The School for Peace

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

The School for Peace is one of the educational non-profit institutions of Neve Shalom ~ Wahat al- Salam and is supported by individuals, foundations and Friends Associations around the world.

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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am happy to share with you the work of the School for Peace during the 2016 activity year. Thank you for your help, support and confidence in our work in building a humanistic society based on equality, peace, and justice with fair and equitable relations between Jews and Palestinians in the region.

This past year we’ve seen increased radicalization and incitement against Arab citizens of Israel, Palestinians, and human rights activists. In addition, the Israeli government has taken more aggressive actions in destroying homes in Arab towns, further dividing the country. The School for Peace, and our graduates, has taken a stance and actions against these events. This changing reality brings with it new challenges in recruiting participants for our programs, but we are also seeing our graduates’ increased concern and interest in bringing about positive change. That is why we are working on building a support network for our graduates and other activists and are even more determined to continue developing our methods at the School for Peace.

This year, the School for Peace initiated one of its biggest projects, a new program with the Palestinian non-profit Inmaa’ for 120 up-and-coming politicians from Israel and Palestine. The European Union Peacebuilding Initiative supported this program by awarding us with half-a-million Euros for this program which will run for three years, each year with a new group of 40 young leaders. This initiative is based on our Change Agents program, which we continued this year with leaders in mixed cities, environmentalists, and, in partnership with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, with urban planners, civil engineers and architects. This year we also continued our work with Jewish and Arab youth, we held two training programs for facilitators working with groups in conflict and we conducted four courses in three Israeli universities.

While this has been the heart of our work, this past year we also carried out a teacher training workshop for the NSWAS primary school and the Hagar Jewish-Arab Education for Equality in Beer Sheva; a weekend dialogue program for families interested in living at Neve Shalom ~Wahat al Salam; a graduate program that brought our graduates together to initiate social action on the local level; and a training program for a group of high school literature teachers to help them incorporate literature by the other national group in their classes.
We improved our social media presence by upgrading our website (www.sfp.org), and by becoming more active on facebook and on twitter. Nadine Nashef, who grew up in the village, has made all of this possible and is helping us reach more people in Hebrew, Arabic and English.

We want to thank our wonderful staff, Harb Amara, Roi Silberberg who joined our staff this year, Bob Fenton, Nadine Nashef, Lindsey Zemler, Fatin Abu Gosh and Mali Sharabi. Without their commitment we would not have accomplished what we did thus far. While we are happy about what we have achieved, we see all over the world the challenges that we will face in the year to come. The fear, hostility, and racial intolerance that is taking over the world is frightening. Over and over again we hear in our programs participants saying how we have helped them see the world differently and how we encouraged them to take action. We still aspire to reach more people and with the present situation in the world, we feel it is of the utmost importance to share our knowledge with others.

This report will give you a taste of what went on in some of our programs this year and I invite you to come visit us. No doubt the year to come will have many challenges, but I am proud to have you, our supporters and friends, and the staff of the School for Peace standing together and working to make a difference in our society and the world.

Thank you for your continued support and for making our work possible.

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein
Director, School for Peace
Neve Shalom ~ Wahat al Salam

(Fatin AbuGosh, Roi Silberberg, Nava Sonnenschein, Harb Amara)
Dr. Roi Silberberg Joins SFP Staff

For the last 11 years, Roi has worked as a dialogue facilitator for groups in conflict and has recently joined our staff as part-time project director. As a 23-year-old student studying biochemistry and psychology at Tel-Aviv University, the ideas of conflict resolution and peace work were far from his mind until, one day, Roi began attending a university course that dealt with the relationship between men and women. As he found out, the professor teaching that course was utilizing a dialogue method that originated from the School for Peace. Finding the method particularly interesting and intrigued by its effectiveness, Roi decided to join a SFP course led by Dr. Nava Sonnenschein at Tel-Aviv University. The university course that Roi took addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it was in this class, he says, that he gained awareness and a strong sense of responsibility for the political situation in the country.

Roi says that The School for Peace truly transformed his outlook and his life, it helped him realize that he had an important role to play when it came to the conflict. After the university course concluded, Roi enrolled in a second program at the SFP to learn to become a facilitator for groups in conflict. Later on he joined and graduated from a Change Agents course for mental health professionals at the School For Peace.

During these courses, a greater sense of urgency arose within Roi and he realized that he needed to act immediately. As he worked as a facilitator, he began to intensively study Arabic. Eventually he founded his own NGO, The Association for the Promotion of Spoken Arabic (A.M.A.L) which seeks to create a more open minded Israeli society in which the Arabic language is taught as a language of peace, and in which Arabic is used to build bridges of mutual respect and understanding between Palestinians and Jews in Israel. Dr. Roi Silberberg went on to graduate from Malta University with a M.A. in Human Rights and he recently obtained his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Peace Education from The University of Haifa.

Roi Silberberg (left) speaks with Bob Fenton (right).
When asked to reflect on the future and the prospect of peace in the region, Roi said that he is certain that the present situation in the country is not sustainable. He hopes that both Jews and Palestinians will start to taking responsibility and understand that they have no choice other than learning to live together. However, it deeply worries him that these changes might be accompanied by unnecessary violence and he truly hopes this will not be the case. Bearing this in mind, he stresses the need for more SFP programs, that have helped graduates like himself, become more active in bringing peace and equality. He strongly believes that individuals working to transform the conflict should never be left alone. Moreover, he thinks that it is imperative that SFP graduates have a strong support network that enables them to achieve their goals and make an impact on society, while working for peace. As a part-time program director, Roi is currently leading a training program for literature teachers, a leadership program in mixed cities, graduates courses as well as youth encounters.

The SFP Change Agents Programs - Increasing Impact, Creating Social Action

The SFP Change Agents Programs work with Palestinians from the West Bank, Palestinian citizens of Israel and Jewish-Israelis in specific professions in order to utilize their professional expertise to create and promote positive social change. To date, professional groups that have completed this program included lawyers, medical professionals, mental health professionals, journalists, up-and-coming politicians, environmentalists, urban planners and architects. In this program, participants go through intensive workshops where they explore how national, ethnic, and professional identities affect their beliefs and their relationship with the ‘other’. They examine their profession’s relationship to the conflict, in what ways their profession might be sustaining it and above all how they can use their profession to create change. As part of the program, participants transform the
knowledge they have acquired throughout the course into social action projects. The hundreds of participants in the change agents' courses are influencing decisions in the institutions and organizations where they work, advancing equality, justice, and peace in both societies. In 2016 alone, the SFP ran five change agents programs, some in partnership with organizations from the Palestinian Authority. This is a truly commendable feat when taking into account the lack of negotiations and general feeling of despair in the region.

The five Change Agents programs operated by the SFP in 2016:

- 23 Architects, Urban Planners and Civil Engineers;
- 19 Leaders in Israel's Mixed Jewish and Arab Cities;
- 22 Environmentalists to advance environmental justice;
- 40 Up-and-Coming Politicians from Israel and Palestine;
- 16 Jewish and Arab teachers training to utilize the literature of the "other" in their classrooms.

Projects carried out by graduates of our Change Agents program this past year included:

- Establishment of a children’s library in Umm al-Hiran.
- Establishment of a Jewish-Arab forum for planners to promote planning equality and to oppose house demolitions.
- Contribution to the development of a master plan for Arab coastal town - Jisr Al-Zarqa.
- Campaign to stop the potential war in the summer of 2016
- Improvement of prison conditions for Palestinian juveniles being detained in Israeli prisons.
- Creation of a governmentally approved curriculum to teach the literature of the “other”.
- Assisting mental health professionals in addressing socio-political aspects of daily life in their work and organizing conferences to raise the awareness amongst thousands of mental health professionals about the importance of building a just and equal society.
- Protest against the destruction of the village of Umm al-Hiran.
- New media initiatives (born equal ولدوا متساوين) advancing minority rights and equality.
Up-and-Coming Politicians - Negotiating Solutions
Today, Opening Avenues of Communication for the Future

The New Year has brought new challenges to Israeli peace efforts as the government is calling for actions that will challenge any hopes for a two-state solution and lasting peace in the region. The School for Peace at Neve Shalom ~ Wahat al Salam understands that young, emerging politicians are the ones who will be determining the future of the Israeli and Palestinian societies. They are one of the most important groups in civil society given that they have the ability to make a positive and lasting impact on the current situation in the region.

For this reason, the School for Peace was awarded a grant from the European Union in order to expand its work this year and to work with up-and-coming politicians from Israel and Palestine. The program is based on the SFP’s ‘Change Agents’ model, which focuses on Palestinians and Jews with specific expertise and spheres of influence, in order to improve and utilize their skills for creating broader, long term, positive change in their societies.

By analyzing the present Knesset leadership in Israel, and focusing on trends within the Palestinian Authority, the SFP identified individuals who we believe will be moving into political leadership in the next ten years. In Israel, for example, the SFP found that today's political leaders emerged from student unions, immigrant groups, leaders in peripheral communities, the media, local governments and from those who have been involved in their political party structure from an early age. In Palestine, the political leadership is
emerging from members of national executive committees of different political parties, student unions, NGOs, labour unions and municipal councils.

These are the groups we will be focusing on and from which we will recruit a total of 120 up-and-coming politicians who will participate in this special program that we developed. Each year a group of 40 Jewish-Israelis, Palestinian-Israelis, and Palestinians from Palestine, will enter the program to meet and work together for 18 months.

For this program, the School for Peace partnered with Inmaa, a non-profit organization for development and human rights, which consists of young leaders in Palestine dedicated to justice, human rights, dialogue, non-violence, democracy, rule of law, and youth and women’s leadership development. Working together in this program, Inmaa and the SFP are helping to build a better, more democratic and inclusive society for all peoples.

This is also one of the reasons the “Up-and-Coming Politicians” program attracted funding from the European Union. The SFP is one of the few organizations that have been able to build partnerships with developing NGOs in Palestine. Considering the present political climate, this program is groundbreaking and a bold step for both organizations to undertake. The SFP was honored to receive $535,270 Euro from the European Union for this outstanding program and is working on acquiring the required matching funds of $52,000 a year for the next three years.

The first cohort of this program met in March, it consisted of 16 Jews, 8 Palestinian citizens of Israel, and 16 Palestinians from Palestine, of these, 17 were women and 23 were men. Their first meeting took place in Aqaba where the 40 participants took part in a five-day, intensive workshop. During those five days they got to know one another and they began exploring their own views, as well as one another’s views, by sharing their personal experiences and how the current political situation is affecting them and the people they live and work with.
The greatest challenge in this program has been bringing together participants from the Right and the Left, and reaching a point of understanding. Participants included members of the Israeli right-wing nationalist “Yisrael Beiteinu” political party, as well as members of the left-wing Joint Arab List. All of the program participants are active in politics, most see themselves as political activists, and many hold various positions in political parties.

The change agents program for up-and-coming politicians is built of four main components:

- **Intensive Dialogue** for 5 days in Aqaba, Jordan.
- **Field visits and joint meetings** to build relations between the peoples, develop skills and gain knowledge.
- **Negotiation workshop**- a 5-Day simulation of discussions between both sides focusing on major issues in Aqaba, Jordan.
- **Developing and implementing projects and social actions.**

In these times, when negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority are non-existent, the desire and courage of these young leaders to reach a negotiated solution is encouraging. We saw that this experience provided them with a significant learning opportunity and a chance for cooperation.
Participants Included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Israelis</th>
<th>Palestinians</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political party activists</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary assistants (present &amp; former)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders in social and/or political NGO’s</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University professors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party members with portfolios (Including: Director Generals of government offices and advisors of negotiations in political offices)</td>
<td>3</td>
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Participants also included:
- Former Israeli Consul to Russia
- Deputy mayor of an Israeli town
- Two human-rights lawyers
- Journalist
- Secretary of the Workers Regulatory Office in East Jerusalem and head of emergency unit at al-Maqasid Hospital in East Jerusalem.

As part of this program the up-and-coming politicians will develop and carry out a number of social change projects to improve society and to strengthen the possibility of a negotiated, equitable two state solution that will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At this point in the program the participants are discussing ideas for social action.

During one of the meetings a Palestinian participant brought up the issue of lack of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian emergency ambulance services in East Jerusalem. This prompted the members of the group to discuss, in subsequent meetings, adopting this issue as a project they could work on together using their combined political connections and expertise.

As well as the idea of improving emergency services in East Jerusalem, smaller groups have begun exploring the following ideas:
- Developing a Palestinian-Jewish support group that would work with the Democratic Party in the United States promoting peace and a two-state solution while being able to address concerns of the U.S. Palestinian and Jewish communities.
- Identifying “shared” aspects of society (music, culture, food) and developing a joint movement bringing people together around these aspects.
- Identifying areas where change can provide a “win-win” situation, analysing the gains and losses of each group and promoting change. This will focus on issues such as free movement, open economy, and the development of a Palestinian State.
- Translating views and stands of the Palestinians into Russian and making them accessible to the over one million Russian immigrants in Israel.

The up-and-coming politicians program which is sponsored by the EU Peacebuilding Initiative is providing an opportunity for the School for Peace to further develop its Change Agents programs and impact peace by strengthening the concept of an equitable two state solution among Palestinians and Israelis. We are already beginning to see a shift in the views of the participants in the program, but we expect the bigger change will come as these young politicians move up into more central political and decision-making positions and take with them the knowledge, experience, and relationships they have built with the ‘other’ and the understanding that negotiating peace is possible.

Meet the Politicians Who will Negotiate Future Peace

AMEER FAKHOURY

Ameer is a Palestinian-Israeli lawyer that grew up in the mixed city of Acre and currently
works as a lawyer in Haifa. As well as a degree in law, he has a master's degree in peace studies and conflict resolution and is currently completing his doctorate in political sociology at the University of Haifa. As a doctoral student, he has lectured extensively on politics and the conflict at community centers, to soldiers as well as air force officers. Ameer learned about the SFP politicians program from his wife who attended the program for city planners, civil engineers and architects, and enrolled in the program because he thought it was time to stop complaining and to start doing something. He said joining the program was "one of the best investments I ever made".

He strongly expressed that the up-and-coming-politicians program completely took him out of his 'bubble'. He talked about how he learned to talk and to listen to 'right-wingers', to establish a common language, reach agreements and even become friends. He said that the program showed him that reaching peace is 'clearly possible.' The degree that the program influenced Ameer is hard to express and put on paper. He says the connections made through the program will give him what he needs to bring about changes in the future. Ameer stated that, “In 10 years at least 20 people from the program will be members of Knesset – and they'll be the ones negotiating peace. It takes people.”

During the negotiation workshop in Aqaba, Ameer sat up all night talking with one of the participants from a right-wing political party. He was able to hear what his colleague had to say. The next morning, he saw that his colleague had posted on Facebook ideas that they had discussed together. These ideas were now being read by thousands of people from the Right who may have never been exposed to them.

Ameer is working with two other Palestinian participants in the program on the idea of developing a Jewish-Palestinian lobby that will work with the Democratic party in America. They have begun identifying key people in the U.S. political system as well as 12 states in the U.S. where Arab votes could make a difference. He knows politics can bring change and although it isn't the greatest time for shared society, times change and "we know politics can move things". Ameer is 31 years old, married with one child and another on the way. He lives in the mixed city of Haifa and his doctoral research is on identity strategies among Arab Christians in Israel.

MOHAMMAD HADYEH

Mohammad is a Palestinian who works for the Negotiation Support Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization. He first heard about the SFP’s Up-and-Coming Politicians program from one of his friends. Though he has often met with people from Israeli NGOs and civil society organizations, this was the first opportunity that he had to really get to know people as individuals, understand how they think, and try to figure out “how we got into the situation we are currently in.”
For him, the program gave him the opportunity to understand Israelis, and perhaps a bit of an understanding of the dilemma that Palestinian citizens of Israel face in their identity. As a Palestinian, he realizes that Palestinians need to work on two levels. He said, “We need to fight for our future and our dream of an independent state, but we must also act with facts on the ground, work with Israelis that believe in peace and a two-state solution, as this is the only future.”

“The Left is feeling it does not have power, and it is fearful of the rising Right and the settlers.” He feels that the Left is desperate and looking for answers and is thus willing to concede. It surprised him that Israelis still think Palestinians should give up land, instead of thinking about relocating settlers. “I find it perplexing that Israelis, even those from the Left, have given up on a two-state solution and are adopting the idea of a one-state solution.” Although, in the long run, he thinks this would be to the advantage of the Palestinians.

Understanding that the people in the program are “our partners”, and it is imperative to talk and get to know each other, Mohammad has already recommended the program to four friends and colleagues. Though he was skeptical about normalization and programs that over the last 10-15 years have not brought about change, he maintains that non-governmental, informal, and unofficial contacts and activities between private citizens or groups of individuals are very important. He emphasizes that they must address the real issues, such as the fact that the Palestinians are still facing military and settler violence and that the Israeli government is becoming more hostile.

As a result of the program, Mohammad has begun talking with Jews and Palestinians in the Jerusalem area to develop a group which will look into specific issues. He is a strong supporter of President Abbas, yet he fears that since the Palestinian people are not seeing progress towards peace and are facing continued violence, they will not support Abbas and his commitment towards peace. “With the present situation, you can’t convince the Palestinian people that the Israelis believe in peace,” says Mohammad, “but I will continue to fight for peace and a two-state solution, because I believe this is the only viable option for both people.”
Shaqued Morag was born in Brazil and grew up in Ramot HaShavim, north of Tel Aviv. In addition to being a political activist, for the past three years she has worked as the parliamentary assistant to MK Michal Rozin. She became interested in the SFP program for up-and-coming politicians when former member of Knesset, Moshe Raz, suggested that she take part in the program.

Although Shaqued had met Palestinians before through other activities, she looked forward to the opportunity to establish long-term relationships and do something meaningful throughout the year. She understood that the program was well established, would be serious, with experienced, professional staff.

She wasn't disappointed, she says, and is now talking about having "partners", as well as providing Palestinians with access to Knesset members. "I'm happy I took part in the program. The participants are very serious and we built a social network that is continuing. In fact, this week, I'll be meeting with one of the Palestinian participants to talk about working on a project together in Jerusalem." As an activist who works in Jerusalem, Shaqued hears the fear both peoples have and wants to lower the fear between both sides. In order to counter this, she is thinking of putting together a group of Jews and Palestinians from Jerusalem.

One of the unique aspects of the program, says Shaqued, is the dialogue between the Right-wing party members and the Palestinians. "When I confront them (Right-wing party members) and tell them they are racist, they dismiss me calling me a 'Leftist'. But hearing it come from the Palestinians, they had to listen. Every meeting with Palestinians, both from Palestine and Israel, opens one’s eyes. Even for us on the Left, our ideas and values were challenged.” They were challenged both by the Palestinians and the “Right-Wingers”. “In theory, everything sounds good, but one can’t only talk to people who agree with them. This was an opportunity to hear people we don’t agree with, understand the reality we live in, and figure out how to make progress together.”

Shaqued defines herself as a feminist, is active in the third sector working on issues of poverty and education, and has held various positions in the Meretz political party. She’s been living in Jerusalem for the last eight years, and holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from the Hebrew University and is working on her M.A. in Public Policy.
Arab and Jewish Urban Planners, Civil Engineers and Architects - Designing an Equitable Future Today

This year, the SFP, in partnership with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, carried out its second year-long program for urban planners, engineers, and architects. The program was attended by 1 civil engineer; 13 architects; 7 urban planners; and 2 environmental planners. Participants came from Yeruham in the south to Nazareth in the north. The meetings took place at Neve Shalom - Wahat-al Salam (NSWAS) and at the Center for Alternative Planning in Eilabun. The program began in February 2016 with a 3-day intensive encounter workshop, and later on focused on a range of issues that were connected to the conflict and the participants’ professional interests and concerns: types of governmental limitation on the ability of Arab villages and towns to expand; issues of discrimination; the different planning and development budgets that exist for Jews and Arabs; and the state as a Jewish State or a state for all its citizens.

It was important that at an early stage of the program participants addressed emotionally loaded topics such as the 1948 war, the situation of Palestinian refugees, fears of the Jewish participants, and experiences of racism and violence in Israel-Palestine. This gave participants an opportunity to discuss complex issues related to the conflict on an intellectual and sensitive level that gave them a deeper understanding of the conflict through dialogue with the ‘other’ side. For most of the Jewish participants this was the first time they were exposed to the variety of discrimination and racism that the Arab community faces from planning councils.

The Arab Center for Alternative Planning (ACAP) in Eilabun hosted the second meeting where participants learned more about characteristics and dilemmas of planning in Arab Society through a lecture and discussion with Dr. Hanna Swaid, a former Member of
Knesset from the Hadas Party, and founder of the Arab Center for Alternative Planning.

The third meeting of the group included participants from the SFP’s Change Agents program for environmentalists, offering both sets of participants an opportunity to widen their knowledge and professional networks. The meeting included an enlightening lecture by Prof. Oren Yiftachel, from Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, which dealt with the Israeli land planning regime—nationalization or dispossession. The following discussion covered a range of issues that drew on the wider range of expertise of a combined group as they considered both land planning and environmental issues in relationship to Arab-Jewish relations.

As part of the program, participants worked on social action projects. They were eager to work together and hear more about each other's ideas. Early in the program, they set up a whatsapp group to keep in contact, communicate with one another, and provide information on various planning actions and demonstrations.

In July, the group met to begin developing projects that they could implement. Melane Atrash from the Arab Center of Alternative Planning discussed what a project is and the central elements to consider when planning a project. Samer Swaid and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein gave an overview of projects initiated by other groups to give them inspiration. Good, creative ideas were generated and the participants then divided into
three groups focusing on three project ideas:

1. Developing and improving the public space, this generally does not exist in Arab towns. The group desires to initiate projects in Taybeh, Nazareth, and possibly a third location. They will focus on planning and initiating a number of specific public recreational areas.

2. A project to involve the Arab population in planning and building committees. The focus will be on establishing a requirement that representatives of the Arab population be part of any planning committee that involves the Arab population; increase citizen participation in planning; and advocating for better allocation of water for the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

3. Establishing an advocacy group to raise awareness and educate the public. The group wants to develop and carry out seminars or group lecture for planners and architecture students focusing on the planning injustices and discrimination that presently exists.

As the program continued through the year, one meeting brought together the participants from this program with graduates of the planners program that took place in 2015. This is part of a new SFP initiative to bring participants and graduates into contact with each other, increasing the impact of the programs by forming groups to work together on relevant issues. The group created a forum and network of Jewish and Arab planners which supports expertise within the planning community and can act on issues of unjust planning. The graduates reported on projects they had undertaken to advance the fair distribution of resources in land planning.

In November, the Jewish and Arab participants travelled to Wadi Ara to see how the issues they had been discussing actually impact communities on the ground. They met with Mr. Mudar Younis, Mayor of Ar’ara who shared the challenges his town faces in growing and developing, and the severe housing shortage that he needs to address. The trip provided another opportunity to build links between current participants and graduates of previous courses as the group heard a presentation by Dr. Enaya Banna, who attended the program for urban planners, architects, and civil engineers in 2015. Dr. Banna heads the Wadi Ara/Nahal Iron Planning and Building Commission, which serves seven communities,
and is the first Arab woman in Israel to head a regional building commission. Dr. Banna spoke about two current issues that the commission is addressing: the first is the struggle against the government’s intention to change the planned route of the railway line that is supposed to serve the residents of Wadi Ara, this change would make it impractical and less accessible to the Arab population; the second is the intention to expand the Jewish town Harish, to surround an Arab community and thereby inhibit its growth.

What do the participants have to say?

An Arab Participant:

I am not the same person politically, personally, or socially as I was when I started this program. The program has given me great strength to speak out and express myself in my work. I saw the struggle that Jews had in dealing with the difficulties the government creates for us. Hearing about it isn’t easy and I greatly value their willingness to hear us. […] The program is something that doesn’t exist anywhere else. It focused on problems I face daily in my work and I gained knowledge and courage to discuss them with people who weren’t aware of them before. (The Jews here) give us a spark of hope seeing that there are people that think differently.

A Jewish Participant:

This year gave me more than just knowledge; it provided a way to channel my difficulty in in being here (in the country). My passion is in doing and I received energy and support to take action. I am already becoming active in the Jewish-Arab planners forum that we have developed here.
The SFP Mixed Cities Program

In Israel there are seven cities where both Jews and Arabs live but rarely mix. Some like to refer to these as 'shared cities', however the reality is very different and these ‘mixed’ cities present special challenges especially in times of tension. This program addresses those challenges by providing an opportunity to establish 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. This year the School for Peace Mixed Cities Program had 23 participants from cities across the country; as with all SFP programs a balance was maintained between Jews and Arabs and women and men. Most of the participants continue to be active in civil society endeavors such as Sadaka-Reut, Hand in Hand, and the Neighborhood Committee in Ajami in Jaffa.

The program began in April 2016 with a weekend seminar at Neve Shalom ~ Wahat-al Salam to get the participants acquainted and prepared for discussions on sensitive and contentious issues at the heart of Jewish-Palestinian relations. After introductions, participants engaged in a facilitated workshop to deal with two pertinent issues that could potentially unbalance discussions, gender roles, and language. Simulated negotiations were then carried out to find creative solutions for the nature of the State. One participant noted that:

"The willingness of the group members to express their opinions and be challenged was commendable. The ability to struggle and not give up while taking into consideration different views and wishes was amazing!"

In May, the group met for a second time. Building on the open dialogue fostered in the previous meeting, the focus of this meeting was painful historical narratives. The meeting
began with personal updates from the group members and continued with a discussion on "Holocaust Day", which took place the day before. Professor Mustafa Kabaha gave a lecture on the Nakba and its implications for Israel’s mixed cities.

In the third meeting Shirin Natour Haffi, principal of the ORT School of Science in the mixed city of Lod, addressed the group on her work using education as a tool to advance equality. The Jews were inspired by the principal's dedication to creating change, and the Arab participants discussed the compromises one needs to make in order to gain cooperation and support from "the Jewish establishment".

Gender and women in the public sphere was the topic of the fourth meeting, which took place on July 29. Professor Hana Hertzog presented the sociological aspects of 'public' and 'private' space, and the history and development of these concepts as they relate to the role of women in society. A motif that repeated itself in her lecture was the importance of relating and interacting as equals, not just declaring and fighting for equality. She also discussed language and how it influences power relations, issues which the group had discussed among themselves in the first meeting.

On September 2, the group toured the adjoining cities of Nazareth and Nazareth Illit, meeting with the Arab members of the Nazareth Illit City Council to discuss issues of governance in a mixed city. The Arab council members discussed their struggle to establish an Arab school in the city, as an example. Although 20 percent of Nazareth Illit’s population are Arab citizens of Israel, it has no Arab schools. The participants also met with the Deputy Member of Nazareth, Mr. Yousef Iyad, himself a SFP graduate, to learn of some regional projects that the city of Nazareth is developing along with neighboring cities and local authorities, giving the participants inspiration for their own projects.

By October, the participants were beginning to plan and implement projects in their cities, and had formed a joint whatsapp group to update each other on their work. The participants then gained even more useful insights for their work as Dr. Manal Totry-Jubran, an expert in planning and land law, presented the various legal definitions of 'mixed cities'; legal aspects of the definition; and new 'developments of mixed cities' as a result of Arab populations moving into Jewish cities.

In order to focus the skills needed to develop projects the group received a training session from Shahirah Shalabi of Shatil (a non-profit providing consulting and training). The participants worked in small groups to define areas they would like to address in their projects. One group planned to initiate a local leadership group in Nazareth Illit to advance the needs of the residents. Another group, inspired by the Gazan Youth Manifesto for Change¹, decided to compile a manifesto for shared living that can be disseminated to various groups.

¹ In 2011 a group of Gazan cyber-activists published an online manifesto detailing the difficulties in their everyday lives caused by international and local players (e.g. UN, Israel, Hamas). It ends “We want three things. We want to be free. We want to be able to live a normal life. We want peace. Is that too much to ask?”
The success and longevity of School for Peace courses lies in their ability to instill a sense of responsibility in each participant to change their society for the better. Graduates of SFP courses thus remain committed to advancing social justice and learning more about the socio-political realities of Israel-Palestine. Even before this course was completed the group had taken their own initiative. First, by arranging their own trip to Jaffa to learn more about the issues faced there. Second, by making a group decision to attend a rally in Qalansawe in solidarity with its people after homes had been demolished.

Palestinian & Jewish Environmentalists: Leaders of Environmental Justice

Preserving the environment for today and the generations to come has become a central concern of people all over the world. In areas of conflict, environmental issues are frequently neglected and the impact of the conflict on the environment is often catastrophic. With this in mind, the School for Peace has created a special 12 month Change Agents program for Jewish and Arab Environmentalists in order to positively impact environmental issues in the region.

The environmentalists program began the December of 2015 and ran throughout 2016. It had 22 participants, eleven Jews and eleven Palestinian citizens of Israel. About half of all the participants are professionals working in the area of the environment and half are educators that deal with environmental justice in their classrooms. Recruitment of the Palestinian citizens of Israel was particularly challenging given that environmental issues still take a second place to many more basic needs that are unmet in that community (education, health, eldercare, etc.).

Professor Dan Rabinowitz, a member of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Tel-Aviv University and Head of the Porter School of Environmental Studies, was the educational advisor for the program. Similar to the program for Architects, Urban Planners and Civil Engineers, for most of the Jewish participants, this was the first time participants learned about the obstacles, discrimination and environmental issues that the Arab community faces.

Highlights of the Program included:

Lectures by professors and professionals in the field on:

- Climate crisis and environmental justice.
- Public transportation as an issue of environmental justice. For example, the train line that runs from Acre to Karmiel does not include plans to service the Arab towns along the way. Moreover, plans for the railroad line that were approved to run through Wadi Ara are in the process of being changed to bypass the Arab towns in the area.
- The land regime in Israel: a system of nationalization and privatization.
This in addition to a simulated peace negotiation that dealt with future relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel.

One of the meetings in this program brought together the environmentalists with the group of urban planners, architects, and civil engineers who engaged in discussion about the political situation and the national days marked by both sides days before the meeting (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Nakba Day). The combination of planners and environmentalists proved to be a success. Many ideas were generated during the meeting, including the possibility of action for change in the local arena that could bypass central authorities.

**Study Tours**
A number of study tours focusing on issues of environmental justice and injustice, particularly as they relate to the Bedouins, were integrated into this program. These included:

**Wadi Atir**, an ambitious educational ecotourism project, launched jointly by the Municipality of the Bedouin town Hura and a number of partner organizations. It is designed to leverage Bedouin traditional values, know-how, and experience with modern-day science and cutting edge technologies. This allowed participants to see how environmental action can be combined with education and entrepreneurship.

**Darrijat**, a traditional village that is not connected to the national electric grid, but instead is powered by solar energy. The village was established 150 years ago by the Abu Hamad family, peasants from the village of Dura near Mount Hebron. To this day it remains the only Arab village in the Negev that is not Bedouin and was unrecognized by the State of Israel until 2004. Lack of state recognition meant the absence of basic services, such as running water, electricity and paved roads. Over the years, the residents had to deal with the forced demolitions of homes that were built without permits because permits were unobtainable, since the village was not recognized. The visit gave participants an idea of the struggle and success of a population that is proud of its present day achievements and has integrated environmental and traditional knowledge with ecotourism.

**Umm al-Hiran** is a village founded in the 1950s by the Abu Al-Qi’an family, who were settled there by military order, after the state forcibly evacuated them from another location in the Negev. They gradually built their village and despite a complete lack of government services, they developed solar power and managed to provide local services, ensuring that their children receive an education. Today, the village is engaged in a struggle to continue to exist in its present location as the government wants to destroy it and replace it with a newly planned Jewish town, Hiran. As a result of the visit some members of the group decided, on the eve of Eid al-Fir, to contribute a library of books and games to the village.
**Kibbutz Lotan** which is an ecotourism site that provides courses, desert hikes and other environmental programs and the **Arava Institute**, a leading environmental and academic institution with an “Off-Grid Technology Hub.” Both sites include model rural and urban structures as well as alternative forms of heating and lighting. The Arava Institute also showcases biogas, hydroponic plants, alternative cooking technologies, along with desalination and solar water pumping technologies. The School for Peace has an ongoing relationship with the Arava Institute as it works facilitating their student groups.

**Social Action Project**

In July, the participants of the program met with Professor Rabinowitz and Dubi Moran, an expert on internet and social media. The focus of the meeting was to gain knowledge on environmental action and begin a group project mapping the nature and danger levels of environmental hazards in the country. The project had participants identifying and photographing environmental hazards in their towns, and collecting data on the damage caused. The group then prepared an album of photos with the information they collected and made it accessible on the internet. Through the project, participants were able to become familiar with environmental issues where they lived or worked, identify and research them and bring them to the attention of the public.

Participants also carried out various social action efforts. Following the tour in the south and meetings with the residents of Umm al-Hiran a number of participants established a library for the children of the village. They collected books, magazines, games, and equipment. The library was established and is now used as a place for enrichment and educational activities for children of the village. Arab participants also brought up the idea of establishing an NGO to involve and support environmental professionals from the Arab community. These professionals will work for environmental justice and to improve the environment. The initiative was received enthusiastically and participants organized a founding conference in January 2017 that included participants of the new SFP environmentalists program slated to begin in January 2017.

**What do the participants have to say?**
Jewish Participants:

“I was very surprised to discover that our Arab friends feel there is injustice and lack of equality. I realized how hard and frustrating it is, even for successful professionals.”

“The program has influenced how I work, making me sensitive to equality in planning. I even advocate for affirmative action that will benefit the Arab communities by investing more money.”

Arab Participants:

“When I began the program, I was in a very different place. Before the program I never talked about how I felt as an Arab. I was afraid that I would be silenced, but the group allowed me to talk and be heard. I was really empowered and shown that it is legitimate to speak up.”

“The fact that we are all together, Jews and Arabs, for a full year should not be taken for granted. I am energized, we have worked together and it has led to something.”

“In my job at the water authority, I suggested combining planning with international investors in the water and sewage infrastructure in the West Bank to combine it with the master plan and area plan of the water authority, to save resources and budgets. The proposal is developing in the right direction.”
In September, the School for Peace conducted its opening activity for the 2016-2017 scholastic year. The event featured a meeting and panel discussion with MK Ayman Odeh, the Head of the Joint Arab List Party, and Avrum Burg, former Speaker of the Knesset, Knesset Member, Chairman of the Jewish Agency and interim President of Israel. Burg called for establishing a 'truly left', joint party composed of an equal number of Arabs and Jews; men and women who will lead efforts both for peace and for economic equality. Odeh spoke of the magic of living in a place characterized by contrasts and differing colors, where there is equal room for the other and where all are committed to the challenge of living together. He remarked that such a paradigm could be a basis for a future shared existence in the region. School for Peace director Nava Sonnenschein, together with program coordinators Harb Amara and Roi Silberberg, presented the current work of the School for Peace and plans to expand the Change Agents training programs; further develop university courses; and programs to catalyze social action through the formation of groups associated with their professional fields.
In December, graduates of five SFP teachers' courses held their first graduates’ program follow-up meeting at the School for Peace. The teachers training program included teachers from Israel and Palestine, and the graduates’ meeting was attended by Tahsin Yakin, the Director for Gender Issues at the Ministry of Education in the Palestinian Authority, a participant in the SFP's first “Two People Write from Right to Left” program in 2012.

Two teachers from the SFP’s literature teachers program developed a follow-up project which brought had their students from Ramat Hasharon and Kfar Kana visiting each other’s schools for a day of shared learning and community building. Central to the events held in each school was learning the literature of the other. President Reuven Rivlin awarded this project a special award for educational initiatives which will help the project continue next year.

The Literature Teachers’ Program also stimulated the development of an experimental curriculum for Israel's schools that want to teach the literature of the other. This project was approved by Israel's Schools National Supervisor of Literature and in the coming years can be adopted by any school in Israel. The curriculum was written by program participants from the Jewish Branco Weiss School in Rehovot and the Arab Mariah School in Al-Jadeida. The program includes the poem "Think of Others" by Mahmoud Darwish, and the poem "There are Flowers" by Natan Yonatan, and it brings together Jewish and Arab 12th graders and their teachers.

The second graduate follow-up meeting consisted of a lecture and discussion by Dr. Maram Masrawi on critical education, with an emphasis on the teachings of Paulo Freire. Dr. Masrawi emphasized the important connection between values education and the socio-political context in which our teachers work. The School for Peace and the teachers...
are currently discussing the initiation of a conference for the end of the year, which will try to get recognition as a national in-service training for teachers. We hope to carry out the conference in cooperation with Beit Berl College and Al-Qasemi Academy.

Facilitators Training Program

In 2016, the School for Peace carried out two of its highly demanded training programs for Jewish and Arab facilitators working with groups in conflict. Participants in the course include individuals from various educational professions; researchers of Jewish Arab relations; and individuals responsible for programs that work with Arabs and Jews. The first program this year was with AJEEC, Arab-Jewish Center for Equality Empowerment and Cooperation for Bedouins in the Negev, for their activists and others interested in promoting peace and shared society. In December the SFP successfully completed its 34th facilitator training course. The program includes an experiential component comprising intensive workshops over two weekends, a series of lectures providing a theoretical background to the approach on which the facilitation is based, as well as development of practical facilitation skills through peer facilitation.

Teacher Training for NSWAS and Hagar School Staff was carried out in three on-day meetings where teachers discussed challenges and practical aspects of working in the bilingual, binational, multicultural educational setting.

Youth Encounters continue to be important and this year the SFP carried out youth encounters between the Givat Brener & Nazareth schools and between the Ohel Shem school in Ramat Gan and the high school in Kfar Kanna.
Weekend Dialogue Seminar for NSWAS Candidates was held by the SFP where 20 Jewish and Palestinian families interested in joining the community came together in dialogue addressing central issues important to the NSWAS community. This helps those interested in joining the community get a taste of and understand the issues of living together.

Conflict and Conscience: From Personal Journey to Public Action is a new book outlining the effect the SFP has had on its graduates. In it SFP graduates talk about their SFP experience. Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, the director of the SFP, has finished compiling and editing the book which we hope to publish in 2017.

SFP Director Invited to the 2016 Global Peacebuilders Summit
SFP Director, Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, was invited along with peace builders from 30 conflict zones around the world to attend the Global Peacebuilder Summit in Berlin. The conference was sponsored by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the Culture Counts Foundation, Breuninger Stiftung, the Berghof Foundation, Ashoka and the network “der kongress tanzt”. The conference took place September providing a rare opportunity to meet activists from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Belarus, Serbia, Nigeria, Kenya, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, northern India, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and Colombia and more. Nava shared that it was interesting and inspiring to hear from the participants about their work, which in many cases involves long term personal risk. This special meeting was an empowering experience. One of the issues raised was the resilience required by peace builders and human rights activists. Participants discussed issues such as the price paid by women in areas of conflict, the issue of exclusion of religious or ethnic groups shared in many national conflicts, the importance of identifying the key factors of conflict rather than just treating the symptoms. The Summit provided participants with the opportunity for mutual learning about work for peace and human rights, clarification of common challenges and discussion about issues that need to advance at the local and global level. One of the issues that arose was the need to deal with government attempting to limit civil society initiatives and the threats felt by organizations working to promote human rights and peace in conflict areas. Participants talked about the urgency of setting up a joint body to protect the rights of organizations who feel at risk and stressed the need to maintain contact.
The SFP on Campus Shaping the Future

University Courses are an important way to influence young adults who will be moving into the mainstream of Israeli society. These School for Peace courses give students an opportunity, through semester courses, to deeply explore the issues of Jewish-Palestinian relations and get to know the views and needs of 'the other'. The SFP is constantly seeking to expand its university programs and this year added two new courses at the University of Haifa along with the courses already being taught at Tel-Aviv University and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

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 2017, 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.

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