

**Creating Change Agents:
Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action**

**Final Year Report
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COTR: Rima Ghandour

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Submitted by (PRIME):

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam

12925 Riverside Drive, Suite 205
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
Tel: 818-325-8884 · Fax: 818-325-8983



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Final Report

I gained self confidence, I am more mature and I feel stronger. I speak my mind more than ever. I have learned from the others' experience how to be stronger in what I do. This was the best experience and most meaningful experience I've had in my life." a Palestinian journalist

BACKGROUND

The "Creating Change Agents: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action" was run jointly by the School for Peace in Israel and Tawasul in the West Bank under the supervision of the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. The overall goal was to promote and strengthen capacity as a tool to prepare the Israeli and Palestinian societies for sustainable peace and reconciliation. The program provided 210 hours of training for three targeted professional groups – (women journalists, environmentalists and up-and-coming politicians). Each group consisted of 40 participants: 16 Palestinians and 24 Israelis-Jewish and Arab). The program was launched in June 2010 and concluded in June 2013.

The "Change Agents" program was developed out of the extensive experience of the School for Peace at Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salam in Israel and Tawasul in Palestine as two NGO's in working with and training individuals seeking social change, social justice and the preservation of human rights in both societies. The program provided the framework for both organizations to broaden their reach by working with individuals in specific professions, helping them personally address issues and how the conflict affects their thoughts and actions; providing them with knowledge, skills and abilities to change the present situation; and helping them act to make real changes in their societies.

The program objectives were to:

Create a cadre of Israeli and Palestinian professionals dedicated to cooperation and community-based reconciliation;

Provide tools and supporting expertise for 120 Palestinian and Israeli professionals to design and implement cooperative projects leading to a constructive peace process

The 114 key stakeholders who participated in the "Change Agents" program -- women journalists, environmentalists and up-and-coming politicians -- were impacted on three levels:

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL: The intergroup dialogues enabled individuals to examine their own ethnic and religious identity, understanding how they affect their view of the other and the political situation. Through this process they were able to take responsibility for their role in the conflict. They challenged negative stereotypes and developed mutual understanding of the other's historical narrative and how it impacts on identity and the conflict.

STRUCTURAL LEVEL: Participants learned how the group interaction which they experienced is a microcosm reflecting the dynamics in society. This gave them an understanding of the power asymmetry that exists in the larger society and how it is reflected in politics, environmental issues and the media. This helped participants develop

tools for critical analysis of groups in conflict, the present situation and how it interacts with their professions.

ACTION LEVEL: Participants acquired an understanding and skills in utilizing their profession and professional knowledge in promoting social change towards peace, human rights, and justice. It gave them the courage to speak out and act to make change in the present situation.

There were three components to each 21 month program.

Component I: Dialogue & Intergroup Process (80 hours per participant): In this component we introduced the participants to the program and the uninational and binational group, as well as to the SFP-Tawasul intergroup process and methodology. It furthered the participants' knowledge of social and political aspects of binational issues. We enabled participants to take responsibility for their role in the conflict and engage in actions that promote reconciliation.

Component II: Becoming a Change Agent (50 hours per participant). During this component, participants acquired skills to create change in their professional and community environment by presenting cases and analyzing them. They received a better understanding of the connection between professional identity and national identity. They gained knowledge about their specific field and how it is related to the conflict and discussed dilemmas through consultation from academics and practitioners. Facilitators and experts helped participants identify opportunities to create change and ways to design their own projects. Participants worked on their projects with the guidance of experts in the field and the course staff.

Component III: Building Capacity and Implementing Projects (80 hours). This component was dedicated to finalizing the planning and implementation of participant projects and acquiring the skills needed for implementing the projects. Participants did site visits and binational and uni-national workshops during this component. The participants presented their project to the group during the last binational meeting.

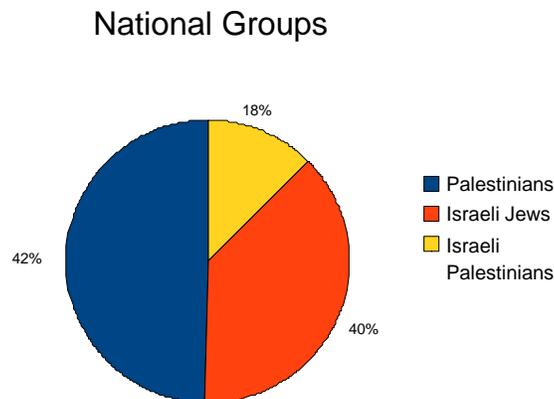
EVALUATION

The "Creating Change Agents: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action" aimed to empower key civil society actors to create institutional change by providing tools to encourage individuals to become change agents and advocates in their professional spheres.

The program underwent extensive internal and external independent evaluation with qualitative and quantitative methods. Various aspects of the program were examined and the overall results showed a significant positive change in the attitudes of the participants and the projects they developed reflected. "As was learned with the complexity of the very detailed and worthwhile projects created by each of the three career-specific participant groups and the subgroups within them, we are just now beginning to see the real impact of their hard work. Like any type of change, this program has planted the seeds for that change and has cultivated the right individuals in very diverse positions on both sides of the wall", Ewing (2013).

DEMOGRAPHICS

One hundred fourteen participants participated in the 3 courses, which included 48 Palestinians and 66 Israelis. The Israeli groups had 46 Jews and 20 Palestinians citizens of Israel.



In the three courses there were 73 women and 41 men.

The age range of participants was 22-69 years old.

Women Journalists;

Age range 22 – 60 years old

The Palestinian journalists were younger than the Israeli participants and one of the reasons was the boycott the Palestinian journalists union put on encounters between Israeli and Palestinian media professionals. Therefore the senior Palestinian journalists didn't participate because they didn't want to risk their positions.

PROGRAM OUTPUTS

Three courses were conducted, each for a separate professional group: women journalists, environmentalists and up and coming politicians.

The participants met once a month over 21 months.

Women Journalists: October 2010 to June 2012

Environmentalists: February 2011 to January 2013

Young Politicians: April 2011 to December 2012

Each group had 30-34 workshops consisting of 210 hours per course; including the bi-national, un-national workshops and site visits for a total of 98 workshops in the 3 courses.

Bi-national workshops were organized in Jordan Aqaba, Beit Jallah, Dier Hajlah and Neve Shalom/ Wahat al Salam, and the uni-national activities in Ramallah for the Palestinian groups and Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam for the Israeli groups.

Field trips were in the area of the North of Israel Acco (mixed city), Sahnin (Arab city), Kishon and Jordan rivers, the Negev Desert, Hebron & Nablus (Palestine), Tel Aviv Jaffa. The site visits were tailored to the need of each specific professional group: the journalists visited the destroyed Bedouin village El Araqib and visited NGOs dealing with restriction of movement imposed on the Palestinian population as Gisha, or to a news agency in Hebron. The environmentalists visited a sophisticated wetland project that purifies sewage water at Yad Hana, and went to Sahnin to visit the Ecological center. They visited the polluted water entering the Jordan River, and they also visited El Ujjah in Palestine and saw the pollution from the settlement flowing to the water system. The up and coming politician group visited an organization called Mussawa that is active in equal rights for Palestinians in Israel. They heard about cases of Palestinians in the mixed city of Acco. The Palestinian group of the up and coming politicians met with politicians in Hebron and Nablus.

Each course had 10 lectures (on each side) by professional experts in the field adding to the professional level of the courses.

Prof. Dan Rabinowitz from Tel-Aviv University, Ms. Avirama Golan from Ha'aretz newspaper on the Israeli side, and Dr. Ghassan Barghouti of Al-Quds University and Miyson Qwasmi of Al Waffa News Agency in Palestine contributed to the course through lectures and by consulting and guiding the participants in their projects in Palestine and in Israel. This was very useful and increased the depth of the participants learning and their ability to develop and implement projects.

OUTCOMES

Participants acquired skills through the program and it created major changes in their view of the conflict and how they can bring about change. In interviews and focus groups the participants often stated that the course gave them 'courage' to do something about the present political situation and that they felt 'more optimistic' and 'support' from the group. (A Jewish participant in the environmentalist group who sits on a local planning council was able to positively change the council's decision on the relocation of the Jahalin Bedouin community to a toxic site next to the Jerusalem city dump.)

ACQUIRED SKILLS

- Analyze conflict and their role within the conflict
- Understand the “other”
- Working in collaboration with others of differing views and backgrounds
- Effective dialogue with the other
- Identify, analyze and problem solve professional issues where there is inequality of resources and power
- Create change in the work place, and professional sphere,
- Leadership and organizational skills to design and implement activities creating change.

Program Achievements

Cross Boarder Cooperation:

The School for Peace and Tawasul succeeded to build a good working relationship over the three years of the project that will continue into the future. This cross border cooperation was a key to the success of the program. Confidence and trust was built between the management staff, administrative staff, facilitators and the participants. The trust was a model for the participants, of good working relations in all the courses.

Both organizations effectively carried out the targeted number of workshops and meetings and had additional meetings to accommodate the need for time to work on projects. This is note worthy as the joint workshops took place despite the constant struggle to receive border permits and the anti-normalization movement in Palestine.

The groups, in all three courses, met at their own initiative outside of the workshops. Participants from the up and coming politicians went to Ramalah after the UN vote, giving Palestine observer status, and showed solidarity and celebrated with their Palestinian colleagues. The environmentalists organized their own meeting at the “Tel Aviv Hub” (an environmental clearinghouse for NGO’s) to learn about how it works (this included organizing entry passes and transportation for the Palestinian participants). The environmentalists also organized meetings with other environmental organizations. The women journalists were in constant contact with their colleagues on the other side to get more information and a different view of events before they filed news reports. The articles and video reports they produce have become more critical and present the other point of view or narrative.

Internal Change – Changing Perception and Understanding

In an external program evaluation conducted by George Ewing (2013), most participants stated, “they experienced some, or even a significant change due to their participation in the program. Most respondents across all three of the career groups noted or referenced the concept of empathy toward the “other” and spoke of social accountability and acting for change in their community. All respondents had experienced some type of positive change and had reflected on and come to some personal level of new awareness about their biases, the conflict, their personal or group political views, views of the “other”, personal

engagement (or lack thereof), stereotypes (theirs or others), and their participation in the program”.

In our concluding sessions and evaluation, we found:

Interpreting the Conflict Differently

- Israeli Jewish journalist: "The course widened my professional perspective of the conflict as a journalist. Instead of looking at the conflict and focusing on my point of view, now I have a wider perspective of 360 degrees".
- Israeli Jewish up and coming politician: "I was exposed to opinions that I was unaware of before and that I was afraid of exploring. Today my understanding and perspective is wider"
- Israeli Jewish environmentalist: "I tended to ignore the fact that there is an occupation, and now it is something that is a central concern in my everyday life. I understand the magnitude of the "steam roller" of the occupation on the Palestinian people. I understand how much personal relationships can begin building change.

Wiping the dust from my eyes to new perspectives

- Israeli Jewish journalist: "The course gave me a refreshing new perspective and in my reporting, 'changed my exclamation points into question marks'. It saved me from the clear, definitive perspective. I needed to move out of the masculine aggressive approach to the media and this is another thing I gained from the course."
- Israeli Jewish journalist: "The course helped me to wipe the dust from my eyes".
- Israeli Jewish up and coming politician: "The course opened my mind to new perceptions and critical opinions that I had not been exposed to in the past."
- Israeli Jewish environmentalist: "My view on the conflict now is very different than it was before the course. I analyze situations differently the conflict, asymmetry and power relations look different.

Humanizing the Other

- Israeli Jewish journalists: "The bi-national encounters humanized the "other" and gave a face to the other side. Every Israeli & Palestinian should have a picture of the other in front of their eyes."
- Israeli Jewish up and coming politician: "I have met the face behind the Palestinian people".
- Palestinian environmentalist: "We discovered that the average Israeli is not just the occupier and that there are people who think differently; we now have a big family"
- Palestinian environmentalists: "In the past I didn't want to meet with Jews, it was not easy to talk with them and was not comfortable for me. Today I am more open; I can see them as humans. I see there is diversity among the Jews, there not all the same. I have more confidence that there are others (one the other side) who are on our side."
- Palestinian up and coming politician: "Before I came to the course I was apposed to interacting with Israelis. I'm not against it any more and I understand that there are Israelis

that can understand and that can help in ending the occupation. I felt I influenced the Israeli participants.”

Learning to Effective Dialogue with the Other

Note: we use the term dialogue to explain the results of a process that participants go through in the course learning to listen and hear what the other is saying, being able to hear about their pain and suffering without feeling defensive, judging, competing, blaming or feeling they have to save face. It is a long difficult process that the participants work through in the course)

- Palestinian environmentalists: "We developed a means for communicating that is more effective and we became able to discuss environmental concerns."

- Israeli Jewish environmentalists: "Prior to the course I hadn't spoken with the other side. The power of the encounter is in the deep understanding of the other, opening a channel for dialogue that brought us closer"

Motivation to Act and Commit

From the external evaluation, “the majority of respondents from the 3 courses had personal conversations with friends and family members, as well as work colleagues, about their activities and work within the groups in the program. The excitement from this interview question was palpable for those who had recently participated in public demonstrations, had reported back to their civic or work groups about the successes, or had made great strides with their cross-border collaborative projects. For a majority of the interviewees, there was a notable sense of pride in their body language when talking about interfacing with their community, community organizations, or other groups about the Creating “Change Agents” Program or other initiatives they have started or contributed to because of exposure to the program.”

The course required a strong commitment from the participants as pointed out in the external evaluation. “Many of the interviewees had experienced “pushback” from friends, family members, “friends of friends”, and work colleagues about participating in a program with “out-groups”. Astonishingly, some had even received personal threats about their participation. Palestinian participants had been warned about their work by security forces, were told that they were being watched, and were persecuted by colleagues for participating in so-called “normalization” activities. Some Jewish participants had family members who had stopped speaking with them all together.”(Ewing 2013)

- Israeli Jewish journalists: “Every place I go I speak about the course. When people talk about the conflict I speak my mind and they are surprised. Without this course I would not have developed any empathy, listening and identifying with the other.”

- Israeli Jewish journalist: “As a result of the course I am very committed to changing the conflict, and bringing about equality between Jews & Palestinians inside Israel.”

- Israeli Jewish journalist: “I became very committed to the Palestinian cause. I feel even if we do not have joint projects, each of us can bring about change and influence the place where he/she works, as I have done.”

- Israeli Jewish up and coming politician: "I speak more freely and with more confidence about the conflict and the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. I speak out in different forums and feel that my opinions are seen as more reliable and serious and I am able to influence others because I attended the course".

- Palestinian environmentalists: "I feel that I have taken on the role of a change agent. I am active in my environment and try to influence. In the course I understood that it is not easy to change deep perceptions in people."

Empowering Palestinians

Palestinian journalist: I gained during the course self confidence I got more mature I feel now stronger. I speak my voice more than in the past. I have learned from the other experience how to deal more powerfully in my life. This was the best experience and most meaningful experience I had in my life. I have a weapon now I work in a Palestinian radio station and through it I can speak my voice.

A Palestinian from Palestine: I am happy I participated in spite of the risk with the journalists union. I feel that the union and the Palestinians who object the encounters do not understand that it is not normalization but resisting the occupation and cooperating for this goal. I was very moved by the film of Rasha "The heart from Jenin" that we saw few month ago. The film the discussion after about humanity and who is more moral and how to construct my point of view in front of the Israelis was important and very meaningful for me.

Exchanging Knowledge

Most participants from both sides spoke about the importance of exchanging information and knowledge.

- A Palestinian from Palestine: We received a lot of ideas from the site visits, from the visit with E in Tel Aviv Hub, visiting in Hardoof. We have seen things that we do not have in Palestine, that we can grow wheat without chemicals".

-An Israeli environmentalists: "I taught my students at the Technion about the biogas project which a female Palestinian is running in Palestine. My students are used to projects that cost millions of dollars and I showed them something we can learn from the Palestinians that is simple, inexpensive and contributing to improving environment

Connecting Professional and National Identity with the Conflict and Activating Change

The external evaluation found that prior to the course participants did not think about how their careers or professional work was connected with the political situation and did not believe that they could influence the situation through their profession. The majority of participants shared that they learned through the Creating "Change Agents" program that their careers and national identity were connected. They found that they had the ability to effect the conflict through work and action in their profession. All of the Jewish, Arab Israeli and Palestinian participants stated that they felt that they could use their career to influence or impact the conflict in varying ways (Ewing, June 2013 pp 61).

The women journalists published tens of articles, created videos with alternative points of view and published them. They expressed the growing realization of the power they had to impact the situation through media

- Israeli journalist: "As a result of the course I understood the power and meaning media has and it motivated me to get more involved in the profession."

As a result of the course the Up and coming politicians advanced projects: promoting employment of Arabs in government positions; initiated a joint course for Israeli & Palestinian teachers; initiated more joint activities between Jews & Palestinians in their political parties; representing the Palestinian cause in their work places; initiating a more feminist position in their political party; improving the situation of the Arab citizens in Tel Aviv Jaffa.

The Jewish environmentalists who have influence in governmental committees became more active in advocating for Palestinians; introduced into their academic teaching the issues of environmental justice and the Israeli Palestinian conflict; stressed the importance of equality in environmental issues in government discussions in which they participated; acting intensively against state policy of separation in environmental issues; several Palestinian and Israeli participants stated that their research or interest now included cross border initiatives.

“Creating Change Agents: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action”

PROJECT OUTPUTS

The program plan involved each professional group carrying out 4 social change projects in their fields. The results were striking with a total of 34 projects being implemented instead of 12.

8 projects were implemented by the environmentalists

15 projects were implemented by the women journalists and

11 projects were implemented by the up and coming politicians.

The participants in all 3 groups showed motivation and desire to carry out projects, which indicates a level of success in ‘creating change agents’. We started working on projects in the second bi-national meeting, earlier than in previous programs. An expert in creative planning was used in all three groups to help the participants think creatively about how they could effect change. Adding professional experts to the environmentalists' and journalists' courses helped facilitate better project planning and follow-up. The courses' staff and the experts helped the participants providing individual and group consultation. We had several projects that were cross the border, working in Palestine and Israel. This was more prevalent in with the first group, the environmentalists, but became harder with the later groups as the Palestinian anti-normalization movement strengthened. Cross boarder projects did take place, but less than we expected.)

ENVIRONMENTALISTS:

1. Project Title: Eco-design

The project idea was to create an incubator for ecological business development in local communities. The company will develop ecological products, technologies, and foster cultural cooperation. It includes 3 sub-projects (see below).

Project leader: Dr. Erez Zimhoni from Israel

Project team: Abeer Abu Sara, Khitam Naamane, Moran Abraham, Mahmoud Husein, and Erez Zimhoni

The company, based on the resources and abilities of Palestinians and Israelis, will look for real needs, research and analyze important issues, and create and design product, which have roots in ecology, consider environment and have sustainable economic development, in order to solve local.

The company will base its products on local/traditional knowledge, including old technology, local design, and culture, but with an emphasis on integrating modern knowledge, standards and relevant technologies. The working model will be based on the “Hub Model” that exists in more than 20 countries throughout the world.

Implementation: The Eco-design project began with 3 entrepreneurial endeavors:

-Recycling and Reuse using Ecological Technology - Organic recycling through bio digester & reuse of manure and gray water in dairy farms in order to produce methane gas which can be used for cooking, heating and lighting. Residues from fermentation create high quality fertilizers which contribute to agriculture, encouraging planting around the farms to produce fodder. The cost of fodder is one of the biggest problems for livestock farmers in Palestine.

Abeer Abu Sara implemented a pilot project with another activist from Arava Institute in Israel, on the farm of the Abu Yosef Family near Susia south of Hebron.

-Solar Air Condition System - Cross border renewable energy systems to replace existing air conditioning with green systems based on solar energy. The product is designed with high efficiency solar reflectors, reducing costs of existing thermo systems currently being used.

Air conditioning systems are responsible for 50% of the gas polluting the atmosphere. However, green buildings are being designed and built in an increasing number of countries and research institutions around the world. The system that has been developed focuses on the private and public market. Solar air conditioners will be developed based on plastic spherical mirror technologies that achieve cost reduction in cooling. The system will be built with modular units so it can be installed in small as well as large structures with simple connections enabling expansion. This project was developed by Erez Zimhoni from Israel.

- Connecting Traditional Knowledge with Modern Times - Research and development of traditional products with a modern design. The initiative has two goals: utilizing traditional knowledge and products to generate employment and income; and documenting and sharing local knowledge that has been passed through generations. By matching local artisans with modern businesses, the project aims to establish new businesses bring traditional elements to the modern world. It will create 'fair trade' products and can encourage local tourism. The hope is that it will also motivate younger members of the community to study in the field of design. The project was initiated by Mohammad Abo Noon from Palestine, with Moran Abraham from Israel.

2. Project Title: Eco-toon

This project combines text messaging to advance environmental justice, peace, and human rights.

Project Leader: Mohammad Abo Noon from Palestine

Project team: Mohammad Abu Noon and Jamila Hardal

This project combines 'text messaging' with caricatures and animation in order to advance environmental justice, peace, and human rights. It is based on the artistic talent of Abo Noon, a caricaturist. Because of health problems, Jamila had to withdraw from the project and the project changed from "text messaging" to wall paintings that advanced

environmental justice, peace and human rights. Abo Noon with Gil Reichman who is the director of the Unit of Environment of the Jerusalem Municipality carried out an event creating a wall painting in Zur el Bacher in East Jerusalem. The event ran for over 2 weeks and involved 50 children from the community who participated and painted over ugly walls, bringing new life to the neighborhood.

On June 14th, 2013, racist (anti-Arab) hate slogans were spray painted on the walls of the Primary School at Neve Shalom – Wahat al Salam. In response, Mohammad and Ahmad Abo Noon, two brothers who participants in the Change Agents Course, initiated "Peace Brush" an event bring a message of support to the NSWAS community from Ramallah. It included painting over the violent graffiti with carton drawings and messages of peace and coexistence. One hundred twenty people: children, teachers, parents, and residents of the Village, guided by the Noon brothers, worked together in this initiative by Palestinian friends. The afternoon included a musical event at the school and a soccer game with Arab and Jewish children from Jerusalem.

Some pictures from the event you can see in the following link
<http://nswas.org/spip.php?article1067>





3. **Project Title:** Initiating an Association of Arab Environmentalists in Israel.

Project Leader: Badria Birumi from Israel

The project goal was to establish an association of Arab environmentalists in Israel. As there are unique environmental issues in the Arab community there is a need for Arab environmentalists to be organized and work together. There are unique environmental and urban planning issues in the Arab community and sometimes land is confiscated to create green areas limiting urban development. Badria Birumi worked mapping existing environmental actions and initiatives as well as needs in Arab community. She organized a committee of Arab environmental experts (among them Prof. Rasem Hama) to defined the goals of the new association and organized an opening conference establishing the organization. Among the speakers were Mr. Ramez Jaraisi, Nazareth's mayor and Prof. Rasem Hamaisi from Haifa University who agreed to chair the new association. Dr. and P.M. Hana Swaid and Mr. Baker Awaida Excecutive director of the Galilee Association. The organization was born and we hope it will develop well in the future.

4. **Project Title:** Planning Water Purification in Wadi Fukin

Project Leader: Hanin El Frouge from Palestine.

Project Description: Wadi Fukin region has 7 rivers within 8 sq. km and they are all polluted.

This project focuses on research and planning in order to address this problem. In the bi-national and uninational workshops, Hanin used her Israeli & Palestinian colleagues to consult on the problem. Hanin prepared a policy statement and presentation with ways to solve the problem.

5. **Project Title:** Bandora Project

Project Leader: Dorian Levin, from Israel.

Description: The project developed an organic 'seed exchange' between farmers in Israel and Palestine, an event to be held in the fall and in the spring. The project is based on the fact that Arab and Jewish farmers or town's people have shared ecological interests to discuss, can share in activities, eat together, and exchange seeds to be grown for agricultural use. The project provides an alternative to costly genetic engineered seeds that will not reproduce new seeds and put a financial burden on the farmer. On April 14th 2012 the first Bandora event was conducted in Dier Hajlah in Palestine near Jericho. There were 120 Israeli Jews, Palestinians from Israel and Palestinians from Palestine who attended the event. It included ecological activities for children and parents as well as seed exchanges and explanations about the project. There was music, dancing and food.

6. **Project Title:** Treating Wastewater in Al Ujjah

Project Leaders: Alaa Amer from Palestine and Noa Stern from Israel.

Description: The projects goal was to set up a wetland water purification system in Al Ujjah that has no sewage system. It is a cost-effective and easy way to operate a wastewater treatment facility resulting in a cleaner environment and enable the reuse of the water for agriculture. As agriculture is the main source of income in the Ujjah village, the project will improve the income prospects of its inhabitants. Currently the wastewater of the village flows to a basic cesspit or flows openly through the Al Uja Wadi to the Jordan River. The project aims to serve as a model for the entire village as well as neighboring villages.

Alaa & Noa prepared a proposal to raise money for the project (see attachment 6a) and met with expert to learn about the system. They established a partnership with the families. In the summer of 2012 there was a decision to connect Al Uja with a large waste system so the project was not carried out. Although the project did not result in developing the wetland purification center, it raised awareness in the community and other communities of the possibilities of inexpensive community based water purification systems.

7. **Project Title:** Education for the environment in community center in Halisa Haifa

Project Leader: Hitam Naamneh, from Israel.

Description: The project aimed to bring environmental education programs to the disadvantaged community of Halisa in Haifa. Hitam with Roi Simha, also from the course, initiated a series of 3 lectures about the environment to groups of women in the community center in Halisa. The women learned the economic and environmental advantages of not using throw away plates, how to recycle, how to separate organic and not organic garbage and how to prepare compost. Additionally Hitam with another course members recently

initiated a community gardening project in the Halisa. Once a month the residents are invited. Children and adults have created a blooming garden and are learning about the connection between them, the land, and the neighborhood. During the annual 'Holiday of the Trees', Hitam and Erez created a Tu Beshvat Seder in Hebrew and Arabic and gathered participants to celebrate.

For pictures from the community gardening in Halisa community center please go to <https://www.facebook.com/Matnashaleesa>



8. **Project Title:** Education for the Environment in East Jerusalem

Project Leader: Gil Reichman, from Israel

Description: Gil initiated and coordinated an educational program to advance environmental issues in East Jerusalem. He implemented the program in 2012 in 3 schools in Zur Bacher. The program was facilitated by university students who had 16 hours of training about environment and sustainability. 25 students were trained. The project reached 200 students, parents and teachers who took part in environmental graffiti with 150 residents' students and artists, hanging up slogans that stressed the importance of environmental issues. 50 student and their facilitators took tours to places of pollution. The students are building a face book page.

JOURNALISTS

1. **Project Title:** Producing a TV Report using another Discourse

Project Leader: Orit Karsboom, from Israel.

Description: After the section in the course about media & gender, Orit wanted to produce a TV report that would reflect what she had learned in the course. The was a news story about the summit of prime minister to advance incorporating (minorities) Arabs in the Israeli economy. It was in Dan Carmel Hotel on March 2012.

Implementation:

Orit produced a 3 minute TV report on channel Hot News1 "hadar hadashot" about the summit. Although one of the summit goal was to advance the incorporation of women and minorities in the Israeli economy, only 4 women where speaking at the summit among 47 speakers. Orit noticed that and mentioned that in her report. Her report focused on the voices of Arab & Jewish women in the summit. Orit interviewed Hagit Nevo and Liran Avisar from the ministry, Joumana Bulus who owns a public relations company, and Jada Zuabi who directs the NGO for empowering women in the economy. During the summit, the Prime Minister Netanyahu, Minister of housing Atias, interior minister Elly Yshay and many other men spoke but Orit chose to bring a critical unique voice and discourse that is from a feminist perspective based on her motivation to advancing gender equality and equality between Jews and Palestinians.

Link to the report:

<http://www.haifahaifa.co.il/archives/19886>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMFtnAB3j9U>

2. Project Title: Qurtuba School for Girls in Hebron

Project Leader: Shadia Sultan and Maysoon Quawasmi from Palestine.

Description: This project created a film about the Qurtuba School for girls in Hebron. The 2 minute film shows the path a little girl takes in order to arrive at school and the interaction with settlers with the school. The film also shows interactions with the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint. The film shows the repeated experience of humiliation and threats the girls experience every day and tries to give the viewers the girls' point of view. Shadia is working with Hebron's mayor to extend the film to 12 minutes.

3. Project Title: Children Pay the Price of Betrayal

Project Leader: Rania Margiech from Israel

Description: Writing an article about children at risk in the mixed town of Ramleh. Rania wrote the article and read it during the final meeting of the course. The article tells the story of poor children in the town of Ramleh from families that have suffered a lot throughout their lives. Some of them, collaborators from the West bank and Gaza, were sent to live in Ramleh. They could not adapt to the school system and they dropped out. They found themselves in the market working as porters paying the price of their parents. Sometimes they are the only providers of their families. Rania interviewed some of them and their sad story is described in the article. Rania also went to the municipality of Ramleh to talk about those kids. The spokesman of the municipality said they were sorry and they were aware that those kids are abused. They blamed the parents and the Arab community in the city that does not want to help. Rania also interviewed a representative of children's rights and presented the laws regarding the employment of children.

Rania published the article in the following media outlet

<http://www.qalansuwa.com/online/maqalat/9018-2011-08-20-17-09-57.html>

http://www.tellskuf.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14630:a&catid=399:rn&Itemid=63

4. Project Title: Bombs in the Agriculture Fields

Project Leader: Ranin Sawafta from Palestine

Description: This project developed a 12 minute film about Tubas, a town where Palestinian residents are being injured and killed by bombs and Israeli military waste that are left in recreation and agricultural areas. The film shows the area used by the local residents interviewing people who were injured or killed from the ammunition and weapons the Israeli army left in the fields after using the area for training. She also interviewed the mayor of Kafar Akab.

5. Project Title: Uprooted

Project Leaders: Iman Jabour & Liora Szyzman from Israel

Description: The project tells the stories about relationships between Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Gaza. The idea changed over time and became a film about a Palestinian stage designer from Gaza who now lives in Ramalah. The film shows how he became up-rooted and began resettling and part of the film was presented at the final group meeting.

6. Project Title: The Olive Tree is the Tree of Peace

Project Leader: Salam Halayka from Palestine

Description: Salam Halayka made a film talking about the land of the olive trees and how people in Palestine are committed to the olive tree. They pour their hearts and souls into the trees and how settlers attack agriculturists while they are collecting olives.

7. Project Title: Jerzim secrets

Project Leader: Diana Kamhawi from Palestine

Description: This project created a film that showing life of the Samaritan minority in Palestine.
The film shows religious ceremonies and the way of like emphasizing their freedom of religious practice in Palestine.

8. Project Title: An Article about the Change Agents' Course

Project leader: Ohoud Murketan, from Palestine

Description: Ohood wrote an article about her experience in the course for women journalists and the NGOs that organized the course. She interviewed staff from the School for Peace and Tawasul and interviewed participants about the impact the course had on their work.

9. Project Title: An Orphaned Dream

Project Leader: Lilach Gavish from Israel.

Description: Lilach Gavish, a Jewish woman of Iraqi background, wanted to create a film that would show her family's ambivalence towards Arab culture. Through interviews with different family members she discovered a connection and longing to the Arab culture that the family members grew up in as well as the bitter rejection they experienced having to leave their country. She dealt with her identity, her family member's identities and their ambivalence regarding their relations towards Arabs. At the final meeting she showed a segment of a film that she is still working on.

10. Project Title: Articles in Pi Haaton with Conflict Sensitive Journalism

Project Leader: Noga Goldfinger from Israel.

Description: During the course, Noga was the editor of "Pi Haaton", a student newspaper of the Hebrew University. While in the course Noga began exploring issues of the conflict to bring a new perspective to the thousands of students at the university. Noga said the course also influenced how she edited the paper. Articles that she included how the Palestinians feel about independence day; an article about living conditions in Isawia, a Palestinian neighborhood next to Hebrew University; and an article about issues Arab students face in renting apartments. Noga also wrote a number of editorials critically analyzing situations with a conflict sensitive approach.

11. Project Title: Ofek Prison Workshop for Ethiopian Youth

Project Leader: Belaynesh Mekonen, from Israel.

Description: Belaynesh is an Ethiopian immigrant to Israel and wanted to use her skills as a journalist and as an educational counselor in her project. As part of the project she began working with Ethiopian youth in the Ofek Prison. The project included 6 meetings (2 hours each) with the Ethiopian youth and a final meeting with the youth and their parents. The work with the youth focused on dialogue on their identity, roots, the meaning of their names, the Ethiopian community in Israel, and the image Israeli society has of the Ethiopian community. The youth were asked to write about their experiences. Later in the meetings youth spoke of their life in the prison, missing their families, their pain and improving their relations with their families. It was a process of empowerment for the youth and the last meeting was filmed and Belaynesh created a film for IETV and presented it to the group. Belaynesh went on to create an 8-month program that trained

Ethiopian teenagers to be young journalists. She also initiated a radio program that gives a voice to young Ethiopian teenagers.

12. Project Title: The Dictionary Kamus*

Project Leader: Noga Eitan from Israel

Description: She created a trigger film (video art and animation) to stimulate dialog between Palestinian and Israeli men and women. With the participants' stories, and personal memories, the film intends to create a comparative dictionary of concepts and interpretations of emotionally charged subjects. Concepts include: silence, pain, home and more. The goal is to break down the stereotypic perception of the "other". It is an anthropological research project and a documentary and Noga continuing to develop the project.

13. Project Title: Banning the Song "A Matter of Habit"

Project leader: Bat Sheva Sobelman from Israel

Description: Bat Sheva Sobelman, utilized journalism to fight a leading Israeli radio station's decision to ban a popular protest song. The song underscores the sensitive intersection of art, politics and freedom of speech in Israel. It describes the 'slippery slope' and thin line Israeli soldiers walk, from fear and confusion to complacency, until "killing becomes a matter of habit." As part of her efforts Bat Sheva published an article on the subject in the Los Angeles Times.

The link to the article in LA Times

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/10/israeli-army-radios-decision-to-ban-protest-song-raises-controvesy.html

14. Project Title: Advancing awareness of the Arab political parties in Israeli news media reporting.

Project Leader: Tal Shnieder from Israel.

Tal Shnieder, a journalist and activist, brought the issue to their awareness, requesting that the attitude should be specific to the different Arab parties and not mentioning them as one entity. She refused to site polls that related to Arab parties as one entity and eventually created an effective change in the attitude of the media and poll makers.

Description: During the Israeli national elections, the media and election polls reported on the Arab political parties as one entity, rather than recognizing the diverse views of the Arab parties and population (20% of the general population).. Tal developed a project that successfully changed awareness and reporting among media professionals and poll makers. She raised awareness of this issue in her professional circles and decided that she would not publicize in her paper (a leading Israeli daily) polls that did not refer to each political party by name. Her decision stirred debate on social networks clarifying the differences among the parties. In addition, through her meetings with several Arab reporters during the course Tal realized the importance of having an Arab view expressed in the press. She was able to make a case to her editors at Maariv & Globes that there was a need to hire Arab reporters. As a result Maariv hired an Arab economic writer for their business section.

<http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/theplg/1.1863795>

15. Project title: On Prisoners and Large Birds

Project leader: Eppie Zore'a Kreitner from Israel.

Description: The project developed a contemporary Middle Eastern version of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale: *Wild Swan* combined with Palestinian, Marcel Khalifa's ballad, *Asfour Tal min al-Shubaq*, (*A Bird Alighted on my Window*). Eppie developed the text to be performed in Hebrew and Arabic and interweaves the story of the young sister of a security prisoner who has started a hunger strike with the story line of Andersen's fairy tale. The work is an artistic rendering of the situation of Palestinian prisoners and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It is meant to draw both Israeli and Palestinian audiences through the universal story line of the European fairy tale. It is currently being presented for potential performance, with hope of production at the end of [2013](#) or in [2014](#).

UP AND COMING POLITICIANS

1. Project Title: Fighting the Separation Wall in Batir

Project Leader: Yasmeen Adawi from Palestine,

Project Description: Through the course, Yasmeen Adawi initiated a project to stop construction of the separation wall between Israel and Batir southwest of Jerusalem. The building plan threatened the ancient traditional agriculture system practiced by the farmers of the area and would take away the livelihood of many local farmers. Sharon and Maayan from the Israeli group joined Yasmeen's efforts. As part of the project, Yasmeen organized a group in Batir to apply to UNESCO to recognize the area as a world heritage site. Batir with Friends of the Earth submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court with the lawyer, Michael Sfard, (a graduate of the SFP) and the Batir group worked on a petition against the construction of the wall. To-date, construction of the wall has been successfully held back.

2. Project Title: Recognition of Palestinians Contributing to Society

Project Leader: Ahmad Mashharawi from Israel.

Project Description: As a city council member in the Tel Aviv Municipality from the Meretz Party, Ahmad Mashharawi, an Arab, is always looking to build partnerships between Jews and Palestinians and to enhance the rights of Palestinian residents in Jaffa. He said several times that participating in the course motivated and empowered him to initiate more projects than usual. During the course, Ahmad initiated a project that would give recognition to the past resident of Jaffa, Dr. Fuad Ismail Dajani, who was a famous doctor who established and directed a hospital in Jaffa prior to 1948. Ahmad, through the City Council arranged for a square to be named in honor of Dr. Dajani. A ceremony was organized with the mayor and 30 family members came from 10 different countries to be part of the event. 300 people, Jews & Palestinians from Israel and from other countries participated with Omar DeJani, the only son of Dr. Dajani. It was the first time in history that a Palestinian figure that lived in Palestine before 1948 was being honored.

Link to the event: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxZryjB1OYY>

Another project of Mr. Mashharawi was the cleaning of the Muslim cemetery after a case of racist vandalism and hate slogans were spray painted on graves.

3. Project Title: Young Leadership Course

Project Leader: Adva Vilchinski from Israel.

Project Description: During the course, Adva joined the organization “One Voice” and initiated a new project to develop young leadership. The project works to empower Israeli college students through on-campus chapters providing seminars on awareness, activism and leadership training. This empowers Israeli students to promote the vision and advocate to political leadership, a two-state solution.

Adva also organized: a lobby of 30 parliament member to support renewing the negotiations and advancing the peace process; screening of movies on peace on Israeli university campuses; developing protest events in Tel Aviv; creating a campaign to support the two state solution prior to the national elections.

One event organized: <http://www.facebook.com/events/431635183529586/>

Video of participant about the Israeli government ignoring the Arab Peace Initiative; http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=iSaZpJ9Y5rQ

4. Project Title: Palestinian Inmaa Center

Project Director: Shadi Abu Arrah from Palestine

Description: Shadi Abu Arrah’s project created the Inmaa Center, a new NGO in Jenin, Palestine, with a group of young people. The aim of the organization is to advance

women's participation in civil society. The Association has carried out several activities in its first year of operation. These include: Seminar at the Arab American University in Jenin with the International Committee of the Red Cross on the role of the Red Cross in the Palestinian territories; a seminar at the Arab American University on environmental legislation in Palestine; a workshop at the headquarters of the General Union of Palestinian Women in collaboration with the Palestinian Center for Democracy and Peace on the role of women to participate in the elections.

5. Project Title: Advancing Training Course for Arab and Jewish Teachers in Jerusalem

Project Leader:

Liron Sfarad from Israel.

Description:

The Israeli Ministry of Education had funding for teacher training sessions which addressed the shared life of Jews and Palestinians in Israel. During the course, Liron discovered that the Jerusalem education system, where Jews and Palestinians are living side by side, wasn't utilizing this resource.

Implementation:

Liron sought out the people responsible and asked why they don't open a group in Jerusalem. He recruited a group of Israeli and Palestinian teachers and the sessions began. The course was organized by Matach and includes 84 training hours. The Arab & Jewish teachers were taught how to plan history or citizenship lessons with a special focus on the Arab Jewish conflict, how to deal with racism and stereotypes, and how to conduct discussions on issues that are currently on the conflict. The course that opened up in Jerusalem in 2012 included dialogue workshops, site seeing tours, lectures, and more.

6. Project Title: Awareness Group of Young Druze

Project Leader: Samer Swaid, from Israel

Description: The program has three goals: bring the participants closer to their Druze roots; educating them about their history and identity; and advancing the status of women in Druze society. Samer Swaid gathered a group of 30 young Druze between the ages of 20 – 35, that are active in Druze Villages. They meet once a month working on: changing the curriculum in Druze schools to include cultural and national values that were taken out of the Druze Education system; creating an alternative dialogue regarding army service; and supporting Druze who becomes conscientious objectors. The group would like to create a Druze youth movement focusing on Druze culture and values, as an alternative to the Zionist youth movements which focus on identity with the military establishment.

7. Project Title: Screening Films in Palestinian Universities through Just Vision

Project Leader: Mais Awad, from Palestine

Description: Three movies were produced by 'Just Vision' which Mais Awad is promoting on Palestinian campuses. The first movie is "Budrous", which was shown at El Najah University in Nablus. The other films are "Two People Under the Same Sky" and "My Neighborhood".

8. Project Title: Promoting the Government Employment of Arabs in Israel

Project Leader: Aviv Canaani, from Israel

Project Description: While Aviv Canaani was an assistant to the Minister of Minorities in Israel, the Minister, Prof. Avishai Braverman, was motivated to advance employment of Arabs in government offices. There were decisions in the past to advance the representation of the Arab population in government positions aiming to reach 10%, but this was never accomplished.

After months of intensive work and coordination with all relevant government bodies, Aviv convened the Ministers Committee for Arab Population and with the Civil Service Administration proposing to 'market' government positions more effectively to the Arab population.

Aviv Canaani later spearheaded opposition to a proposed law that wanted to promote special benefits for employment of ex-Army soldiers in government position. Such a decision would discriminate against employing Arabs. As a result of this opposition the proposed law did not pass.

9. Project Title: Internet Cell Phone Application to Attract Tourists to Palestinian

Project Leader: Einat Ovadia

Description: The Project is called "Eyes to Palestine" and its aim is to increase tourism to Palestine and strengthen the economy.

10. Project title: Peace Delegation and Against Illegal Settlement

Project leader: Liran Gal from Israel

Description and implementation: Liran Gal is active "One Voice" and during the course coordinated a delegation of business men & women from the U.S. to Israel-Palestine to advance the two-state solution. During the visit she organized a number of events including meetings with: former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert; President Shimon Peres; parliament members, cultural and business figures and young Israeli & Palestinian leaders. Liran is a member of the leadership of the "Peace Now" movement and recently took part in a discussion in the Israeli Parliament about the Migron settlement and the implications of illegal settlement on the rule of the law.



Figure 1: Illegal Migron settlement

11. Project Title: I am for You

Project Leader: Noa Shimshoni from Israel

Description: Noa's project focused on advancing volunteerism in Arab society. She did this through "Latet" where she works. Noa developed 10 groups of youth in the Arab towns and villages of Arabe, Dir el Asad, Juliss, Yerka, Ibelin and Merar to do volunteer work contributing to those in need in their communities.

<http://www.latet.org.il/Index.asp?CategoryID=132&ArticleID=687>

Lessons Learned

Participants staff and external evaluator critique

Length and structure of the program:

The independent evaluation stated: "This longitudinal campaign was one of the most comprehensive and detailed I have seen in any encounter program to date, and the quality of the design, instruction, guest speakers, lectures, and choice of field sites visited were of the highest quality." We agree with this and participants stated that it was important to have an on going program. Twenty one months was however, too long of a commitment. Some participants went to study abroad. We think the optimal time is 14-15 months.

Bi national and uni-national meetings:

All participants and staff said more bi-national meeting were needed. The plan had 4 bi national meetings and in order to work on projects we added at least one more bi-national workshop in each course. For several participants the longer bi-national workshops in Aqaba was the highlight of the course because it gave a five day intensive meetings between the two groups. For future programs we think there should be more joint workshops in the program.

Working on projects

The projects significantly contributed to the course. Participants said they needed more time to plan, design and work on projects. The facilitators mentored the project groups however there is a need to invest more professional expertise in the projects development and implementation. In the future we think that professionals in the field should mentor each project. Small funding should be provided for projects. Cross boarder projects require even more time and effort.

Site Visits

The participants mentioned they benefited and learned from the site visits (especially the environmentalists). The participants wanted more site visits in Palestine and we learned that we should conduct them when ever possible because when there are tense times the boarder is closed.

Location

The meeting in Aqaba, Jordan was a very good venue, but some Israeli Jewish participants felt they wanted a more neutral location and we have to consider this in the coming programs.

Neve shalom/ Wahat al Salam is a place that both sides feel at home but there is always a problem in getting permits for Palestinians to come into Israel. A big effort was invested in getting the permits for the Palestinian groups.

Beit Jallah is the only place accessible to both sides but the facility is poor and not attractive to the participants.

Acquiring skills: There is a difference in the needs of the participants of the two sides. The Israelis needed more work in changing their understanding and views and knowledge about the connection between their profession and the conflict. The Palestinians from Palestine needed more skills and capacity building, so the program added more training sessions to meet these differential needs.

CONCLUSION:

The “Creating Change Agents: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action” program was a long term project that allowed participants to take part in a meaningful binational educational and social change program. At the same time it activated the individuals to take action and developed a variety of projects that had concrete effects, some bigger and some smaller, on the lives of Jews and Palestinians. The evaluations of the program clearly shows significant change in the attitudes of the participants and their ability to work with ‘the other’. It states that “the NSWAS SFP Creating “Change Agents” program took the planned encounter model to a new level, as it targeted specific professional groups (female journalists, environmentalists, and up-and-coming politicians) to confront their differences, to evolve and explore their identity through interaction and collaboration with the “Other,” and to empower them to make institutional change in their professional sectors, communities, and beyond.”

The actions developed by individuals and groups reflects the extreme motivation that the program inspired, effecting participants abilities, desires and perceptions in creating a change in the conflict. The project had more far reaching effects than we had anticipated as many of the actions involved local citizens, empowering them, involving them in civic activity and strengthened civil society in Palestine and Israel. The independent evaluation states, “Maybe the greatest achievement of this program is the inner commitment of the participants to act for peace, equality and just solution between the two people. We saw it in the participants from the 3 professional groups that they took every opportunity to expose their community, friends, family and colleagues at their work places to those issues. We saw that in the many projects they implemented and other projects they continue to do after the courses ended. It is not one time action but internal change that motivates them to act in any opportunity they can for peace equality and just solution of the conflict.” We can not overemphasize the commitment of the participants and the time they invested in the course meetings over the 21 month period and beyond the course meetings. The relationships that were built have created a network that will continue to contribute to joint efforts in the future.

Working with individuals who share similar professional backgrounds and shared interests and concerns facilitated joint work. We also have seen the importance of uni and binational meetings and how the dialogue and intergroup process is central to building a shared starting point for Palestinians and Israelis to work together.

The course participants, Tawasul and the School for Peace, have all gained valuable experience in working together in cross border activities providing a base for future cooperation which has already begun and programs and connections that are continuing. We have learned of the challenges involved in cross border activities, and have also seen the change that they have begun to create.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the most challenging and daunting part in implementing the program was the unexpected death of program director Ahmad Hijazi. It was a tremendous blow to the participants who knew him, the program facilitators, the SFP, Tawasul and the NSWAS community. His contribution to the development and implementation for this project and his expertise were invaluable to the work of the SFP and he will be missed.

“We have all tasted a bit of peace. We are hungry for a bigger bite!”
Palestinian Course Participant