

Updates from the School for Peace, April - June 2014

School for Peace Course at Harvard

Between the years 2012 and 2014 Dr. Elinor Amit has been teaching the course “Us and Them: Challenges and Possibilities in Intergroup Relations”, at the Psychology Department at Harvard University. The course teaches the psychology of intergroup relations by applying scientific literature and a practical group experience. The experimental component of the course was modeled on the School for Peace approach which Dr. Amit studied in a joint School for Peace / Tel Aviv University course in 2000 – 2001. She later attended the School for Peace Facilitator Training Course.

In the course, she now teaches at Harvard, students learn about their social identity, in a mixed racial group. Part of the exercises involves the students themselves defining “White” and “non-White”. The participants chosen for the workshop belong to the Harvard community, and are all undergrad students in their second, third, and fourth year of studies between the ages of 18-22.

<http://sfpeace.org/school-for-peace-course-taught-at-harvard-university/>

SFP Initiates Ad-hock Committee to Promote Peace and Human Rights among the Israeli Left

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, SFP director, and Dr. Nachi Alon have initiated a meeting of representatives from peace and human rights organizations to work on developing a new strategy on what to do now. The meeting, to be held in July, will focus on how to build a more powerful unified movement, how to work to reach larger and different audiences, how to maximize impact and build better cooperation.

Teaching Teachers – The Literature of the Other...

The School for Peace is continuing its first training course with Israeli and Palestinian teachers from Palestine teaching them to teach the literature of the other to high school students. Among others the course included someone from the Palestinian Ministry of Education, a high school principal and high school literature teachers from Palestine.

Professionals in the field of literature provided lectures, including Dr. Esam Mouslat on Palestinian literature in the context of the history of the conflict and Dr. Maram Msarwi, who translated famous works of the Palestinian national poet, Mahmoud Darwish, and others.

The course focuses on using literature as a tool to humanize the ‘other’ helping students to understand the every day life and culture of those they perceive as ‘the enemy’. The teachers presented simulation lessons and received feedback from their colleagues and have created an email list to continue discussing their work with each other.

A Jewish Israeli lecturer in a teacher's training college said:



"The course is fascinating. It's significant because it's an opportunity to meet Palestinians face to face to share opinions not to fight. There is a space for us to talk, agree and disagree. It is the first time in my life meeting Palestinians from the West Bank and gave me a new understanding of the occupation. The course has changed my political view."

A Palestinian participant, teacher, researcher of literature, and author of books said:

"The best part is the practical part, the practice lessons, it is important to learn how to teach the literature and the conflict. Especially when we find a method to do that, by letting the students think and get some distance from the conflict... If we see the individual level, how it is for each one, we can see the whole... through this we think and feel as one group and we hope we will have the tools to achieve peace in the future."

Living together in Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam encouraged us to live together in any type – one state, two states – so how can we transform and increase this way of thinking to kids and young! For me as a teacher, and writer, it gives me more experience to deal with this kind of literature, and I hope to develop this experience, with the benefit of this course, by careful planning.

The teachers are committed to the program despite the worsening situation between Jews and Palestinians. They feel they have a mission with their students and started to teach in their classrooms the literature of the "other". The dialogue is very meaningful. A second course is scheduled for the Fall.

SFP awarded \$50,000 prize from the Journalists and Writers Foundation (Turkey)

In June, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein was invited to Turkey to take part in the last competition for the prestigious Journalists Writers Foundation award. The School for Peace was one of 1,179 organizations, from 107 countries, competing for the 10 prizes that were awarded.



Through its programs the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF), has brought together joint efforts of voices from different backgrounds seeking common solutions for problems. The foundation has set its goal as promoting the idea of coexistence through understanding among the masses. [JWF](#) is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The prize is intended to "support innovative conflict resolution and peace building projects focused on preventing, managing and resolving violent conflict and promoting post-conflict peace building". It will fund a joint project of the School for Peace and Tawasul in Ramallah which will teach 60 Palestinian and Jewish literature teachers to teach the literature of the "other".

<http://sfpeace.org/sfp-awarded-50-k-grant-by-jwf/>

SFP – Presents at the Slomoff Symposium on Bridging the Global Religious Divide

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein was invited to Boston to present at the Slomoff Symposium convened at the University of Massachusetts, Boston by the [Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance](#) and the [Center for Peace, Democracy, and Development](#), McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies. The symposium brought together leading practitioners and scholars engaged in interfaith conflict resolution in local, national, and global contexts, analyzing best practices and developing a research and action agenda that promotes innovative policies, new tools in conflict resolution, and scholarly work on inter- and intra-religious peace building.

SFP Teaches Year Long Course at Ben Gurion University Raising Awareness and Activating the Next Generation

SFP Course at Ben Gurion University helps students bring social change to the Negev. This year long course is called 'the Arab-Jewish Conflict in the Mirror of theory and Practice' and was run for 22 Jewish and Arab students, in partnership with the psychology department at BGU.

The first semester involved the students addressing issues of Jewish-Arab group identity and how it affects socio-political issues in every day life. As the majority of the Arab students were Bedouin, major discussion focused on the state's treatment of the Bedouin in the Negev. In the second semester the students, under our supervision, volunteered in NGO's working on social change. Many volunteered in the Jewish-Arab school in Beer Sheva, modeled after NSWAS primary school, and an NGO "Itach Maaki" giving legal aid to Bedouin women.

"This course is a real gift. It broke down many of my stereotypes (about Arabs)..."

The volunteer work I did in the course revealed to me how the state relates to Bedouin citizens. It was the first time I was in the Bedouin City of Rahat."



Bedouin and Jewish Student from SFP Course working with Jewish and Arab Children in bi lingual Hagar kindergarten in Beer Sheva

Course for Students of Ben Gurion University

At the end of April the SFP began a course for students at the Ben Gurion University, organized by the University's Arab Student Union. This included eight weekly three-hour meetings. Twelve Arab and Jewish students took part in the course. The SFP's many activities at BGU were published and the article can be found in the student union newspaper, "Chupchick" http://www.bgu4u.co.il/pages/chupchik_issue_538.aspx.

תנו לאנשים לדבר

במסגרת קורס בחירה ייחודי נפגשים אתם לשבוע טטוונטיים יהודים וטטוונטיים ערבים לשיחה פתוחה ובגובה העיניים. עוברים ממונולוג לדיאלוג

התפוצצות המגעים המואצים אצלנו בקהילה ארבעה שבועות קודם לכן, נעמנו בראשית דברנו, ונפגשנו עם אנשים שונים, שיש להם דעות שונות על המצב הנוכחי. אנחנו מרגישים שיש צורך לדבר על זה, כי זה לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים. אנחנו רוצים לדבר על זה, כי זה לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים. אנחנו רוצים לדבר על זה, כי זה לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים.

רבים: "היה יהודי שאמר שגם ליהודים יש לפעמים טשטוש זהות, כי כל אחד בא ממוצא אחר וגם הם לא מצליחים להגדיר את עצמם. זה היה לי חדש מאוד"

ההגדרה הקבוצית כדבר מה שיש לו חשיבות רבה, היא לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים. אנחנו רוצים לדבר על זה, כי זה לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים. אנחנו רוצים לדבר על זה, כי זה לא רק עניין של חינוך, אלא עניין של חיים.

נאוה זונגשטיין: "הקבוצה הערבית מתחילה להביא יותר את המצוקות של היום. ובצורה אסרטיבית וחזקה שדברך כלל יוצרת מעט חרדה בקבוצה היהודית. הם חווים מיעין דיסטנט בין איך שתפסו את עצמם, חברה ליברלית ושוויונית, לבין מה שהם שומעים. באופן כללי הקבוצה היהודית חווה את הקבוצה הערבית בעוצמה שהיא לא רגיזה כפגוש בחיי היוםיום"

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Bank HaPoalim – Israel’s Largest Bank at Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam

On April 4th Mr. Yair Seroussi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank Hapoalim visited Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam along with Shelly Amir, and Dr Sharon Hefetz. The visit was organized by Fouad Dibsi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of the Educational Institutions of NSWAS. The visit opened doors to many new opportunities for joint activities.



SFP Reunion of Participants of the Change Agent Course for 'up and coming' Politicians

At the end of June graduates of the Change Agent's Course met in Tel Aviv to meet socially and discuss what they have done since finishing the course. In addition to their professional work, almost everyone is involved in social action projects and the issue of social justice is central to their daily activities.

- One of the Arab participants works as parliamentary aid and is promoting a humanitarian project that helps the families of Palestinian children who are hospitalized in Israel.
- Another participant works in the legal department of the Ministry of Education on budgetary issues for schools that teach disadvantaged groups.

- A third participant specializes in employment law in a law firm that deals with the promotion of women's rights in the workplace.
- And one is active in the youth wing of the Labor Party and works in a company that deals in renewable green energy.
- The discussions and learning continue as our graduates work to change the future.

New Regional Forum for SFP Graduates

With the changing political climate, SFP graduates have been anxious to get involved and make a difference in the communities where they live and work. This year the SFP began a graduate project, meeting in three different cities in Israel. With the staff graduates are discussing and planning initiatives to rejuvenate citizens' involvement and promote peace and equality.



One of the first projects will be spearheaded by a graduate who will lead discussion groups on ethics and the military in schools where "Five Broken Cameras", an Academy Award film nominee, will be screened.

Facilitators Forum Facilitators Forum

The facilitators' forum meets every two months in the Fred Segal Peace and Friendship Library and is made up of graduates of the SFP facilitators course. This time Rasha Sharkia, a graduate of the facilitators training course of 2012, presented a film made by Imtiaz Diab on the situation in occupied Palestine. The film shows the beauty of the people who live there and the country and the impact of the occupation on their lives. The film followed a Palestinian who has a mobile movie theater and brings movies to remote villages in Palestine. There were about 25 people, half of them SFP's facilitators and half from the community. After the movie we had a good discussion.



Peace-building and Environmental Leadership

During the second semester of 2014, the SFP worked with the Arava Institute in their academic studies program providing professional facilitation and work on intra group dialogue. The group consisted of Jordanians, Americans, Palestinians, Israelis, and Germans. Major themes that were discussed this year included collective memory, a broader perspective of the politics and narratives of the middle east, especially Israel and Palestine. As well as the skills and knowledge acquired, participants bravely discussed their shared lives as people coming from different cultures and countries. Wasim Birumi and Michel Shahar facilitated the course.

School for Peace Graduate Publishes New Book



Dr Nissim Avissar's book *Political Therapy: Psychotherapy between the Individual and the Political* has just been published (in Hebrew) by Resling Publishing. Nissim is a graduate of the SFP first 'Change Agents' course in

2007 which was run for Israeli and Palestinian mental health professionals. The course focused on social action in the mental health fields during periods of conflict. Dr. Avissar's book connects therapy and politics and is a groundbreaking book that proposes a revolutionary psychological approach laying out, for the first time in Hebrew, a clear and detailed narrative of the complex interactions between psychotherapy and politics in its broadest sense.

Dr. Nissim Avishar is a clinical psychologist and one of the founders of the group "Psychoactive" – therapists for human rights and lecturers at Kibbutzim College and the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya. The book can be purchased at www.resling.co.il



Update on the Fred Segal Peace & Friendship Library



In the recent period we have completed another phase of purchasing books for the Fred Segal Friendship Library. The SFP has reached an agreement with the University of Massachusetts, becoming recognized as one of its branches. This will broaden the scope of the Library, giving on-line access to all periodicals and ebooks at U. Mass. as well as supplying technical support to our library infrastructure.

Activities at the Library in the Past Months

- Meeting with Historians with Professor Motti Golani, a Jewish Israeli, and Dr. Adel Manna, a Palestinian with Israeli citizenship, discussing their collaborative book "Two Sides of the Coin: Independence and Nakba 1948."

- Life in the Village, five half-day workshops in which community members discussed the future of the community; the role we should have in Israeli society in the face of growing racism; how we can work to equalize the status of Hebrew and Arabic, and many more issues. Crossing generations and reaching into the future, many of the village youth joined these meetings.

- Youth and Young Adults Peace Conference – International Rotary attended by 150 youth from around the world with workshops and guest lectures on multi culturalism, multi-faith, culture and values, and peace through service.

- Training of the Dharma Friends of Israel with 120 participants the meeting was led by teacher Geshe Gen Gyatso, and its theme was "To treat the pains of the heart- Understanding the emotions spoiling our minds and torment our hearts".



- Mysteries of the Mind, a workshop led by Patrizio Paoletti a world renowned expert in relational communication.

Change Agents in the Mental Health Profession

The mental health professionals change agents' group met three times in the past months. In April, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein presented developmental theory of racial identity and the results of her research. The research focuses on Jews constructing their identity through encounters with Palestinians. In May the group visited Hebron, H2 area, the area in the middle of the Palestinian community (Shohada Street) occupied by settlers. The group heard about the history of Hebron, the current political situation, and met with social activists. The current political situation was presented by Tamar Fried, who is a participant in the course and volunteers with Palestinian families facing harassment from settlers. We then went to the Palestinian Media Center and heard a lecture by Issa Amrou a peace activist who works with children in the neighborhood. The third meeting was in June, with Hani Biran, group psychoanalyst and a member of psychoactive, who facilitated the seminar focusing on 'the social dream', using a technique that she developed.



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