A Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

As a graduate of the School for Peace and staff member for the last fourteen years, I was honored to have received the support and confidence of the staff and board of the NSWAS educational institutions in being chosen as the new director of the School for Peace. I began in October 2020 with the challenge of filling Nava's 'big shoes' and building the direction for the future.

I'm happy to say that I feel very much at home and look forward to carrying the organization forward.

The arson attack at the SFP this September left us with the big challenge of rebuilding the school and raising the necessary funds. I am happy to say that after the fire we were able to quickly organize and find additional space in the village to continue our important work. The support we received from all of our friends in the region and abroad helped us once again realize how significant the School for Peace is to all of us.

The political situation in the country reminds us on a daily basis that there are few places where Jews and Palestinians can meet and work together as equals and the uniqueness of our work and methodology has become much more apparent and indispensable.

In the coming years, the SFP will work to help our graduates become more active and influential in peace activities. Based on our unique voice, we will strengthen our connections with peace activists nationally and internationally as we continue operating our important programs. The SFP should become a center of peace education developing theoretical and practical knowledge for social change towards equality and peace.

We thank you for your ongoing trust, support and partnership in working for peace and equality and I look forward to meeting you. May the coming year bring us all health and vision for a better future.

Sincerely,

Dr' Roi Silberberg
A Letter from the Former Director

Dear Friends,

In 2020 I was proud to complete eight years working as the director of the School for Peace. Moving from this management position I thought it important to pass on the task to one of the young talented members of our staff and a serious selection process was developed that resulted in the staff recommending, and the board accepting Dr. Roi Silberberg as the new director.

I was asked to take on the directorship of the SFP after the tragic death of Ahmad Hijazi and his son Adam who were killed in a car accident on a family vacation. It was a difficult period as the SFP and the whole NSWAS community was in shock and mourning. Ahmad was in the height of his work as director of the SFP when he died. It was a difficult and painful void to fill.

These past eight years have been significant as SFP continued to develop its "Change Agents' School" programs reaching out to different professional sectors and teaching Jews and Arabs to promote sociopolitical change in their fields. The goal was, and still is, to build a strong group of professionals dedicated and working to promote equality and peace, the end the occupation, and build shared society.

During the past eight years the SFP ran four year long change agent programs for planners, architects and engineers in conjunction with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning. We ran five programs for leaders in mixed cities; two programs for lawyers; three programs for up and coming politicians; four programs for mental health professionals and three programs for environmentalists and eight courses for facilitators to facilitate groups in conflict. We now have some 680 Palestinian and Jewish graduates from these programs which have allowed us to begin building our graduate community network, which we will continue to develop in the years to come. It will help our graduates develop projects in different areas of the country in order to bring about social and political change.

The courses we teach at Israel universities have continued throughout the
years, and each year we taught 3-4 full credit university courses with a total of 640 students. As well as the courses at Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Ben Gurion Universities, we built relations with new academic institutions, starting to teach the course at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design and the Ruppin Academic Center. SFP will continue to expand this program to more colleges and universities in the country.

During my time as director we renewed the SFP research center under the direction of Ameer Fakhoury which publishes articles and other writings. The research center held a groundbreaking conference on "Constitutionality, Constitution and Sovereignty - A Comparative and Theoretical Perspective" in conjunction with by the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University and the Walter Lebach Institute of Tel Aviv University in 2019. This year a book was published by the three institutions with the content and name of the conference.

The SFP staff began to work with other non-profits providing professional consultation to joint Jewish-Palestinian organizations. During my time as director my approach was to discover and strengthen the unique talents, skills and potential of every staff member.

2020 was a challenging year as the Covid 19 pandemic affected us all. We had to run the three university courses over the internet, which was very different than in the past where Jewish and Arab students had a face to face human contact. We managed to continue our other programs, working outdoors, providing masks and outdoor heaters and blankets, while following the rules of social distancing. The large hall in the Fred Segal Friendship Library was divided with plastic into two 'capsules' to accommodate small groups. We have been holding meetings over the internet, and even held some meetings where some participants were at the SFP and others participated through the internet. As always our view was to "make it work and never give up" and we are doing it and continuing to recruit participants for new programs.

As I was finishing my tenure as director, on the first and the sixth of September the building that houses the SFP classrooms was twice
deliberately set on fire. Police found it was arson and the class rooms where we had conducted thousands of hours of dialogue, were destroyed by a painful act of hatred. Many people came to visit and show their support for the SFP including members of the joint list political party; the ambassadors from the European Union, Slovakia and Belgium. We said we must continue our important work for peace and equality, and we continued to recruit new participants for our change agents' courses that were scheduled to begin; facilitators training, performing artists and university courses, and continue those that we were currently running.

Professor Amia Lieblich wrote a book on Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam called, "Against All Odds" and this is how the staff felt as we continued our work. MK Aida Toma, from the joint list political party, said when she came to visit: "It is known in the world that during a war or conflict it is forbidden to burn churches, synagogues and mosques. The School for Peace is also an educational institution that should not be burned." But the police closed the investigation and did not find who set our work for peace on fire. I wonder why? We have not given up and are determined to continue promoting peace, shared society, equality, and ending the occupation through dialogue and activism.

At the SFP I will be embarking on a new path continuing to manage a number of projects including our graduate community with Harb Amara, and facilitating a number of change agents' courses, developing new ideas and ensuring the continuation of the School for Peace.

I really love and enjoy this work, believe it is important for building a healthy society, and look forward to continue contributing to the SFP. I wish Dr. Roi Silberberg much success in his new role and look forward to supporting him as our work continues to impact on the world we live in. I extend my sincerest thanks to you, our dear supporters who have stood by me and the SFP allowing us to grow and continue our work. With great appreciation of all of your support over the years and much admiration and thanks to the dedicated staff of the School for Peace.

Dr. Nava Sonnenschein
Arson Attack at the School for Peace

In September, the opening day of the primary school, the village woke up to a difficult reality as the School for Peace became a target of an arson attack. During the night the main building was burned down and five of the seven classrooms sustaining heavy damage. The building in which so many peace activists had been trained, thousand of dialogue groups had met, and where the word “peace” was spoken countless times, turned into smoldering ruins. A week later, in the early morning hours a second arson attack was carried out in the Fred Segal Peace Library. The building survived an event that could have been much larger and more dangerous if not for the automatic fire suppression system. This is not the first time the village has experienced hate crimes, however it is the first time they have been so violent.

Following the event the staff of the School for Peace quickly organized and moved their headquarters to Fred Segal Peace and Friendship Library and was able to continue its work without any delays. We are now working hard to raise the funds needed to rebuilding and expand the destroyed building as our work for peace and justice continues.

Our colleague, fellow activist and senior facilitator at the SFP, Samer Swaid expressed what we all felt:

“In this place I have spent hundreds or thousands of hours facilitating groups of Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians; we conducted equal dialogue so contrary to the asymmetrical power relations outside the room. Some time ago there was a "tag mehir" hate attack on the village, and now arson. Though the building was burned, the idea is still alive and we will act to strengthen it.”
Creating Agents of Change

Leaders in Mixed Cities

The 2020 program for leadership in the mixed cities marked the fourth year of this program. Its goal is to build leadership that will work to bridges differences and alleviate tensions between the two populations living together, but separately in the same city. This year’s program had 19 participants and the majority is involved in non-profit or community organizations, are educators, or social workers. A number of the participants do not live in a mixed city but work in one of Israel's seven mixed cities.

The meetings in this program highlighted the three main components: dialogue, learning and carrying out initiatives.

Highlights of this year's program included:

- Lecture by Knesset Member Sami Abu Shehadeh from the Joint Arab Political Party discussing the Arab population in mixed cities and
The participants in this program began working on initiatives and had ideas for:

- Creating road signs in mixed cities with the Palestinian names that existed before the establishment of the state.
- Developing tools for stimulating dialogue between Arab and Jewish children.
- Putting together narrative tours of the mixed city of Jaffa.
- Creating a women's writing group in mixed cities.
- Promoting housing issue for the Palestinian population in Jaffa.

Discussion with Ms. Maha Freij, Executive Director ACCESS - Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services in Dearborn Michigan. Fifty percent of Dearborn's population are Arabs and she talked about the Palestinian-American community and their identity as a minority in America.

Meetings in the mixed city of Haifa with Dr. Roly Rosen who gave a lecture and led a discussion on how the residents of Haifa, perceive relations between Arabs and Jews. She pointed out that local identity of Haifa residents is much different than those in other mixed cities. In Haifa, both Jewish and Arab residents think of the Arabs and Jews a one group of residents, where in other cities Arabs and Jews describe their mixed city as having two different and distinct populations.

Meeting at the Mousawa Center which has developed a shared space in the community which includes student residences, an art gallery and offices of NGOs. This combination contributes to sense of a shared city. Discussion also focused on the solidarity project of the Center that builds collaborations that include Arab and Ethiopian activists and other groups such as Russian immigrants.
“I think I understood better the complexity and necessity of changing the situation regarding the relations between Jews and Palestinians in mixed cities as well as in other parts of the country”.

A Jewish Participant

“I spoke with my family about our visit to Tsuba and the displacement of the Arab population during the Independence War. The next day my daughter talked to her class explaining that there is another side to the Zionist narrative. And that others were killed and uprooted.”

Jewish Participant

“The meeting with the ‘other’ made me change the way I perceive the other. It allowed me to look at myself from their position and think with a new perspective.”

Arab Participant

Quotes from Participants:
In 2020 the lawyers' course in human rights covered 15 sessions which included dialogue workshops in a bi-national and uninational settings; theoretical lectures on human rights law; workshops on how to develop and implement projects to impact human rights law; and a tour.

The dialogue workshops created a common safe place for in-depth discussions with the purpose of formulating syntax of Jewish-Arab partnership within Israeli society. In this framework participants focused on understanding the power structure in society which results in discrimination and forms the foundation in which cooperation and equality needs to be forged. The discussion allowed participants to become familiar with the national narrative of 'the other' and the diversity within the groups. Although the social and political reality is difficult, the group managed to create an honest, meaningful and challenging atmosphere enabling good dialogue.
A 42-year-old Jewish participant shared with the group that the monthly meetings stayed with him throughout the month and is the most powerful meetings he has been a part of.

A 38-year-old Palestinian shared with the group that even though she is not young anymore, this is the first time she has become acquainted and fully listened to the Zionist Jewish perspective.

A 33-year-old Palestinian Arab expressed that although he didn't agree with everything the 'other' was saying, he felt secure enough in his intent that it is worthwhile to start working together to formulate agreements and partnerships.

The theoretical segment of the program included lectures and discussions that enriched the group's knowledge and included:

△ Analysis of Israel's regime in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Professor Oren Yiftachel.
△ The rights of Palestinian Prisoners - the personal and collective, with Attorney Abeer Baker.
△ Legal Struggles for Civil Rights - a comparative historical perspective, with Dr. Yael Shternhel.
△ Violence in Arab Society, with civil activists Fedaa' Taba'aony.
△ On history and its presentation in the framework of the Jewish and Palestinian narratives, with Professor Hillel Cohen.
△ The Arab-Jewish partnership versus Jewish supremacy, with the journalist Miron Rapaport.
△ The Need to Establish a "Democratic Camp", with Attorney and MK Ayman Odeh.
△ The Role of Human Rights Lawyers in Civil Society and the Human Rights Movement, with Attorney Michael Sfard.

The program also included a tour of the Bedouin Village of Laque with Attorney Huda Abu Obaid; viewing of the film "The Rule of Law"; and two seminars on initiating, planning and implementing social action projects in civil society.
Change Agents Course or Performing Artists

The SFP is always looking to broaden its ability to promote peace and find innovative ways to disseminate the message of equality and social justice. Art is an effective platform in addressing issues outside of the consensus and pushed out of the public discourse; many artists are deeply concerned and committed to social issues and seeking to bring about change. This program has been developed for artists who are interested in creating social and political works in theatre, film and photography. Through art it is possible to broaden the scope of public discussion and expose the public to different aspects and issues that need to be addressed.

This initiative grew out of a meeting between the political artist Einat Weizmann Shahira Shalabi organizational advisor and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein. Weizmann is an actress, director, playwright and political activist whose plays, performances and events are around documentary theatre that is used as an investigative tool into the hidden spots of the Israeli reality. In the meeting the idea came up of initiating a program to help performing artist translate their social concerns into their professional and artistic works. Recruiting artists, especially during the Corona pandemic was not easy; however in October 2020 this new program began with 18 participants, including 12 Jews and 6 Arabs; 11 women and 7 men. The practical component of the program will involve participants developing a project which they will present at different stages, to the group. This new direction for the SFP presents an exciting development which will open new creative avenues to reach out to the public.

The program will continue into 2021
Environmental Justice

In 2008 the SFP conducted their first course on environmental justice which included Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority. In 2015 and in 2018 the School for Peace operated an additional two programs for environmentalists helping them advance environmental justice. In 2020, SFP held its fourth program for Jewish and Arab environmentalists working in Israel. The program focused on the meeting points between the environment and the Jewish-Arab-Palestinian conflict, providing participants the ability to create working relationships and influence environmental issues impacting minorities and disadvantaged groups in the country. The program ran throughout 2020 with 11 Jewish and Arab participants and the majority of the meetings were held over the internet.

Danny Rabinowitz, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University, and Chairman of the Association for Environmental Justice in Israel, acted as academic consultant when we first developed the program and presented in a number of the meetings this year.

Conducting the program in 2020 was a challenge. We could not conduct the field trips and most of the meeting were conducted over the internet. Never the less participants had a decent dialogue and learned about the main challenges in the region. Lectures and discussions included: an introduction to environmental justice; struggles and collaborations on issues of environmental justice in the world and in Israel; post-colonial theories and their connection to conflict and environmental justice; the real estate regime in Israel and Palestine and its implications for society and the environment; the connection between national movements and environmental catastrophes; climate change and issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their environmental significance. The participants were excited to meet together in the final meeting. They shared their frustration of carrying out most of the program over the internet and were thankful for the opportunity to carry out the course during the Covid Pandemic.
Building a Community of Graduates

We have always been encouraged by graduates of our programs, many who went on to become leaders in peace and human rights activities and most who continued to work on some level promoting peace and justice between Jews and Palestinians, (The Power of Dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, Sonnenschein 2019).

In 2020, we took the first formal step to building a community of graduates pulling together individuals who share the SFP values and are acting or wish to act in bringing about change in our society. The idea began in 2019 when we surveyed our graduates seeking to understand what they have gained from the programs they attended, and questioning how we can help them in taking action to bring about needed changes. What we found was that they wanted to meet again with those they connected with in their program, exchange ideas, build deeper relationships and work together. As a result, three groups were formed: architects, engineers and town planners; mental health professionals; and leaders from mixed cities. Each group met 3 – 5 times in 2020 seeking a way to express their concerns through social action. Each group had their own interests, and in every group graduates pulled together to work for change.

Planners

The planners held a meeting in December 2019 addressing the issues of annexation as the Israeli government talked about annexing parts of 'area C' in the Occupied Territories. A project developed called "Finger on the Pulse", which organized a conference on June first and petition signed by 400 architects, urban planners, and engineers, opposing the government's annexation plan. A group planned an exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum on architecture that can be culturally
sensitive to the past and present Arab population; and a group developed a city plan that was culturally sensitive development of the Arab town of Kfar Kara. A central issue in Arab towns is the growing population and the government’s refusal to grant building permits because the lack of overall city development plans. As part of this issue a group of graduates formed, "Harish L'an"; working advancing just division of land resources in the Wadi Ara area. In that area, Harish a new Jewish city has made plans to expand into land that is desperately needed for the natural growth of the Arab towns in the area. In Akko, a project began to turn neglected city space into community meeting places.

Mental Health Professionals:
The mental health professionals involve 300 graduates of which 80 to 120 participated at various times. They were active in trying to prevent the arrest and trial of children by the Israeli military in the occupied territories and worked to ease the suffering of incarcerated children. An internet journal, "Tarbotipoliti" began dealing with the connection between psychology and politics, radical psychology and activism, and treatment which is aware of social and political aspects of life in the region. One participant developed an online program to teach Arab university students how to teach Arabic in Jewish schools.

Leadership in Mixed Cities:
The graduates from the program for leaders in mixed cities come from Akko, Carmiel, Ramla, Lod, and Nof Hagalil. Out of their meetings developed a project teaching Arabic to Jews in Ramla. Another project that began engaging 300 new immigrants
from the former Soviet Union in a whatsapp group teaching them Hebrew and enlightening them on socio-political issues related to the Arab population. A group from Nof Hagalil, next to Nazareth, increased activities of Arabs and Jews living in the city. Another group is working on making town planning computer program accessible in Arabic and a graduate from Tel Aviv Jaffa is working on advancing Arab names of streets in Jaffa in order to maintain the Arab history of the city.

An interdisciplinary group of lawyers, planners, leaders from mixed cities and mental health professionals is working on opening rural Jewish towns to the Arab population.

SFP graduates have many rich ideas which they want to implement in order to bring about change in the world they live in and with minimal support, they can accomplish a great deal. In 2021 we will continue building our graduate community, providing them with a 'platform'; a community and support system of professional consultation and some financial backing to empower them to act to promote peace and justice in the region.
Training facilitators in the School for Peace method of working with groups in conflict is an important part of the SFP’s work in spreading the knowledge it has developed over the years. We have taught this course for forty years, adjusting and refining it with what we learn from our work in the field. In this year’s course we suddenly faced a new challenge as the second wave of the Covid virus struck and social distancing became the modus operandi. As this course involves intensive participation, observation and feedback with participants it made its operation over the internet impossible. Facing the challenge, the SFP moved the program to the outdoors holding the majority of the meetings in the courtyard of the Fred Segal Friendship Library. An awning was put up in the courtyard for the sunny days, and portable heaters and blankets were brought out for the colder days. Despite the difficulties, the course had 17 participants, 9 Palestinian and 8 Jewish citizens of Israel. Participants in this course were many who work in peace and coexistence groups such as Givat Haviva, Hand in Hand, AJEEC, Sadaka-Reut and more; five graduates of the SFP change agents program who wanted to learn facilitation; and one member of Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam’s second generation. The course will continue through the Spring 2021.
An Interview with Michal Fruchtman
SFP Graduate of Program for Mental Health Professionals

I was born in England and lived there until the age of 3, and then spent part of my childhood in Israel and part in the US. In 1973 just before the Yom Kippur War, I made Aliyah. When I made Aliyah to Israel I didn’t know anything about the Jewish-Arab relations here. I had one friend from childhood, who said if you want to be Israeli, join the army. We were at Mitzpe Shalem, above the Dead Sea. Gradually I became more aware of things. Hiking around I would see abandoned homes with overgrown cactus; it wasn’t clear who had lived there. As I matured I started to understand what had happened, but I don’t know how or why.
Tell me about your first encounter at the School for Peace.

In many ways it was a very disturbing experience. To confront the story that I already knew on some level but not really... to experience how I appear to Palestinian citizens of Israel...

The whole process of having my eyes opened was not an easy one. I look at my father now 93 years old, who today harks back to situations in South Africa and sees what is going on here... My father as a young adult secretly taught Blacks to read and write, in Soweto. He is torn from within... We did not know, he tells me, your mother and I did not understand in advance what was really happening here. It's not the story we were told. We had a choice... It's very hard, very hard. The understanding... the societal process...

You can't go in a direction where you are forced to suppress your humanity more and more... Somehow I am struggling against losing the connection to this place, because I'm not connected to anywhere else. Even when I was in high school here in Israel for a year, all the national songs and the poetry I learned. Gradually I began to understand more and more about the history, why there was a disconnect. I didn’t know, before; how could I not know? This is a question that has stayed with me. How could my parents not have known? That whole question of how is it possible not to see something. But that's the thing about human consciousness. It’s not a matter of evil, or of arrogance, it’s...[long pause] it’s something that the soul doesn’t let in, because it’s incomprehensible. You know...[long pause]... the awareness is also somehow circular so that you can simultaneously know and not know all kinds of things. The depth of the knowing is circular. We are stuck.

I’ll tell you about something that happened after the last mental health graduates meeting. I didn’t want to even talk about the subject of the arrests of Palestinian children, I said to Tova no, everyone here already knows about all this stuff, it’s really superfluous. And Tova didn’t let me not talk. I told her that with this audience it would be ridiculous to talk about this stuff, but she didn’t let me not talk, so I talked and first of all, one saw how it resonated very strongly with the people there and it was very important for people that I had talked about it. There was this woman who telephoned me a few days later who had not spoken at the time.
She told me that after I spoke she understood that there was a process taking place with the arrest and trial of minors in the occupied territories that was not just a legal issue, but one important to mental health.

We are talking about someone who totally understands the situation, who wants to be active, who is active, involved, who sees everything with a critical eye – yet again that ability, as if there is some kind of crack in consciousness that things fall into and until there isn’t some kind of movement there, you don’t know. You can roam around this country and the question is nagging at you in your head as an adult and as a person; how the hell is there suddenly a grove of trees here in the middle of nowhere. And the penny doesn’t drop. There’s no “click.” And it’s terrible. Afterwards you are walking around with this terrible guilt. The question was right there, so why didn’t you go ahead and look into it? The question comes up each time, but it isn’t enough in your awareness. And until you become aware - you are not aware.

Tell me about your activism

To my regret I am not active enough.

But, in the framework of PsychoActive there were all kinds of things... we organized conferences... There were several conferences. The most powerful
of them, from my standpoint, was a conference we organized on the Nakba, when the “Nakba Law” was adopted. We wrote a report published by Defense of Children International-Palestine and we appended the opinion of Israeli psychologists, which was very significant. Then I joined a group that wrote an article for publication in Israeli Psychology. … I lectured at conferences in Israel, and one time abroad.

What kind of responses did you get?

In Israeli psychology of course the biggest defense among mental health professionals was that we were injecting politics into a space of mental health where it did not belong. But beyond that the thing we did was to go as observers at the trials. It’s unbelievable what goes on there. Of course it’s a ritual whose ending is known in advance as 99.7 percent or maybe it’s 97.9 percent of the children are found guilty. They get out on a plea bargain or they rot in prison. And what is a plea bargain? It means that there is actually no evidence, but the child confesses because it’s the fastest way to get out of jail.

-- Really, truly, I don’t do enough, It is a matter of the balance between work and family, the burdens of work and of family -- No, I am not active enough but yes, it is a central part of my life. And I am always looking for a way to do something that maybe would be a little more meaningful.

That’s the feeling there is today; it’s the choice society is making. There are no words to oppose it. To say that something is immoral -- Who cares? Who cares if the society is moral or not? And with all the blindness, this is not the society we grew up in. We grew up within that crack, but the message was that we have to be moral. The message was that there is a truth, whether you see it or not there is a truth and it can be discovered. Today there isn’t – lies and truth have the same weight. And I think that’s part of what is so paralyzing. I am so grateful to Parents Against Child Detention that they were suddenly there to look at this now. It’s the activism that you are trying to do, not to concede despite the situation, bring people back to activism and a place where I can encounter people who understand that yes, there is still meaning.
An Interview with Amal Oraby Hussein
SFP Graduate of Program for Lawyers

I was born in Deir Hanna, in the north of Israel, to parents who were manual labourers. I'm the second of four children and over the last four years I've moved between: Jerusalem, Ramala, and now live in Haifa. I studied law at Haifa University and have a master's in urban and regional planning from the Hebrew University. When I participated in the SFP program for lawyers I was working on my master's degree.

I am now working at Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Jewish-Arab Equality and am responsible for the project preventing violence in Arab society. I'm part of a group of young Arab Palestinian activists in Haifa and I volunteer with a non-profit association providing treatment for sexual assault survivors in Arab society.

Tell me about your experience as a participant in the [change agents'] course for lawyers that you participated in [at Neve Shalom].

I was persuaded to take the course at the School for Peace by a Jewish friend who also was in the course. She said, "You don't talk to Jews and I don't talk to Arabs, we do talk with each other. Let's go somewhere where there are people like us, and we'll sit and talk."
After we went to the first meeting, I realized I was coming to the right place. Unlike other places where I have participated as "the Arab", "the activist", "the Palestinian", I did not feel threatened at Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam. And I was surprised to find that a lot of Palestinians I know were in the room with me.

With each meeting, I felt that I was peeling away another layer of myself until at a certain moments I felt that we were conducting a dialogue that was intellectual and profound and that did not distinguish between the personal, the professional and the political. I began to use my trips to the meetings and my time in the course as an opportunity to learn and think.

I'd like you to say a bit more about the defensive posture and about peeling away another layer each time.

Being defensive is something internalized in my personality. I'm used to being in settings where I cannot fully reveal myself as an Arab. I did an internship at the Ministry of Justice and understood it was a place where I couldn't talk freely. At SFP, since we were all lawyers, we're not starting from zero. We are here as lawyers discussing legislation, and law, and we share beliefs and values of equality and justice. A good lawyer, when he/she doesn't know something, is silent and then goes and learns. When a lawyer presents an argument that is not normative, not based on the law or ethics, it is thrown out. At the SFP we are not sitting in the courtroom, but we are not sitting around smoking a Narghilah either.

Here, at the SFP program, the setting creates some kind of equality of power between us, even though it's a kind of fiction, it enables us to talk. We are all lawyers and our professional experience provides us with a foundation to begin from. When I was young, and came to a youth encounter at NSWAS all I knew was that the Jews cheated us, and that was the only thing that was important. Now I found that both the Jews and the Arabs were listening to me and understanding what I was saying, appreciating it, just as I herd them and valued what they were saying.

That was missing for me before. Suddenly I saw that I could have discussion with Arabs and Jews that were real and not superficial; with people whose understanding is similar to mine and who listened. I couldn't find fault in that, so I started to shed my layers of defence.
Yes.
What did you learn about yourself, about the other side, your group, your nationality...?

I think learning something new kept me going in the course. I learned new things from people who were experts in the field; I read and studies materials. Before coming to the meetings I was in touch with the facilitators or called people in the group to ask what they had read and what they thought about it? That kept me going. I don't believe that just meeting together makes change. I believe in knowledge, professionalism, thinking - the best thing anyone can give me is a new idea or insight. The lecturers and discussions were excellent for that.

During the course, I began learning how to talk to Jews and came to understand their perspective. There are differences in their approach. There are intellectuals; people into action, doing; ambitious people; conservatives, and I saw how each relates to a particular issue. When I start to see the differences in the group, the fear that I had of the Jewish collective starts to gradually dissolve. When this is supported in a learning process the intense fear and suspicion of the "other", starts to dissipate. This allowed me to start to talk about what I really thought and share my whole story. In the beginning, I was more nervous; I would give speeches,
instead of engaging in a dialogue. And gradually I started to learn how the group dynamic works. Not in terms of Jews and Arabs, but how I am, within the group. In the end I was able to understand diverse approaches and not be concerned about us all agreeing.

After the course, did it push you to do more volunteering or more activism?

After the course, for the first time, people, lawyers, were listening to me, to what I was saying, and I was having an impact on them. They were having an impact on me. There was a certain dynamic in me that had changed. I don't think something like that could have come about if I hadn't been through that process at Neve Shalom. Not because I understood at Neve Shalom that partnership is the way, but because there was a very significant inner obstacle that fell apart: the defensive posture, the anticipation that Jews either don't know or want to know about the Arabs experience here. I sought work in several human rights organizations and decided to go work at Sikkuy, because I thought I could integrate my knowledge of law and planning and suddenly I liked the idea of working in a joint Arab and Jewish organization. And the course improved my ability to organize my thoughts and express them verbally or in writing. I don't worry any more about my identity; I approach things as someone who is open.
The year 2020 marked the 30th year that the course, "the Jewish–Arab Conflict in the Mirror of Theory and Practice" was taught, at the Tel Aviv University in its Psychology Department. In addition, for the first time, SFP began teaching the course at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, and continued teaching it at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. At Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion University 10 Jewish and 10 Arab students participated and at Bezalel there were 6 Arab and 5 Jewish students. The SFP has been teaching this course at Ben Gurion University intermittently for the last 20 years.

Due to the Covid 19 virus teaching brought new challenges as university campuses were closed and courses began to be taught through the internet. As the dialogue and interaction between the Jewish and Arab students is a central part of this course, we were concerned about how we could teach it. We decided to try and were pleased that the students were
able to engage with each other in a meaningful way over the internet. We found that working over the internet results in participants' greater verbal expression as non-verbal messages can't be easily communicated online. The informal contact and discussions which take place during breaks allowing students to get to know one another was missing.

The new course at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design was a joint initiative of the School for Peace and Professor Senan Abdelqader. In 2018, Abdelqader established the Institute for the Study of Arab Culture in Visual Arts, Design and Architecture in the Bezalel Academy. The Institute works on constructing an academic space that enables interaction with the Arab legacy and the modernization processes. This course is unique to the other SFP university courses as it combines the intense meeting of Jewish and Arab students with lectures on planning and construction in the shadow of the conflict. The participants' chose the course because of an interest in the impact of the conflict on planning and construction policy in Israel which has important ramifications on the relations and tensions between Arabs and Jews. It was surprising that both the Jewish and Arab groups lacked knowledge of the history of the Palestinians in Israel from 1948 onward. For the Jewish students the course was the first time they discussed issues facing Palestinian citizens of Israel, together with them. Arab students were happy to share their experiences facing discrimination as Palestinian citizens and this first hand open dialogue with their Arab colleagues deeply affected both groups. This year's course was fully funded by the School for Peace.
Youth Workshop: A Look

As everything this year, our program for high school youth demanded great flexibility as the Covid Virus hit and Givat Brenner, our usual Jewish partner, became the first school in the country to be closed because Covid 19. Luckily several other schools were interested and provided us with the opportunity to work with a new Jewish school, Meitar High School, in southern Israel. The program was run in mid-February just days before the countries first national 'lock-down'.

Both Meitar and the Hagalil Arab High School found it easy to recruit participants. The Hagalil School had a long waiting list and the school chose the excellent students to attend. In the Meitar School, the group was comprised of students from their diplomacy and Arabic courses. In total there were 57 participants, 30 Palestinians and 27 Jews, 23 boys and 34 girls, who were divided into four working groups, each group with a Jewish and Palestinian facilitator. In the preparation meeting the Jewish youth expressed their worry about not being knowledgeable enough on the issues related to the conflict. The Arab students were concerned about the extent they would be free to express themselves and what the best way would be to help the Jewish students understand their lives.
In the first meetings students shared their personal hobbies, favourite music, and hopes and dreams as well as presenting their school, the cities they live in and their holidays. As the program continued they began speaking about the conflict in an activity called ‘photolongage’, that uses associative pictures. This allowed them to begin to talk about the conflict in a non-direct manner, while at the same time opening up the important issues they came to discuss. They discussed the issues as the program continued talking about: the situation in Gaza and terror attacks originating there, Arab’s in the political arena, house demolitions (especially in the Negev) and recruitment to the army. Discussions continued around significant issues such as the unrecognised villages in the Negev; the humanitarian situation in Gaza; the separation between Jews and Arabs in the education system, and the life course of Arab youth after high school in contrast to the Jews going to the army. Despite the sensitive and painful nature of what was discussed, it was done in a very respectful open manner.

In the summary session students shared their experience:

△ A Jewish boy said, “Thank you for sharing your lives with us. Thank you for letting us into your daily reality.”

△ An Arab girl said, “We had a respectful and honest dialogue together. Each one of you entered my heart and helped me better understand who I am and what I feel.”

△ A Jewish girl said, “I wish we could have stayed several days longer to get to know each other better and dive deeper into the issues of the conflict.”
Summary of the Activities of the Research Institute

Finding A Shared Past and Building Toward a Shared Future

The research institute ran discussions with 18 researchers on the subject of "a syntax for shared nationality". The research group operates in conjunction with the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, Partnership NGO and began in February 2020. The group will produce a series of articles that will address the historical, political, social, and cultural context which can contribute to bridging center-left Zionist political parties and Arab-Palestinian parties in Israel. The research group seeks to formulate a shared political syntax; a toolbox that includes bridging narratives, a just political language, and social, cultural and political frameworks that can arise in order to open up opportunities for productive political and national dialogue and to create "intervening bi-national politics."

Publication:

The research institute co-edited "Constitutionality, Constitution and Sovereignty - A Comparative and Theoretical Perspective". The book published this year followed a conference of the same name held in 2019 by the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University. It includes the lectures given at the conference and was edited by Amal Jamal, of The Walter Lebach Institute of Tel Aviv University, and Nava Sonnenschein and Amir Fakhouri from the School of Peace.
Human Rights Law in Divided Societies

Seminar with Babloo Loitongbam lawyer, anthropologist and human rights activist from India and renowned Israeli human rights lawyer, Gaby Lasky.

In February 2020 the SFP held a seminar at The Fred Segal Peace Library with Mr. Babloo Loitongbam a human rights activist from Manipur, India who discussed his work confronting the extreme impunity of the Indian military against civilians. With his organization, Babloo Loitongbam meticulously documented 1,528 cases in which innocent people were killed in so-called "fake encounters" with the military. Loitongbam bases his methods of fighting military violence of civilians on Gandhi’s form of non-violent resistance and employs all legal means offered by the Indian State and the international stage. His non-violent resistance is creative and resulted in the decrease of the shootings and deaths of demonstrators. Lasky responded to Mr. Loitongbam's presentation pointing out similarities and differences in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the audience were local human rights lawyers. Dr. Sonnenschein, the director of the SFP and Mr. Loitongbam have been meeting over the past four year at the Global Peacebuilders Summit, which bring together experienced peace builders from around the world.

https://youtu.be/UqFwT1RtIrs
ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Nava Sonnenschein
Presentation at University of Massachusetts 2020 Colloquium on Conflict Resolution of the Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Government
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLvBt7al228
Participation in 2020 Global Peacebuilders Summit

Roi Silberberg

Publication: "Dealing with Racism in the Classroom- A Necessary Component for Teacher Education in Israel". Chapter in the book, Critical Education as Resistance Against Populism, Sexism, Racism, Paolo Vittoria and Dave Hill (Eds.),

Member of research and organizing team and presenter at Open University conference, "The Boundaries of Political Education within Citizenship Education"

Accepted as member of the Asia Peace Innovators Forum and participated and presented at several of there online conferences.

Presented at Open University conference on "Citizenship Education or Political Education?".

Ameer Fakoury
Publication series of articles in "Shar Mikomi", an online magazine of news and opinions, on the current political issues and the subjects of Jewish-Arab political partnership, and an analysis of Palestinian Arab politics within Israeli citizenship.
Publication with Muhammad Khalayla: "The Internationalization of the Arab Minority Status in Israel: from Internal Politics to External Politics". Chapter in the book, Constructive Strategic Insights: The Capabilities and Possibilities of Palestinian Society in Israel


Published, "The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Israeli-Palestinian Relations", Amal Jamal, (Editor).


Participant in panel discussion of The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on the "Deal of the Century."

Participant in opinion paper for the New Israel Fund on "The Vision for a Common Civil Society in Israel".
In Memorial of Fred Segal

Our dear friend and partner in our work for world peace

The School for Peace staff mourns the loss of our dear friend and supporter Fred Segal.

He was a man who believed in peace and supported it any way he could. A friend of the School for Peace since 1989 he supported our work because of our unique approach for advancing peace and equality between Jews and Palestinians.

The Fred Segal Peace and Friendship Library at Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam will stand in his honour and memory and will continue to strengthen all of us who passionately believe in peace, and will be used as part of our work teaching peace to new generations. For this we will ever be thankful to Fred and his family.

May his memory be blessed.

The Fred Segal Friendship Library,
Inaugurated 22.4.10
Join Us in Building the Future

WASNS was one of Israel’s first social action peace organizations and has been working for over forty years advancing an egalitarian, pluralistic and just society. The School for Peace does not receive government funding and relies on your support to reach an increasing number of youth and adults with a vision for a shared future.

The demands for our programs are growing and your generous contribution can continue to strengthen the path to peace.

**Contributions to the School for Peace at Neve Shalom Wahat al-Salam can be made to:**

Bank Hapoalim #12/690
King George 16, Jerusalem
Account Name: The School for Peace, Amutat Yedide Hamosadot Hachinuchiim
Account # 694344 Swift: POALILILIT
IBAN: IL64-0126-9000-0000-0694-344