israel instead of protecting it.

“It is frightening us...it will lead to a conflict that will not have an insignificant price. Since the establishment of Israel, Israel chose not to connect to its region, but to connect to the West. Israel chose to be disconnected, to build fences that will continue to separate it from its neighboring states, which will not allow it to become integrated into its region. For example, it didn't take the responsibility to teach Jewish students Arabic like it made Arabic students learn Hebrew.

“The media ignores what is going on in the Arab sector except for negative events. This created disconnection, not knowing the ‘other’ and alienation. It causes a deepening of separation. This is what we see happening today, and create a fertile situation for developing stereotypes and prejudice. The policy is to block processes that are happening in modern societies, especially in the West, of civilizing the society, to reach a state in which a citizen equals a citizen. I dream about this.

“There are initiatives, like giving mortgages for the periphery, which ignore the Arab population because 93% of the building in Arab sectors is privatized and [as a stipulation of the initiative, private properties] are not getting mortgages. I don't think that there is a state that is considered Western in which there is a group appealing to the Supreme Court [so often] on issues of human and civil rights as there is in Israel. It



is happening because the regular system is not working and appealing to the Supreme Court is the last resort that is left for the Palestinians in Israel. This example is showing how much the reality and the relationship of the establishment to the Arab minority is discriminatory and ignorant. There is no will, honest will, real will, to create a change. It is creating anger that may explode. We have experienced it in October 2000.”

Later Dr. Mary Totry, from Oranim College, spoke about turning points in the history of the relationship between the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the State from 1948 until today. She said that from 2006-2007, four documents were created by the leadership and the intellectuals of the Arab population, called the Future Vision Documents, the Haifa Declaration, the Democratic Constitution and the Mousawa Document.

The common things in the documents, according to Dr. Totry, were that they reflected a consensus that it is not possible to postpone any longer about the relationship of the State and its Arab citizens until the conflict is solve. The documents spoke about the painful reality for the Palestinians in Israel. They demanded a two-state solution with a democratic arrangement so that the new Israeli state would be a state where all of its citizens would be equal, including the 1.2 million Palestinians that would end up being on the Israeli side.

Gadi Al-Gazi of Tarabut, who is much involved in such cooperative efforts, opened with two examples of successful Israel-Arab partnerships. First he described the resistance to evacuation of Bedouin villages in the Negev and later, he discussed the case of Arab residents of Jaffa working together with residents of Kfar Shelem against the displacement of long-term residents of Tel Aviv dwelling in residential areas. Afterwards he named the central problems needing active cooperation between Jews and Arabs.

Al-Gazi emphasized the need for Arabs to organize independently for the purpose of liberating themselves. He claimed that in principal every oppressed group has the right to organize itself for defense. A group cannot obtain liberation from another group, he said, claiming that it is necessary to deeply respect the need of people to act independently. From this starting point, it is possible to move towards cooperation, but partnerships between the Israeli left and Palestinian activists need to develop only from the point where people are struggling for themselves.

According to Al-Gazi we are missing a deep discussion of the problems of partnership in a place where this is no equality. Leftist activists mostly assume that in the joint struggle we are all equal, that they are all subject to the same penalties. But no, Israeli and Palestinian activists are not equal in the struggle for equality. Al-Gazi felt that our thought needs to be focused on the question of how there can be partnership in conditions of deep inequality that occur also in the activist groups themselves. The inequality in organizations is not always a mirror image of that which takes place in society. For example, mixed schools attract a more affluent population group in Arab society and sometimes a less affluent population group on the Jewish side.

Some partnerships are based on feelings of guilt, empathy with the suffering of the other side, Al-Gazi continued. He claimed that it is important to create partnerships based on common interests, i.e. that the compassion is also in the interest of the Jews and not only out of "care and concern" for the other. For example, in the cooperation between Jaffa residents and Kfar Shalem residents, there was a difficult discussion between the people of Kfar Shalem. From their point of view, working with Jaffa residents might damage their relationship with the Likud Party (of which many are either members or have connections with members), or with the society of which they are part. The significance of partnership is to pay a price because there is an interest that has higher value than its cost.

Finally, Al-Gazi spoke about the post-national place of Jewish organizations. An additional asymmetry in the partnership involves the fact that the majority of Palestinians are very nationalistic, while members of leftist Jewish organizations are not very nationalistic. In many instances they think beyond nationalism, and see nationalism as something tribal. They do not see it as a factor that can be associated with solutions. Jews do not understand Palestinians that see national commitments as an inseparable part of the process. Al-Gazi claims that Jews can see above nationalism only because their national identity is assured and protected. He describes the Jews as those whose citizenship is taken for granted, who may even possess multiple nationalities, who do not know checkpoints, and who have not experienced nationality as something relevant to every corner of their lives. Post-national activists like these are "waiting for" Palestinians to "advance" to post-nationalism. This is a problematic recipe for partnership. Al-Gazi

proposes that Jewish and Palestinian cooperation can provide a basis for new thinking also on Jewish nationalism, a place for learning about collective identity also as an empowering factor and not just as a negative factor. Jewish activists are invited here to a process of deep learning through partnership with Palestinians on the question of how they consider national belongingness that is not tribally restrictive, and which can be a basis of change towards social justice.

Mr. Nidal Othman, the head of the Campaign for Fighting Racism, gave an inspiring lecture to the audience. "As a Palestinian, do I need the Israeli anarchist to participate in my struggle?" he asked. "I say 'yes.' We need to work with people who are not fully convinced of our cause, and our case struggle against racism." Othman shared the results of a report his organization prepared for 2011. Othman reported some of the shocking results; that in 2011 there were 28 violent events waged by Israeli security forces against Palestinian citizens of Israel. There were 73 events of attacking the legitimacy of leaders of the Arab public in Israel. There were 97 instances of incitement to wrongdoing against the Palestinian citizens of Israel by leaders and public figures in the Israeli community.

"When there is a rise in racism towards Arabs, there is also a rise against other ethnic groups, like immigrant workers, refugees and others." He also lamented that there has been a higher frequency of attacks on religious symbols and institutions, like mosques, in Israel and Palestine.

Yoav Hess, from Yesh Gvul, an Israeli peace group campaigning against the occupation by backing soldiers who refuse duties of a repressive or aggressive nature, closed out the first panel by talking about abusive IDF tactics. He called the participants to join the appeal to the Supreme Court to oppose the usage of white phosphorous incendiary devices by the IDF. «There are already 117 appeals, among them five people who won the Israel Prize and 16 human rights and peace NGOs.»

After the speakers of the first panel were finished, the second session began. It consisted of three parallel panels. The first panel dealt with the legal issues regarding the institutionalized discrimination of Arab citizens in Israel. It began with a lecture

and discussion by Yousef Jabarin from the Dirasat Center, who was followed by architect Abdulrahman Yassin, who spoke about planning as a tool for dispossession.

A second parallel session emphasized the subject of the status of women and youth. Naila Ouad, from the Association of Women Against Violence. Khaled Anbatawi spoke as well, about youth and Arab society.

The third panel focused on education, both at the high school level and the university level. Ataf Maadi, director of the education committee of the Arab Higher Monitoring Committee, spoke about challenges in education in Arab society. Rajah Za'atra, of the Hirak Organization, spoke to the attendees about the higher education and the Arab minority.

After the three parallel panels, Oubur Taha Rizek, a social worker and peace activist from Nazareth, who was the MC of the conference, issued some closing words. She said, «We brought our position against the state. It doesn't mean that we don't have self-criticism on issues like the status of women and the status of young people in Arab society. We have a lot to do about that. We wanted you to listen and understand, so that we may find a common ground to work together, and to create new partnerships that do not exist [between Jewish and Arab activists]. Ms. Rizek is also a graduated from the School for Peace's mental health course.

### *Reactions*

The conference had a very positive effect. The various organizations that took part brought materials and presented them to the other activists, helping to strengthening the connections in the activist community. In the words of the Lirona Rozenthal, an activist with Psychoactive:

“This was a very educational, eye-opening conference, full of information. Beyond the practical and factual knowledge, the conference contributed to my knowledge in two central areas in their relevance for Psychoactive: First, the central need for activism inside Israel, in partnership with Arab Israelis. . . . why are the majority of organizations on the Left busy with the Occupation and not with the situation inside Israel? . . .

As mental health workers we are up against the problem of language, likewise, as is known, in the recent period, partnership is becoming more and more difficult. The conference constitutes an invitation and a call to develop channels for activism within Israel together with an expression of willingness for partnership, in which language is less of a limitation. The second point is the limitations and difficulties that are at the basis of cooperation between Arabs and Jews.”

### *Conclusions*

The School for Peace felt the conference fostered in important dialogue on the relationship between organizations on the Jewish left and Palestinian human rights activists. The School for Peace hopes that conferences like this one in Nazareth can make a modest contribution to the advancement of Jewish-Arab solidarity and partnership, which is so much needed in these days, in which the Right is attacking through new legislature both Arabs and leftist organizations.

*The three previous conferences were made possible by the dedicated work of the following conference committee members: Shmulik David and Pepe Goldman of Shatil; Nachi Alon and Shiri and Aviv Tatarsky of Psycho Dharma; Dorit Shippin, Eyas Shbita, Abdel Salaam Najjar, Adil Lustigman, Sagi Frish, Ahmad Hijazi, and Nava Sonnenschein of NSWAS; and SFP graduates Harb Amara, Obour Taha Rizak, Manar Sagheer, Samir Othman, Hiba Amara and Keren Dahan.*



## **Instead of Fighting Wars, We Will Read Books**

### **The Inaugural Event for the Fred Segal Friendship Library**

In 2010 the first ever regional library dedicated to peace and wellness will be opened in Wahat al Salam—Neve Shalom. This innovative project will serve as a resource and educational centre for local and international academics, personnel from peace NGOs and others interested in the field of peace studies and education.

This will be the only specialized library in the country focusing on peace and conflict resolution on an international scholarly level. Its collection will be multilingual and multidisciplinary, including resources from sociology, political science, psychology, history, and related legal issues.

The vision of Mr. Fred Segal has been the critical factor driving this project, enabling completion of the library building. Our hope is that the messages in the pages of the books there, and the message of the library itself, can do a small part to achieve further understand and cooperation between Jews and Arabs.

The ceremony opened with a few welcoming words from Dorit Shippin, Chair of the Municipal Society of Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam. “There has never been such a grand project in Neve Shalom. . . I hope that this is a sign that the big dream we all have to transform the whole region into a Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom will also come true,” she said.

Those in attendance were also fortunate enough to hear former Minister of Minorities, Professor Avishai Braverman, speak at the inauguration. “I think that what we have here is simply something wonderful and I say, in the clearest way, that if anyone – Arab or

Jew – looks at what is happening here he would understand that this has a message for the whole world,” said Braverman.

“When it was suggested that I would be Minister for Minorities, I accepted this because the main internal issue in Israel is equality and civil partnership between Arab citizens. This is not only just but also wise.”

Braverman mentioned a conversation he had to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu last year, in which he told the Prime Minister “that if he wants to be a leader and not a marginal note, it is necessary to act like Yitzhak Rabin who, although he did not write anything, was the only leader who embraced the way of two nations for two peoples, and of equality and civil partnership between Israel and the Arabs. I believe in this way, and the people who sit here believe in this way, and, *inshallah*, with the help of God, we will be victorious.”

“It is necessary to remain optimistic,” Braverman continued, “even when many people tell me that there is no point, that it isn’t possible to change anything. I look at the people who are sitting here and have reached another place. Even when things are not



going well, they continue and continue, because they must remain optimistic – life isn't linear. Three or four hundred people who get together can change history."

Mr. Moshe Dadon, Head of Mateh Yehuda Regional Council, also shared important words with the inauguration's attendees. "If anyone said that such a conference is impossible, well, here there are hundreds of people to change the world. . . I want to deviate from the custom and say thank you. Thank you for building such a place in Mateh Yehuda. Thank you for meeting the challenge, in this place."

"I like to read books because this takes me away from our terrible reality. A book takes me to regions of the imagination. So I very much hope that this library will not only take us into imaginary realms but to a reality that will connect us. Instead of fighting wars, we will read books."

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein of the School for Peace, and a longtime friend of Mr. Segal had kind words to say in his honor. "Thank you Fred for your patience and generosity, for the faith in the direction of Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom," said Sonnenschein. "I know that it is only one of the social projects that you have supported throughout the years. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"Today, in the 43<sup>rd</sup> year of the occupation, when Palestinians are evacuated from their homes in order to populate them with Jewish settlers. . . it is important to raise our heads and not give up, to return to another vision of equality between the two peoples living in this land, of acting humanely towards the other, of fulfilling the national aspirations of the two peoples, of repairing injustice."

Deanna Armbruster, Executive Director of American Friends of NSWAS, came all the way across the Atlantic to speak for the inauguration. "I first met Fred in 1997 and it was an opportunity to go and pick up the first installment towards this library. It's been 13 years now. . . in order to come to this day and build this building and create this new beginning for the community and for the center here," she said. "It's my privilege today to bring you a special message from Freddy – 'The library is based on a simple concept – friendship. Building friendship heals. Friendship is a bridge to peace and it is a key in the process. . .' He reminds us that . . . here in this conflict, at this difficult time in these difficult moments that so many are dealing with on a constant day to day basis, that we



have to look deep in our hearts, to find new ways, to build relations.”

We were also fortunate enough to hear from Knesset Member Haim Auron (Jumes). “Many of those who are seated here know that in many ways our dreams seem further away today than at many times in the past. Actually, the basis of the dream of Neve Shalom - and I was there at its engagement - was the thought that peace would be impossible without coexistence. . . for peace and reconciliation,” said Auron. “Maybe the price we will pay is rising up to the point of endangering the very possibility of living together here, the future of which depends on a solution of two nations for two peoples. If this solution stops to be a real possibility in the near future, we will collapse on both sides.

Nida Houry, a Palestinian poet, followed Jumes. “The only choice that we have is to continue to hope; to continue to act, to continue to search for an alternative,” Houry said. “The objective is not sovereignty or borders. The objective is the existence of the human being, not of identity. . . Communication is built upon finding something in common, despite our differences, so this is the way. And actually, although I am standing here and speaking with you in Hebrew I also know that I am challenging you - all Jews and all Israelis and sending you an invitation, as a Palestinian. . . There is no pure identity. There is no absolute truth. We are all right and we are all mistaken and in the same way we are all stupid. . . Salvation will not emerge from here, if we do not bring a message to the world that we in the Middle East may be different but can manage together.”

Ruth Almog, a Jewish author, spoke about the importance of the Fred Segal Friendship Library and of books in relation to the conflict. . . I think that a library, as a concept, is parallel to hope. It incarnates something of hope because we place on the shelf members of one people next to another people. Although they write in different languages, they sit next to one another peacefully. And this very fact gives hope, so the concept of a library manifests hope.”

“Literature reveals the human possibility of unity with the other. Through literature, we meet the other and learn about him, his religion, his culture and his soul. The only way, and the only authentic way, as I see it, to meet the soul of our neighbor is to know him via a book.”

Prof. Ariela Friedman, the head of the Psychology department at Zefat College, also offered meaningful words for the special occasion.

“I want to say that every time I come to Neve Shalom I feel that I breathe a little more deeply than in my everyday life. I love this place and I feel fortunate that I linked up with it. It was good fortune that 20 years ago exactly Nava and Rabah arrived in my office at the University of Tel Aviv and told me about the group work they do here in the School for Peace, and asked if we could work together. And I immediately felt that there could be a place for such a connection.”

“We began to conduct dialog groups at Tel Aviv University between Jewish and Arab students – an authentic meeting, of a kind that does not happen in many other groups. They were always encounters. They touched on the real things, touched on the pain, the conflict, the relations. This was work that demanded lots of courage because people were scared of it. Today there are many discussions and dialogue of this kind, but at that time it was very innovative. . . I saw them when they left – the Jews who were shocked, who now felt that they knew less than they had imagined, who felt that many of their beliefs had been shaken, but, together with this, that there was an opportunity to open



something new. The Arabs left with a feeling that, maybe for the first time, they had met the Jews who surrounded them on campus and could speak with them about what they really feel. This was a very strong experience and it influenced them for years.”

“What I want to say, following those who have already spoken, is that for years I believed that the conflict between Palestinians & Jews was a lot easier to solve than building our common nation here. . . The solution itself is clear and easy, but the only problem is the way there. The problem is the process. The problem is to implement the solution, never mind that we all know what it is.”

Finally, Mr. Segal himself spoke the audience. Mr. Segal unfortunately could not make the trip to Israel physically, but was with the audience “in energy,” as he put it. From a video he sent us, in which he was wearing a shirt that said “Love one another,” Fred said “This is a great day for me; it’s been so many years.”

“My involvement with Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has been for 25 years. . . The School for Peace means a lot to me. Over the years I’ve had the opportunity—the privilege—to watch the progress and the transformation of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, including the conflict resolution that was introduced, and the way we have communicated to one another with great energy and with so much motivation to learn about one another. We’ve done a great job [working] towards the goal of peace.”

“Friendship is the key. We can talk for years and years and years about the history that’s gone on, and we’re wasting our energy doing that, because the time spent doing that is time where we should go. . . walking together in nature or time we could be with one another spiritually, learning from the inside out and not the outside in. . . we have to find a way to introduce friendship as the key ingredient for our peace.”

“I’m so happy about the health element—that we’re going to teach people. . . [food] is our fuel and our energy, the better the food, the better we function, the easier it is to be friends.”

The library will be the corner stone of a Peace Campus which will support and compliment other educational institutions of the village. The library will also serve the residents of the village and surrounding local communities. The ground floor will house a reading room for high quality literature in Arabic and Hebrew including a special collection of books focusing on personal health and wellbeing. This room will also serve as a function room for community and visitor use. The School for Peace is developing an MA Program

in Peace and Conflict Studies with Tel-Aviv Jaffa College and other universities in the US which will be taught from the library campus. The library will serve as a Peace NGO Resource Center – a centre for local and international activists and scholars, as well as a center for conferences, seminars and workshops in peace studies and conflict resolution. The library will be a focal point for encouraging social interaction and meetings between residents of the community, Jews and Arabs.

The School for Peace, on behalf of Fred Segal, hopes that the Friendship Library can facilitate the process that Professor Friedman referred to: the process of understanding, the process of learning, the process of integration physically and spiritually between Jews and Arabs. The Library is also dedicated to healthy living and healthy food habits, a strong priority of Fred Segal, to emphasize the connection between the health of the body and the health of the mind and the heart.

# Future Plans



## **From the Grassroots Level, to the Classroom, to the World Designing a Master's Level Course and Forming the Peace College**

The following report was written by Deanna Ambruster of the American Friends of Neve Shalom~Wahat al-Salam.

For a decade, the School for Peace has aspired to create a program that would integrate its experience and knowledge at the grassroots level and share it with a global audience. The new Peace College opening at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is a realization of this dream and offers new ideas, extraordinary vision, and hope. A natural next step in the evolution of the work of the "Oasis of Peace," the Peace College builds on its expertise to expand its impact internationally. Through courses and training programs for students and professionals from around the world, the Peace College connects individual values to civic consequences by creating a peace education program that deepens knowledge, shifts attitudes and builds skills for a new generation of peacemakers.

The educational work of the community and the daily life experience of living in a mixed Palestinian-Jewish village provide the ideal context for studying the grassroots peacemaking experience. Various short-term trainings and a Master of Arts Degree in Theoretical & Practical Aspects of Peace and Conflict will be offered in partnership with numerous U.S. universities and colleges. Short term trainings will open in January 2012, with the Master of Arts degree program to begin enrolling students in September 2013.

The University of Massachusetts in Boston, California State University at Dominguez Hills, Nazareth College in Rochester, NY and Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont, CA are among the various schools partnering with the Peace College. The program offers a unique opportunity for students to learn to critically analyze conflict and explore peace-building techniques worldwide using the lens of the local Jewish-Arab Israeli-Palestinian reality and the 35 years knowledge and experience of the mixed Jewish-Palestinian community, the "Oasis of Peace" as a model for study.

The objective of this academically rigorous and experientially based program is to prepare cadre of peace builders ready to work within the full range of conflict socio-political frameworks. Students are trained as activists in the field of conflict resolution, prepared to work in civil society either with groups in conflict or on the political and policy level. This will be achieved by linking theory and practice with critical perspective, examining the interaction between the micro and macro levels of inter-group conflict, building habits of reflective practice within individuals and bridging relations between individual, group and community levels. A multi-disciplinary curriculum draws from conflict resolution, political science, history, social psychology, anthropology, religious studies, cultural & gender studies, economics, philosophy and sociology.

The Peace College will feature both residential courses and an intensive interactive web-based online program. The programs will challenge students to explore theoretical concepts within the real-life work and practices of the "Oasis of Peace" and its educational institutions. The community is a laboratory for studying conflict and the realities of building equality. It is an opportunity to bring the experience of the community to all types of conflicts. It offers a unique, critical perspective from the micro to the macro levels and will provide skills and tools for active engagement, teaching a new generation, how to make substantive change as peacemakers.

The college will be established as an independent institution upon receipt of license of operation from the Council of Higher Education in Israel. The first course "From Conflict to Resolution: Diagnosis, Process and Lived Realities" will open in January 2012. The course is open to all English speakers. Participants will work directly with the work at the educational institutions in the community. For more information, contact [deanna@oasisofpeace.org](mailto:deanna@oasisofpeace.org) or visit <http://nswas.org/spip.php?breve139>



## More Plans to Advance Justice, Understanding and Activism

- At the School for Peace, we believe that our biggest assets are the amazing graduates of our past courses. In the coming months, we aim to launch a **forum for our graduates** from a variety of different courses and professional backgrounds to be able to meet with each other and develop further personal and professional connections. Over the years, hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians have graduated from our courses and have often expressed a motivation to stay involved and forge ties with people from other fields who have experienced SFP dialogues in order to further binational and cross-professional cooperation. Many have felt that after the courses have finished, they have been lacking a platform to support and foster their activist ambitions. We will host meetings approximately few times a year for course graduates to get together, engage in discussions about the conflict, listen to professional lectures, and, most importantly, to create new bonds to advance their activism.
- One of the traditional cornerstones of the School for Peace programming have been our **experiential and theoretical conflict resolution university** courses Tel-Aviv University and Haifa University. In the near future, we seek to expand our programming to more universities and colleges in Israel, particularly, course at Ben-Gurion University starting in October 2012. Our courses aim to immerse the students in the conflict through experiential dialogues between Arabs and Jews and lectures on group conflict theories, psychology and history. Our university courses have been successful for 20 years and we seek to bring this education to more colleges in Israel, all of which can benefit from having a course about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and inter-group facilitation and dialogues.

- The School for the Peace is in the process of formulating a program, called **Arab and Jewish teachers: an alternative approach to teaching history and human rights**. The program will target high school teachers in civics and history teachers. The aim of the course is to provide techniques for these teachers, who will come from many different schools, to teach their students about sensitive historical events, such as the Holocaust and the Nakba, tactfully, justly and accurately. The course will be a tool to teach teachers how relay historical information to their students that upholds human rights.
- Another project which the School for Peace is attempting to launch is called **New leadership for a new Jerusalem**. The program would bring Palestinians and Israelis together to dialogue about future peaceful solutions for the city of Jerusalem. In particular, the program will target leaders in the sectors of Israeli society which are most intransigent on the subject. Our hope, is that if we can, as a result of this encounter with Palestinian leaders, give a new perspective to the Jewish leaders of the new immigrant, ultra-orthodox and right-wing communities, we can help to foster a more conciliatory consensus on Jerusalem's status in negotiations.
- The School for Peace would like to develop **courses for the professional groups that we've had the most success with in the past**. For the second round, we would like to organize courses only within Israel, for Jews and Palestinians, in order to continue the success we've had with past Change Agents courses. We would particularly like to launch more courses for Architects, Civil Engineers and Urban Planners; Mental Health Professionals; Lawyers; and Environmentalists. Because our experience with these groups has given us knowledge of those professions' networks, key actors, and experts, we will be able to get even more out of a second round of these courses by learning from our past experiences and mistakes. In the same time we also would like to work with new groups like the business sector and artists and educators as well as others.
- In the very near future, the School for Peace is excited to announce the publication of **Two Peoples Write from Right to Left**, an anthology of short stories and poems by Israeli and Palestinian writers. All of the Israeli works are translated into Arabic and all of the Palestinian works are translated into Hebrew. The anthology will have five chapters, divided into: a foreword, Israeli



poetry, Palestinian poetry, Israeli short stories and Palestinian short stories. For each of the writers whose work is featured in the anthology, a short biography is included.

- The School for Peace is also set to publish **a collection of interviews with graduates** of SFP courses for facilitators, Change Agents and university students. We seek to evaluate and qualify the long-term impact that our courses have had on the personal and professional lives of our graduates and their activist ambitions.
- The SFP would like to launch three day weekend **encounter workshops for religious Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel** and conduct a meaningful dialogue between them. We came to the conclusion that we need to reach those populations that have never had the opportunity to meet with the other side. The School for Peace has trained several facilitators who are religious themselves, who would be well situated to mediate such an encounter, and we are ready to start now!

# Publications

Nava Sonnenschein, Zvi Bekerman & Gabriel Horenezyk, (2010) *Threat & the majority identity*, Group Dynamics: Theory, Research & Practice. Vol. 14, No 1 47-65.

Nava Sonnenschein & Zvi Bekerman, (2010). *Who is more humane? An ethnographic account of power struggles in Jewish- Palestinian dialogue encounters*. Peace & Conflict Studies, Vol, 17, No 2, 307-346.

Rabah Halabi, (2009) *Why Negotiate?* The School for Peace at Wahat al Salam –Neve Shalom (SFP) & The center for Conflict Resolution& Reconciliation (CCRR).

Nava Sonnenschein, (2008). *Dialogue Challenging Identity: Jews constructing their identity through encounter with Palestinians*. Pardes. (In Hebrew).

Bela Sosovski, Maha Sakala- Tali, Sani Gordon Bar, Naama Hochstein, Yael Sivan, Harb Amara & Nava Sonnenschein (Eds.) (2010)*From Autism to Activism: A book devoted to mental health professionals Jews & Palestinians that are interested to deal with social layers of therapoutic work,*. The School for Peace, Neve Shalom/ Wahat al Salam.

Nava Sonnenschein & Ahmad Hijazi (Eds.) (2011). *Two peoples write from right to left: Palestinian and Israeli anthology of poems and short stories*.The School for Peace at Neve Shalom/ Wahat al Salam.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of all of those foundations, individual donors and Friends of NSWAS Associations who supported our work over the last three years. Without your help, our diverse endeavors would never have been possible.