



Dear Friends,

The School for Peace (SFP) has been very busy this summer despite this year's depressing election results and a period in the country that has been characterized by violence, discrimination and racism. As we have written about below, the activities of the School for Peace have only increased and the past months have been busy. We operated: an international conference; a new university course; work with Jewish and Palestinian literature teachers, town planners, leadership in mixed cities; a course for group facilitators; renewal of the forum for SFP graduates; and a prize for reconciliation from the SER Foundation in Europe.

As the School for Peace enters its 36th year, we begin with our strong commitment to continue to have our unique message heard and to persist in bringing peace and equality to society. We hope you enjoy reading about our work and wish you all a happy new year and eid sayid.

Very Sincerely,

Dr Nava Sonnenschien  
Director of the School for Peace

Harb Amara  
Program Director

### The School for Peace awarded the S.E.R. Reconciliation Prize

We are proud to share with you the honor of receiving the S.E.R. Reconciliation Prize that was awarded to the School for Peace for promoting long term reconciliation through its innovative program for Palestinian and Israeli Literature Teachers (see below). The award ceremony will take place in Berlin, October 3, 2015 and we thank the S.E.R. Foundation for recognizing our exceptional approach and contribution.

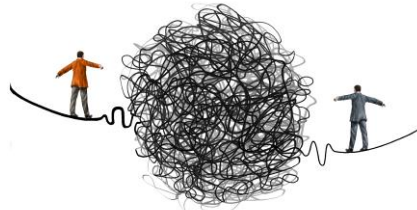


### Masters of Arts Program Approved at Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom

On June 9th, we received official approval from the Israeli Council of Higher Education to launch an international MA program in Conflict Resolution which has been developed and will be run in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, Boston. The program builds on practical experience of conflict resolution and peace-building in the region.



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



On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May the School for Peace, in cooperation with the Walter Lebach Institute for Jewish-Arab Coexistence at Tel Aviv University, and the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University, organized an international conference on dilemmas of recognition in asymmetric conflicts: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a comparative perspective. Attended by 90 academicians and leaders of NGO's, the conference focused on major issues relating to conflict between Jews and Arabs in the country discussing the difficult issues of: management of contradictory historical memories within an asymmetrical reality; Israeli-Palestinian cinema as related to the conflict; de-legitimization and dialogue in public opinion, education, literature and social media platforms; national ethnicization and the 'identity vacuum'; patterns of legislation; the politics of space and the role of civil society organizations in promoting equality and working against racism; and problems of city planning in the Arab-Jewish context. There was a panel of foreign guests who came from South Africa, Serbia, and Northern Ireland, to share their experiences and knowledge.

You can see the presentations of the conference with English translation at: <http://sfpeace.org/intl-conference-on-dilemmas-of-recognition-in-asymmetric-conflicts/>

## Changing the Urban Landscape: Program for Arab and Jewish Urban Planners, Civil Engineers and Architects

Thirty Jews and Palestinians participated in this spring's 'change agents' course which we ran in partnership with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning in Elaboon. Dr. Nava Sonnenschein and Samer Swaid facilitated the program. Mr. Samer Swaid is the director of the Arab Center for Alternative Planning and a graduate of the School for Peace Facilitators Course.



On May 1st, we held a joint meeting of the participants in the Planners program and the program for leadership of mixed cities; the two change agent courses we are running. Prof. Leslie Schwartz from South Africa and Dr. Orly Friedman from Belgrade were invited to share their experience



and the challenges in their work in mixed cities. They were here for the conference on "Dilemmas of Recognizing Asymmetric Conflicts". Dr. Orly Friedman spoke about the mixed cities of Belgrade and Kosovo, cities in the stage of post-conflict characterized by a huge variety of ethnic groups living together. Prof. Leslie Schwartz spoke about Cape Town, one of the most multicultural cities in the world and how it addresses the gaps that still exist between blacks and whites.

After the lecturer and discussion, participants were divided into groups according to where they live in the country and discussed cooperation in social action initiatives. One result was that Jewish and Arab planners and community leaders from Lod decided to work together to file an objection to the city's master plan because it does not take into account the needs of the Arab residents. The group worked on a position paper which was sent to the NGO, "BIMKOM" - Planners for Planning Rights, requesting to be included in a joint petition against the plan.

On May 4th – 5th, the members of the Change Agent's course devoted two days to study different approaches to dialogue as well as to participate in a tour of the mixed city of Lod. The tour was led by city council member Ghassan Monier who is a member of the SFP Course for Leadership in Mixed Cities. We toured the "Train Neighborhood" and the Dahamash Village, learning about the housing shortage for Arab residents. Later the group discussed their impressions from the tour and then broke into four task groups to develop projects. Project ideas included: opposing the proposed master plan for the City of Lod; preparing a master plan for the unrecognized Bedouin Village of Al Awajan; mobilizing to improve the urban planning process in Jisr al-Zarka; and promoting a Palestinian Heritage Museum in the Galilee.

On July 31st the participants in the course toured the coastal Arab town of Jisr al-Zarqa. This town was chosen as it reflects many of the difficulties involved in planning and growth of Arab towns. Bordered by the sea on the west, the town of Caesarea in the south, the fish ponds of Kibbutz Maagan Michael in the north and the Tel Aviv-Haifa highway on the east, it suffers from overcrowding with no room for expansion. After the tour there was a discussion with Professor Ayala Ronel of Tel Aviv University and the city engineer Mr.



Yakub Jubran. The members of the group then participated in a workshop discussing possible planning alternatives for Jisr al-Zarqa and at the end of the day participants worked on developing their projects.



## Building Leadership in Mixed Cities

The program for leadership in mixed Arab and Jewish cities has been continuing. It includes 30 Jews and Arabs from five mixed cities in Israel: Ramla, Lod, Beersheba, Haifa, Acre, Jaffa and Nazareth. On April 17<sup>th</sup> the group met at Wahat al Salam- Neve Shalom to hear a lecture by Dr. Roly Rosen from *Shatil*, the New Israel Fund Initiative for Social Change, on the reality and vision of mixed cities. Dr.



Rosen, a graduate of the School for Peace facilitators' course, wrote the book "Haifa between Reality and a Vision for a Shared City", focusing on how to transform a mixed city into a city for all its citizens with equal rights and equal access to city services.

The meeting stimulated discussion and began the planning of projects that participants will undertake as part of this program.

In May the group organized on their own initiative a meeting in Jaffa to commemorate Nakba Day which falls on May 15<sup>th</sup>. For this meeting Tom Weisel, a Jewish participant, prepared an exhibition of photos and text on the Nakba and participants shared the stories of their families during the Nakba. The participants noted that the commemoration was meaningful and an emotional experience for them.

In June the group met at Wahat al-Salam-Neve Shalom with Professor Gadi Algazi who discussed historical and contemporary analysis of the Jewish Palestinian conflict and the current situation. The group talked about the possibilities for combating the ongoing displacement of Arabs in mixed cities. After the lecture, the participants formed three groups to discuss possible projects. Some ideas included: establishing a parliament of young Bedouins in Southern Israel; organizing an exhibition in Jaffa to strengthen Palestinian heritage and raise awareness to the changing of the Arab character of the area; developing a creative way to address Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement and Eid al-Adha, the Muslim celebration which fall on the same date this year. They developed an educational kit to be used in schools in mixed cities. The participants formed a 'WhatsApp' group to continue their dialogue between meetings.



On Friday, July 24, as part of the program Attorney Kais Nasser gave a lecture on legal aspects affecting the Arab population in mixed cities: processes of dispossession, destruction and gentrification. It included a presentation of legal cases that he had handled. The meeting was reported on the popular Al-Arab news site that serves the Arabic-speaking population.



## Facilitators Course for Groups in Conflict

There is always the need for more trained facilitators to work with groups in conflict and this Spring we began a facilitators training course. It was attended by 19 participants (half Jewish and half Arab). Among the participants were mental health professionals; staff from Shatil; a principal from one of Hand in Hand's bilingual schools; the principal from Wahat al Salam- Neve Shalom's primary school; two young women from Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom's second generation; and the director and two senior employees of the NGO - Tapuach. The course included 120 hours with 3 parts: an experiential workshop; the acquisition of knowledge; and practical experiences through peer facilitation. The course facilitators were Maya Rabia and Liron Tal.

The second half of this course included a series of lectures and in-depth group discussions on theories important to facilitating groups in conflict. Professor Yhuda Shenhav spoke on Post Colonial Theories and their relevance to the Palestinian Israeli conflict; Dr. Adel Manaa gave a historical perspective of the 1948 war and the Nakba; Professor Ariella Fridman on work with groups of mixed nationality, gender and ethnicity; Mr. Basem Knaaneh on joint Arab Jewish civil society – staff relations in NGO's with Arabs and Jews; psychologist Mr. Ami Ferago Gopher gave a lecture about study group and group analysis theories; and Dr. Nava Sonnenschein gave a lecture on identity and conflict.

## School for Peace – Reaching Out to New Populations at the Azrieli College

The School for Peace has been involved in teaching academic courses on the Jewish–Arab conflict in Israel's major universities for the last 25 years. The goal of the courses is to get students who will be entering the work world, to understand the Jewish – Arab conflict in a way that can contribute to mitigating the conflict. It is done through the study of the conflict, employing theories on social identity and inter-group conflict from the fields of social psychology, history and political science.

On April 19, for the first time, we began two courses for students studying at the Azrieli College of Engineering in Jerusalem. Each course had 15 students, half Arab and half Jewish, meeting 4 times at the College with a full day workshop at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom.

The college has 1,500 students: 10% Arabs, mostly from East Jerusalem and has a Jewish population that includes religious and politically conservative students. The College thought it was extremely important to open communications between the two groups as tensions can often run high. The students study together for three years and often never interact with those from the other nationality. For many the program was the first time they openly discussed issues with the other side. They spoke about life in East Jerusalem, the Gaza war last summer, discrimination, terrorist activities and many issues that are at the heart of the conflict.

As a result of the success of the program the College has requested that the School for Peace run the program again next year, doubling the number of meetings.



## School for Peace Alumni Forum – Activating our Graduates....

This year we resumed our graduates' forum in the North, Center and South of the country. In May we held a meeting for those from the North at the Yafia Community Center whose director, Obour Taha Rizaq, is a graduate of the School for Peace. Fifteen alumni came and offered various ideas to advance projects to fight racism and promote shared community.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, twenty five Jewish and Arab alumni from the center of Israel gathered. After the introduction, Professor Gadi Algazi historian and political activist shared his experience and suggested ways to fight the injustice, dispossession and destruction that the government authorities perpetuate against Arab villages, cities and towns. The participants discussed ideas for various projects and wanted to work to develop these projects with the support from the School for Peace.



## Teachers Bringing Change - Two People Write from Right to Left

This year we began training a second group of Jewish and Palestinian literature teachers to teach the literature of the 'other'. This two year program funded by the Turkish based Journalists & Writers Foundation has worked with a total of sixty high school teachers, teaching them how to use the literature of the other to humanize the 'other' and discuss issues of the conflict in the classroom. In May the program had a three day bi-national workshop for the teachers in Nazareth and a unination workshop to discuss the issues raised in their work.



The course concluded with a three day workshop at Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom where participants conducted simulation lessons, teaching the literature of the 'other' with their colleagues observing and providing feedback. This intensive meeting also included a lecture about Palestinian poetry by Mr. Marzouk Halabi and a lecture on Hebrew literature by Professor Yigal Schwartz.

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

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



with Jewish and Arab facilitators from the School for Peace learning and discussing issues of how they as educators can speak about the conflict in the classroom.

### Teaching Teachers at the Kibbutz Seminar

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

### The Strategic Planning Forum to End the Occupation

Over the last six months, the forum's steering committee met three times. We began to formulate the idea of developing an annual Arab-Jewish congress to address the main issues concerning relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. One of the meetings started with a solidarity visit with Bedouin activists at Um al-Hiran. They are fighting against the states demolition of the village in order to make way for building a Jewish town.



### End of the Year Event at the School for Peace

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



*We thank you for your continued interest and support of the School for Peace and will be happy to provide you with more information about any of our programs.*