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פורום משפחות שכולות  
ישראל-פלסטיני בעד שלום  
ISRAELI PALESTINIAN  
BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR PEACE  
منتدى عائلات تكلي فلسطيني  
إسرائيلي من أجل السلام

# Narratives for Change

**AID-294-A-14-00008**

**IMPLEMENTED BY PARENTS CIRCLE- FAMILIES FORUM**

**Annual Program Report**

**September 2014 – September 2015**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the progress PCFF made in implementing its project: *Narratives for Change (NFC)*, during its first year, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014-September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This project is made up of three components:

1. Parallel Narrative Experience (PNE): 7 groups, each made up of 25-30 Israeli and Palestinian participants, who will engage in in-depth exploration of the individual and national narrative of the other. The groups will be led by trained members of PCFF according to a module of approximately 65 hours that includes uni-national and bi-national workshops and dialogue activities.
  
2. Advancing Social Change Agents for Shared Issues: This component is made up of two activities:
  - a. PNE Alumni Leadership Workshop: 4 groups, each made up of about 30 Palestinian and Israeli participants who have completed the PNE module (under this action or other programs), that will participate in a series of 4 meetings/workshops facilitated by PCFF facilitators and/ or external professional facilitators, to enhance their capacity to respond to challenges on the ground, to maximize their potential of influence and provide a framework for addressing mutual concerns.
  - b. Joint Projects: Five Joint (Israeli-Palestinian) Projects will be created by PNE Alumni. Participants in Joint Projects will actively engage with the other side to address shared areas of concern - focusing on assisting their societies and communities and having a tangible impact to help mitigate the effects of the conflict by benefitting local populations and communities.
  
3. Women Dialogue Meetings and Engagement in Reconciliation: This component is comprised of two parts:
  - a. Training for 20-25 Palestinian and Israeli women members of PCFF to build their capacity to facilitate dialogue encounters and to actively participate in PCFF peace-building efforts.
  - b. 30 dialogue meetings will be conducted to female audiences (600-900 women). Each meeting will be facilitated by two PCFF bereaved women (one Israeli and one Palestinian) who went through the training. In the dialogue meetings the facilitators describe their personal loss and their opting for reconciliation and non-violence and hold a facilitated discussion. Meetings may also include the screening of PCFF's "Two Sided Story" documentary, and a discussion of the issues that arise from it.

**The objective of the program:** The program aims to drive a reconciliation process among Israelis and Palestinians as a necessary catalyst for a negotiated agreement and to create a platform for cooperation on tangible actions that help to mitigate the representations of the conflict in the communities' day-to-day lives. Through the program PCFF seeks to expand the scope of influence to allow not only a shift in attitude and perception but increase the number of Israelis and Palestinians who are actively involved in peace-building activities.

### **Major Accomplishments during the Reporting Period**

During the reporting period, PCFF conducted the Parallel Narrative Experience (PNE) for 2 groups (students and bereaved people) for a total of 55 participants who went through an emotional and meaningful process to enable them to know and understand better the narrative of the other side (the 2<sup>nd</sup> PNE group has yet to finish the full process). According to the PNE evaluation 88.5% of the participants agree that they have better understanding of the others that helped in changing their attitude positively.

PCFF has also conducted the PNE Alumni Leadership Workshop for the first group of 28 Israelis and Palestinians from different PNE groups (groups that were conducted under the NFC project or under other programs). Four Proposed Projects Teams that were formed at the end of the alumni group program, have started to work to develop projects that will benefit local communities and help to mitigate the effects of the conflict on them. PCFF has also conducted training for 23 Palestinian and Israeli women members of PCFF who will take part in the Reconciliation Dialogue Meetings program for female audiences, and conducted the first two dialogue meetings (one in Palestine and one in Israel) for a total of 49 participants.



**Participants from the Bereaved People PNE Group**

## PROGRAM REPORT

This is a report describing the progress PCFF made during the first year of the project in each of the three components of the project.

### **Component 1: Parallel Narrative Experience (PNE)**

**During the reporting period, PCFF conducted the Parallel Narrative Experience (PNE) for 2 groups for a total of 55 participants (30 Israelis and 25 Palestinians).** The first group went through the full PNE process and the second group will complete the process during the first quarter of the second year of the project. **PCFF has also conducted a workshop for 14 PNE facilitators (8 Israelis and 6 Palestinians) to increase their facilitation capacity.**

**According to the analysis of the questionnaires of the first group that has already concluded the full PNE process, 88.5% of the participants agree that they have better understanding of the others that helped in changing their attitude positively.**

#### **a. Conducting the PNE groups**

Two groups went through the PNE during the reporting period. In the PNE, the participants of the groups are going through a meaningful process of getting to know the other side and its narrative through a program, which is similar for all groups, as described below:

**Uni-National Meetings:** The program starts with two separate meetings (one for the Israeli participants, held in Jaffa/Ramat Efal, and one for the Palestinian participants, held in Beit Jala) in which the facilitators, who are trained PCFF members, explain about the program, talk about the participants' expectations and prepare them for the meeting with the other side.

**Bi-National Weekend Workshop:** The first bi-national meeting of each group is a two-day workshop in Beit Jala that includes the following activities:

- Acquaintance and trust building activities (that are selected by each pair of facilitators to fit their group).
- The "Time Line" activity - in which they share important personal milestones in the conflict.
- The national narratives historical lecture – in which two historians, one Israeli and one Palestinian, introduce the historical milestones in each national narrative and how it is perceived in their society. The lecture is followed by Q&A and a processing session to discuss the participants' feelings.
- Activity in small groups in which the participants learn more about each other's personal narratives.

**Uni-national Meetings:** Two separate meetings (for the Palestinian participants and for the Israeli participants) in which the participants process the experience they had in their first meeting with the other side, and discuss the reaction of their families and friends to their experience. The meeting is also devoted to preparing the participants to the national narrative tours they will participate in and discuss their concerns.

**National Narrative Tours:** Tours to significant places in the history of both nations in order to raise the empathy to the pain and suffering of the other side and to better understand the influence of traumatic events in the history of the other people on its narrative.

- **A tour to Lifta** - a Palestinian village (located at the entrance to Jerusalem) that was ruined during the 1948 war - where the participants learn about the Palestinian Naqba.
- **A tour to the "Yad Vashem" museum** in Jerusalem, where the participants learn about the Holocaust of the Jewish people.

Each tour is followed by processing sessions (uni-national and then bi-national), held in Beit Jala, in which the participants share how they feel after the emotional and powerful tour they went through.

**Summary Meeting:** The last meeting of each group is held in Beit Jala and includes activities to reflect on the process the participants went through, and to discuss how they can bring the message of reconciliation to their society. The goals of this meeting are the same for each group but the activities are chosen by the facilitators of each group to best fit the unique group.

Following is a description of the 2 groups that went through the PNE in the first year of the project, their experience and the challenges faced by PCFF in conducting them:

### **The 1<sup>st</sup> Narrative Working Group – Students Group**

This group was comprised of 15 Israeli and 13 Palestinian young adults (a total of 28 participants), all students from different universities in Israel and Palestine. The group conducted its activity during the period between February and April 2015, and had a total of 8 events (meetings) as described above.

Going through the PNE process was not easy for the participants from both sides. Hearing the narrative of the other side, which is different and sometimes even contrasting your own narrative, can be very difficult. At the beginning of the process the communication between the two sides was very difficult. Each side wanted to show the other that they were right and the other was wrong, an intent that impaired their ability to really listen to each other. With time however, the participants were able to overcome their fear from hearing and knowing the other's narrative. They opened up to see the other side's point of view and understand their narrative, even when they did not agree with them. In their summary meeting the participants talked about the importance of the process they went through and their wish to continue their meetings as well as to spread the message.

The meaningful process the participants of this group went through is illustrated in their comments following the experience:

- *"I was against this kind of projects, but eventually I was persuaded to come. At the beginning I felt that I cannot except your suffering when I'm still suffering myself, but this project raised some questions for me and made me see the other side's suffering as well". (A Palestinian participant)*
- *"The meetings were very difficult for me, but I see the participation in the project as a privilege and I'm glad I got the opportunity to take part in such an important program, that I think every Israeli should go through". (An Israeli participant)*
- *"Participating in this project was a very good experience for me. I learned and understood new things and my way of thinking was changed as a result" (A Palestinian participant).*
- *"Meeting the other side opened my eyes and taught me a lot. I now want to tell others about what I have learned. The key to brining a change is for more people to participate in such meetings" (An Israeli participant)*
- *"At the beginning I was afraid from the other side, but now I see that we have things in common and that we will be able to work together to change the reality" (A Palestinian participant).*
- *"This was my first time to meet Palestinians. I now know more about the way the other side think and its narrative. When I will talk to my friends in the future about Palestinians I will talk about people that I know personally and about the stories I heard here". (An Israeli participant)*



**Summary session**



**Visit to "Yad Vashem"**



**Tour at Lifta**

### Continuation meeting – Success Story

Albeit the difficulties reported above with regard to the participants' initial openness to listen to the others, it was inspiring to see that after they finished their formal meetings as part of the project, the participants of the group arranged a joint tour in Tel Aviv that was held on May 29<sup>th</sup>.



### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Narrative Working Group – Bereaved People Group**

This group is comprised of 15 Israelis and 12 Palestinians, all of whom lost a member of their family to the conflict (a total of 27 participants). The group started its activity in August 2015 and so far had a total of 6 events (meetings) out of the 8 events planned. During the next quarter the group is planned to have their last 2 events.

This group is unique since all the participants of the group are bereaved. Despite their pain, and often anger, they chose to come and get to know the other side who represents in a way, those who are responsible for the death of their beloved. The first part of their joint weekend together was devoted to hearing each other's painful stories. It was clear that people were not there just to tell their own story but also to listen to the story of others, learn about their pain and empathize with it. Listening to these bereavement stories was very hard but it brought the participants closer. From this place of honesty and openness, they were able to start their journey together to know and acknowledge the narrative of the other side.

Here are some of the things they said:

- *I was raised on the Zionist narrative that did not really see the other side, and during the weekend and through the lecture we heard about the narratives I gained a new perspective. (An Israeli participant)*
- *"I am glad I met you all. At the beginning I didn't know how I will be able to sit with you and talk to you, but I have changed my mind and my feelings about you have changed. I feel that we can be friends. We felt your pain and you felt ours. We met people that have compassion in their*

*hearts and not hate. We all have the same goal –we are all for peace" (A Palestinian participant)*

- *"I would like to thank each and every one of you for opening your hearts. I found here partners to a journey. I now have more will and determination to do all that is in my power to bring an end to the occupation and bring peace". (An Israeli participant)*
- *"After the weekend one of the Palestinian participants called me, and even though we could not say more than 'hello' and 'how are you' because of the language barrier, the fact that it was important for him to call me meant so much. I felt the special connection that was created between us and the Palestinian participants, the power of our group and the strength it gave me and the drive to be more active". (An Israeli participant)*
- *"We are people from bereaved families. We live the pain and therefore we have a special power to make a change. But we shouldn't stay in this small circle. We must strengthen the connections and the honest friendship that were built between us and think together how to promote peace. We must bring the message to others and make this a bigger circle in the way to bring peace." (A Palestinian participant).*



**Bi-National weekend activity**



**Group picture at the Liftera tour**

### **Challenges PCFF faced in organizing and conducting the PNE Groups:**

- ***Permits refusals*** - Despite efforts made by PCFF, in both groups one or two of the Palestinian participants did not get a permit from the IDF to enter Israel to participate in the Liftera / Yad Vashem tours. PCFF conducted the processing discussion after the tour in Beit Jala to enable these participants to join the group for that part of the day.
- ***Change in groups' order*** – Originally PCFF planned for the second PNE group to be a group for women, however due to reasons related to the facilitators for the group, PCFF decided to change the target group for the second PNE group and to conduct a PNE for women in the second year of the project.

## **b. Workshop for the PNE facilitators**

On September 11, 2015 PCFF held a one-day workshop for the PNE facilitators to increase their facilitation capacity and give them additional facilitation tools. 14 PCFF facilitators participated in the workshop (8 Israelis and 6 Palestinians) with different amounts of facilitation experience.

The first part of the workshop was led by Sharon Leshem-Singer who is a highly experienced professional group facilitator. Leshem-Singer is the Director of the Collot Ba'Negev training school for group facilitators, and a lecturer at the Ben Gurion University Conflict Management & Resolution program.

Sharon talked about different aspects in the role of a group facilitator and how to deal with difficult situations that arise during the PNE process. She discussed with the facilitators some examples that they brought from difficult situations they encountered with groups they facilitated, and how the facilitator can deal with such situations and what tools he/she can use. Sharon also demonstrated some psychodrama techniques that can be used by the facilitators.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to the new module of the PNE Alumni Leadership Workshop. The Palestinian and Israeli Project Managers described the module to the facilitators, reported about the experience of the first alumni group, and discussed with them the lessons learned from this experience and the changes PCFF is planning to make to the module based on these lessons (see a description of the changes in section 2a below).



**Facilitators' discussion**



**Psychodrama simulation**

## **Planned Activity for the coming quarter**

During the next quarter the PNE group for bereaved people will complete the PNE process and PCFF will work on organizing the next PNE group to be conducted as part of the project.

## **Component 2: Advancing Social Change Agents for Shared Issues**

During the reporting period, PCFF conducted the PNE Alumni Leadership Workshop for the first group of alumni with a total of 28 participants (15 Israelis and 13 Palestinians). 4 Proposed Joint Projects Teams were formed by the participants of the alumni group which have started working on the development of the joint projects.

### **2a. PNE Alumni Leadership Workshops**

The alumni leadership program is aimed at enhancing the capacity of PNE alumni (from the NFC project and other projects) to respond to challenges on the ground, maximizing their potential of influence and providing a framework for addressing mutual concerns. The program includes uni-national and bi-national meetings according to the following module:

**Uni-National Meetings:** The program starts with two separate meetings (one for the Palestinian participants, held in Beit Jala and one for the Israeli participants, held in Jaffa/Ramat Efal) that are devoted to:

- Acquaintance: Personal acquaintance between the participants as well as through describing their experience as participants in the PNE and the reaction they received in their community to their participation in the program, and challenges they faced.
- Explanation about the program and its expected outcomes of joint projects
- Sharing the reasons for their participation in the program.

### **Bi-National Meeting**

The first bi-national meeting of the group is aimed at acquaintance between the participants, providing them tools to deal with challenges they face in their community related to their participation in the program, and deepening their knowledge regarding reconciliation and the challenges on the ground (through activities such as lectures or films, etc.).

### **Joining the Community Field Trip**

A joint field trip and outdoor activities together with participants' family members that are aimed at:

- Getting to know the reality and challenges on the ground
- Learning first-hand about Israeli-Palestinian projects that aim to mitigate the effects of the conflict.
- Engaging in outdoor activities that support the local community.

By engaging with local people the participants are able to gain insight into some of region's most acute problems and acquire additional knowledge that will help them advocate and work for change as well as build their capacity towards developing joint projects themselves.

Including family members in this activity is aims to support the participants in the process they are going through and in dealing with objections from people in their community.

### **Launch of Joint Projects Meeting**

A meeting in which the participants start the process of developing joint projects. This day is led by facilitators from The Center for Emerging Futures (CEF) – an organization that has 10 years of experience in working with Palestinians and Israelis to develop joint projects. The meeting consists of three parts:

- Presenting the goals and criteria for developing joint projects.
- Beginning the development of joint projects using the Open Space Technology (OST) format: Participants who have ideas for joint projects describe their idea to the group, in short, and are identified as Hosts. The room is set up so that there are as many tables as Hosts and each Host is assigned a table. Participants interested in the Host's idea, are invited to sit with that Host, listen to the Host's idea in more detail, add to the idea and develop it. Some of the ideas for projects gain momentum, some fade over the course of the discussion, and some are combined with similar ideas.  
The Proposed Projects Teams (PPTs) that are formed through the OST process are tasked with creating a poster that presents the idea, the leadership of the project and action items.
- Explanation on how to go from idea to action – how to develop a work plan and a budget, what are the logistics involved and what forms of support the CEF can provide the participants with throughout the project's development process.

Following is a description of the process the first alumni group went through, their experience and the challenges faced by PCFF in conducting the program:

#### **The 1<sup>st</sup> PNE Alumni group**

This group was comprised of 15 Israeli and 13 Palestinian PNE alumni from different PNE groups (a total of 28 participants). 2 of the participants were alumni from the NFC project (students group) and the others were PNE alumni from previous projects. The participants represent a variety of professions, interests and skills. The group went through the leadership workshop during the period between May and June 2015, and had a total of 5 events (meetings) as described above.

At their ***first bi-national meeting*** the group heard two lectures aimed at deepening their knowledge about the challenges on the ground and about reconciliation:

- A Lecture by Ibrahim Salameh (a senior manager for the Ministry of Interior in Al-Ram and one of the co-founders of Combatants for Peace) about the anti-normalization movement in the Palestinian society and the challenges it creates for Israeli-Palestinian partnership and reconciliation initiatives.
- A lecture by Shiri Barr (an expert on conflict transformation) about the psychological barriers on the road to peace / conflict resolution (such as fear, hate, images of the "other", victimhood etc.) to help the participants understand the mindset people adhere to in times of conflict.

The facilitators also worked with the participants on how to deal with objections they encounter from their community regarding their participation in the PNE project. The facilitators presented tools the participants can use to deal with such objections and the participants practiced these tools in small groups' role playing.

The second meeting of the group was a **Field Trip**, with family members of the participants, that included three parts:

- A visit to the Palestinian village Batir where the group met with a Palestinian representative of the Friends of the Earth organization, who told the group about their successful struggle against building the separation wall in the village. This was a joint Israeli-Palestinian project of Friends of the Earth together with the people of the village. Including it in the group's tour enabled them to see an example of a joint project that was aimed at helping a local community overcome obstacles created by the conflict.
- A tour conducted by representatives of the Combatants for Peace movement as part of their Israeli-Palestinian West Bank tours project, showing the reality on the ground. Through the tour the participants learned about issues such as the separation wall, the settlements, outposts, water issues, building permits, etc. This activity was also another example for the participants of a joint Israeli-Palestinian project.
- Engaging in agricultural work at the Tent of Nations farm, located southwest of Bethlehem, to support the farm. The land of the farm is threatened with confiscation by the state of Israel and its owners are fighting this threat in a peaceful resistance through legal battles. The participants also heard the story of the place which conducts educational and environmental activities for many groups aimed at bridging between people and promoting reconciliation.

At the summary session of the day the participants said that it was very good for them to see the situation on the ground first hand and not just to hear about it and that it helped them a lot to be introduced to joint Israeli-Palestinian projects.

Their last meeting as part of the leadership workshop was the **Launch of Joint projects meeting** in which they started the process of developing joint projects using the Open Space Technology format (as explained above). The two CEF facilitators (one Israeli and one Palestinian) who led the day explained to the participants about the goals and criteria for developing joint projects and gave a presentation on how to develop a work plan and a budget and other issues relevant to developing and implementing a project. The CEF facilitators emphasized that only projects that will meet the criteria will be submitted to a special CEF-PCFF committee that will choose the projects that will be able to receive financial support. Here are some of the main criteria presented:

- The project should be a partnership between Israelis and Palestinians (i.e. the team working to develop the project should be comprised of Israeli and Palestinian participants from the alumni group).

- The project should be founded on the basis of shared concerns and should help mitigate the effects of the conflict.
- The project should involve and influence a larger audience (not just the participants of the group).
- The project must be realistic and start the implementation phase within reasonable time.
- Resources for the project should be clearly defined and identified.

At the end of the day, 4 Proposed Projects Teams (PPTs) were formed. A description of the 4 proposed project ideas and the progress each team made since, is detailed below in section 2b.

At the summary session the facilitators held at the end of the last meeting, to discuss the experience the participants had in the PNE alumni workshop, the participants talked about the new tools they gained in the process they went through and the additional knowledge they acquired which will help them in their work to develop joint projects.

Many of the participants said that they felt they didn't have enough time to get to know the other participants on a personal level and that they feel this is a very important element when the goal is to create projects together.



**Tour at Batir**



**weeding work at the Tent of Nations farm**



**Launch of joint projects meeting – presenting projects' ideas**

## **Challenges PCFF faced in conducting the first PNE Alumni group and lessons learned**

The PNE alumni workshop is a new program that PCFF has conducted for the first time. Through the different activities in the program the participants increase their capacity to be actively involved in peace building activities and to create joint projects that will address shared areas of concern and help mitigate the effects of the conflict by benefitting local communities. PCFF believes that the participants' capacity was indeed increased through the program, however more emphasis was needed to be put on personal acquaintance between the participants, since this is a necessary basis for their work together on developing projects together. The program included only two one-day bi-national meetings before the participants started to work together on joint projects, and the participants felt that this was not enough for them to build personal relationships, especially when the second meeting was conducted in a less intimate atmosphere since it included the participants' family members as well.

The program for the first alumni group was done according to an illustrative module PCFF developed. Based on this lesson that was learned through the first group, PCFF decided to enable more time for the participants to build personal relationships by making two changes in the module for the next alumni groups:

- The first bi-national meeting will be a weekend workshop rather than a one day meeting, allowing the participants more time to strengthen their personal connection.
- The field trip will be conducted without family members, in a more intimate atmosphere, thus contributing to the purpose of strengthening the ties between the participants.

This change in the module was approved by USAID AOR in August and will be implemented in the program of the next alumni group PCFF will be conducting.

## **2b. Joint Projects**

As described above, 4 Proposed joint Projects Teams (PPTs) were formed in the Launch of Joint Projects meeting of the first alumni group. Following is a description of the ideas raised by each of these teams for the joint project they will develop and the progress they have made since in developing their project:

### **PPT 1 – The "Similar and Different" Theatre**

The project idea: An Israeli and a Palestinian theater youth groups that will create plays that tell their narratives, which will be presented to larger audiences.

The goal of the project is for children from the two peoples to get to know each other through theatre work and to expose larger audiences to the message of the project.

The basic idea for the project was set at the Launch of Joint Project meeting of the alumni group. The proposed project team (PPT) then set a date for a meeting in which they will discuss the

project in more details and will decide on the first steps needed for the development of the project. This meeting was conducted on July 24<sup>th</sup> in Beit Jala. Prior to this meeting each side recruited someone to help with the professional side – on the Israeli side an alumni of one of the PNEs was recruited, who is a high school theatre teacher that has experience in working with Jewish-Arab theatre youth groups. On the Palestinian side another alumni of a PNE group was recruited who is working as a teacher and is a psychodrama specialist.

In the meeting, to which the professional volunteers joined, it was decided that each side will recruit a group of children age 8-12. The two groups will meet once at the beginning of the process for a bi-national meeting and then each side will work separately while the team leaders and the professional volunteers on both sides will work in close cooperation with each other with regards to the contents (that will be related to the identity/narrative of the children from both sides) and to the work methods. The team also discussed the possibility of filming the work process, so that the video created can be used to bring the message of the project to a much larger audience.

After the end of Ramadan and the Jewish holidays the team started working on the recruitment of the two groups of children to take part in the project as well as looking for a suitable place for the activity to take place.



**The meeting of the theatre project team on July 24<sup>th</sup>**

## **PPT 2 – "Knowing the other" meetings**

The project idea: Conducting meetings for Israeli non-leftist audiences with Palestinians, that are aimed at changing Israeli public opinion.

This team was also supposed to meet on July 24<sup>th</sup> for a planning meeting, however due to lack of motivation and cooperation of the team members the meeting did not take place. Efforts made by the CEF facilitators to motivate the team members to continue working on the project development were unsuccessful and on August 9, 2015 CEF facilitators wrote a letter to the CEF-PCFF joint projects committee recommending that this team will be denied from moving forward under the NFC project since they are not making sufficient progress.

### **PPT 3 - "People of the Land" Campaign**

Project idea: A campaign that will be based on portraits and stories of Israelis and Palestinians that are engaged in dialogue, aimed at increasing awareness to the "other" and encouraging dialogue.

The goal of the project is to reshape the perception of the "other" in the Israeli and Palestinian societies.

The basic idea for the project was set at the Launch of Joint Project meeting of the alumni group. After this meeting the team discussed through emails the outline of the project, suggestions for a slogan and text for the campaign, and first sketches. At the same time the team worked to set a date for another meeting in which they will discuss the project development in more details. The meeting was held on September 4<sup>th</sup> in Beit Jala, and the team was able to make progress in the planning of the project as well as in assigning tasks and responsibilities to the team members. The team discussed different options of how to publicize the campaign – printed posters, internet website, Facebook page etc., and the first steps needed to take place in the process of developing the project.

The original team of this proposed project included only one Palestinian participant of the PNE alumni group. Following efforts made by PCFF Palestinian staff two other participants of the group joined the project team and took part in the September meeting.

At the end of the meeting the team decided to hold another meeting in one month (the date was set for October 16<sup>th</sup>) and in the meantime to make progress on the tasks assigned.

### **PPT 4 - "Places and their Story"**

Project idea: Conducting tours to places in Palestine and Israel to introduce the history and culture of the two peoples.

At the Launch of Joint Project meeting of the PNE alumni group this team decided to develop a project of tours in Israel and Palestine for bi-national groups that will include acquaintance and learning and discussing issues related to the places that will be toured.

On July 24<sup>th</sup> the team met in Beit Jala to discuss the project objectives, target groups and potential activities. The team decided to hold a pilot tour in Jaffa in September from which they will be able to draw conclusions regarding the project development and implementation. The team members assigned responsibilities as to the content, budget, transportation, food, permits etc. for the pilot tour. It was decided that the budget for the tour will be based on participation fee and in-kind support.

The pilot tour was scheduled for September 4<sup>th</sup> and in the meantime the team members worked on planning and logistics issues. The two team leaders (Israeli and Palestinian) also met on August 28<sup>th</sup> in Tarquimiya and finalized the tour details as well as the schedule of the day.

The pilot tour was held as planned with 24 participants, half Israelis and half Palestinians, that took part in the tour and relevant workshops that were aimed at personal acquaintance and learning of historical aspects. In general the tour was successful with some difficulties. The team is planning to hold a meeting during the next quarter in which they will discuss lessons learned from the pilot tour, and future plans for the project development and implementation.



The tours project's planning meeting in Beit Jala, July 24<sup>th</sup>



Pilot Tour in Jaffa

### **CEF Facilitation of the Joint Project Development Process**

The CEF facilitators' work with the proposed joint projects teams started at the Launch of Joint Project meeting of the PNE Alumni group and continued from that point on with providing support to the teams in the development process. The two CEF facilitators were in on-going contact with the teams through emails and phone calls checking on the progress they are making and advising them on different relevant issues and helping them with any difficulties they encountered. The CEF facilitators also accompanied the teams in their joint meetings, advising as necessary as well as helping the team leaders prepare for these meetings. The work of the CEF facilitators with the team members helped in building their capacity towards developing their project.

CEF facilitators updated PCFF on an on-going basis on the progress made by each of the PPTs and the support they provided to the teams.

### **Challenges faced in the proposed projects' development process**

So far the PPTs had only a few months to work on the development of their projects. During that time none of the teams achieved an organized work plan and budget. This is of course related to the fact that the participants are not professionals. CEF facilitators will continue to work with the PPTs to help them with this mission.

The language barrier is also a challenge to the PPTs in the process of developing their projects. CEF facilitators as well as PCFF staff are helping the teams to overcome this challenge by providing translation to email correspondence between them as well as translators for face-to-face meetings.

**Planned Activity for the coming quarter**

During the next quarter PCFF will work on establishing the second PNE Alumni group - decide on the dates of their meetings, choose the facilitators for the group and together with them finalize the program for the group (based on the revised module of the program), recruit participants for the group, and start its activity.

The Proposed Projects teams from the first alumni group will continue their work on developing joint projects with the support of the CEF facilitators. CEF facilitators will also assess each of the PPTs they mentor towards a decision on whether these proposed projects should be considered as strong projects that should receive further support from PCFF.

### **Component 3: Women Dialogue Meetings and Engagement in Reconciliation**

During the reporting period PCFF conducted training for 23 women members of PCFF (12 Palestinians and 11 Israelis) to build their capacity to be facilitators of dialogue meetings for women. Following the training PCFF conducted 2 such dialogue encounters – one in Palestine (for 23 Palestinian women) and one in Israel (for 26 Israeli women).

#### **3a. Women group training**

During the reporting period PCFF conducted the training for the Palestinian and Israeli women members of PCFF who will take part in the Reconciliation Dialogue Meetings program for female audiences. This training was aimed at building their capacity to facilitate dialogue meetings – meetings, in Palestine and in Israel, in which they tell their personal story of personal loss and opting for reconciliation and non-violence to the audience and then hold a discussion with the audience about the conflict and the possibility of reconciliation. The training was comprised of two actions:

##### **a. Uni-national training for the Palestinian PCFF women**

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, PCFF conducted a uni-national training in Beit Jala for 12 Palestinian women members of PCFF. The training was led by Manar Farag, a project manager at the Center for Democracy & Community Development and a researcher and teacher on conflict resolution (focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian refugees' identity and women's rights).

After an overview of the Dialogue Meetings for Women program and the goal of the training, the participants took part in different activities all aimed at building their capacity to tell their personal story and at equipping them with some required tools. The training also included a session devoted to the role of women in the Palestinian society and in conflict resolution.

##### **b. Bi-national weekend training**

On May 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, PCFF conducted a subsequent weekend training in Beit Jala for the 12 Palestinian women who took part in the uni-national training, together with 11 Israeli women, all members of PCFF. The training was comprised of the following activities aimed at building the capacity of the participants with regards to all aspects involved in facilitating dialogue meetings:

- Introduction – about the Dialogue Meetings for Women program and about the unique role of women in promoting reconciliation.
- Acquaintance, expectations and concerns

- Explanation about the dialogue meeting activity and the goals of sharing the personal story in a dialogue meeting.
- Personal story simulation - The participants did a simulation of telling their personal story in a dialogue meeting, The simulation was first done in small uni-national groups and then in two bi-national groups, and the participants got feedback from veteran PCFF dialogue meetings facilitators who led the simulation as well as from other participants. After the simulation a processing session was held to discuss the participants' experience.
- Co-facilitation – The participants learned about important guidelines in facilitating a dialogue meeting with a partner from the other side. These included general rules in co-facilitation and specific tools for working with a partner from the other side.
- Facilitating a discussion in the dialogue meeting – After the participants learned about the role of the facilitator and got important tips and tools on how to facilitate the discussion they conducted a simulation of a discussion in a dialogue meeting. The participants tried to answer difficult questions they may be asked in dialogue encounters in Israel or in Palestine and got feedback from veteran facilitators.

The training was very intensive and covered a lot of subjects that are essential in building the participants' capacity to be facilitators of dialogue meetings. The participants said that they have learned a lot and acquired new and important tools.

Following the training the women continued working to improve their skills through working with veteran facilitators on their personal story on a one on one basis or in small groups, taking part in PCFF dialogue encounters as observers, and participating in other PCFF workshops on dialogue meetings that were conducted under other actions.



### **Challenges faced by PCFF in training the women**

One of the challenges PCFF faced in training the women, was the different level of experience these women had. Some of the women in the group had no experience in facilitating dialogue meetings and were relatively new members of PCFF, and others (mainly on the Israeli side)

were much more experienced. For those with less experience PCFF felt that the two trainings were not sufficient and therefore continued working to improve their skills as described above.

### **3b. Organizing and Conducting Reconciliation Dialogue Meetings**

Following the training, PCFF started marketing the "Women to Women" dialogue meetings to women organizations and other possible female audiences. The marketing process was done by PCFF staff with the help of the PCFF women who went through the trainings, other members of PCFF and PNE alumni. On the Palestinian side, PCFF also contracted with external manpower to help with the marketing process.

Two dialogue meetings were conducted as a result during the last quarter of the reporting period – one in Palestine and one in Israel - and more dialogue meetings were scheduled for the next quarter. Each of the meetings was facilitated by two women – one Israeli and one Palestinian – members of PCFF who went through the trainings as described above. Since none of the facilitators knows both Hebrew and Arabic, a translator joined each of the meetings with PCFF translation equipment and simultaneous translation.

#### **Dialogue meeting in Surif**

On September 8, 2015 a dialogue meeting was conducted in Surif through a women cooperative society for 23 adult women (some were members of this organization and some were invited by the members). The two facilitators of the meeting were joined by two other PCFF women (one Israeli and one Palestinian) who came to observe and learn from the meeting.

The facilitators told their personal story to the participants, after which a discussion was held with the participants. The participants were very interested to hear both from the Israeli facilitator (since for most of them it was their first time to meet an Israeli who is not a soldier or a settler), as well as from the Palestinian facilitator who was talking about reconciliation. The participants showed empathy to the facilitators' stories of bereavement but they also asked them both difficult questions. It was hard for them to understand how the Palestinian facilitator, who lost her son, could work together with Israelis. The Palestinian facilitator told them about the change she went through from looking for revenge to joining the PCFF and working to promote reconciliation and that she was doing that for her other children's future. The ability of the two facilitators to answer the participants' questions in a respectful and understanding way opened their hearts and minds to the possibility of reconciliation and by the end of the meeting they said they would like to meet other members of PCFF and learn more about the PCFF activity.

## Dialogue Meeting in Yad Natan

On September 29, 2015 PCFF held a dialogue meeting in Moshav Yad Natan for 26 adult women. The meeting was held at the home of a friend of one of the PCFF members who invited her friends for a unique opportunity to meet and hear an Israeli and a Palestinian bereaved women talking about reconciliation. The two facilitators of the meeting were joined by two other PCFF women (one Israeli and one Palestinian) who came to observe and learn from the meeting.

After a short introduction about the PCFF the two facilitators told their personal story and then held a discussion with the participants. For most of the participants it was the first time to meet a Palestinian and therefore most of the questions were addressed to the Palestinian facilitator to learn about the daily life in Palestine, their wish for peace and how mothers are educating their children in that sense, etc. After the meeting the woman who organized the meeting told PCFF Project Manager that the meeting was very successful, interesting and moving, and that she got many positive feedbacks from participants. The participants asked to have another meeting with PCFF women members, so they can learn more about the other side.

Here is a quote from one of the questionnaires filled out by the participants that can reflect the participants' view about the meeting: *"The meeting helped me understand better the daily life of the Palestinians. It opened a window for me to their world, made me understand the importance of this kind of meetings between people from both sides and motivated me to be more active"*.



**Women Dialogue Meeting in Yad Natan**



**Dialogue meeting in Surif**

## Planned Activity for the coming quarter

During the next quarter PCFF will continue marketing the dialogue meetings to women organizations and other possible female audiences, and will conduct more dialogue meetings that will be facilitated by the women who went through the training.

## 4. Other Issues

### a. Social media and internet

During the reporting period PCFF used its internet site and the social media to publish information about the activities conducted in this time. For example:

**PCFF Website** – PCFF published invitations to participate in the [Students PNE group](#) , in the [Bereaved People PNE group](#), and in the [PNE Alumni group](#) on PCFF website.

**PCFF Facebook Page** - Several posts with pictures about activities conducted were published on PCFF Facebook page Crack in the Wall (a platform for dialogue between Israeli and Palestinians), such as a [post](#) about the training for the women group; a post about the Students PNE group tour to Lifta and a post about their summary meeting; a post about the field trip of the alumni group and a [post](#) about the meeting of the alumni group PPTs meeting; a post about the Bereaved group weekend activity and their tour to Lifta, and others. (see some of the pictures below).

Posts with invitations to participate in the [Students PNE group](#) and the [Bereaved People PNE group](#) were also published on PCFF Facebook page and were promoted to target populations reaching almost 28,000 people and almost 39,000 people respectively.

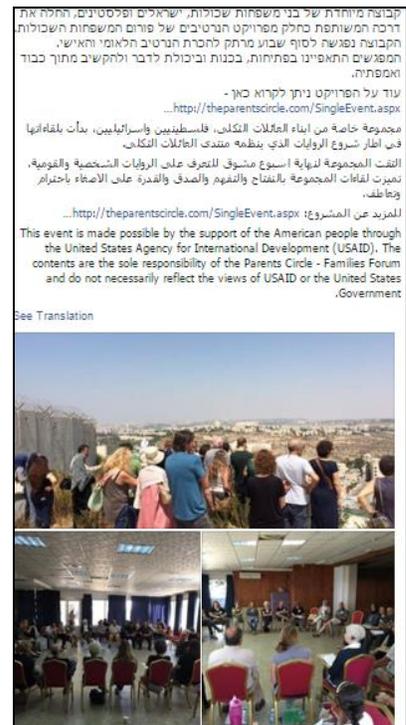
**PCFF Newsletter** - PCFF also published items with pictures about these activities on the PCFF newsletter which is sent by mail to approximately 1,300 people.



A post on PCFF Facebook page on the Students' group tour at Lifta



A post on alumni group field trip



A Post on the Bereaved group weekend activity

## b. Evaluation

PCFF chose a team of two external evaluators – one Palestinian and one Israeli– to evaluate the NFC project, in order to get both an Israeli and a Palestinian point of view on the project. Both evaluators – Jamal Atamneh and Anat Reisman-Levy – are experienced evaluators in the field of conflict transformation and each holds an MA in this field.

For evaluating the project the evaluation team combined qualitative and quantitative evaluation measures, such as: pre and post questionnaires that they developed (in Hebrew and Arabic) specific for each of the activities under the project; observations in the different project activities; interviews and focus groups with participants; and meetings with the PCFF staff.

After the end of the first year of the project the evaluation team submitted an internal evaluation report to PCFF with their findings, analysis and recommendations.

According to their analysis of the pre and post questionnaires of the first PNE group (the only PNE group to finish the PNE process during the reporting period) **88.5% of the participants agree that they have better understanding of the others that helped in changing their attitude positively.**

The result for this mandatory USAID indicator was an average of results of the participants' answers to three statements phrased by USAID, as detailed below:

- **100% of the participants agreed that as a result of the PNE they can understand "others" perspective**
- **72.5% of the participants agreed that as a result of the PNE they are more positive about the "other"**
- **93% of the participants agreed that as a result of the PNE they are willing to work with the "others" on common issues**

The evaluators wrote in their report that a safe space was created in the PNE groups meetings that enable an authentic, reliable and open dialogue between the participants about their thoughts and feelings. Thus they were also able to listen in a non-judgmental way to new information, which enabled them to reach new insights about the reality that influenced the way they perceive the "other". This, according to the evaluators, is an important first step in the way to reconciliation and promoting a resolution to the conflict.

As for the alumni group – since the group is still at the early stages of developing joint projects, the evaluation focused in the program prior to the projects' development stage. The main finding with regards to this program, based on interviews and focus group with the participants, was that more time is needed for personal acquaintance between the participants to strengthen the connections between them.

As described in section 2a above this was one of the lessons learned by PCFF from conducting the first alumni group and PCFF is planning to make changes to the program in future alumni

groups (as detailed above) that will enable more time for the participants to build personal relationships.

With regards to the women dialogue encounters – since only two encounters were conducted during the reporting period, the evaluation of this component was only a preliminary one. A more elaborative evaluation, about the encounters' impact and the facilitators' capacity, could only be given after some more activity is done under this component during the second year of the project.

### **c. Working with USAID**

- Implementation Plan and M&E Plan - The Implementation Plan for the first year of the project was approved by USAID on December 12, 2014 after some small revisions were made to the draft submitted by PCFF. The Implementation Plan for the second year of the project was approved by USAID on August 31, 2015.

The M&E Plan for the project was approved by USAID on March 18, 2015. The delay in approval was caused due to new guidance provided by the USAID program office that required revision in the M&E plan submitted by PCFF.

- Data Quality Assessment – After a DQA visit at the PCFF office was conducted by USAID AOR and an M&E specialist from the program office (on June 22<sup>nd</sup>) to check PCFF data collection procedures and supporting documents, a DQA report was issued by the USAID on August 17, 2015 concluding that there were no data limitations.
- Trainings and meetings – PCFF's representatives participated in trainings provided by USAID during the reporting period: a Post-award training with USAID staff that was conducted at PCFF office, M&E training, Mission Order 21 training, DQA training and GEO-MIS training. PCFF's representatives have also participated in the USAID CMM partners meeting.
- Using the Geo-MIS System – PCFF uploaded all information to the Geo-MIS system about the activities it had conducted during the reporting period and also updated the values of all indicators on the PMP Matrix for this period.

During the first year of the project 27 events were conducted by PCFF:

Component #1 : 15 events (8 meetings of the 1<sup>st</sup> PNE group, 6 meetings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> group, and 1 facilitators workshop)

Component #2 : 9 events (5 meetings of the first alumni group + 4 Proposed Joint Projects teams that were formed)

Component #3 : 4 events (2 trainings for the women group and 2 dialogue meetings)

*\* While writing this annual report another round of violence erupted.*

*The activity period reflected in this report does not include the implications of this new surge of violence. Its effects on the program implementation will be reflected in the next quarterly report.*