

THE OLIVE BRANCH Summer 2009

Teacher's Guide

Educational Supplement
to the Youth Magazine
of Seeds of Peace



Tools for Educators

From the editors

Daniel Noah Moses & Inessa Shishmanyman

Welcome to the second edition of the Seeds of Peace *Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*. Between the first issue in the fall of 2008 and this one, Palestinians and Israelis have gone through painful and difficult times. The escalation of violence—"the Gaza War"—caused terrible suffering. The political landscape shifted ground. The gaps in communication and understanding between Palestinians and Israelis grew. During those first months of 2009—in Ramallah, in Tel-Aviv, in Jenin, in Beersheva, everywhere you went—you could hear the tones of anxiety, anger, fear, suffering, and hate.

In such a harsh climate, the idea of this *Teacher's Guide* might seem precious. Tragic. Absurd.

This guide represents the hard work of Palestinian and Israeli educators, their colleagues, friends and allies. These educators communicate even when communication is difficult. They teach and model respect. They encourage leadership and an ethic of responsibility.

Who are the educators who contribute to this guide? The core group is composed of Seeds of Peace Delegation Leaders (DLs). These are educators who accompany delegations of Seeds from countries in conflict to the Seeds of Peace Camp in Maine. At Camp, DLs represent the parents; they are the eyes and ears of their home communities. DLs make the Camp possible. They recruit and select Seeds; they help to organize orientation for them. Meanwhile, DLs go through an intense "encounter" program of their own. Back home, DLs support Seeds and Seeds of Peace: they root the organization in the community.

In recent years, Seeds of Peace has expanded the network of Palestinian and Israeli educators dedicated to the mission of Seeds of Peace. The widening circle includes: parents of Seeds; "graduate Seeds" (those who took part in the Camp program as teenagers who are now educators and community leaders); graduates of the Seeds of Peace facilitation program in Jerusalem; participants in the Model Schools Initiative and the various educators' workshops funded by USAID; counselors from Camp; international educators who support Seeds of Peace.

Seeds of Peace educators have collected material for this *Guide*. We have collected our best practices, tools, curriculum and reflections. We hope that what we offer is useful to our friends and allies working for a better future.

These guides are supported by the USAID/Seeds of Peace Cooperative Agreement, "Promoting Peace Education and Dialogue in Israeli and Palestinian Centers of Learning."

This partnership, started in September 2007, supports the following projects:

I. PEACE EDUCATION TRAINING

The Model Schools Initiative: Teaching tolerance in Israeli & Palestinian schools

With the cooperation of regional and American faculty, Seeds of Peace works with approximately 20 Palestinian and 20 Israeli educators from select schools to introduce new methods and new curriculum, to develop action plans, and to train other educators. For the Palestinian part of this component, Seeds of Peace partners with Peace Games, a peace education organization based in Boston; for the Israeli part of this component, Seeds of Peace partners with the Maine-based Greenshoes Group.

Workshops on peaceful learning environments in the West Bank & Gaza

Starting in January 2008, Seeds of Peace organized six three-day workshops per year for approximately 25 Palestinian educators. These workshops were held in Jericho, Jenin, and Bethlehem. The objective: how to cultivate peaceful learning environments at home, in schools, and in local communities. Workshops provide a chance to share best practices and tools to encourage communication skills, critical thinking, tolerance, leadership, and civic engagement. In fall of 2009, Seeds of Peace plans an additional workshop on peaceful learning environments for Palestinian educators in Gaza.

Cross-border bi-national workshops to exchange best practices

With the support of USAID, Seeds of Peace organizes two three-day cross-border workshops a year to bring together approximately 40 Palestinian and Israeli educators to share experience, knowledge and resources, and to strengthen the Seeds of Peace cross-border network of educators. In February 2008, the cross-border workshop brought together Palestinian and Israeli Delegation Leaders and participants from the Seeds of Peace facilitation program in Jerusalem. The workshop focused on the Seeds facilitation experience as an educational process.



EDUCATORS MEET in Tiberius for the Seeds of Peace Cross-Border Educators' Workshop in June, 2009.

In May 2009, there was a second cross-border educators' workshop. The focus: human rights education and peace education. Both of these workshops took place in Jordan's Wadi Rum.

The third workshop was originally planned for early 2009, but it was postponed due to the Gaza War. The workshop eventually took place in June 2009. For a record of what transpired, see Page 6.

II. PEACE EDUCATION OUTREACH

Seeds Café

Each month, Seeds of Peace organizes a forum in Jerusalem to present and discuss cultural and political issues relevant to Palestinians, Israelis and the international public.

Winter & summer camps for children in the West Bank

In January of 2008, Seeds of Peace organized its first West Bank camp in Jericho (it was profiled in the first issue of *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*). In June of the same year, Seeds of Peace organized a second camp, this time outside of Jenin. Each camp brought together approximately 50 Palestinian children, ages 10 to 12, from across Jerusalem and the West Bank. In 2009, the camp schedule was delayed because of the Gaza War, but again, there were two camps, both outside Jenin.

These camps coincide with workshops for Palestinian educators. The camps are opportunities for Palestinians from across the West Bank to meet at a time when such meetings are rare. At multiple levels, the camps provide outreach and leadership opportunities. Through these camps, members of the Palestinian Seeds of Peace community have the opportunity to do something tangible and positive for their community.

Educational materials for peace education outreach

Seeds of Peace creates and disseminates educational material to Palestinian and Israeli schools. *The Olive Branch* is created by Seeds; *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide* is created by Seeds of Peace educators and staff. Together these publications promote and encourage peaceful dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, leadership and civic engagement and the peaceful transformation of conflict. Through *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*, the best practices, ideas, and experience of Seeds of Peace educators are collected and disseminated to a broader public.

Through the storms and droughts, Seeds of Peace educators cultivate the environment for Seeds to flourish. We hope that you use and enjoy this second issue of *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*.

Summer 2009 Volume II, Issue I

The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide is a magazine written, edited and produced by members of the Seeds of Peace program. All opinions expressed on these pages are those of the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by Seeds of Peace, any government, *The Olive Branch* or its staff, or USAID.

Teacher's Guide Staff

Managing Editor
Daniel Noah Moses, Ph.D.

Deputy Managing Editor
Inessa Shishmanyman

Editors/Consultants
Deb Bicknell Lili Birnbaum
Rachel Brophy Myra Small Ben Mueller

Contributors

Bobbie Gottschalk	Steven Brion-Meisels
Sarah Norton	Linda Brion-Meisels
Karen AbuZant	Kathleen Borschow
Jessica Marx	Carol Daniel Kasbari
Lamis Hussarri	Haya Shapira
Jason Kim	Ismail Mukbil
Ajay Noronha	Orly Kalinsky
Margie Arsham	Maysoon Jayyusi
Elisabeth Mallin	Walid M.A. Errahman
Saheb & Sundas	Khader Abu Alia

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COVER PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE, TOP LEFT): SARAH BIGNEY, RACHEL BROPHY, BOBBIE GOTTSCHALK, AJAY NORONHA.
BACK COVER: RACHEL BROPHY. ABOVE: CAROL DANIEL KASBARI.

The foundation & vision of Camp

By Bobbie Gottschalk, Co-Founder of Seeds of Peace



Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language, even the phrase 'each other' doesn't make any sense.

—Rumi

Seeds of Peace is an effort to become that field described by Rumi in the 13th century A.D.

As an admirer of psychologist Alfred Adler, I predicted that enemies living “as if” they were friends would eventually become friends. Day after day, going through the same routine, the same process, they would find out that they all have more in common than they could have realized while living apart.

The question is: with the realization of our commonality as human beings, can we

learn to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence? The answer is: yes. It happens all the time at our Camp and back in Seeds’ home countries, after Camp.

The overnight camp setting was the vehicle chosen to begin the process of creating a culture of peace which could be carried anywhere in the world. By offering the intense experience of our Camp to people already trained to hate and fear each other, we hope to change their “hard wiring,” so they will always question the designation of enemies and deeply-ingrained stereotypical viewpoints. We aim to expand their circle of concern to include people different from themselves and help them continue to build a culture of peace wherever they go.

Seeds of Peace has always been a “work in progress,” but the underlying principles of respect, appreciation of differences,

I've always lived with the assumption that I don't really need to know more about "the other," or even to learn new things. I felt that I was happy and satisfied with my wonderful family, husband and relatives; knowing more was never my dream.

Coming to Seeds of Peace opened a new door for me. I learned a lot from and about the new people I met. They taught me that no matter where you are from or what your religion is, deep inside we are all human beings. I also learned we have a great power inside us to love, help, support, accept, and respect.

Nature at this camp played a positive role in teaching me and purifying my soul. God is pure and his creatures are also pure. God created us so pure and peaceful.

I think that being here at Seeds of Peace was an experience that enriched my knowledge. It added a lot to my thoughts. It humbled my soul.

—Ghada (Jordanian Delegation Leader, 2009 Session II)

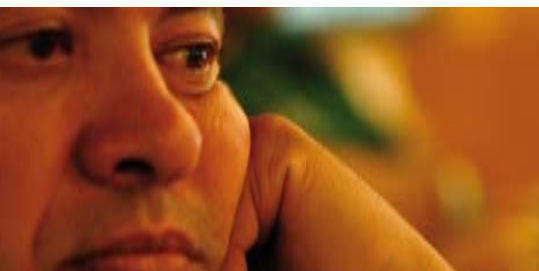


PHOTO CREDITS: AJAY NORONHA, BOBBIE GOTTSCHALK, ERIC KAPENGA

Origins: The founding fathers and mothers

By Ben Mueller

IN THIS, THE 17TH YEAR SINCE SEEDS of Peace was founded, we look back to some of the people who have been guiding the organization from the start. I sat down with Hadara Rosenblum and Farhat Agbaria to hear their thoughts on where Seeds of Peace has come, and where it needs to go.

Hadara Rosenblum

For Hadara Rosenblum, it was in her blood. “I was raised in a family where everyone was equal,” she says. “I was taught that we had to meet.” So when she was approached in 1993 at her post at the Israeli Ministry of Education as Director of Youth Councils and Youth Leaders about becoming involved in Seeds of Peace, she jumped on it.

Since then, she has seen hundreds of teenagers come through the program, first as names on applications, and then as eager and idealistic youths in the woods of Maine. Hadara helped to design the pre-Camp preparation program for the Israeli Seeds; her program teaches the

Seeds the history of the conflict, but encourages above all else that they open themselves to the possibilities of the future. As for Camp itself, it’s “the experience of a lifetime,” she says.

Hadara is not sitting back and admiring her work. She is eager to confront the challenges that she sees Seeds of Peace facing in this, its 17th year of existence.

From her experience in the Israeli Ministry of Education and with Seeds of Peace, Hadara has learned that “the real changes happen when the kids take ownership of their work.” She would like to see programs that give Seeds the freedom and responsibility to design their own projects. Hadara is also working to find ways to keep Delegation Leaders involved after their work in Maine is over.

“Kids feel a connection to the DLs. They are the ones the kids will call first.”

Above all else, Hadara says, Seeds of Peace must remain true to the values that have allowed it to flourish for so long: vision, equality, and a passion for responding to the changing needs of the people around the world who put their faith in Seeds of Peace.



BOBBIE GOTTSCHALK (left) with Palestinian Seed & Delegation Leader Kheirallah in Maine.

honesty, equality, responsibility, openness and good-natured fun have always been basic building blocks. Our objective has always been to reduce the level of fear

and replace it with mutual trust.

Program changes have developed over time, in response to better knowledge in the field of peace-building, very talented and committed staff, and the institutionalization of what began as a grassroots experiment.

It is safe to say that most of what is done at our Camp has been done before, but it has been put together in a unique program. It starts with holding the Camp far away from home, obligating participants to take a great journey and arrive at a different place where they can discover a new perspective. We create a setting where the culture of peace can thrive, in Maine, where the slogan for the state is, fittingly, “The way life should be.”

It is well known from recent studies that attending something like Camp just once in a lifetime, without on-going, follow-up activities, would yield a small population of dedicated change-makers. Camp would become a faded memory to most participants. Camp is the eye-opening experience from which they all start to open their hearts and minds to people from different backgrounds and even enemies.

But it cannot be the end. At the end of Camp, the bulk of the work begins. We realized this almost from the beginning

but did not obtain the resources to create a year-round program until 1997. By 1999, we had a physical presence in Jerusalem and the follow-up programs began in earnest. We are now able to support and maintain contact with a large number of Seeds who have benefitted from both this camp experience and the continuing programs.

Over time, I have watched the growth of other worthwhile NGOs and, unfortunately, the death of many. When Seeds of Peace President John Wallach died in 2002, many people thought Seeds of Peace would end.

It has been rough, but we have survived and we are now, in our 17th year, in a stronger position than ever before.

Every summer I work at our Camp because I love it as a laboratory of human behavior. This is not about categorizing people, but instead, about helping young people become the best human beings they can be, supporting each other and creating their own culture of peace. The essential human beings underneath the cloak of political and religious identity can be freed to find common bonds of humanity.

We have proven it is possible. Rumi had it right.

Farhat Agbaria

For Farhat Agbaria, Seeds of Peace is not an abstract experiment in coexistence. “For my children and their future, this can be a real contribution of mine. This is my calling.”

When Seeds of Peace’s founders came to Farhat in 1993 with little more than “an idea,” he knew that he needed to lend his concrete experience to the cause. Led by this visceral feeling of duty, he has helped to guide Seeds of Peace from the beginning to his current role as part of the two-member team in charge of the Facilitation Program in 2009 and founder of the Seeds of Peace Parents’ Program.

In Farhat’s view, Seeds of Peace provides a unique experience.

“We cut people off from reality. All of a sudden, they’re equal in Maine ...”

And so, when Seeds are asked to confront reality directly during dialogue sessions, they can enter the room with a different perspective. For the first time in their lives, they think and speak about the conflict not as a member of an ancient tribe of peoples under entrenched political and cultural dictates, but as a bunkmate, a Color Games teammate, a swimming companion.

Farhat says that there have been many changes through the years, changes



within the organization and changes in the surrounding political situation. Seeds of Peace has responded to those changes with versatility. For example, when a Palestinian Delegation Leader worried that visits to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum were too one-sided, she got the chance to present her own exhibit of Palestinian suffering.

Through all these adjustments, “the core of the program remains the same; the kids

still go to line-up at 7:30 every morning at Camp.” And there’s something about that daily 7 a.m. wake-up—a call that sounds every summer morning in Maine to signal another day of gathering for the purpose of peace—that provides hope to people whose home lives know tumult and agitation all too well.

Farhat says that Seeds of Peace represents a “huge investment in individuals and in a peace community.” At the end of the day, whether bombs are flying or the skies of the Middle East are quiet, that is how it should be judged—by its “success in creating a society of people talking peace and giving back to their home communities.”

“The little changes among the kids are what give me hope.”

Especially when the “big picture is terrible” and others are “planting so many negative seeds,” it is imperative that those who recognize the long-term potential of a few carefully-cultivated positive seeds work ever harder to grow a small garden.

It is that “little world of Seeds” who wake up at 7 every morning to act on their belief that their bunkmates and basketball teammates are capable of building peace in the woods of Maine that is a source of hope for this “Palestinian and Israeli” watching his kids grow up.

Programs *in the region*

Tiberius Educators' Seminar

Palestinian & Israeli educators explore the opportunities & challenges in leading/guiding children to a better future

In early June, a remarkable group of Palestinian and Israeli educators gathered in Tiberius. They traveled from Jenin and from Haifa, from Ramallah and from Tel-Aviv, from Hebron and from Eilat, to participate in a workshop to meet friends and colleagues from the other side. This cross-border educators' workshop was supported by a USAID-funded set of Seeds of Peace initiatives, "Promoting Peace Education and Dialogue in Israeli and Palestinian Centers of Learning."

Members of the planning committee for this Tiberius workshop could not agree on whether it was best to say that they want to guide or to lead their children to a better future: they agreed strongly when it came to the objectives for being together. They were dedicated to making the most of the rare and precious opportunity.

The educators who gathered came with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Together they compose a unique cross-border network that grows out of the Seeds of Peace Delegation Leaders Program.

Together the people who met in Tiberius are Seeds of Peace educators, a growing circle of concern and commitment.

For Seeds to grow into their full potential, for them to flower, they need the proper environment. They need to be nurtured and encouraged, so they can grow to be strong. Young people in regions of conflict need local educators who support them, teach them, and empower them.

The growing network of Seeds of Peace educators are dedicated to such work.

What follows is a brief record of what transpired in Tiberius when these Palestinian and Israeli educators, along with their American colleagues and friends, gathered.

This time together is but a small example of what we need at a larger scale.

Dear friends and colleagues:

Seeds of Peace invites you to participate in a unique gathering of Palestinian and Israeli educators and community leaders—Delegation Leaders, graduates of Seeds of Peace programs in the region. The meeting will take place on June 5th in Tiberius. This is the first meeting of its kind in a long time. Using the Open Space method, you will have the chance to bring your energy, your ideas, to meet your many different interests and needs. Open Space is based on the assumption that you, the participants, know what moves you, what challenges you face, what hopes you have, what you want to talk about, what you might want to do. The day-long focus will be:

"Palestinian and Israeli Educators: What Are the Opportunities and Challenges in Leading/Guiding our Children to a Better Future?"

The Open Space meeting will be facilitated by Carol Daniel Kasbari, a well-respected organizational consultant and facilitator for groups in conflict. Based in Jerusalem, Ms. Kasbari has worked with a wide range of NGOs, public and private organizations. In the 1990s, she worked for a summer at the Seeds of Peace Camp in Maine.

During the day of Open Space, we will follow the "law of the two feet." You will have the opportunity to lead and attend a wide variety of discussion groups on any burning topic related to the theme. Before we meet, please think about how you want to make the best possible use of this time.

We welcome you to make the best possible use of this precious opportunity.

With Respect and Hope,

Open Space Steering Committee & Daniel Noah Moses, Ph.D.
Director of the Delegation
Leaders Program, Seeds of Peace



PHOTO CREDIT: CAROL DANIEL KASBARI

The Format: Open Space Technology

By Carol Daniel Kasbari

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY IS A way to format a group meeting, retreat, or conference that generates communication, collaboration, innovation, and other solutions to challenges and transitions. It's an interactive process—participants meet in concurrent and overlapping mini-discussions around a theme or an issue, across departmental, hierarchal, or historically opposite lines. The cross-pollination of moving from group to group and topic to topic in a non-linear way allows participants to jump quickly from familiar ways of thinking into innovation and action.

The rules are simple. Do you know how sometimes when you go to a conference or a meeting, the best ideas, networking, brainstorming, and deal-making happen during coffee breaks? Open Space Technology is designed to simulate that natural way people find each other and share ideas in all different cultures and countries. It is also based on the understanding that there is a great amount of wisdom and experience in any gathered group of people—that we are all 'experts' and can contribute in a true democratic process.

It all starts with a circle of chairs, without a pre-designed agenda. The group members set their own agenda by identifying issues and topics that have heart and meaning for them; topics for which they have passion and interest and for which they are willing to host a discussion group. Small group discussions happen throughout the day, with participants moving from group to group whenever they feel that they can no longer learn or contribute to a discussion, or when they feel drawn to another topic.

There are four simple guidelines:

1. *Whoever comes is the right person:* Rather than wait for the expert on a given issue, realize that whoever is moved to come to your discussion group has been moved by their passion for the issue. The best and brightest are convening to discuss something they really care about—across departmental or hierarchal lines.

2. *Whatever happens is the only thing that could have:* Don't try to control the discussion. Even if it goes off on a tangent, that may be exactly the direction for the breakthrough of new ideas. Follow the energy of the group.

3. *Whenever it starts is the right time:*

Don't wait for some specific person to arrive; begin with whomever is drawn to the discussion.

4. *When it's over, it's over:* You may settle the problems of the world in 20 minutes; on the other hand, you may wish to continue your discussion for longer than the allotted time. Creativity and intuitive thinking do not happen according to a schedule—take it where it wants to go.

There is only one law: The Law of Two Feet. If you feel you are neither learning from nor contributing to a discussion, you are required to get up and move to another discussion, without waiting for the group to complete its conversation. Your fresh insights and creative thoughts are needed elsewhere. The result is a room alive with movement and animated discussion as people travel from group to group to use their best energy and thinking where it is most needed.

And finally, **Be Prepared to Be Surprised.** If you carry your preconceived agenda into a conversation, you may never receive the greater results and more intuitive thinking that can come from a group of diverse and passionate people taking a conversation where it can go.

The Results: Open Space Sessions

Here are the topics the educators found worthy of discussion

How do we help our children avoid the influence of unbalanced media?

Israeli and Palestinian educators alike expressed concern that the media's biases were pulling their students away from reality and stoking the flames of hatred and violence. How can we as educators help our children avoid this influence and develop their own points of view? We must begin by introducing workshops for parents and children that help them recognize and analyze the ways in which current media distorts the news. Through clips of different media sources, children can learn that not everything presented on TV is irrefutable fact. And in the classroom, we must focus on exercises that develop our children's critical thinking. Only independent children confident in their own judgment will be able to change the future.

—Discussion led by Bahia

The day after Gaza: Working with teenagers

Educators emphasized the importance of facilitating interaction between both sides, even during times of conflict, through avenues like online chats. Other possibilities are non-educational activi-

ties, like sports and games, to bring kids together. We can also work with parents to widen the range of acceptable points of view. One idea is to collect letters written about experiences and have students guess whether they were written by Israeli or Palestinian kids. It is essential that we create empathy by showing examples of suffering from both sides, and develop skills by working on active listening for both sides.

—Discussion led by Najwa

We should believe in peace from the inside before teaching it

Too often as educators, we find ourselves advocating positions about which we ourselves are not yet certain. We always have to be true to ourselves and our beliefs when we are representing ourselves. We should maintain our values in good times as well as bad; don't change your attitude just because the times are challenging. So, before we lead others in peace projects or activities, we should confront our own hesitations about peace and try to develop a deep, genuine belief in the process. We can achieve this deep belief by taking part in activities that put us into the shoes of "the other side."

—Discussion led by Maysoun

How do we help our students express their emotions in positive ways?

Our emotions can be the strongest drivers of change, and as educators it is neither right nor practical to ask our children to suppress their feelings. Yet when discussions become angry shouting matches, it seems that these emotions get in the way of peace and progress. As educators, how can we teach our children to channel their passions in new, constructive ways? One good exercise is to have children express themselves through writing a song, creating a film, or drawing a picture. We can also promote safe and constructive classroom discussions by establishing rules that prevent students from interrupting or personally criticizing other students.

—Discussion led by Manal

How do you define a "better future?"

Before we make plans to lead our children into a better future, we should decide what that better future actually is. Each person constructs a "better future" based on his or her own experiences. For some, a better future consists of the freedom to travel. Others see safety,

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shelter, and the feeling of belonging as the most important values. Still others envision good relations, understanding, and respect as the keys to moral progress. In any case, keep in mind that defining your goals makes it easier to work together in pursuit of a brighter future.

—Discussion led by *Walid*

How can we use the environment to unite students across borders?

As educators, we constantly seek ways to excite students to come together and create meaningful change. What better way to bring Israeli and Palestinian children together than by working to protect the natural resources that we share? We must teach our children that the way Israelis treat the environment affects Palestinians, just as the way that Palestinians treat the environment affects Israelis. We must show our children that land has a non-political value, a value that is often lost in debates over who controls what. Think about making next year in your school “A Green Year” and teaching students about the shrinking water supply that threatens the whole region. Take your students to a local river to see the pollution first-hand. What better way to teach coexistence with the land and between each other?

—Discussion led by *Aviv*

Violence in schools

Both teaching and learning happen best within a safe, supportive environment. How do we cut down on the violence that forces educators’ attention away from the real educational process? The reasons for this violence are varied, among them stresses in family life and inadequate discipline. Some helpful steps would include a reduction in class size and clear punishments for bad behavior. Retired teachers could also help by monitoring school buses and cafeterias to reduce violence. This is a process that involves parents, teachers, and students—everybody needs to pitch in to create a healthy environment in which children are free to expand their minds.

—Discussion led by *Claire & Reena*

Joining educators and parents to support our children’s coexistence ideas and activities

As we know well, Seeds can’t flourish without a carefully cultivated environment. But when Seeds return to parents and communities stuck in pessimism and ignorant of the coexistence experience, children’s enthusiasm and inspiration are too easily extinguished.

We need to allow and encourage parents to participate in similar activities as their children. This would allow the message of coexistence to spread beyond one family. Parents should be actively involved in their children’s experiences, getting updates from educators and writing letters to encourage their children. A program of “model families” to forge cross-border connections would allow communities to become gradually more comfortable with coexistence efforts and more supportive of their children.

—Discussion led by *Karen*

How do we create trust between hostile groups?

Trust is an essential ingredient in the process of overcoming old hatreds and forging new bonds. We can begin to overcome our hatred and fears by meeting “the other side.” We must be honest with each other and not hide our thoughts and feelings. In order to achieve that openness, we have to create a setting in which people are comfortable expressing themselves. This process will take time, but without trust there can be no peace.

—Discussion led by *Menachem (Sandy)*

Teaching cross-cultural awareness and diversity

It’s hard to gain an appreciation for worlds radically different from our own, especially as the media enhances stereotypes every chance it gets. How do parents, teachers, and the community work to break down these barriers and teach children the wonders of cultural diversity? We can teach children about the holidays of “the other side.” Food also presents a valuable common ground to promote diversity & cultural richness.

—Discussion led by *Maha*

What is the impact of fear on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

On both sides of the conflict, there exists deep-rooted fear based on the historical and present-day realities of Arab and Jewish existence.

That fear can lead us to reject dialogue and resist change. Understanding and addressing these fears are essential to minimizing them.

Only by this positive transformation of fear can we humanize the “other side” and move towards productive dialogue and mutual acceptance.

—Discussion led by *Myra*

How do we present a united and unbiased view to those outside the conflict?

It is essential for the global community to develop a balanced understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order for it to make a positive contribution to peace-building.

Bombarded by the biased views of media, government, and the educational establishment, people are too often led to accept stereotypes blindly without pursuing their own investigation of the situation. Students should be encouraged to read primary source documents to develop their independent critical thinking skills.

They should learn opposing narratives, and learn the actual teachings of different religions. Cross-cultural communication can be established through e-mail or pen-pal exchanges.

—Discussion led by *Kathleen*

Tales of Hope Project

This discussion focused on Tali’s book, *Tales of Hope*. Tali presented the background of the book, and talked about her hopes and goals for the project.

Natali offered the possible help of her student in building a website for the book. Maha agreed to distribute a copy to cross-border teenagers she is working with.

Aviv suggested a contact to a program called “A Key to the Heart,” and Shoshana offered a connection to the children’s literature supervisor at the Israeli Ministry of Education.

—Discussion led by *Tali*

The Next Steps: Solidifying Plans **Parent Partnerships**

WHEN THE OPEN SPACE SESSIONS had been completed, the group moved into more informal discussions that gave people the opportunity to begin solidifying ideas and forming strategies for certain key goals. One of those goals was to focus on cultivating a supportive environment for Seeds once they return home, a goal that can only be achieved if parents become more involved in the

Seeds of Peace process. Below is a summary of the discussion in which parents and educators shared their ideas on strengthening support for Seeds within their own homes.

How can we provide Seeds parents with sufficient preparation and Seeds participants with sufficient support both pre- and post-Camp?

The overall consensus of this discussion was that parents should be more involved in supporting and understanding the changes in their children after they return from Camp, and also be more informed about their children’s progress at Camp and the Seeds of Peace process.

While some passionately stated that parental involvement should be mandatory in order for a student to become a Seed, others recognized the logistical difficulties in bringing parents from throughout Israel and the West Bank together. For instance, a hypothetical example was presented of the difficulty for a mother of nine in Hebron to travel

to Ramallah, let alone Jerusalem, just to sign a form. Furthermore, several Palestinian Delegation Leaders observed that there is a greater lack of information and preparation on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side.

Another important concern is that Camp is a one-time experience that might not succeed in generating lasting change in Seeds' ideas about the conflict. However, Camp is neither the beginning nor the end of the process; it is the culmination.

Although all agreed, one Palestinian Delegation Leader pointed out that it

is a struggle for Palestinian Seeds to return home after a blissful few weeks at Camp—back to the same conflict, and with very little support from parents and peers. She said that she keeps in touch with a handful of Seeds, and they reach out to her when they need to vent to someone who will understand. She suggests that the responsibility for supporting the Seeds lies not only with their parents, but perhaps even more deeply with the Delegation Leaders.

Other suggestions included setting up times during which Seeds could call their parents from Camp; planning one

day of pre-Camp debriefing, seminars, and firsthand stories from Seeds for all parents to attend; creating a cross-cultural connection for parents, for example through letters from Israeli Seeds to Palestinian mothers describing the wonderful relationship forged with their children, and vice versa; separate meetings in particular regions to overcome the travel difficulties; and having parents chaperone certain events.

As one educator eloquently described it, Seeds cannot remain Seeds; they must be planted, grow, and spread into fields and forests. —Discussion led by Karen

Perspectives on the Seminar from young American observers

Seeds of Peace also invited some American volunteers to participate in the seminar. What follow are reflections on their unique introduction to peace education in the Middle East.

Invaluable inspiration

By Jason Kim

BEFORE COMING TO THE MIDDLE EAST, I had only read about the Arab-Israeli conflict in textbooks and academic journals. As an American university student, I became interested in the conflict and had taken several classes related to the conflict, including a course titled "Religious Dimensions in the Middle East Peace Process." To learn even more about the conflict, I also followed the news periodically, and like most of my peers, I watched the recent conflict in Gaza on CNN from the comfort of my dorm room.

At the end of the day, however, after my classes had finished and after I had turned off the television, I returned to my life as a college student, taking comfort in the fact that I had quenched my thirst for knowledge for the day. Having done so, I thought that I understood what the conflict was about. By spending countless hours in the library, reading Amnesty International reports and scholarly articles, I thought that I understood the plight of Palestinian people who live under military occupation; by taking classes on the conflict, I thought I understood the viewpoint of the Israeli people and their need to protect themselves from suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks.

After attending the Seeds of Peace conference in Tiberius, however, I have found that I know close to nothing about the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is true that I am familiar with many of the facts; I have learned about the UN partition plan, the 1967 war, and the Oslo Accords. And yet, before I came to Israel and before I attended the conference, I was unfamiliar with the conflict's human aspect. I did not fully comprehend

that the conflict had taken a toll on the personal lives of countless Israelis and Palestinians, and that it was still having a profound impact on their lives today.

By meeting Seeds of Peace educators and human rights activists, I am beginning to understand the conflict in a different light, one that stretches beyond the classroom, the textbooks, the newspapers, and the television. I now understand that beneath all the political discourse, the scholarly articles, and the classroom discussions lie real people.

Though I have learned about the conflict at school, I never thought that I would actually meet people that have been directly affected by the conflict. At the seminar, however, I met amazing people like Karen and Faisal, who have lived in the West Bank, under military occupation, for many years.

While Karen spoke of the financial hardships she experienced during the Second Intifada, Faisal voiced concern of the violence amongst students in his all-boys school, a violence that he says is directly linked to the tragedies that many of his pupils have experienced due to the conflict. I also met amazing people like Rabbi Nava Hefetz, who believes that we must teach young Israelis and Palestinians to respect the basic human rights, namely the right to life, of "the other."

These are only a few of the incredible people that I met at the conference; there were many others who had interesting, personal stories that were shaped by the conflict. Most importantly, however, the people at the conference represented both the Palestinian cause as well as that of the Israelis. Though they often held opposing views, the participants of the conference were friends, and they had all come to Tiberius so that their children might one day live in peace. Of course, there were arguments during the discussions between persons of different views; some participants even felt offended by the comments of others. And yet, they were willing to listen to one another and to try to understand the others' points

of view. What's more, they were all united by the common cause of bringing peace to their children. Ultimately, their example of cooperation and understanding has demonstrated to me that peace here is possible.

At the end of the seminar, we were all asked to give an evaluation of the event and to discuss our future goals. Many people viewed the sessions as productive, while others voiced the need to strengthen relations between educators within Seeds of Peace and to have more meetings and discussions to build a sense of continuity.

For me, however, the seminar has been an invaluable source of inspiration that has motivated me to learn much more about the conflict. I have met people on both sides that have been through so much hardship, and yet, they have not allowed their anger to engulf them—they have not given in to hatred. Rather, they fight for peace on a daily basis. Their example has ultimately inspired me to not only learn more about the conflict, but also, one day, to contribute to the peace process.

An education in real-world hope

By Ben Mueller

I WAS AT A SEMINAR ON EDUCATION, but I didn't expect to learn anything about my own education. As an American student from New York, I have never had to worry about violence in the classroom or the post-Gaza War learning environment, two topics on the table here in Tiberius. But as I sat in on a discussion listening to the words of the 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes come from the mouth of a Palestinian Jerusalemite, I learned quite a bit about the role of my education in my life.

I used to think of the world of ideas and the world of real people as distinct and incompatible. Sure, I read in the history books about how certain philosophical proposals found expression in various times and places. But I thought

SEE "TIBERIUS" ON PAGE 19 >>>

Cooking *dialogue through food*

Daniel Noah Moses, Ph.D. Managing Editor

John Wallach, the co-founder of Seeds of Peace, used to say: “‘the enemy’ has a face.” This so-called enemy also has a mouth and a stomach and legs for dancing after the meal. At the Seeds of Peace Camp, food is a constant topic of conversation. What’s for lunch in the dining hall? What do you eat at home, for breakfast, lunch and dinner, for your most important holidays, at different times of the year? Through discussions about food, we learn about one another, about where we come from, about who we are. There is an expression, “you are what you eat.” In some ways, perhaps, this is true.



During each session of Camp, Delegation Leaders cook together. Once at the “International Dinner” they cook for the whole Camp. At the end of the session, they cook for the people outside the Camp who, over the course of the session, made a positive impression on them—the musicians, the educators, the neighbors who invited them for dinner, the rabbis, ministers and imams, the community leaders and shopkeepers who welcomed them. This is the “Farewell Dinner.” It’s a chance for Delegation Leaders to express themselves, to give back to people who gave something to them. They plan the meal; they coordinate the cooking; they work long hours in the kitchen; they present their creations to applause and appreciation.

In July 2009 the Seeds of Peace Delegation Leaders went on a trip to Augusta, the capital of Maine. The Seeds of Peace Camp is in the town of Otisfield, Maine, and people in Maine are proud that Seeds of Peace is in their state. The Governor of Maine invited the Delegation Leaders to meet him in his office.

We arrived in our green Seeds of Peace t-shirts. We climbed the stairs to the Governor’s office. We were invited into an official room with a large wooden table. The Governor was there in his suit. He invited us to sit down. “Welcome,” he said. He spoke about how happy he was to be meeting representatives from Seeds of Peace. He talked a little bit about Maine, and then he invited questions.

There was silence. The Governor asked again. But there were no questions, so silence followed. The Governor looked around the table.

“So, what do you like to eat back home?” he asked.

Immediately everybody around the table had something to say. They spoke about favorite dishes, about favorite deserts. The Governor joined in with gusto: he had, it turned out, grown up working in his family’s Italian restaurant.

Gradually, we are collecting recipes and stories about food. They are part of a dialogue that will continue—after breakfast, there is always lunch ...

PHOTO CREDITS: RACHEL BROPHY

Kalayet Bandora (Fried Tomatoes)

Sahab, Jordanian
Delegation Leader
(2008 & 2009)

In the summer of 2008, when she first came to Camp as a Delegation Leader, this dish was Sahab's specialty.

She used to make it on the fire, at the fire pit, by the lake.

When Sahab returned to the Camp in 2009, however, she did not have a chance to make this delicious dish—it rained too much (see the "After Rain Salad" below).

10 large tomatoes cut into small pieces
2 large red onions, cut finely
5 cloves of garlic, minced
1 cup of olive oil
1 tsp each of salt & black pepper
1 tsp of hot red pepper

1. Stir-fry the onions in the oil.
2. After a few minutes, add the garlic and stir-fry till the onions turn pink.
3. Add the tomato pieces and keep stirring along with the onion-garlic mixture.
4. Add salt, black pepper, and the red pepper.
5. Keep cooking and stirring on a full flame for about half an hour.

This dish can be eaten with bread or rice.

Mansaf

(Jordanian Lamb Dish)

4 cups of rice
4 tbsp of cornstarch
2 kilo (4.5 lbs) of lamb meat
(chicken can be used as a substitute)
4 large containers of plain yogurt
olive oil
salt
black pepper

1. Wash and clean the meat and then boil in water.

YOU COULD ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

What is your favorite meal? What do you eat at weddings, at the most important holidays? What do you eat for breakfast? When do you sit for the longest meal? How do you slaughter animals for meat? Who cooks in your house? What are the rituals surrounding the meals? What are the meals like? How many times do you have to say, "no thank you, I'm full" until the host or hostess stops feeding you?

It is easy to take such questions for granted until one comes face to face with those who do these things differently.

As educators, how do we learn and teach about other cultures? It is important to ask your students: What is happening in these stories? What is the cultural context of these stories? Food provides us with one concrete way to bring other cultures into a tangible learning experience. It is important to make the food about more than tastes and smells—to also make it about personal stories, people's lives, cultures and humanity.



Khader, a Palestinian Delegation Leader, says:

To be a villager, we do what our ancestors used to do. The tradition that my father maintained was drinking a cup of olive oil in the early morning, which I still do until this day.

When I wake up, before having my coffee, I have a cup of natural virgin olive oil.

Now I'm a father of four and I have passed this tradition to them.

The villagers started this habit for two reasons. Most of them cultivate olives, which they turn into olive oil for commercial use. They used to drink a cup of the oil in order to make sure of the quality and taste.

Also, they believed that drinking the olive oil in the morning is a healthy habit for one's body.

2. After the meat is boiled, remove from the water (set aside the water).
3. Mix the yogurt with 4 cups of water that was used to boil the meat.
4. Put the yogurt/water mix on the stove and bring to a boil. Add salt and black pepper for seasoning.
5. After the yogurt/water mix is brought to a boil, add the meat and continue to boil.
6. After 5-10 minutes, mix in 4 cups of rice and 4-5 cups of water (again from the water used to boil the meat).
7. Add a bit of olive oil.
8. Bring to a boil and simmer until the rice is cooked.
9. Add salt for seasoning.

§

After Rain Salad (Spinach & Strawberry Salad)

The source of this recipe is not known. What is known is that it appeared at the Seeds of Peace Camp in the summer of 2009.

This was a summer of intense rain in Maine. Delegation Leaders coming from places with scarce water were amazed by how much it rained.

The volleyball court and the fire pit, which people usually gather around in the evening, turned into a marsh. We had to put temporary bridges to the bunks in place so that people could walk home without getting their feet soaked.

There were days when it looked as if the sun would make a full appearance. In the morning, you could see a patch of blue sky in one area.

But in the other direction, there were clouds. And the rain came back, day after day.

½ kilo of spinach (cut by hand)

½ kilo strawberries (sliced)

CONTINUED >>>

200 grams of dried apple
(chopped) or raspberry
200 grams of cashew nuts
(not salted)
100 grams of sliced almonds

Dressing:

½ cup olive oil
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 tbsp mustard
2 tbsp honey
salt & pepper (to taste)

1. For the dressing, put all the ingredients in a bottle and shake until well-mixed.

2. In a plate, spread the chopped spinach and then cover it with the rest of the ingredients and then the dressing.

§

**Hummus
with Tahina**

Maysoon, Palestinian
Delegation Leader
(2002 & 2008)

125g (4 oz) chickpeas,
soaked for a few hours
juice of 2 lemons
3 tbsp tahina
2 garlic cloves, crushed
salt

For the garnish:

1 tbsp of olive oil
1 tsp paprika
a few sprigs of parsley,
finely chopped

1. Wash and drain the chickpeas and simmer in fresh water for about an hour or until tender. Set aside the chickpea broth.

2. Process the chickpeas in a blender (or food processor) along with the lemon juice, tahina, garlic, salt and enough of the broth to obtain a soft and creamy consistency.

3. Serve on a flat plate, garnished with a drizzle of olive oil, a dusting of paprika (this is usually done in the shape of a cross) and a little parsley.

Eat with warm pita bread.
Serves 4-6.



DELEGATION LEADERS Ismail (left) and Haya (right) at the Seeds of Peace Camp in Maine.

Haya, an Israeli Delegation Leader, says:

I met my husband at Hebrew University. He came from a different kind of family. I'm from an Eastern family, from Egypt. His family comes from Poland, from the Holocaust. After about a year, we decided to get married.

We went to my family. He came to my father and said that he wanted to marry me. My family brought wine. Everybody was so happy. We celebrated. My parents kissed him. They saw he was a nice guy, educated, nice-looking. They were very happy for me. My mother served many sweet things—we set a table and celebrated between us.

The next day, we traveled to his parents. We arrived at their house. His parents met us in the kitchen. They have a small family—just a father, mother, son, and daughter. We came so happy. We stood in the kitchen. My husband said, “We want to get married.” They were silent. No comment. No reaction.

I come from a family where we are always talking. I went to his mother and to his father. I kissed them. The only thing she said to me: “Come, eat. I have some chicken soup.”

So we sat. It was traditional Polish Jewish food. We sat down to eat. She gave me chicken soup. The parents sat beside me, the two of them. They sat with me while I ate. I understood that they could not express themselves with words—they could only communicate with food.

After that, when I met other families from Europe, also from the same background, I found they have the same story. My sister married a man with a similar family. How is she connected with her mother-in-law? It's through food. Her mother-in-law brings her food. They communicate through food. This is how they show their love.

Food can be the messenger of love. When my mother-in-law wanted to be very friendly to me, she would say to me, “Haya, do you want me to teach you how to make my chicken soup?”

I said, “No, I want to have the chicken soup from you.” For me, the food is not my food. It's not my taste. When they prepare their chicken soup, they are throwing the chicken into the soup and boiling it for hours. We call it ‘laundry chicken.’ It has no taste. With spices, it can work. I put ketchup in it.

But my mother-in-law was so happy when she saw me eating. She prepared food in the kitchen for hours. I can tell you that I miss her very much.

Kousa Bil Bandora
(Stuffed Zucchini
with Tomatoes)

Lamis, Palestinian
Delegation Leader
(2005 & 2007)

2½ lbs. zucchini
¼ cup lean ground meat
1 cup rice
salt & pepper
cinnamon
ground nutmeg
4 peeled, chopped, seeded,
medium-sized tomatoes
16 ounces tomato sauce
shortening

1. Wash the zucchini. Cut one end and make a hole through the middle of the zucchini, leaving ¼ inch left at the other end. Remove all the seeds from the inside.

2. Mix the meat with the rinsed and drained rice, a dash of salt, pepper, cinnamon and nutmeg.

3. Stuff the zucchini with the meat, rice and spice mixture. Fill only ¼ of the zucchini to allow the rice to double in size and fill the zucchini as it is cooked.

4. Arrange the zucchinis in a deep cooking pot.

5. Cover the zucchinis with the chopped tomato and tomato sauce. Add a pinch more salt and cover just barely with water. Bring to a boil.

6. Once the zucchini has reached a boil, reduce the heat to medium. Cover and let cook until done (about one hour).

After I was married, my mother-in-law used to invite us over every Sunday for this dish. I always wondered why her version was tastier than mine—I am also a good cook (having started when I was 18, after my mother died).

One day, we looked over the recipe together. The only difference was that she used nutmeg in the stuffing. And with that, I discovered why her *kousa* was tastier. From that day on, I've added ground nutmeg in my own stuffing.

Cabbage Salad

Orly, Israeli Delegation
Leader (2008)

For the marinade:

¼ cup of soy sauce

¼ cup of vinegar

¼ cup of oil

¼ cup of soy sugar

*150 gms of fried sesame
seeds*

100 gms of fried almonds

1 finely shredded cabbage

Mix the first six ingredi-
ents to make the marinade,
then add the cabbage to it.

§

Lassi

(Yogurt Drink)

Sundas, Pakistani
Delegation Leader (2009)

Lassi is a very popular
drink in Pakistan.

It is served for break-
fast most of the time. In
hot areas, people use it to
diminish the effect of heat.
The drink has a cooling
result.

When I was in college
in Multan, Pakistan, my
brother used to take me to
school.

Once or twice a month
he would take me to a lassi
shop.

I missed many first or
second lessons because of
this lassi love.

simple plain yogurt
milk
sugar
ice

1. Put the yogurt in a
blender. Let it go for two
minutes.
2. Add sugar (to taste).
3. Add milk and ice cubes.
Blend it well.
4. You can add water to
increase the quantity (you
can also do this by hand
with the help of a beater).

If you want a flavored
lassi, add strawberries,
bananas or mangos (the
actual fruit).



Ismail, a Palestinian Delegation Leader from 2007 & 2009, says:

*The Caliph Omar Bin Al-Khattab used to wander in
the desert among the tents to make sure that his people
were okay. He wore the dress of a simple person so that he
would be treated as an ordinary man.*

*Once, in the middle of the night, he heard children cry-
ing. He headed towards the voices. When he reached the
spot, he found a mother in front of a big pot filled with
stones over a fire. The children were surrounding it. The
Caliph was astonished. He asked what she was doing.*

*The woman explained: she was doing this to make her
children feel that there was food being prepared for them.
“By the end,” she explained, “they will sleep.”*

*After hearing this, the Caliph ordered his treasurer to
fetch ground wheat and meat.*

*Omar Bin Al-Khattab then prepared this food himself
for the family. They still did not know who he was. The
children ate, then the rest of the family.*

*The old woman thanked the Caliph for his kindness,
saying, “You are better than the Caliph Omar Bin Al-
Khattab.” She still did not know who he was.*

*From that time onwards, many Islamic charity founda-
tions serve this food for the poor.*

*To this day in Palestine, this is the food for the poor.
We have distribution centers in main cities. We serve this
food near the Abraham Mosque in Hebron and near the
Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.*

*On Mondays it is cooked without meat, and on Thurs-
days it is cooked with meat. Sometimes you add sugar to
the stew and eat it as a dessert.*

*My old school was near one of these centers. We used to
send the school attendant to bring us porridge, mainly
on Mondays.*

We used to then add sugar. It was very tasty.



Blueberry Pudding

Margie Arsham, American
friend and supporter of
Seeds of Peace

Margie Arsham lives
down the road from the
Seeds of Peace Camp.

Each session, she orga-
nizes “host families” for
the Delegation Leaders.
The host families are lo-
cal people who invite the
DLs to their homes for
dinner—thus providing a
taste of the local cuisine
and hospitality, and a tiny
taste of American life.

Sometimes Margie invites
Delegation Leaders to her
place; she is also a baker.
This recipe uses Maine’s
famous blueberries.

Preheat oven to 375°F
(190°C)

*3 cups of wild blueberries
or cultivated blueberries*
juice of ½ lemon
½ tsp cinnamon

1. Mix above ingredients
together in an 8” x 8” glass
dish (20 cm x 20 cm).
2. Add cinnamon to taste.

1 cup sugar
6 tbsp butter
2 cup flour
2 tsp baking powder
2 tsp salt
1 cup milk

1. Cream butter and
sugar together.
2. Mix dry ingredients
together and add them
alternately with milk and
mix together.
3. Spread batter thinly
over the berries. You may
not have to use it all.

¾ cup sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
dash of salt
1 cup boiling water

1. Mix sugar, cornstarch,
and salt and sprinkle over
the batter.
2. Pour boiling water
over the whole thing.
Do not stir.
3. Bake at 375°F for an
hour.

AS I START TO WRITE, MY MIND WANDERS TO THE LAST NIGHT OF THE 2008 SEEDS OF PEACE Camp in Maine. On this camp-wide “Bunk Night” the nine Seeds and two Counselors from Bunk 7 crowded on and around two beds and fixated on the M&M’s and other treats in front of them. As we joked around with one another and shared hugs and stories, we were suddenly stunned to realize that this was our last night.

In retrospect, I was equally amazed at how different this scene was compared to the one I witnessed three weeks earlier, on the first night, when we had all sat rigidly in a circle outside, eager to make friends, but unsure of how to proceed. The awkward and shy glances that had passed between individuals that first night were replaced by direct eye-contact during earnest conversations on that last night. As the M&M’s were devoured, we shared our camp highlights, our epiphanies, and our fears about returning home. The ties that now connected the previously hesitant Americans, Egyptians, Israelis, and Palestinians present were tangible, as everyone had something to say and the words fell on individuals listening with rapt attention.

The words spoken by every one of my campers were precious, but one Israeli girl said something that I think of every day. She said, “This place doesn’t change us—it allows us to become ourselves.”

These words resonated—albeit differently—with every member of the group. And, upon reading them, will mean something different to each of you. So I will qualify what follows by saying that this phrase has special meaning to me as a counselor, educator, and mentor at a place as unique as Seeds of Peace. There is something special about this safe-haven in the woods of Maine that allows one to exist in a time and place where much of the societal pressures that youth experience the world over are removed. Here, we are provided the somewhat rare opportunity to think our own thoughts, speak our own minds, and be ourselves.

Central to this article is the idea of our unique narratives. Fellow Counselor Carrie O’Neil and I offered a creative writing activity during the summer of 2008. The idea behind this program was to provide a group of Seeds the chance and the space to comprehend and express the intense experience that was life at Camp. The exercises ranged from “free writes,” to observation poems, to quotation prompts.

We also ran thematic exercises, where campers were provided with a single word—like “rain,” “garbage,” “friendship”—and asked to either take three minutes for ‘free association,’ jotting down every word that came to mind, or eight minutes to write a piece of prose using that word as a starting point. The campers took advantage of these opportunities, and the responses were, I believe, remarkable.

Keeping in mind the fact that the examples on the next page are “first” drafts, I invite you to enjoy some of the activity’s results. Below, you will find observation poems that are representative of the Seeds’ work. These poems were written on a gorgeous summer day while sitting on the girls’ dock. The Seeds were asked to write poems about the different senses.

Some time has passed since we sat on the dock and penned these words. As I read over what the campers and I wrote in response to the various exercises, I am amazed by the many different directions our thoughts took, as well as by our willingness to express emotion, to make a difference and to *find* ourselves.

Paramount in the lessons learned through this exercise is that young people (as amazing and unique individuals) all have the capability of expressing their thoughts in different mediums. While not everyone can speak what they feel, many have a unique gift—a gift that allows them to write. A gift to write their own narratives.

I will leave you with one thought and one task. Find a scrap of paper, a pen, and a quiet setting. Now, imagine a place that allows you to be yourself—if you are a Delegation Leader, this may be the dock on the Pines Side or your bunk at night.

If you are a teacher in Israel or Palestine, this may be your classroom after the students have left for the day.

Now, take eight minutes and share your thoughts—on paper, with yourself or with your students. Try ‘free association.’ Tell us what the phrase from the last night of Camp means to you. As was true in our small enclave in the woods of Maine, there is no single correct answer or experience.

Even if you find it hard to voice what you are thinking, it is often possible to write.

PHOTO CREDIT: SARAH NORTON



Lareen (Israeli Seed)

*I know what I want to say.
But I still haven't figured out a way
...
I'm supposed to write a poem about
something ... but I still got some
doubt.
I'm giving it a try anyway,
Here at the dock, as I lay.*

*I can see so many things.
I can feel what this situation brings.
I can hear a lot of sounds,
like that boat making rounds.
I can even feel the drops of water
unite.
Something which is uncatchable by
sight.*

*I can see the trees standing still.
And I can see the clouds touching
that hill.*

*I can see stuff,
I can hear things,
But what is above all,
Is the feeling that it brings.*

§

Tamara (Palestinian Seed)

Poem No. 1

*A beach.
How many stories it has listened to.
How much support it has given.
How many tears have soaked
through its skin.
A beach.
Only noticed when needed.*

*A slow vibration of a drum
Glides along the glass.
Mirroring the damp clouds.
Awaiting the arrival of droplets.
Droplets that will create
Millions of little drums.
Beating to the sound of renewal.*

Poem No. 2

*Alone—but in company
Thinking of everyone who has let
the lake take them in.
Rinsing themselves of what weighs
them down.
The lake must be heavy.
Heavy with things we don't know.
Things we let go of.
Lingering.
Yet somehow we come out clean.*

§

Kayla (Maine Seed)

Poem No. 1

*I knew how I was brought here, but
not why
Everybody here presents me with a
new conflict
At first I didn't understand
Why me? Why now?
They say love is a battlefield, but
what about myself
My country is at war like many
others*

*In some ways we are all connected
But our experiences are differently
Although, we are all here and we
all have our flaws we're the same
Our common goal is peace
Everyone keeps saying 'trust the
process'—it works
At times I feel the pressure or get a
look
I can feel so alone in a crowded din-
ing hall
I knew what I had to do and now I
know why I have to get there
It's not easy to explain yourself
It's hard to make others hear your
story
But that's why I am here to find
myself
And to begin a new chapter in my
life*

*Not to start over, but to move for-
ward
And to believe in myself and that
I'm doing what I need to*

Poem No. 2

*You roll in without warning
There is no sound
You create a mask
Making things disappear*

*To the naked-eye you look like
smoke
However you form no smell
Your serenity is your beauty
The way you cover the hills*

*I love your covering
The way you can make someone lose
themselves
You make me think
You can look like you haven't moved
However, you're constant
But it's hard to see
I can feel your peace
And the comfort you create in your
surroundings*

Poem No. 3

*You surround the water
Creating a darkness within
You are firm and still
Yet you creek without a touch*

*You stand tall and slim
Your color looks lifeless
But you do live
The years you've survived
Through storms and rain
That's what makes you unique
Others use you to breathe
Or for a resource*

But I use you for your difference

IN THE FALL (2008) OLIVE BRANCH TEACHER'S GUIDE, WE SHARED SOME IDEAS ABOUT USING cooperative games to promote peaceful learning environments. Here are a few more resources that seemed useful to our Palestinian colleagues when we met in February and June 2009. We hope they are helpful for you. Stay tuned for more in the next two issues of the Teacher's Guide.

De-briefing Cooperative Games: A Reminder

A game is successful when players make the connection between the game and their own life experience. Playing games is a fun way to laugh together and build community, but the larger connections are equally—if not more—important. Engaging participants in a discussion about the game itself invites a self-awareness that extends beyond the game and into everyday interactions.

How to process a game depends on the context; however, it is always a good idea to take a few minutes between games to

ask some questions. To debrief a game ask these three simple questions:

WHAT? Questions that help players think about what they learned.

Examples: What happened during the game? How did it make you feel? What was hard about this game? What was easy? What did you like or dislike about the game?

SO WHAT? Questions that help participants to think about why they played the game.

Examples: So what does this teach us? Why would we play this game? Why is it important to practice teambuilding, communication, or inclusion?

NOW WHAT? Questions that help players to think about how the game applies to the real world.

Examples: How can you use what you learned in real life? What did you learn about yourself and your fellow players? How can we use these skills in other situations?

Games to Strengthen Teams through Peaceful Communication

One important way to use cooperative games is to strengthen our ability to work as teams—whether those teams are made of students, teachers, parents or community leaders. Here are some games that we have found to be helpful in strengthening teams.

People to People

Purpose: to connect with different people	Group Size: 10-30 people
Skills: cooperation, listening, coordination, gross motor skills	Space: large open space so that players can interact with many different people
Ages: 6 & up	Supplies: none

DIRECTIONS This is a very simple game, but it can be fun, especially for younger children. Begin by putting players in pairs. Explain that the facilitator will call out different

HINT With younger children, it may help to review some of the key vocabulary before playing.

ways for the pairs to be joined to each other—finger to finger, shoulder to shoulder, ankle to ankle, head to head, hip to hip, and so on. But when the facilitator calls out, “People to People,” everyone needs to find a new partner. Players must partner with five different people before they can repeat a partner. A facilitator may also choose to mix things up by calling out things like finger to shoulder, knee to toe, wrist to head, shoulder to elbow, knee to hand, and so on.

Mirrors

Purpose: to practice careful observation	Group Size: 10-30 people, in pairs
Skills: non-verbal communication, creativity, coordination, empathy, concentration, leadership	Space: enough space for pairs to spread out
Ages: 6 & up	Supplies: none

DIRECTIONS Put people into pairs. Explain that they will play two rounds. In each round, one person will be the leader and one person will be the follower. Have pairs choose the leader for the first round. Explain that the

leader will have 60 seconds, during which they should move slowly and deliberately and during which their partner must mimic the movements, as if they are a mirror image. Players may make faces, wave their arms or legs, turn side to side, stand on one foot, re-tie a shoe, or anything they can imagine (within reason). It should be a silent activity, and leaders should move slowly and smoothly enough so that their “mirror images” can follow along in synch. After 60 seconds, have players switch roles.

VARIATIONS After each person has had a chance to be the leader and the follower, give groups a minute during which neither person is designated the leader.

Change 3 Things

Purpose: to practice careful observation; to give players a chance to be the center of attention	Group Size: 10-30 people
Skills: observation, concentration, creativity	Space: medium to large space for the whole group to sit or stand comfortably
Ages: 6 & up	Supplies: none

DIRECTIONS This is a game that can be played easily without moving chairs or desks. Explain that one volunteer will stand up in front of the group. They will slowly turn around once or twice, during which time the group should observe them carefully looking for obvious and seemingly insignificant details about the person’s appearance. After a couple of turns, the volunteer should leave the room and take about a minute to change three things about their appearance.

Some suggestions include tucking or untucking a shirt, removing glasses or pieces of jewelry, untying a shoe, or

HINT If playing as a whole class or a group, this game can easily be broken up or continued over a long period of time.

anything else (within reason). After they have changed three things, they return to the group. Tell the group that if they think they see something that has changed to raise their hands. Have the volunteer call on anyone with their hand up.

After each change has been guessed—or after the volunteer has stumped the group—choose another volunteer.

VARIATION Play the game in pairs. Each person has thirty seconds to observe their partner, at which time they both must turn around and take a minute to change three things. After a minute, have pairs face each other again. Have them shout out changes as fast as they can, or have them alternate guesses.

HINT With younger children, begin by having them change one thing and work up to three.

Draw What I Draw

Purpose: to practice active listening and oral communication skills	Group Size: pairs or small groups
Skills: active listening, patience, giving directions, communication, respect, asking questions, cooperation, creativity	Space: enough space for groups to sit on the floor or around tables/desks
Ages: 8 & up	Supplies: pens/pencils, paper, “Draw What I Draw” worksheets, dividers

DIRECTIONS There are many ways to play this game. The easiest—and the one that requires the fewest materials—is to split the group into pairs. Have the pairs sit back-to-back (or have them sit at a table with a divider in between them). Explain that in this activity one person will be describing a picture to their partner, who will have to duplicate the picture based on their partner’s description. Tell pairs to decide who will describe and who will draw during the first round. Give each person a blank piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell the describers to draw a simple pattern on their piece of paper. When they are finished, tell them that they must describe the drawing to their partner and help them duplicate it.

Before they begin, give the group some communication and listening strategies that may be helpful. For example:

- Give one direction at a time to your partner. By slowing down and communicating clearly, people have a better chance of understanding you.
- When listening, make sure not to interrupt your partner, so that you can hear the directions clearly and completely. If you have a question, wait until your partner has finished speaking.

HINT To save some time, give the describers one of the “Draw What I Draw” worksheets—or encourage describers to make similarly simple drawings using easily-described shapes.

Ask if there are any questions, then let the group begin. When pairs have finished working, tell them to compare drawings. How are they similar and different? What was easy or difficult about the process?

VARIATIONS Instead of pairs, have one person describe a picture to a large group. Seeing how many different people respond to the same set of directions can provide interesting material for discussion.

Instead of drawings, use blocks or building materials. Split into pairs or small groups. Further divide small groups, so that one half will build and describe a structure and the second half will try to duplicate the structure. Set up pieces of posterboard or cardboard as dividers and give an identical set of building materials to each group. Using building materials helps participants who feel inhibited by a lack of perceived “artistic skill.” It is also more concrete—and tactile—than drawing, which is better for some kinds of learners.

For any of the several variations, create a rule that the person or team trying to duplicate may not ask questions. This requires the describing partner or team to be extremely specific with their directions. (And no matter how specific they are, it is rarely specific enough, which means that the debrief can focus closely on how easy miscommunication can happen.)

HINT Building materials can be most anything: plastic cups, pencils, crumpled scrap paper. Be creative and do not fear recycling!

Building Bridges

HINT Have materials prepared and waiting on tables for each group.

Purpose: to work together to complete a task	Group Size: small groups of 5-7
Skills: cooperation, non-verbal communication, leadership, problem solving, encouragement	Space: space for groups to spread out; a hard work surface (table or floor) Ages: 12 & up
Supplies: a ball (or rolled-up tape); For each group, <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 pieces of newsprint or posterboard (2' x 3')• 4 paper plates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 paper or plastic cups• ruler• scissors• roll of tape• 4 toothpicks (optional)

DIRECTIONS Put participants into groups, seat them around their “building materials,” and tell them that they may not touch the materials. The goal is for each group to use only the materials in front of them to build a bridge. The bridge must be able to support the weight of a small ball rolling from one side to the other, and it must also meet certain specifications:

- It must be at least two feet tall
- It must be at least three feet wide.
- It cannot be anchored to the table or floor.

Randomly assign leaders in each group, but do not give

them any specific responsibilities. (Without specific parameters, leadership can emerge in different ways and people can choose to use or not use the “power” they have been given.)

Explain that for the next 10 minutes, groups must talk about how to build the bridge; however, they may not touch the materials. After the 10 minutes have elapsed, they will have another 10 minutes to build the bridge; however, they may not talk.

When they have finished building their bridges, the facilitator will measure the bridge to make sure it meets the requirements, and then each group will test their bridge with the ball. Ask if there are any questions, then begin the clock. Walk around and monitor groups and their progress.

There are a hundred different ways to succeed (and struggle) with this activity. During the debrief, explore issues of problem solving, communication, leadership, decision-making, and consensus-building.

HINT Instead of a ball, crumple up a piece of scrap paper and cover it with masking tape. It works just as well and makes the supply list just a bit shorter.

Peaceful Communication: Some Basics

1. **Start with yourself.** Ground yourself in these questions: How do I want someone to speak to and with me? What helps me understand and stay in relationship? What skills do I bring to this relationship? What help do I need?

2. **Respect yourself and the other(s).** Peaceful communication requires respect for self and other(s). Be neither a bully nor a victim. Respect the other person as a person ... especially if communication gets difficult or heated.

Conflict is part of communication; whether it is peaceful or destructive depends in part on how you approach the conflict.

3. **Listen actively.** Concentrate on what is being said, reflect back what you hear and try to summarize at key

points. This means clearing your head of the other agendas that run through our minds every day. Be present.

4. **Withhold judgment.** Judgment gets in the way of peaceful communication. Work first to understand before trying to judge, blame or correct. This is what we want others to do for us.

5. **Use non-verbal communication skills.** Your posture, position, eye contact, gestures and facial expression all communicate—peacefully or destructively! Sit up, find a position that is “equal” (sitting, standing, on the floor) to the other person. Be present in your body as well as your mind.

6. **Speak carefully and clearly.** Take your time. Let the other person finish her/his sentence or thought. Interrupt

only when absolutely necessary. Fewer words often have more power and effectiveness, so choose words carefully.

7. **Communicate without being adversarial.** Express concerns without judgment. Focus on the problem, not the person. Look for (and articulate) common ground, and win-win solutions. Use “I” messages. Try not to blame—even (especially) when you feel the urge to do so!

8. **Keep communication lines open.** When issues are complicated, or with relationships that really matter, no single interaction is enough to solve a problem, clarify an issue, support a colleague, or complete a task. Give things time. Return to the relationship, especially if it is difficult in the moment.

Trust the process. And yourself.

Creating Effective Meetings

1. **Be clear about the need and purpose.** There are lots of reasons to get together. Being clear about the need, purposes and goals of this meeting can help participants focus and feel that they are not wasting their time.

a. Discussion meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas and perspectives, brainstorm strategies or build community. These meetings generally require the least structure.

b. Decision meetings need more structure because the group needs to come to some kind of decision about a specific problem or action. These meet-

ings first need a clear agreement on how the decision will be made, then some structure to ensure equitable voices, and finally enough time to make the decision (vote, consensus, etc.)

c. Problem-solving or emergency meetings come up when something difficult has happened, or an immediate problem needs to be solved: a teacher is seriously ill, a parent has launched a complaint against the school, a child has been hurt, an incidence of violence requires some immediate response. These meetings require a high level of supportive structure. They can often be helped

by outside folks who have experience in working on emergency situations. They also require patience—with leadership as well as participants—as the community works its way through often uncharted territory.

2. **Prepare for the meeting.** Successful meetings don’t happen by chance. Like other successful projects, they require preparation—materials, agendas, and the mental preparation that all good leaders use before they actually lead an

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◀◀ “TIBERIUS” CONTINUED

that the world of here and now was too imperfect and confusing for that kind of application. I would have to choose between the ivory tower of ideas and the dirty trenches of real life, as I saw it.

Bahia, a middle school teacher from East Jerusalem, proved me wrong. When she was asked how she defined her better future, Bahia echoed so closely the dry and accurate words of Thomas Hobbes that my mouth dropped. Hobbes wrote about how peace is possible because each individual desires above all else to be safe from the dangers of conflict. As long as we recognize this common motive, we can come together and cooperate to end the strife. In Bahia's words, “if you want to live, you want to be safe.” In Hobbes' words, “seek peace.”

Whether in New York, Tel-Aviv, or Ramallah, this is the value of education: to see words on the page given life by somebody encountering the everyday difficulties of the here and now. At this intersection between the world of ideas and the world of real people is where hope emerges. For if Bahia's words can begin to mirror the utopian constructs of philosophy, why cannot the whole world move closer to fulfilling the perfect peace that Hobbes prescribes?

The fruits of Open Space Technology

By *Jessica Marx*

I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO work with Seeds of Peace since March. Most of my work has been with the Seeds, but this seminar gave me the unique opportunity to work with the educators connected to this incredible organization. It provided a window into the world of those committed to shaping the future of Israeli and Palestinian youth.

My experience during the seminar revolved around the Open Space Technology itself. I found it to be an incredibly creative process to tackle issues concerning the future of Israeli and Palestinian children. Rather than taking a passive role by listening to a speaker, this seminar enabled the “audience” to become the “lecturers” themselves, taking part in mini-dialogue sessions led by their peers. Open Space Technology proved to be a fruitful means of dialogue for educators.

Looking back on the past four months I've spent interning with Seeds of Peace, two words come to mind: inspiring and hopeful. Every person I have encountered who is connected to Seeds of Peace is inspiring in some form

—through their ideas, their actions, their role in this organization. Seeing Palestinian and Israeli educators work together revealed a committed path toward peace and understanding.

I ask then, what is my role as a Jewish American in promoting peace? As an outsider, I feel like I have only breached the surface of the insider's perspective. Just by listening to the voices of educators during this seminar, I still remain hopeful. Through seminars, monthly Seeds meetings, and working with staff, Seeds of Peace continues to show me a network of committed people. It is this hope, and endless dedication, that are driving forces behind this organization.

My final thought as I was looking around the seminar circle was that these people honestly believe in peace and will do anything they can to promote, create, and spread it. It made me think of the following quote:

“I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.” —US President Eisenhower

Perhaps, and hopefully, one day this will be true for this place and all of its people.

Reactions to the Tiberius Seminar

During the last year, I have had the honor, but mostly the pleasure, to take part in several events organized by Seeds of Peace. This one was a bit more open than the other ones, using the Open Space technique.

I see that my own educational project, “Tales of Hope,” has come a long way recently, and I can definitely attribute it to my involvement in Seeds of Peace in general, and to the Tiberius workshop in particular.

First of all, after presenting my project at an educator forum organized by Seeds of Peace, I felt some responsibility to report on my project's progress. Secondly, I made some very good connections with people during the Tiberius workshop.

Thanks to some of those wonderful people, my project is really “happening” right now, which makes me very happy.

So out of my own experience I can definitely say I got a lot out of this weekend. I'm really looking forward to the next cross-border workshop!

—*Tali, Haifa*

After a very disheartening period in the conflict, the Tiberius cross-border seminar refreshed my spirit and renewed my commitment toward improving cross-border understanding and communication.

To finally experience a face to face meeting with people whom I share similar thoughts, concerns and interests

with gave me the fortitude to carry on with my work. Moreover, these similarities made me feel welcomed, appreciated and empowered in this gathering.

Another definite plus was being able to share the Sabbath with my Jewish counterparts. It gave me a great insight into this culture that will undoubtedly help me engage them in open and respectful communication in the future.

Finally, this gathering gave me the opportunity to use my networking skills, to bring cross-border programs to my own community.

I only wish every willing Palestinian and Israeli could have the same opportunity we were afforded.

—*Karen, Tulkarem*

◀◀ “MEETINGS” CONTINUED

event. Visualize, prioritize, walk through the meeting, talk with your allies and anticipate challenges that may arise. Then be open to the group with whom you are about to work.

3. **Create a clear agenda and try to follow it.** The agenda should be clear, so that all participants understand and have an opportunity to suggest changes if those are necessary. Different needs and purposes require different structures, and they generate different agendas.

4. **Choose a good meeting space.**

Cafeteria chairs are really uncomfortable after about 15 minutes, so try to choose a place that is comfortable, welcoming, professional and attractive. You can help improve the space with a few plants or cut flowers; you can increase comfort (and decrease snoozing) by moving around a bit during the meeting.

5. **Respect the participants.** Start and end on time. Welcome participants into the meeting and space, even if that takes a few minutes. Connect as people, as well as professionals. Be aware that every meeting is an opportunity to build community—or to damage it.

6. **Encourage broad participation.** There are often individuals who like to talk (take the air time) and those who hold back. Listening can be a form of participation, so don't force an individual to speak up—but do manage time and air space in ways that encourage broad participation. In most instances, the more voices the better!

7. **Summarize outcomes and next steps.** You may want to develop minutes or notes that are distributed to participants. If so, you need to identify a note taker who is responsible and has time to follow up.



Cultivating the Environment
for Seeds to Flourish

