



## The School for Peace 2015 Annual Report

### Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

With the increase in acts of violence, aggression, racism, the frozen peace process, continued military occupation of the Palestinian people and growing discrimination inside Israel between Jews & Palestinians, it has been a hard year in this country and across the border for both Jews and Palestinians. As difficult as it has been, it has only reinforced the importance of our work at the School for Peace and we have increased activities.

Harb Amara joined our staff this year as project director and he has contributed a great deal to our increased activities. Faten Abu Gosh, who has worked as our office manager for ten years, completed her bachelors' degree and we are very happy for her and pleased that she is continuing as part of our staff. Bob Fenton has been working hard with our donor relations and was key in our receiving a new grant from the European Union.

As the year came to an end, we received the news from the European Union that the School for Peace with our Palestinian partner Inmaa in Ramallah, Palestine, was awarded a grant to work with 120 up-and-coming young politicians from Palestine and Israel as part of their "Partnership for Peace" initiative. They will be giving us 500,000 Euro over the next 3 years and we need to raise an additional 135,465 Euro. We all know how much we need new open-minded **leadership** in this region who understand the values of equality, honesty, justice and can advance peace. We are happy that we will be contributing to this in the years to come.

We began this year with a new 'change agents' program for Jewish and Palestinian architects, urban planners, and civil engineers which we ran in cooperation with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning in the Galilee. This strategic partnership, which is continuing to develop, brought together the expertise of our two organizations and is changing the approach of this important group who has the ability to effect changes in how the country relates to minority populations around land and building issues. In February 2016 we will open another course for planners.

In May of 2015, the SFP, in cooperation with Tel Aviv and Hebrew University, organized a very successful international conference on dilemmas of recognition in asymmetric conflicts. In the fall we began our change agent course for environmental justice with 27 Jewish & Arab environmentalists and in the winter we opened an innovative program for leaders in mixed/shared Jewish and Arab cities. As a result of its success, we are planning an additional program like this in February 2016. Furthermore, the City of Tel Aviv-Jaffa has asked us to run a program for Jewish and Arab leaders in Jaffa.

We have worked hard this year expanding our university programs and as a result we began new courses at the Azrieli College of Engineering in Jerusalem and in 2016 we will open a course for students at Haifa University. We are planning to continue to develop these courses in universities and colleges all over Israel.

We continue to train facilitators to work with groups in conflict and participants in this year's training course included the principal of the WASNS Primary School, the assistant principal of the Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem, the director of the non-profit 'Tapuach', and two members of WASNS' second generation. It was a very serious group that will now become part of the SFP pool of free-lance facilitators.

We at the SFP are continuing work with our graduates in helping them develop new projects throughout the country. We have received many requests from organizations to develop programs for them or to work together in partnerships, including a request from the Olympic Committee of Israel, Israel Association of Community Centers and Hagar- bilingual school in Beer Sheva.

This annual report provides details of the programs the School for Peace has done this year. I hope you will enjoy it and continue to be part of our struggle and successes in advancing a just peace & equality in the years to come.

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein



**Staff photo, from left: Faten Abu Gosh, Bob Fenton, Harb Amara, & Nava Sonnenschein**

## Report

### **AWARD From the S.E.R.**

The **S.E.R. Foundation of Germany, Switzerland and Netherlands** awarded the School for Peace one of four annual prizes for promoting long term reconciliation through its innovative program for Palestinian and Israeli Literature Teachers. The program was specifically recognized for its sustainability in building civil society.



The award was accepted on October 3, 2015 by Dr. Ludger Schiffler of our German Friends Association in a gala ceremony in Berlin. The Foundation considers reconciliation as a general principle for human development to peace in all areas of a society. The S.E.R. Foundation award is given to outstanding projects that support the U.N. Millennium Development Goals from different perspectives. It considers reconciliation towards peace as a general principle for human development in all areas of society such as health, environment, social activities and education, economy, religion, culture, science, and politics.

### **THE AHMAD HIJAZI PEACE COLLEGE – Opening its Doors**

In the summer of 2015 we received official approval from the Israeli Council of Higher Education that the MA program in Conflict Resolution, which has been developed and will be run in partnership with the University of Massachusetts. The first program will begin in September 2016 with 24 Jewish, Palestinian and international students. The School for Peace and others have worked in developing this program over the last three years and in 2016 it will become its own independent institution within WASNS. Professor Galia Golan is the academic director and Dr. Maram Masarwi the administrative director of the MA program.

[https://www.umb.edu/academics/mgs/crhsgg/study\\_abroad/conflict\\_resolution\\_ma\\_study\\_in\\_israel\\_1](https://www.umb.edu/academics/mgs/crhsgg/study_abroad/conflict_resolution_ma_study_in_israel_1)



### **PARTNERS FOR PEACE**

**The European Union awarded the School for Peace a 500,000 Euro grant in its 2015-18 Partnership for Peace Program Competition.**

The funding will go towards our change agent program and, over the next three years, we will work with 120 up-and-coming politicians from Israel and Palestine. Our Palestinian Partner, Inmaa was established in 2010 in order to contribute and participate in building a democratic Palestinian society where young people practice an active role in the development of society and promote the concepts of citizenship and development. This innovative cross-border project is scheduled to begin in the Winter of 2016.

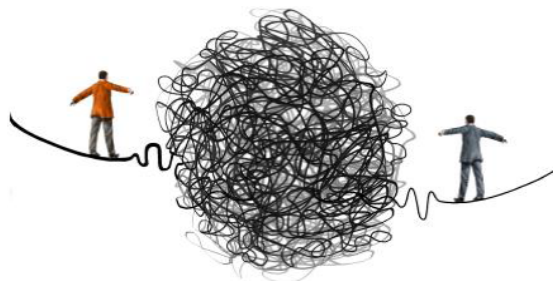
## SCHOOL FOR PEACE DIRECTOR – A Global Peacebuilder



In the coming year some 30 peacemakers, all of them renowned personalities from around the world, will gather in Berlin for the first time to discuss the role of civil society. Dr. Nava Sonnenschein was chosen to attend this summit, which takes place on 5th - 10th September 2016. The members of the summit all come from conflict regions; they are the most outstanding personalities in their field, and have proven to work successfully with their organizations on the peace process in their country. The Global Peacebuilder Summit is organized by the Culture Counts Foundation in collaboration with the German Federal Foreign Office.

## International Conference on "Dilemmas of Recognition in Asymmetric Conflicts"

On the 4th and 5th May the School for Peace - in cooperation with the Walter Lebach Institute for Jewish-Arab Coexistence at Tel Aviv University and the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University - organized an international conference, "Dilemmas of Recognition in Asymmetric Conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in a Comparative Perspective".



Attended by 90 academics and leaders of NGO's, the conference centred on major issues relating to conflict between Jews and Arabs by focusing on the difficult issues of: management of contradictory historical memories within an asymmetrical reality; Israeli-Palestinian cinema as related to the conflict; de-legitimization and dialogue in public opinion, education, literature and social media platforms; national ethnicization and the 'identity vacuum'; patterns of legislation; the politics of space and the role of civil society organizations in promoting equality and working against racism; and problems of city planning in the Arab-Jewish context.



**From left: Prof. Leslie Schwartz, Harb Amara, Samer Swaid, Dr Nava Sonnenschein, Dr Orly Friedman**

A panel of foreign guests presented, including: Professor Leslie Schwartz, from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, presenting "Post Conflict' Work and Disparity in Higher Education"; Prof. Orly Friedman, of Serbia: presenting "Albanian-Serb Relations / Kosovo and Serbia - Challenges and Realities in Post-Conflict"; Prof. Colin Craig, of Northern Ireland, executive director Corrymeela Community, presented on "20 Years After the Cease Fire: Living with a Hollow Peace"; and Prof. Camilia Suleiman, from Michigan State University, spoke on "Hybrid Identities in Israeli-Palestinian Reality and their Reflection in Literature".



The conference provided an excellent academic forum for investigating different aspects of conflict, their manifestation in society and how they have been addressed in other parts of the world. You can see the presentations at: <http://sfpeace.org/intl-conference-on-dilemmas-of-recognition-in-asymmetric-conflicts/>

## **CHANGE AGENTS – FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE – FOUR PROGRAMS BRINGING SOCIAL CHANGE**

The 'Change Agents' programs at the School for Peace took shape in 2007 when we examined how we could build on our knowledge in working with groups in conflict and develop the area of social action. For years we have seen how our work has influenced people, changing their perspective of the 'other' and broadening respect and acceptance of varying identities and cultures. Many graduates of our programs go on to become leaders in human rights and peace non-profit organizations. However we sought greater impact 'on the ground' and thought that the best way to achieve this would be by building onto our present approach.

In many ways, the natural outgrowth of what we were doing was action or 'praxis' the process in which theory is enacted and realized. Taking this idea, and with initial funding from USAID, we piloted a 14 month program working with Palestinians and Jews, from specific professions, teaching them how to impact society and bring about social change. This created the 'change agents' program, a new direction in our work.

It added a third component to our program structure in which Palestinians and Jews become advocates for change after going through: a dialogue and intergroup process; exploring identity and how the conflict effects them (and now their professions). This is done by learning skills and then designing and implementing projects to actively promote peace and mitigate conflict. <http://sfpeace.org/activism/>

In 2015 the School for Peace ran four Change Agents projects focusing on different professional groups: **urban planners, architects and civil engineers; environmentalists; and leaders in mixed Jewish and Palestinian cities & literature teachers.**



**In Dialogue – Early Meeting of Planners, Architects & Engineers**

## Program for Urban Planners, Architects and Civil Engineers

The School for Peace developed this change agents program because of the crucial role of planning in the conflict where land is such a central concern. The land planning process in Israel has often been used as a means for limiting growth in Arab communities and the planning process is influenced by many economic and political interests. While 20% of Israel's citizens are Arab, they occupy 2.5% of the land. Civil engineers, urban planners and architects address issues of land and urban planning; they may work on area planning councils, or committees that make decisions on the separation barriers and borders. Many of them face situations in which they have to develop, approve or reject building or expansion plans. Their daily professional activities impact both Jewish and Palestinian citizens and it is essential that they become aware of the political, economic and social implications of their work. It is also important that they be conscious of their own role in the conflict and of their own capacity to effect positive change.

Our change agents program for urban planners, architects and civil engineers was carried out this year in partnership with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning and ran throughout 2015. Participants included 28 professionals including: 3 civil engineers (one who is a member of the local council of the Arab town of Kfar Kanna in northern Israel); 12 architects; 8 urban planners; 2 lawyers specializing in planning matters; 2 environmentalist planners; and a real estate appraiser. The Arab Center for Alternative Planning brought to this program their expertise in town planning and work with Arab municipalities on planning issues and their director Samer Swaid, coordinated it with Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, director of the SFP.



**Prof. Ayala Ronel & Mahmoud Amas**

After an initial 3 day seminar at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom, the program held monthly meetings and discussions, field trips and planning sessions to develop social actions.

### **Lectures in the program included:**

- **Prof. Oren Yiftachel**, from Ben Gurion University in the Negev, on Israeli land planning regime, as nationalization or dispossession,
- **Dr Hanna Swaid**, former Member of the Israeli Parliament, on housing shortages in Arab towns and the history of Elaboon during the war of 1948/ Nakba,
- **Ayman Odeh**, Member of the Israeli Parliament, on his experience in parliament and opinions on the current political situation,
- **Prof. Leslie Schwartz**, from Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, on dilemmas in Cape Town as a city in transition towards equality,
- **Dr. Orly Friedman**, from Belgrade, on the dilemmas of coexistence in cities that experience violent war,
- **Professor Gadi Elgazi**, from the Department of History at Tel Aviv University, and senior editor of the Journal History & Memory, on the history of land use in Israel and the conflict between the natives and the settlers.



**Abed Yassin at the Bet Netufa Association of Cities**

Discussions focused on governmental limitation on the ability of Arab towns to expand; discrimination; budget differences for Jewish and Arab towns; issues concerning the "Jewish" character of the state, and more. Rasan Monayer, a city council member and program participant led a tour of the mixed city of Lod with a lecture by Arafat Dahamesh, who spoke about the planning issues in his village, which borders Lod. A meeting and tour was also held at the Bet Netufa Association of Cities – Environmental Center in the Arab City of Sakhnin with architect Abed Yassin, who participated in the course. He was the architect of the Center's building which incorporates unique Muslim architectural elements and environmental construction. The center provides environmental education in the region.

**The participants worked on a number of projects and will continue working on them into 2016. These include:**

- Filing an objection to the Area Planning Council in Lod opposing the proposed city plan, because it does not take into account the natural growth of the Arab population in the city. The plan's approval is still pending,
- Planning a playground for children in the Bedouin City of Rahat,
- Developing alternative ideas for the city plan of the Arab coastal village of Jisr az-Zarqa which suffers from a serious lack of housing and is unable to expand,
- Brainstorming about the idea of developing a Palestinian heritage museum to be located in the Galilee.

Above and beyond the projects that were developed our goal is to see the graduates of our change agent's programs exercise their influence as a result of what they have learned. In this program, the participants have become serious advocates of equality in planning issues in the places they work; many in municipal planning agencies. Enaya Banna, a course participant was recently appointed as the head civil engineer of the Committee of Building and Planning in Wadi Ara Region. One participant reported that as a result of the program she was able to bring the issues of equality in planning to a forum of the Technion Israel Institute of Technology, where she sits on a panel to evaluate final projects of architect students. Other participants presented on a panel at "The Akko Convention on Urbanism" which was attended by over 1,000 planners, architects and city officials from throughout the country, and others gave four different presentations at the Young Urban Planners' Forum in Tel Aviv.

We are pleased to see that our change agents programs are reaching far beyond those who participate in the program and are contributing to strengthening Israel's civil society.

The final meeting of the Urban Planners, Architects And Civil Engineers program is scheduled in Feb. 2016 in Nazareth.





**Planners Meeting in EIAbon**



**Professor Oren Yiftachel**



**Participants Planning Projects**



## **Building Leadership in Israel's Mixed Cities**

In Israel there are seven cities where Jews and Arabs live in close proximity but rarely mix. These cities present special challenges especially in times of tension. This spring at the School for Peace, for the first time, launched an innovative program for 30 leaders and activists from mixed cities throughout Israel in order to help them address the needs and begin to transform these cities into shared communities.

The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics defines: Acre (27.2% Palestinian-Israelis), Lid/Lod (24.4%), Ramleh/Ramla (22.5%), Haifa (10%), Jaffa (31.2%), Nazareth-Illit/Upper Nazareth (14.5%) and Ma'alot-Tarshiha (22.1%) as mixed cities. Aside from Nazareth-Illit and Tarshiha-Ma'alot, the situation in these cities is a direct outcome of the 1948 war and today the Palestinian populations in these cities are made up of four groups: pre-1948 residents, refugees from neighboring villages and cities, Bedouins and after 1967 Palestinian collaborators from the West Bank and Gaza. The Jewish populations are primarily poorer immigrants from the 1950's onward. This change agents program addresses conflicts in local civil society and around the world, presenting sustainable solutions and models of conflict management at the micro and macro level.

The program provides an opportunity to establish a dialogue between participants who are in leadership positions in Israel's mixed cities; to create working relationships, strengthen leadership qualities and promote peace and equality in these communities. The program brings to the forefront the extensive knowledge of the participants and places an emphasis on joint endeavors for social change. The objectives are to help local leaders: create and manage shared spaces for Arabs and Jews in mixed cities; to create a sense of shared security and joint ownership of public spaces, and to enhance networking with other mixed cities. Our primary objective was to create a group that will be committed to raise its voice and take action upon every incident of racism and violence between Arabs and Jews; a group that will provide an effective and functional response and will handle incidents before they escalate.



**Participants in Mixed Cities Program on Tour in Jaffa**

In February we opened a course for leadership and activism in shared/mixed Arab and Jewish cities. This program lasts 12 months and began with a three-day opening workshop in Wahat al-Salam ~ Neve Shalom and was followed by monthly six-hour meetings held on

Friday. The program includes study tours in the field and an end of the year two-day closing workshop in Wahat al-Salam ~ Neve Shalom.

Participating in the program are an equal number of Jews and Arabs from: Ramla, Lod, Beersheba, Haifa, Acre, Jaffa and Nazareth. On April 17th the group met at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom to hear a lecture by Dr. Roly Rosen from *Shatil*, the New Israel Fund Initiative for Social Change, on the reality and vision of mixed cities. Dr. Rosen, a graduate of the School for Peace first facilitators' course, wrote the book "Haifa between Reality and a Vision for a Shared City", focusing on how to transform a mixed city into a city for all its citizens with equal rights and equal access to city services.

In May the group organized a meeting in Jaffa to commemorate Nakba Day. Tom Weisel, a Jewish participant in the program, prepared an exhibition of photos and text on the Nakba and participants shared stories of their families experience during the Nakba. In June the group met with Professor Gadi Algazi who presented a historical and contemporary analysis of the Jewish Palestinian conflict as well as the current situation. The group talked about the possibilities for combating the ongoing displacement of Arabs in mixed cities. After the lecture, participants formed three groups to discuss possible projects. Some ideas included: establishing a parliament of young Bedouins in Southern Israel; organizing an exhibition in Jaffa to perpetuate the Palestinian heritage of Jaffa; developing a creative way to address Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and Eid al-Adha, the Muslim celebration which fall on the same date this year. The group developed an educational kit to be used in schools in mixed cities. The group formed a 'WhatsApp' group to continue their dialogue between meetings.

In July, Attorney Kais Nasser gave a lecture on legal aspects affecting the Arab population in mixed cities: processes of dispossession, destruction and gentrification. It included a presentation of legal cases that he had handled. The meeting was reported on in the popular Al-Arab news site that serves the Arabic-speaking population in Israel.



**Pictured right: Attorney Kais Nasser a Program for Leadership in Mixed Cities**

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, "International Workers' Day", the 'mixed cities' and 'Architect, planners and engineers group met together and heard two lecturers, who spoke about the dilemmas of mixed cities in times of conflict or post-conflict in other places in the world. Prof. Leslie Schwartz, from Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa spoke about dilemmas faced by Cape Town in becoming a city for all its residents, and Dr. Orly Friedman, from Belgrade, who spoke about the dilemmas of coexistence in cities that went through a bloody war. After the lectures the participants split into region-based groups and built interesting connections and ideas for joint projects. Ghasan Monayer, from the mixed cities course, presented the problems of a proposed plan in Lod that does not take the Arab community into

account. In Lod there are 82,000 residents, of them 71.6% are Jewish and 28.4% are Arab. The planners from the Tel Aviv area, who work for the Tel Aviv Municipal Council, planners from the Arab Center for Alternative Planning and others offered to take a look at this proposed plan and add their professional recommendations for changes in the plan.



**Dr Orly Friedman - Joint Meeting of Change Agents Program**

The mixed cities program carried out three field visits. The first was in Nazareth, where the new city of Nazareth Elite is slowly encroaching. Many Arab families are moving to Nazareth Elite; however the city services are not inclusive. Nazareth director of education Samia Basul discussed with the group the issue of education and the complexities of the Arab citizens of Nazareth Elite having to utilize the Nazareth school system.

Program participants from Jaffa organized a tour there. We visited the Mishlama-project, a special office of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality which is responsible for coordinating between Jews and Arabs and addressing the special problems of Jaffa. The group also visited Hand in Hand bilingual school which is initiating a mixed Jewish and Arab school in the community. Sami Abu Shadeh, a Palestinian Israeli political activist, tour guide and expert of Jaffa's history, lead the tour and discussed the demographic shifts of the population in Jaffa during the Nakba and today as the community faces the harsh realities of gentrification.

The final field visit was organized by participants from the south. We heard Veronika Vigdirchik, project manager at AJEEC-NISPED - Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation – Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development, who spoke about their programs in the Negev. Professor Yiftachel lectured on the Dispossession of the Bedouin in the South and the group visited the destroyed village of El Arakib where Sheich Saich el Toury spoke about the village. The day ended with a visit to Shahar Hadash - Center for Bedouin Leadership in the Bedouin City of Rahat. The final summary meeting of the mixed cities program will be in January and will focus on skills needed for social change, with a lecture from Professor Ester Herzog on gender issues and leadership in mixed cities.



**Sheich Saich el Toury Addressing the Mixed Cities Participants**





### **Teaching the Literature Of The Other - Two People Write From Right To Left**

As part of the change agents program, the SFP carried out the second and third of three courses to teach Palestinian and Jewish teachers how to teach the literature of the other. Literature opens the window to culture and understanding and by teaching Arab and Jewish literature in high school the 'other' is humanized in the eyes of students, enabling them to begin to understand and accept the other side.

The program first brings the teachers together for an intensive 3-day meeting so they can get to know each other and address their own questions. This intensive weekend is followed by meetings with lectures from prominent literature professors; and in the final stages of the program participants present lessons utilizing the literature they have learned in the course and from the SFP literature anthology.

Today teachers are fearful of discussing the conflict between Jews and Arabs in their high schools and this course gives teachers the tools to bring this subject into the classroom. With the conclusion of this course, the SFP has completed the training of 60 Palestinian and Jewish teachers from Israel and Palestine who are now able to bring a different view of the 'other' into the classroom.

### **Changing the Environment Changing the Society**

In November the School for Peace opened its program for Jewish and Palestinian environmentalists focusing on environmental justice. The program will run over 14 months, through 2016, with 27 participants from all over the country. Participants include environmental educators, a professor from the Technion and a professor from the Porter School for Environmental Studies at Tel Aviv University, and staff from local government who are responsible for environmental issues.

Program staff include: Professor Dan Rabinowitz Head of the Porter School of Environmental Studies at Tel Aviv University, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein and Harb Amara.

### **REACHING OUT TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

For many individuals, especially the Jewish population in Israel, university is the first place where Jews and Palestinians meet. The School for Peace sees this as an important setting to intervene and bridge the differences between the two people as students become more familiar with the larger world and issues of living together.

Each year the SFP runs an accredited academic course in Israeli universities. This year the SFP worked in three universities and one academic institution and will be expanding its university programs in the year to come. This course "The Arab-Jewish Conflict in the Mirror of Theory and Practice" is taught in four higher-education programs; The Azrieli College of En-

gineering in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, the Ben Gurion University in the Negev and at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies.

In the Spring we began a new course for university students at the **Azrieli College of Engineering in Jerusalem**. This was the first time we worked with the college, which has a unique student population made up of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and from Israel, Jews who are graduates of combat units in the Army and religious Jews including some from settlements around Jerusalem. The Spring course included a total of 30 students in 4 meetings and an intensive full-day workshop at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom.



Not only is the college's population different from that of other universities we work with, but the program of study is very science based. The college offers a four-year B.Sc. degree in a number of engineering disciplines as well as a preparatory program for students who want to apply to the college. It gives the SFP the ability to influence those moving into Israel's growing high tech and engineering industries.

Azrieli College, heard about our program when Dr. Sonnenschein presented at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute at a conference on pluralism in higher education. The College approached the SFP to teach the course because its staff felt that the diverse student body had limited or no connection with each other and that it was important in these heated political times to open avenues of communication between the two groups. The College's evaluation of the program showed that the majority of the participants were 'very satisfied' with the course and think that it is important to carry it out at the College; however they felt it was too short. They were willing to continue to meet together and would recommend the program to others. Many said that the program brought up a lot of questions about the relations between Jews and Arabs at the College, and Jewish students said that they "began to understand the meaning of being an Arab student at the College".

As a result of this first course the College requested that the SFP run an additional course in the first semester of the 2015-16 academic year, and extend it to include 10 meetings, a weekend workshop at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom and an information gathering tour in East Jerusalem. This second course began in November 2015 with a new group of 15 Palestinian and 15 Jewish participants.

In the Fall, we taught at the **Arava Institute in the Negev**, which operates a special program in environmental studies for Jews and Palestinians from Israel, Jordanians, Americans and Europeans. The Institute sees our workshops as a way to educate their students about the conflict between national, ethnic and religious groups, as well as teaching their students how to overcome these conflicts and other differences. In the everyday educational program, the students do not undertake dialogue that focuses directly on the conflict and each year they request that the SFP help them with this. The experiential part of the course helps the students themselves explore the issues, opens avenues of communication and understanding,

and facilitated the students ability to live and work together while at the Institute, and in the future.

The course gave the international students in this group a feeling that they could legitimately express their feelings and thoughts, where previously they felt like 'outsiders' without the right to be heard. In later meetings, personal stories became relevant as one of the participants had a friend who was killed when he wandered into a conflict zone and this gave the Jewish Israelis an opportunity to discuss their army service. Issues explored in the course included: responsibility, privilege, victimization and, most importantly, responsibility to bring change.



**Tel Aviv University students on a tour of Jaffa**

In October, at **Tel Aviv University**, we began our 25<sup>th</sup> year of teaching our course, "The Arab-Jewish Conflict in the Mirror of Theory and Practice". The course is taught in the psychology department and students who participated came from psychology, sociology, political science, management, anthropology and law departments.

As part of the credited course the students address the central issues of the Jewish-Arab conflict including: discrimination, the definition of Israel as a "Jewish State", the Gaza War of last summer, questions of identity, the Jewish Zionist and Palestinian historical narratives; the occupation; Jewish-Arab relations on campus; and their fears. Issues were explored with students sharing their personal experiences and understandings.

The course takes on special significance in this time of daily violence that differs from acts of violence in the past. The first meetings gave participants the opportunity to listen and hear each side. This year the feelings of despair were dominant as well as the thought that, in the near future, there will not be a solution to the present conflict. Lectures and discussions connected theory with issues that came up in group meetings in the first part of the course, and an educational field visit to Jaffa was included, presenting the historical and present realities of the Jews and Palestinians.

We continued working with **Ben Gurion University** in the Negev where the majority of the Arab students are Bedouin living in the south. This raises different issues than other university courses as Bedouins face different life situations. These include issues of unrecognized Bedouin villages - and the government's policy of forcing Bedouin populations to move to existing Bedouin cities - and cultural differences, such as polygamy for example. The course had two lectures, one by Dr. Tal Eyal, a graduate of the SFP course at Tel Aviv University, on group identity, and a lecture from Insaf Abu-Shareb, a lawyer, on the rights of Bedouin women.



One student said: *"The conflict influences our life every day and I decided that if it changes my life I have to take a part in changing it, because there are others that are suffering more than me. I have to do something to change things for them; that is why I am studying political science."*

## YOUTH ENCOUNTERS

The School for Peace began its work over thirty years ago with 'youth encounters'. Shortly afterwards its method became the direction in the country for working with Jewish and Arab youth. Over the years, and through research conducted at the SFP, we have refined the model and the approach is the basis of our work with groups in conflict. This year we were able to continue our youth encounters on a limited basis although we would like to do more. It is important to invest in the next generation and these meetings are the first steps in shaping high school youth's views of the other.

This year we conducted a three-day workshop for sixty-one 11<sup>th</sup> graders from the Jewish Givat Brener School, outside of Rehovot, and the Nazareth High School. Both of these schools are at a high academic level and always appreciate the work done with their students at the School for Peace.

What is striking in our continued work with youth is the profound importance of giving them a chance to meet the 'other', face to face for the first time, and to discover that they have points of agreement, shared interests and shared visions of the future. Most pronounced is the recognition, by both groups, of the need for equality in a shared society. They addressed the conflict directly and seriously when in the group meetings and during the breaks, they built real friendships. Issues of rights and responsibility (army service) are always difficult yet important subjects that they discuss as well as terrorism and violence. Because of their interests, we are considering continued work with this group of youth.

Bridging the language barrier is a challenge in these meetings and helping the youth begin to develop the courage and communication skills in order to talk with each other is an important step. This first meeting for them, where they come face to face with the other, is crucial as it opens the door to the future giving them the belief that they can talk with the 'other' and there is a basic ability to live together and build a future. This year the simulation of future agreements and how to live together brought about interesting new directions that our countries' leaders could learn from.



**Negotiating Peace – Students from Givat Brener and Nazareth High Schools**

*"This experience was different than anything I have experienced in my every-day life. I arrived with a lot of stigmas, like Arabs don't pay taxes and are against the Jews. I was exposed to the ideas and beliefs of the other and their views on the situation. I admit, you broke my stereo types. I now understand that the situation that I thought was complicated is really complex."*

*"First of all,..kol hakavod, it was great meeting with the other group. We should have more meetings like this so we can change our views and opinions as well as theirs. We had difficulty changing the views of the right wingers, but what was important, is that they completely listened to what we had to say. It gave us the feeling that they weren't against Arabs in the country and a few said it is good that there are Arabs in the country and I understood that there are people who like the Arabs. Most of the group believed that there is not equality between the two people*



## **FACILITATORS TRAINING**

There is always the need for more trained facilitators to work with groups in conflict and this Spring we began a facilitators training course. It was attended by 19 participants (half Jewish and half Arab). Among the participants were mental health professionals; staff from Shatil; a principal from one of Hand in Hand's bilingual schools; the principal from Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom's primary school; two young women from Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom's second generation; and the director and two senior employees of the NGO - Tapuach. The course included 120 hours with 3 parts: an experiential workshop; the acquisition of knowledge; and practical experiences through peer facilitation. The instructors were Maya Rabia and Liron Tal. The second half of this course included a series of lectures and in-depth group discussions on theories important to facilitating groups in conflict. Professor Yhuda Shenhav spoke on Post-Colonial Theories and their relevance to the Palestinian Israeli conflict; Dr. Adel Manaa gave a historical perspective of the 1948 war and the Nakba; Professor Ariella

Fridman on work with groups of mixed nationality, gender and ethnicity; Mr. Basem Knaaneh on joint Arab Jewish civil society – staff relations in NGO's with Arabs and Jews; Mr. Ami Ferago Gopher, gave a lecture about studying groups and group analysis theories; and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein gave a lecture on identity and conflict.

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### **Soon to be Published**

The School for Peace is finalizing the editing of a new book on its graduates. The book, in English, explores Arab and Jewish graduates of the SFP courses sharing their life stories and the impact the programs had on their lives. It includes theoretical background of SFP approach, and 25 in-depth interviews and analysis. Their dramatic stories are an inspiration in these difficult times showing how their experience at the SFP was formative and lead to new actions promoting peace, equality and social justice. We are now looking for an English language publisher.

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### **Teaching Teachers at the Kibbutz Seminar**

On June 29, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, gave a lecture at the Kibbutz Movement's Teachers' Seminar on peace education. The lecture presented the literature teachers project "Two People Write from Right to Left" and our recently completed research on the impact of the School for Peace on participants' lives

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### **Educators of the Reform Movement at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom**

On July 2nd, the School for Peace met with educators from the Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism to help in their training seminar devoted to pluralism. Sixty educators from all over the country took part in the meeting that addressed tolerance and understanding between the two nations. In the first half of the day the participants heard about life at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom and then worked with Jewish and Arab facilitators from the School for Peace learning and discussing issues of how they as educators can speak about the conflict in the classroom.

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**Van Leer Conference:** In the beginning of 2015, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, was invited to present on multiculturalism on campus and the School for Peace's university programs. The conference on "Pluralism and Equality of Opportunity for Higher Education: the Accessibility of Academia to Arab Society" was held by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and was attended by representatives from all the colleges and universities in Israel.

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**Belgium Youth Delegation:** In April the SFP held a seminar for 40 Belgium youth studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The visit was organized by Simon Susskind, Member of Belgium and European Parliaments as part of the project "Israel-Palestine: to understand". The high school youth from three Brussels schools came to Israel and Palestine to deconstruct





prejudices related conflict and encourage reflection and awareness among young people of the complexities of reality. The youth spent half the day touring and learning about the Village and spent the second half of the day in a seminar on the Jewish-Arab conflict and conflict resolution.

<http://simonesuskind.be/2014/israel-palestine-pour-mieux-comprendre/>

### **School for Peace Graduate Forum – Activating our Graduates**

This year we resumed our graduates' forum in the North and Center of the country and with the help of the United States Embassy in Israel, the focus of these meetings has been to activate SFP graduates and provide them with seed funding, consultation and support to develop local projects that will contribute to peace and equality.

In **May** we held a meeting for those from the North in Yafia, an Arab town adjacent to Nazareth. We were hosted by the local community center whose director, Obour Taha Rizaq, is a social worker and graduate of the School for Peace. Fifteen SFP graduates, of various SFP programs attended and were enthusiastic about initiating projects to fight racism and promote shared community. Some ideas that were raised included: a joint project with Arab and Jewish women living in the area. In **October**, a second meeting was held in Yafia, where the 20 participants expressed their deep concern for the deteriorating situation in the country and continued to discuss project that could address the situation. Following the meeting the forum was opened to the general public with a joint program where Awni Banna, a lawyer, discussed the present violence in the country analyzing if it stems from religious or national sentiment and ongoing oppression. This part of the program was attended by 50 individuals including the head of the local council, representatives to the local council, and women active in the community.

In **June** a meeting was held with 40 Jewish and Arab alumni who came from the center of the country. After introductions, Professor Gadi Algazi historian and political activist discussed successes and failures in social change initiatives, his experience, and suggested ways to fight injustice and the dispossession and destruction that the government authorities perpetuate against Arab villages, cities and towns.

In **July 30th** the School for Peace held its annual end of the school year event attended by current and past facilitators, staff, program graduates and members of the WASNS community. As well as a summary of this year's activities and plans for the coming year, the play, "In Another Place", was performed by theater students from the Tel Aviv University. The play, directed by Israel Prize Laureate, Nola Chilton, is based on David Grossman's powerful book, "The Yellow Wind", and portraying life experiences of Palestinians and how it is affected by the conflict and occupation. The evening was concluded with a discussion with the actors.

In **November**, the School for Peace hosted its Graduates Forum at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom, Fred Segal Peace and Friendship Library with a panel discussion marking the launch of the Arabic edition of Prof. Yair Auron's book, *The Shoah, the Rebirth and the Nakba*. Sixty people attended the event and panel discussion with Dr. Hillel Cohen, from the Hebrew University; Avrum Burg, former Member and Chair of the Knesset; and Palestinian-Is-

raeli scholar Antoine Shalhat. The discussants hailed the new Arabic translation of Auron's latest book as an important contribution to Palestinian-Jewish reconciliation as it helps to open the discussion of what happened to the Palestinians in 1948. "What are we afraid of?" he asks in an effort to acknowledge "the other's" tragedy and suffering as an important step towards mending relations. Auron, a long-time resident of Wahat al Salam – Neve Shalom is a specialist in genocide studies. Rather than equating the Nakba and Holocaust, the new book looks at the links between the two historical events. With an emphasis on trauma and the need for healing, he points out that non-recognition does not permit healing, while feeding on the trauma negates reconciliation.



As we enter 2016 the alumni will begin implementing projects on the local and national level. To date, the projects that are being considered include:

- Publishing a document with lesson plans for teaching the literature of the other in Jewish and Arab schools.
- Running joint seminars with Palestinian women living in the Arab town of Yafia and Jewish women from Migdal Haemek.
- Operating a workshop to empower Arab students Unions
- Creating a booklet to help teach high school students about perspectives of the holidays especially Yom Kippur & the Id El Adha which fell on the same day this year.

The forum for School for Peace Graduates will continue in 2016 where we will work with participants in developing projects that can be carried out in different parts of the county to promote peace and equality. If the model is successful it will help the SFP strengthen its influence on the larger Jewish and Arab community throughout the country.

## **FORUM TO FREE OURSELVES FROM THE OCCUPATION**

The Forum to "Free Ourselves from the Occupation" was initiated by the School for Peace and Wahat Al Salam-Neve Shalom at the end of 2013. At that time it became clear to us and many of our colleagues in peace and human rights NGOs and the left, that we must consolidate our strength; find avenues to work together and with our Palestinian partners; reach

populations we have not reached before; and bring new life to the Israeli peace movement. The forum combines the leaders of 25 peace and human rights groups in the country as well as representatives from left wing political parties. In July 2014 after the war with Gaza began the forum organized a rally in the City of Tira under the banner, "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies" and held a conference in the Fall 2014, following the war in Gaza <http://sfpeace.org/conference-october-2014/> .

In conjunction with the forum, Dr. Alon Liel, former Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, worked successfully in getting signatures of key individuals in Israel, including members of the forum, to encourage the British Parliament to support the recognition of the Palestinian State. The effort was very effective and related to in a positive way on the floor of the British Parliament. The forum will continue to be part of Dr. Liel's efforts strengthening international pressure on Israel to move towards peace.

Following the results of the national election in March 2015 the forum called a special meeting to discuss what needs to be learned from the elections. Uri Avnery, the founder of the Gush Shalom peace movement (peace block) and the first Israeli to meet Yasser Arafat, wrote, "the majority have decided on an apartheid state between the Jordan Valley and Mediterranean Sea in which democracy will increasingly die; but the judgment is not final. Democratic Israel has lost the battle but not the war. If we do not learn a lesson from this, democratic Israel will lose the war...peace, human rights and social justice NGOs each working independently and deserving of praise, should enter the political arena and take a central role in working together on the front to save democracy."

As a result of the meeting the forum decided to develop an Arab-Jewish congress that will meet once a year with committees that will meet throughout the year. The objectives of the committee will be to: build a alternative vision of partnership between Jews and Arabs and fight against Israel's control of another people; construct an alternative social vision of partnership between Jews and Arabs in order to build a shared society; advance the struggle against the control of Israel over another people; and providing a space for joint discourse on issues of civil equality and shared citizenship that is a true partnership.



A steering committee was elected that met several times to develop the idea and included: Eyas Shebeta, Nachi Alon, Anwar Dawood, Dov Hanin, Shmulik David, Yaela Ra'anan, Nava Sonnenshein, Harb Amara and Mosie Raz.



The steering committee met in Ramallah with Mahmoud El-Madani, head of the Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Peace Movements in order to advance cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian peace groups. Forum members met with Mazen Ganiem, head of the Council of Arab Towns and Villages in Israel to discuss ways of cooperation and in the Negev the steering committee visited the with Bedouin



activists in Um al-Hiran. They are fighting against the states demolition of the village in order to make way for building a Jewish religious town under the name of 'Hiran". Um al-Hiran was built in the 1950's when the Israeli government moved the Bedouin citizens to the current location. The committee was received by a local resident who was a graduate of the SFP course at Ben Gurion University.

The next meeting of the forum will be January 26, 2016 at WASNS Fred Segal Peace & Friendship Library.

### **2016 - Our Plans for the Year to Come**

The School for Peace has been increasing its activities over the past years and we are planning continued growth and new programs in 2016. Plans for 2016 include:

#### **University Courses at:**

Tel Aviv University

Ben Gurion University

Haifa University

Azrieli College

The Arava Institute

#### **Change Agents Courses:**

Urban Planners, Architects and Civil Engineers with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning  
Leadership in Mixed Cities

Environmentalist and Environmental Justice

Teachers and Teaching the Literature of the Other in High Schools

Palestinian and Israeli Up-and-Coming Politicians

Mental Health Professionals

Leadership from Jaffa

Health Professionals at Ha'Emek Medical Center in Afula

Women's Leadership in Migdal Ha'Emek and Yafia

#### **Other Activities:**

Facilitators Course

Forum of SFP Graduates

Youth Encounters

Forum to Free Ourselves from the Occupation

In-service Training for Facilitators

In-service Training of the Staff of the NS/WAS Bi-lingual School and Hagar Bi-lingual School in Beer Sheva

**You can stay updated by checking our website: <http://sfpeace.org/>**

***We thank all of our friends, supporters and the Friends Associations of Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam, which were our partners this year in carrying out all of the programs we have described.***

***As we begin 2016, with your support we hope to continue to expand our work. The reality of Israel and the world requires that we work even harder, strengthening the values of equality, democracy and promoting a just peace while creating new and innovative approaches to reach out to society.***

***Nava Sonnenschein, Harb Amara***