

THE OLIVE BRANCH Winter 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 Winter 2009 edition of *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*. These guides are part of a set of projects supported by USAID. Together they strengthen and enlarge the circle of Seeds of Peace Educators, while reaching out to youth and the broader public.

## USAID-Supported Educational Projects for Palestinians and Israelis

**Teaching Tolerance in Palestinian and Israeli Schools—a Model Schools Initiative:** See Page 12, or for additional information, see the Fall 2009 issue of *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide*.

**Workshops on Peaceful Learning Environments:** Seeds of Peace held six workshops a year

across the West Bank; this August, we organized a workshop in Gaza.

**Winter and Summer Camps for Children in the West Bank:** This issue features an essay by children's author Lynne Reid Banks about the Jenin summer camp; for perspective on the first camp, held in Jericho, see Karen AbuZant's piece in the Fall 2008 issue of *The Teacher's Guide*.

**Cross-Border Educators' Workshops:** These workshops are held twice a year. For information on the June 2009 Tiberius workshop, see the Summer 2009 issue of *The Teacher's Guide*.

**Seeds Cafés:** These monthly cultural and political forums are held in Jerusalem.

**The Olive Branch and Olive Branch Teacher's Guide:** For in-depth information on these and other programs, visit [www.seedsofpeace.org](http://www.seedsofpeace.org).

## Reflections

Daniel Noah Moses

AS WE FINISH THIS ROUND OF projects funded by USAID, people sometimes want to know what motivates me to do this work. "Doesn't it seem hopeless?" they ask.

They are also curious to connect the dots of my life. I have a Ph.D. in history. I lived in Yerevan, Armenia. I was a Lecturer on Social Studies at Harvard University.

As the Director of the Delegation Leaders Program at Seeds of Peace, I split my time between Jerusalem and the Seeds of Peace Camp in Maine.

How do these things connect, they wonder.

When I was growing up in suburban New York during the last years of the Cold War, we talked in elementary school class about the threat of nuclear war and nuclear annihilation.

The bomb shelters in the schools were well marked. I used to wonder: why did the people of the Soviet Union want to kill me, and my family, and my classmates? Why did human beings

seem to be so good at destruction and death, and so bad at figuring out peaceful ways to live together?

Years later, I moved to Yerevan—in what had once been the Soviet Union—to teach at the university there. I made good friends. We used to go hiking in the mountains on Sundays. Sometimes my friends and I talked and laughed about how we had once been "enemies."

During those years, I used to accompany Armenian university students to Tblisi, Georgia, to conferences to meet Azerbaijani students.

The two countries—both once part of the Soviet Union—are now in a deep conflict.

"I want to meet them; but I cannot sleep in the same room with them," my Armenian students would say.

"They could kill me in the middle of the night."

When I taught at Harvard, we started the year with "What is Enlightenment," by the philoso-

pher Immanuel Kant (see Ben Mueller's essay in this issue of *The Teacher's Guide*).

We ended with a contemporary philosopher, Jurgen Habermas. The work of Seeds of Peace embodies the ideas and hopes that Habermas has made his life work.

Habermas responds to the kinds of concerns I had in elementary school. He argues that there is a dangerous gap between the destructive forces human beings have accumulated and our ability to live together.

Hope resides in our ability to engage in dialogue, to listen to one another, to figure out non-violent ways to resolve differences.

The challenge: we are separated into our own groups; we surround ourselves with people who think as we do. We go to specific schools where we learn particular perspectives. We watch television stations and read newspapers that confirm what we already want to believe.

Usually we can barely imagine how those people on "the other



**PALESTINIAN EDUCATORS** play a team-building game at a Model Schools Initiative workshop in Jenin.

side” could possibly believe what they do. This can be true of people who live in the same city (but don’t communicate) and those who face one another across borders with guns.

What we need, according to Habermas, are “public spheres,” places where citizens of this small planet can engage on an equal footing about the challenges that confront them.

People need opportunities—within schools and communities *and* across borders—to meet others with radically different ideas and narratives, people who seem to turn everything upside down, at least from your point of view (they see things differently, of course).

People need the chance to express themselves, their needs, who they are; they need the chance to listen to other very different kinds of people.

Through such experience, participants often change at some level. We don’t give up who we are. We keep core beliefs. But we listen.

We try to understand how “they” can believe what they believe. We see that somehow, we must also respect the perspectives and needs of “the other.”

We see that somehow we must figure out a way to resolve conflict peacefully, to meet these different needs, or the suffering will get worse.

“Doesn’t your work get depressing?” people ask.

In my attempt to answer, I offer

stories.

I describe the amazing men and women I have the honor to know through this work.

I tell them of staying with friends in Jenin and Hebron, in Shtula and Eilat, in Amman and in Portland, Maine.

I tell them of the schools I visit, where I meet so many wonderful people and see so many wonderful things.

“If you could see what I see,” I explain, “you would be hopeful, too.”

These *Teacher’s Guides* collect and share some of the good things around us (which are often hidden).

They’re an attempt to connect educators to one another to support one another, to continue, to expand, to deepen, this work.

This work focuses on the community, on what happens around us, where each of us has the power to make a tangible difference.

Together such differences add up. And the circle of concern and commitment grows.

There are so many good people, so many committed educators. You are doing such good work: it doesn’t make the news, but it makes a difference.

I am grateful to know such people, to call some of you friends.

When I was growing up, it seemed as if the Cold War would go on forever. I look forward to a time when what now seems impossible becomes commonplace.

## Winter 2009 Volume II, Issue III

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COVER PHOTOS: AJAY NORONHA, ABOVE: LINDA BRION-MEISELS

# Camp

## From the softball grass to the geometry class

How being a Counselor led me to teach

By *Matthew Simonson*

I AM BEING GRILLED IN THE MEAT market. All around me, hundreds of teachers are interviewing for jobs, flashing their veteran teaching philosophies and pedagogical degrees, while I, a college senior, camp counselor, and math major, don't even have a B.A. to my name, let alone a full semester at the chalkboard.

As I run around the hotel ballroom, dodging desks, shaking hands with principals, and hoping my tie is on straight, I start to wonder why anyone would want to hire me. Will my creativity, enthusiasm, and three summers spent teaching coexistence and capture-the-flag really be enough to land me a job?

As I sit down at yet another table, the department chair, director, or dean—more business cards than I can keep track of—asks me the inevitable new teacher question. It is the question that brought me to this hectic hiring conference, the question that has followed me ever since I put my favorite little water-skiers and

pie-eaters on a plane back home to a conflict zone last summer: “Why did you become a teacher?”

“Well,” I say, launching into my increasingly formulaic narrative, “it all started with this camp . . .”

To say my summers with Seeds of Peace have been life-changing would be an understatement. I'd been on international programs—a summer of service in Mexico, a semester abroad in Mongolia, and a summer teaching in rural Ghana. But while each of them led me to challenge myself, learn, and grow, I didn't feel like they changed who I was as a person.

Seeds of Peace was different. I came expecting to spend a summer focused on the Middle East conflict. Instead, I found myself thrown headlong into the trials and tribulations of adolescence.

On the one hand, I learned more than I could ever have imagined about the Middle East from these bright, passionate 14- to 17-year-old boys and girls. They told me stories both dramatic and mundane, of friends being shot by soldiers and of soccer games missed due to military



## Reflections on a summer with the Delegation Leaders

By *Pious Ali*

I WAS SURROUNDED BY TEAR-streaked faces and green shirts with three alien-like figures and an olive branch printed on them.

Across from the field, the last bus was carrying away some of the most beautiful people I have ever encountered in my life.

As I started walking back to my bunk, I was hit by the reality that in just a few hours I would be going back home to my everyday life.

There, instead of listening and sharing ideas on how we can contribute to change our world, I would be bombarded by TV images and newspaper articles that portray the “other side” of all conflicts as the ones who don't want peace. As the evil ones who are going to kill their neighbors at the drop of a hat.

In the winter of 2007, I took my first step toward being part of a program with goals and a mission that have eluded



mankind for generations—“peaceful coexistence.” I am talking about the Seeds of Peace International Camp, by the shores of the beautiful and calm Pleasant Lake in Maine.

I was offered a position as a facilitator with the Delegation Leader program. At first my job looked easy: all I was

PHOTO CREDITS: AJAY NORONHA, BOBBIE GOTTSCHALK

check-points. They talked about living in fear of indiscriminate rocket attacks and café bombings, of parents missing work as they took cover in bomb shelters.

And they taught me about their boisterous family feasts at the end of Ramadan, the youth movements that took them camping in the desert every summer, and the European soccer teams to which they were passionately devoted.

At the same time that I was hearing these riveting tales of conflict and culture, I was seeing the unmistakable signs of teenage curiosity and angst, familiar to any high school teacher. Their trash-talking and their insecurities. Rebelliousness mixed with an earnest longing for approval. Worries about whether their accents made them sound stupid, or if the passionate nationalistic stance they had taken in dialogue impressed a certain girl.

Moreover, as I gained their trust, I started to get a hint of how they were perceived back home. A talented debater in our post-lights out political discussions who, at home, argued and fought with his siblings. A clumsy-but-loveable camp clown who was sure to have a hard time fitting into the high school social scene. A happy and self-confident athlete who nevertheless cried at night over her parents' recent divorce.

On their return home, many of these outspoken youths would be ostracized, made fun of, or called "traitors" by



closed-minded classmates whom they had previously called friends.

I wanted to be there for those kids. I wished more than anything I would be there beside them when they heard about the loss of a relative's home or about an older brother who had just been deployed. I wanted to be there to reassure them of their own self-worth when they failed a math test or got cut from the basketball team.

I sent hand-written letters, wrote lengthy e-mails, and even visited the Middle East over winter vacation. And yet, none of these attempts to stay in touch could quite fill my camp counselor shoes.

"That's why I want to be a teacher," I told my future boss, and a year-and-a-half later, the impact of Seeds of Peace contin-

ues to drive me every day.

As a middle and high school math teacher, I can never quite fit the camp counselor role: I can't go slipping and sliding through the mud with my students, I can't entertain them with the sort of sophomoric humor that kept our bunk giggling well past curfew, and I can't give them hugs.

But I can be their mentor, role-model, and devoted fan 180 days a year. I'm there when they score a goal in lacrosse, when they garner a standing ovation in a stirring winter one-act, or when they earn their highest-ever grade on an exam.

That same heartfelt devotion to my campers that Seeds of Peace inspired has made supportiveness second-nature, has taught me to use every smile, high five, and word of praise to instill mathematical self-confidence, and to invest every ounce of my energy in making my students believe they can succeed.

To a teacher, coach, advisor, tutor, or counselor-mentor figure of any sort, there are no greater words to hear from an adolescent than those one of my Seeds of Peace softball players wrote in my scrapbook, echoed by my students this past year: "Thank you for pushing me. I didn't think I could do it."

*Matthew Simonson has been a counselor at Seeds of Peace since 2006. During the rest of the year, he teaches 7- to 12th-grade math at The Siena School in Silver Spring, Maryland.*

supposed to do was help facilitate adult groups from India and Pakistan, and from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt. We were there to help run discussions about how the conflict between their peoples have affected their lives, and about their ideas to bring peace. I would be working with two women with long experience facilitating similar dialogue groups.

A taste of what was ahead came when the first bus arrived. This is the conversation I had with a gentleman as I showed him to his room:

"Thank you very much my friend, but why do I have two beds?"

"You're welcome. You have a roommate."

"What is his name and where is he from?"

"He is from the country next to yours."

"W-H-A-T!? No—I am not going to sleep next to *him*. Can't you change the arrangement?"

"I'm sorry, there are no more empty bunks. I will bring it to the notice of the person in charge of this tomorrow."

"Please do that. I can't stay in the same room with him or any of *those people* for three weeks."

Similar conversations took place between my colleagues and several other

Delegation Leaders as we directed them to their accommodations.

I first saw a group of people who came with determination to defend their side's stand on the conflict, and to show how patriotic they were—judged by how far they would go to defend their country.

But then I watched them change into friends working to build a network of peace-seeking colleagues from their regions and around the world once they returned home.

From the first through the last day (before the buses departed), I was surrounded by smiling faces and positive energy from people of all ages and from many different countries. This Delegation Leaders group will remain in my memory for a long time to come.

How can I forget Avi's energy, or Ajay's beautiful smile and honesty. How can I forget Saroj's peaceful saintly approach to everything in life and Salim's creative mind and strong baritone yelling "open the door: the Seeds of Peace are coming!" each time we returned to Camp from one of our educational field trips.

I will always remember Sahab's appetizing Jordanian dishes and pleasant personality, Rehab's intellectual conversations,

and Zaki's beautiful voice whenever he sang in Hebrew. Harb's volleyball skills were amazing, as were Maha's.

I will never forget Orly's balanced point of view during dialogue or Rehab's scholarly approach to conversations. I loved listening to Hussain's opinions on everything—I learned a lot from this gentleman.

Neither will I forget Carmit, Yahaya, and Muhammad, each of whom gave the process their all. Mayssoon and Avi's love for the campers they led is worth mentioning, and so are Ajay's beautiful pictures that captured every aspect of camp life.

I also learned a lot from Arafat's belief in a non-violent way of tackling the conflict between him and his neighbors.

My roll call will not be complete without Farzana from Pakistan, who made sure that she served everyone present a cup of tea anytime she was having one herself.

The people I met at Camp have given me a reason to believe in peace again.

*Pious Ali is the Founder & President of the Maine Interfaith Youth Alliance. He was a Delegation Leader facilitator in 2008 and a Maine Seed facilitator in 2009.*

# Programs *in the region*

## Tales of Hope: My project

Tali Kochavi Educator

**A**SI GET TO KNOW SEEDS OF PEACE MORE deeply, I understand how important this organization is, and how necessary this educational activity is, especially now, when a peaceful solution to the conflict through dialogue seems to be further away than ever, and as essential as ever.

My educational project, Tales of Hope, is a modest attempt to do something to change the political situation, to take a step beyond the convenient place of the frustrated citizen.

More than that, it is to do something as an educator—as someone who believes in the power of education to make a difference, who believes in the importance of books, and who thinks that children are the ones who pay the biggest price in the current situation.

The Tales of Hope project aims to reach Palestinian and Israeli children with a message that advances peace, hope, pluralism and children's rights. The starting point for the project is that a child is a child is a child, no matter where he or she lives, what his or her nationality or religion are, no matter the political situation into which he or she is born.

The project aims to gradually reach out to every boy and girl in our violent region and give them a few moments of joy and grace, and some hope.

For this project, I hope to work with a Palestinian partner to reach out to Palestinian and Israeli children at kindergartens, schools, community centers, summer camps and the like, to give them an educational experience in which they'll hear a story and a song, talk about their hopes and dreams, and share these hopes and dreams by drawing them on the project's postcard.

They will then be exposed to hopes and dreams of children from other places and to pictures of other children who took part in the exact same activity. At the end of the activity they'll get free bilingual books in Arabic and Hebrew containing messages of hope, peace and pluralism, as well as a bookmark and a sticker.

The first book to accompany my project is *No One Can Ever Steal Your Rainbow* by the American writer Barbara Meislin.

The Jewish-Arab Center at Givat Haviva published a bilingual edition of this book and has kindly donated 1,000 copies for the first stage of the project. Ghassan Jammal has translated the book into Arabic while my mother and I translated it into Hebrew. The book is published with an audio CD by the wonderful singer Amal Mukus, who recorded in both languages.

This book transmits a general message of hope without directly referring to the characteristics of children in our region.

I intend to introduce it with a bilingual text I have written that directly addresses the children who are going to read it. This introduction is rhymed and written in language that young children can understand. It speaks of Palestinian and Israeli children, as well as the range of religious, cultural, and economic diversity. It strongly emphasizes the equal rights of children.

The text draws on a direct line between the right of the addressed children to enjoy a happy protected childhood and to make his/her dreams come true, and the right of other children to enjoy exactly the same experience.

This book is only part of the first stage of the Tales of Hope

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you are a Palestinian, Israeli or an international educator and you think you might want to work with Tali, please contact her. If you have any ideas for promoting the Tales of Hope project, including constructing a website and fundraising, send her a note. Her e-mail address is talikochavi4.7@gmail.com.

project. In the future, I hope to add books for different age groups, including books by Israeli and Palestinian writers. As more books are added, they may be accompanied by theatrical performances and films suited to the books and to the project's message.

Israeli poet Shlomit Cohen-Asif wrote in one of her poems for children:

*I threw a candy into the sea/ it sank in very deep/  
If everybody did like me/ the sea would be so sweet.*

This project is my attempt to put something sweet in the ocean of fear and hate surrounding us.

*Tali Kochavi is an Israeli educator from Haifa. She took part in the Israeli Model Schools program in Jaffa, the Seeds of Peace Spring Seminar in Netanya, Cross-Border Educators' Workshop in Tiberius, and the Neve Illan Seminar.*



# Lynne Reid Banks: Jenin summer camp

Lynne Reid Banks Writer

**W**HEN I FIRST ARRIVED, IT APPEARED THAT all the activities I basically came expecting, might not happen. But Daniel phoned the good news three days later, eliciting a whoop from Karen.

The events were held at the Haddad Tourist Centre, an amazing place to find in the rocky hills outside Jenin. It belongs to a Palestinian family that first built their own magnificent villa—replete with Doric columns and a pediment with a luridly painted three-dimensional evocation of St. George and the dragon.

To this they added villas of residence, kitchens and an outdoor dining area, a wedding plaza, various halls for meetings, a swimming pool, and a fun-fair, all in a bucolic setting of shade trees and flower gardens.

In other words, it was a veritable paradise.

Karen and I slept in one of the villas, together with about two-dozen girls aged 10 to 14. It was all spacious, tiled and spotless. Karen was so incredibly busy that I hardly saw her, except when we fell into our beds at night.

Karen wanted me to tell the kids—60 of them—a story in the evenings before bedtime. And I was scheduled to give a lecture at the Model Schools Initiative educators' workshop that ran parallel with the kids' camp.

At lunch Daniel took me aside. "Maybe you could tell them a story instead?"

I gaped at him.

"But they're grown-ups, aren't they?"

I'd seen them at meals. They were predominantly male, many high school principals, many with specialties in maths and science. "Light relief" for heavies?

Story-time, first night. The kids were all in a state of high excitement. The girls trailed in late, after their strictly segregated swimming time. They all sat on the tiled floor of this vast hall, madly cluttered with the boys' bedding, rucksacks, chairs, tables and other impedimenta.

I'd decided—though not without qualms—to start with something simple: an unbound picture-book I wrote with my son, that I'd brought with me on spec. I read the story, and as I finished each page I handed it into the crowd so they could look at the pictures.

It was going pretty well when there was a small commotion—a space magically spread in the midst of the crowd as one poor kid was copiously sick. The story (luckily nearly finished anyway) never recovered. As I said to Sawsan, Karen's Seeds of Peace colleague, "I've had some bad reviews in my time, but no one's ever thrown up before!"

The kids very sweetly collected up the scattered pages and collated them for me, amusingly with the bottom page on top, as in Arabic books. I was hoping Karen would come back to the room at last and have a rest, but she decided she'd better go to the hospital with the throw-up kid.

Breakfast at eight. I sat in the shade and chatted with Steven and Linda, Daniel's colleagues, who were giving up their holidays, or sabbaticals, to do this work. Despite the heat and the

intensity of the course, the participants appeared very earnest and engaged.

The educators' meetings took place in one of the big halls, featuring an air-con unit that roared like a furnace-in-reverse, making it essential to speak very loudly.

When I went, as bidden, to introduce myself, I shouted that I was going to entertain them, but that they'd have to help. I would show them how to do an instant play with their classes. When this was explained, and I made it clear they'd be expected to contribute acting skills, the women—mostly primary school teachers—looked enthusiastic and the men looked stunned.

My advance fears proved groundless. They loved the story and fairly threw themselves into the performance.

In the end, even the men took part. When the Spoilt Queen (she was wonderful) shouted "Arrest that man!" I, as director, said, "Well, don't just sit there, you heard the queen's orders!"—whereupon the men leapt gleefully to their feet and carried the luckless offender off shoulder-high.

They all took part in the crowd-scenes, ad-libbing in English—except for Steven, who's learning Arabic! It was funny and fun.

Afterwards, I was awarded three of the "stars" which were given out to anyone deserving a reward.

The second night, the kids arrived in the hall breathless with exertion, after a number of Karen's night games outside on a playground.

After the story, I followed the sound of live music and found impromptu entertainment going on under the trees as the full moon rose. The small circle of chairs expanded over the next half-hour as more and more of the teachers, and youth-leaders gathered. A troupe of *debka* dancers—none older than 15—snaked into our midst and gave a really impressive display. The audience responded with vocal enthusiasm.

I was aware that last night, sitting in that circle, listening and watching something quintessentially Palestinian, that I have by no means divorced myself from Israel, however disgracefully the government and the army—not to mention the settlers—behave, however many Jewish citizens live in their "bubbles" and refuse to even think about what's going on a few miles away.

What to make of it all? I don't know. A foot in each camp, or straddling the divide, is uncomfortable at best and deeply distressing at worst. But perhaps one has to try.

I think the teachers were well satisfied. The kids' camp was undoubtedly a big success. They clearly had a wonderful time, coming from all over the West Bank, rich and poor, some from refugee camps, all mixing and mingling and getting to know each other, which is normally very difficult because of the checkpoints and roadblocks.

A noble enterprise to which Karen, Daniel, Steven, Linda, Sawsan and their colleagues have made major contributions.

*Lynne Reid Banks is, among other things, an author of children's books. Her best-known works are The L-Shaped Room and The Indian in the Cupboard. A former kibbutznik, she lives in England and is an active peace-maker.*



PHOTO CREDIT: DEB BICKNELL



**AIKIDO SENSEI** Jamie works with Palestinian youth at a school in a village north of Nazareth in March 2009.

## Peace networking pays off

**Karen AbuZant** Seeds of Peace Educator

I'VE BEEN "NETWORKING" WITH VARIOUS PEACE organizations and movements for the past four years. Through this networking, I've managed to send many teens to peace camps and programs, both locally and internationally. I've also managed to get several volunteers to come to Tulkarem to impart their knowledge and share their experiences with our community.

It's been very rewarding to see the difference this makes.

Recently, my network partners Len and Libby Traubman, who I was introduced to through Creativity for Peace, and had the pleasure of meeting at Peacemakers camp in San Francisco, gave me an online introduction to Aikido Sensei Jamie. They briefly gave me a description of the Aikido for Peace program she is involved with. They said she was coming our way and was interested in introducing her program to, and sharing her special talents with, our community.

I immediately invited Jamie to Tulkarem. I asked if she'd be interested in giving a presentation to a group of 16 teens who I have been teaching English to, in preparation for participation in international peace camps/programs.

She expressed her excitement at the prospect of being able to come to our city and be a part of getting this special group of teens ready to become peacemakers.

Before visiting Tulkarem, Jamie attended a Seeds of Peace workshop for its Palestinian delegates in Ramallah, giving a taste of Aikido to 50 Seeds, several Delegation Leaders, facilitators, counselors and staff members.

Again, networking at its best.

When she arrived in Tulkarem, my students were more than ready for her after their hour-long English lesson. Jamie greeted the class and without pausing for a breath, changed into her Aikido garb and began by telling the students the meaning and history of her uniform. They absorbed every detail. After a brief explanation of the art form and the Aikido for Peace

program, she invited them to learn some of the concepts and movements of Aikido.

At first, things seemed a bit strange and unclear of purpose to them. However, about ten minutes into the nearly three-hour presentation, the kids became fascinated with finding the inner strength they didn't know they had and realizing that physical strength wasn't what empowered them. It was self-control and a willingness to cooperate and work with, instead of against, your partner. This was the secret.

After the session, even though all the kids had exams to study for and we had another group of younger kids coming, the teens wanted to learn more and were surrounding Jamie like bees on a hive, gathering every bit of dripping, honey laden information she could impart to them.

The next group, all boys between the ages of 9 and 12, had been selected because they had experienced turmoil in their lives. They needed the empowerment Aikido offers. They were a rambunctious group, but Jamie didn't mind at all. She used their energy to get them motivated and to help demonstrate the techniques.

Next morning, we met some of the families of the previous day's participants along the way. All were happy to meet her and thanked her for coming such a long way to share her talents with their children. We also met some of the participants who, smiling from ear to ear, asked when she could give them another class.

Jamie inspired all of us, and I believe we inspired her as well. We hope that an Aikido program can be started here, and that the groundwork that Jamie laid will lead to the empowerment and enlightenment of our youth.

*Mother of three Seeds and counting, Karen AbuZant is an active Seeds of Peace Educator from Tulkarem. She is one of the prime organizers of the Seeds of Peace West Bank camps, and is a participant in the Seeds of Peace Model Schools Initiative and cross-border educators' workshops.*

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AIKIDO PROJECT

# Q&A: Facilitation & Parents Programs

By *Ben Mueller*

SEEDS OF PEACE IS NOT RESTING on its laurels. It is constantly searching for new ways to enhance cooperation and communication among existing participants while also widening the circle of dialogue to incorporate new voices.

Two programs at the forefront of this mission are the Conflict Management and Mediation Training Program (also known as the Facilitation Program), which has already produced facilitators working at the Camp in Maine, and the Parents Program, which ran for five successful years before being put on temporary hold two years ago.

I spoke with Farhat Agbaria, one of the leaders of the Facilitation Program, who is also leading the charge to reinstate the Parents Program, about the importance of training a new generation of facilitators and involving parents in the Seeds of Peace process.

## **Q: What is the Facilitation Program and who is involved?**

Farhat: We need a professional team of facilitators who are familiar with the needs of Seeds and the uniqueness of Seeds of Peace in terms of its year-round programs.

The facilitation program is a two-year program. It involves older Palestinian and Israeli Seeds of Peace graduates, and outsiders, too. All are university graduates interested in coexistence and peace.

## **Q: What is the process of training the facilitators?**

It starts with dialogue among themselves. They work on their own beliefs. They go to deep levels of self-evaluation. If you are going to facilitate dialogue sessions, you have to be ahead of the group. You have to be aware of the tools you need and what the expectations are. It's an art.

We also teach them the theory. Then we give them fieldwork; they go facilitate groups outside. They also have the opportunity to facilitate groups of Seeds at Camp. That's a unique experience, with very intensive work—they're facilitating every day for 21 days each session.

## **Q: Why is this program so important to Seeds of Peace and to the field of peace education in general?**

It helps the students to develop skills and to move out to spread the message. The Facilitation Program gives these

committed people the chance to become very much insiders in peace education.

It's also important in that it helps Seeds stay involved; we need people to continue to be involved. It creates another group of skilled people committed to the peace process.

When they graduate, they get jobs all over the place.

## **Q: What kind of impact do you see the program having?**

I hear from the students that it changed their lives in terms of how they see the other side. They're going to a very deep level of how much you can really take the different needs of the other side—how much you can recognize these differences on a deep level and say that I can live with these differences.

## **Q: Where do you see the program going from here?**

In the long-term, we want to open a school of facilitation for Seeds of Peace. We want to bring together the first groups that we have trained with new students. Continuity is much needed for the sake of Seeds of Peace and for the sake of the students who have gone through the program already.

This program needs to be a top priority.

## **Q: Now what about the Parents Program? How did that start?**

It started six or seven years ago. We realized that the campers were going through a very unique and different experience. They were leaving homes of conflict to go to Maine for a unique month-long experience. But then they come back home, and this is difficult.

We thought that they have a special need. There is no way for parents to understand what's happening with their children. It's all out of view of the parents. Parents hear that their kids are living together, eating together, learning about the human side.

The parents have their own stereotypes and beliefs that sometimes clash with their kids' new experiences. So we wanted to help the parents help their kids.

## **Q: How does the program work?**

We had 12 meetings. There were two groups in Jerusalem and one group up north. The meetings were between Jews and Palestinians in Jerusalem, and Jews and Palestinians in Israel.

It wasn't easy in Jerusalem, in particular. It took a lot of planning, but we finally did it, and it was great to see. Unfortu-

nately, two years ago, the program budget got squeezed.

## **Q: What went on during the meetings?**

We gave parents a very similar experience to their kids' experience without being in Maine.

The goal was to know the other side, and learn the culture of the other side. They worked on their own stereotypes by having a dialogue with the other side about the conflict.

We can't ignore the conflict; avoiding it doesn't help. We have to go through what makes us fight, and get to know each other and our cultures.

The parents worked on listening, because listening can teach you to understand the other side and its needs. This makes it easier to plan a future together.

The hope is that the parents will then bring what they learned to other families.

## **Q: What makes this program so important for the growth of Seeds of Peace?**

The more people who are involved in Seeds of Peace, the more you spread the word. It is difficult for people to talk peace, even for those who believe in it.

So the more new participants you recruit, the more legitimacy you give to peace dialogue.

## **Q: How do you overcome the challenges of cross-border meetings?**

You're right, we can't do it every week, but we can build it in a different way. We can start by meeting perhaps three times per year.

The most important thing is that we start with lots of uninational work. First uni-national, then bi-national.

## **Q: How did the parents respond to the program? Do you see the program having an impact on them?**

You don't have to convince the parents. They're seeking opportunities to come together to see what their kids are doing.

They want to share the experience with their kids. I've never seen this kind of commitment—the parents came to every meeting! They even brought their friends and neighbors, sometimes. And they went through a real change.

We make them reflect on their feelings. They would say to me, "Farhat, now I understand my kids." And then they ask, "So when can I go to Maine?"

They want to see the waterfront that their kids talk about every day.

**O**PEN COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE—AT YOUR HOME, with your friends and family, at work, and in school. There are generally four recognized basic kinds of communication: propaganda, one-way communication, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. The two-way symmetrical is the best form of communication and the one highlighted in this article. The idea is to build understanding and common ground for all parties. Truth is essential, and communication needs to happen to and from all parties.

As an expert in media relations and communication (as well as an Egyptian Delegation Leader and proud mother of a Seed who returned to Camp as a Peer Support) I tell people about the need to be open in communication. It is important to always be honest. Even if you are not ready to say something, do not hide yourself. Instead, say that you are not ready to discuss the matter.

I often work with groups to improve their communication skills. Usually, I lead role-playing activities, where I ask direct, indirect and aggressive questions. This is done with the aim of training people to formulate, honestly and openly, a comprehensive message, in a confident and quiet manner.

One of the main objectives of this training is to control your emotions and be respectful, not aggressive, towards others. A second objective is to listen. I believe that listening is the first step to any conversation or dialogue; it is important that we listen to the message being conveyed by others and do not jump to conclusions. We must accept that others' frames of reference, viewpoints and opinions are true for them.

The best place to start practicing open communication is with the people we interact with on a daily basis: our families, friends and co-workers. It is amazing to see the ripple effect of practicing open communication. By modeling the technique you will help build more open, honest relationships with and among your family and social circles. I recommend that you push yourself to the maximum you are able to, and then take one step forward—this will be a true achievement. As educators and parents, it is important to model open communication at home and at schools. This will give students essential tools for communication and conflict resolution.

Here are two models that I find useful for practicing open communication. Try to use these with your family, friends and co-workers and see what an improvement open communication can make in your life.

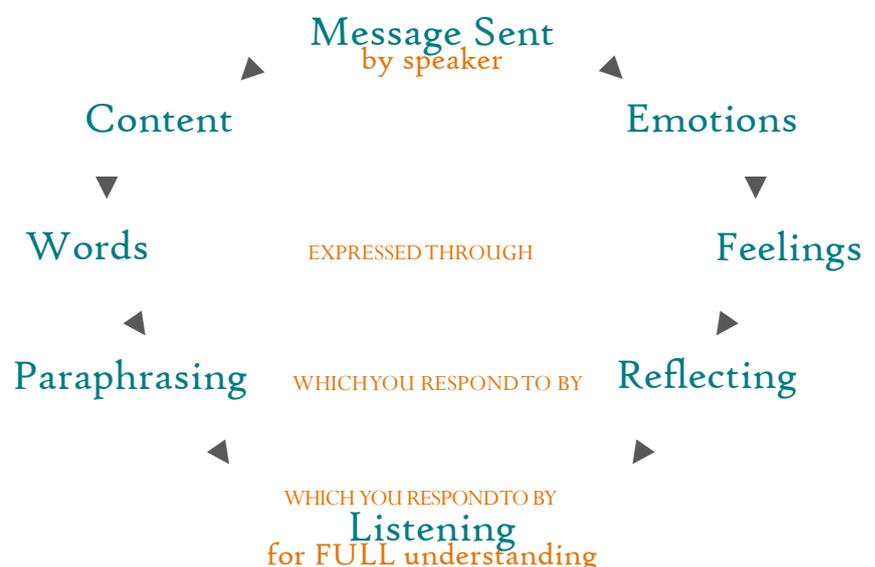
## Active Listening, Paraphrasing and Reflecting Model

THE FIRST MODEL, THE ACTIVE Listening, Paraphrasing and Reflecting Model, is from The Greenshoe Group, an organization consultation group based in Maine.

Through this model, participants learn how to paraphrase or reword what they have heard and reflect on the feelings expressed in others' statements. To practice this model in schools or with a group of people, break the group into pairs and have one person tell their partner a short story (for example something that happened to them the previous day).

Instruct the listener to pay attention to both the content of what the person is sharing and also the emotions expressed. Then have the listener paraphrase what they heard and reflect on the emotions.

Here is a diagram explaining the flow of this model and on the next page, a list of suggestions and questions to be used during the modeling activity.



## Paraphrasing Content

- Check-back for accuracy by restating the essence of the speaker's message in your own words. Examples: "In other words ...", "It sounds like ...", "So you're ...", "If I understand this ..."
- Restate the speaker's meaning without any judgment or editing of your own. You don't have to agree with the statement to paraphrase or reflect it.
- Use paraphrasing sparingly or you'll sound like a parrot.
- Use paraphrasing sincerely, as a way

of really understanding the speaker's meaning, not as a mechanical technique.

- Be open to correction if you missed the real point of the message.

## Reflecting Feelings

- Listen for the feeling words and observe feelings through non-verbals.
- Check-back on feelings that you see or hear by reflecting them in words and tone. Examples: "You seem angry," "You look puzzled," "You sound worried."
- If the speaker doesn't show feeling,

you can check-back by saying what you think he or she is feeling ("That must be very frustrating").

- You can reflect feelings by linking them to the event that triggered them through words like "by," "because," or "that." Examples: "You feel anxious because he's so inconsistent." "You're discouraged by her lack of response on these issues."
- Use feeling reflections infrequently and sincerely.
- Always be open to correction.

# The Pinch Model

THE SECOND MODEL, THE PINCH Model, comes from Dennis DaRos, the owner and principal consultant at Great Island Consulting in Maine. The Pinch Model is a model for dealing with "pinches," or minor issues, that arise in any relationship. The model outlines how to deal with those issues while they are minor, before they build up to a "crunch"—a large issue.

Here is a chart that demonstrates relationship dynamics and how pinches can be addressed. The best relationships address pinches as they arise and therefore build a relationship that best supports stable and comfortable productivity.

For a relationship of any kind to be productive, the individuals in the relationship need to have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations.

If something gets in the way, a miscommunication or breach of trust, this is a disruption of shared

expectations and needs to be dealt with in a productive and honest manner by all parties in the relationship. This is the "planned renegotiation" process.

If this conversation does not take place, the resentment, anxiety, hurt, anger, betrayal, frustration, ambiguity and uncertainty continues to grow into a crunch.

When a crunch occurs there are three possible scenarios:

- the issue is not discussed and the relationship ends with all parties feeling resentful;
- the issue is discussed under duress and the relationship ends in a planned and agreed upon manner; and,
- the third and best option is to have a conversation about the issue and resolve it in a manner that brings the relationship back into a stable and

productive place.

This model for dealing with issues can be used on a large or small scale in any work environment.

It is ideal for school settings because it encourages students to address pinches as they arise (before they become crunches) and helps build good problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

*Marsha Greenberg of the Greenshoe Group and Dennis DaRos of Great Island Consulting are both Delegation Leader Facilitators at the Seeds of Peace International Camp.*

*Marsha has been involved with Seeds of Peace for many years, and has facilitated at the Camp for three summers.*

*Dennis spent his first summer at Seeds in 2009 and we hope to see him back in the future!*



**T**O UNDERSTAND THE MODEL SCHOOLS INITIATIVE—ON BOTH THE Israeli and Palestinian sides—imagine Israeli and Palestinian Seeds returning home after their Camp experiences by the shores of Pleasant Lake. This transition from one reality to the other can be a shock.

For Seeds, their time at Camp is a heroic saga of epic proportions. In the stories they tell, they take previously unimaginable risks. They stand as representatives of their people. They say what they want to say, what they need to say. They engage directly on subjects that delve into the very core of their being. They listen even when it is so painful to listen, even when they feel that they are ready to explode, even when they cry. They taste strange food, live in a bunk with teenagers from around the world, and swim in a lake, in a land where there are so many lakes that you cannot even count them all. At Camp, people of all religions, all races and backgrounds, all beliefs, treat one another with respect. The Camp is filled with laughter and shared memories.

Returning home, the Camp experience can feel like a mirage in the desert. As Seeds soon realize, the vast majority of people around them have never had a kind of experience even remotely like Camp.

Most, in fact, are bitter when it comes to the prospects for “peace,” and profoundly ignorant of “the other side.” Most are skeptical, and many are suspicious of the Camp; a number are actively hostile.

At Camp, what had seemed impossible starts to seem normal, “life the way it should be.” But a few days at home make it clear that life beyond Camp is not.

After Camp, Seeds get the chance to meet. But if you are a gardener in a greenhouse you need to be careful about how you transplant young flowers. The flowers that thrive in the greenhouse can easily die outside in the cold at night. In the vision of John Wallach, the founder of Seeds of Peace, Seeds will grow up to lead their communities into a peaceful future. But these Seeds cannot thrive if

the ground is toxic. And people, whether age 16 or 60, cannot make change alone: successful change requires systemic change—social and institutional change. It even requires cultural transformation. People-to-people peace building requires work from the ground up.

Such insight is at the heart of the Model Schools Initiative.

Delegation Leaders return home from a transformative Camp experience, too. Then they go to work as teachers, school counselors, principals, inspectors, and officials in the Ministry of Education. They know “the system.” They lead and manage these systems. The idea behind the Model Schools Initiative is to work with Delegation Leaders to reach new educators who have never been to Camp.

The idea is to enlarge and strengthen the circle of Seeds of Peace educators, to support the Seeds—and the young people who will never have the chance to go to Camp. The idea is to share resources, to share

best practices about how to build trust and communication. The idea is to build centers of Seeds of Peace activity and to cultivate peaceful learning environments.

Over the course of two years, we organized two different Model Schools Initiatives, one for Palestinians and a separate one for Israelis. We worked to meet the needs of real educators on the ground.

To serve as faculty members, we brought together some of the most wonderful and dedicated educators in the world. In past issues of *The Teachers’ Guide*, you can find out more about these educators and their work. You can also take a look at some of the tools they use.

Below is curriculum from the Israeli Model Schools Initiative, which faculty members Steve Schuit and Marsha Greenberg have generously shared.

You will also find a few words from the faculty of the Palestinian Model Schools Initiative. Their material appears in previous issues of *The Teacher’s Guide*.

## Overview of the Israeli Model Schools Initiative curriculum

### Model Schools Initiative Vision

“To cultivate an environment of tolerance, dialogue and civic engagement in Israeli schools and youth organizations.”

#### Mission

To develop a “Model School” program for educators which is truly unique for both educators and students, especially as it fosters a cross-border network and contributes to the peace process. This developmental program will:

- Be sustainable
- Support efforts toward peace
- Be committed to the long-term
- Encourage learning at a deeper level
- Build a team of empowered students in your schools and communities.

### Two-Way Communication Process

No matter what position we hold, all of us are involved with daily two-way communications. We listen to take in information. We also speak to others, all day long.

We continually try to get our message across and to receive the information required to do our jobs. Our communication may be as informal as a meeting with one person, or as formal as a speech before two hundred people. Whether formal or informal, effective communication requires confidence, competence, and clarity to get both our messages across and maintain our credibility.

Communication breakdowns occur when our filters change the message that

was intended. Practicing **active listening** and **checking with others for understanding** are two ways to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding and poor communication.

### Active Listening

When you actively listen, individuals perceive they are understood. Defensiveness is reduced, self-esteem is maintained and emotional exchanges are defused. See the Active Listening Model on Page 10.

### What is Trust?

“Trust is a relationship of mutual confidence in performance, honest communication, expected competence, and a capacity for unguarded interaction.”

Reina & Reina, *Trust & Betrayal In The Workplace*

## The Payoff of Trust

When higher trust is felt within a school, students and teachers will increasingly ...

- Take risks
- Feel more freedom to express their creative ideas
- Admit mistakes
- Learn from those mistakes
- Perform beyond expectations

Reina & Reina, *Trust & Betrayal In The Workplace*

## The Trust Triangle



Caring: To what extent are concern and respect genuinely and actively demonstrated?

Adapted from Blaine F. Hartford, ©1996

### Commitment

- Being dependable and reliable
- Making and keeping promises
- Holding others accountable for their actions

### Competency

- Demonstrating job-appropriate skills
- Creating and promoting a learning climate
- Demonstrating sound judgment

### Caring

- Telling the truth
- Being fair
- Finding out what matters to others
- Demonstrating genuine concern

## Prescription for Building Trust

### CARING

- Actively listen with an open mind

- Show compassion & genuine concern
- Demonstrate respect for others as equal partners
- Share the whole truth: information, values, feelings, ideas and feedback
- Make yourself available to others
- Be fair
- Speak with good purpose: directly, avoid gossip, watch sarcasm
- Admit mistakes

### COMMITMENT

- Manage expectations
- Delegate appropriately
- Keep confidences
- Make and keep commitments and promises
- Hold students accountable for their actions
- Help “poorly-matched” teachers transfer or exit the school with dignity
- Make your actions consistent with your words
- Be dependable and reliable

### COMPETENCE

- Take personal risks to do what is right for the students, your colleagues and the school
- Demonstrate sound judgment
- Create and promote a learning climate in your school
- Ensure selection and promotion of competent people
- Involve others and seek their input
- Accept criticism and blame
- Demonstrate other job-appropriate skills
- Respect people’s knowledge, skills and abilities
- Give feedback, be open to receive feedback

## The Johari Window

The Johari Window is a way to examine our own behavior in relation to others. It was named after its developers, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham.

**Quadrant I** is behavior and motivation which is known to oneself and to others. It shows the extent to which two or more individuals can freely give and take,

work together and enjoy experiences together. The larger this area, the greater is the person’s contact with reality and the more available are his/her needs and abilities to him/herself and to associates. This can be labeled the quadrant of honesty, openness and frankness. Also, included in this area are things a person can’t hide, like height and weight.

**Quadrant II** is the blind area representing behavior and motivation which is not known to oneself, but which is readily apparent to others. The simplest illustration of this quadrant is a mannerism in speech or gesture of which the person is unaware, but which is quite obvious to others. Perhaps this individual dominates in conversations or at meetings and is not aware of it. Most people’s Quadrant II is larger than they think.

**Quadrant III** is behavior and motivation that is open to oneself, but kept away from other people. Sometimes this quadrant is called my secrets. This area has to do with secrets as well as stored resentments. A convenient way of differentiating between Quadrant I and Quadrant III is to think of Quadrant I as those things which are on top of the table and Quadrant III as those things which are under the table.

**Quadrant IV** is the area of hidden potential where behavior and motivation are not known to oneself or to others. We know this quadrant exists because both the individual and person with whom he/she is associating discover from time to time new behavior or new motives which were really there all along.

### The Johari Window: A Model of Interpersonal Relations

Things about me that I <b>know</b>	Things about me that I <b>don't know</b>	Things about me that others <b>know</b>
<b>I Common Knowledge</b> Things that are	<b>II Blind Spots</b> Things others haven't told me yet	<b>Things about me that others don't know</b>
<b>III My Secrets</b> Things I haven't told yet	<b>IV Hidden Potential</b> Things that I never dreamed about myself	

# Final lessons from the Palestinian Model Schools Initiative

DURING THE TWO-YEAR MODEL Schools Initiative, we learned much from our Palestinian and Israeli colleagues.

We learned that US and Middle Eastern peacemaking practices bring different strengths and challenges; working together, we can use these differences to create new and stronger peacemaking strategies.

We also learned that there are important similarities across our two cultures. Some of these are rooted in a common commitment to compassion; others

include the use of stories, the importance of time and relationship, and the power of listening.

Working together, we can strengthen our common strategies and build new bridges.

We learned about courage in the face of stress, trauma and loss.

We learned about the power of teaching and the importance of teaching from the heart.

We learned about hope as a “passion for the possible.”

In the words of Principal Mohammed Manasra, “Students are ready to cooperate with teachers and help the community. They have power and energy. To discover this power and energy and move it in a positive direction, this is the role of the teacher.”

*Linda Brion-Meisels, Deb Bicknell, Casey Corcoran and Steven Brion-Meisels are trainers for the Palestinian Model Schools Initiative.*

*Oraib Waari and Jihad Sirhan are Palestinian educators from East Jerusalem.*

# Creative writing

Elana Bell Educator

## as a means of exploring identity and building bridges

I RECENTLY HAD THE PRIVILEGE of facilitating a writing workshop with Palestinian women from a small village in the West Bank. On the outside you could say we had little in common. I am a Jew from California who grew up in the very liberal, hippie community of Venice Beach.

Most of the women from the village are observant Arab Muslims, who wear the *hijab* and observe traditional religious customs.

But after 15 minutes together, most people would not have believed that we had just met. The women were laughing and gesturing wildly, each one more eager than the next to share rich images from her life.

In the course of that one and a half hour workshop, I was given an intimate glimpse into the complex interplay of beauty and struggle these women live everyday, in their own words.

What gave them the permission to let down their guard and share these vibrant stories with me, an almost total stranger? I believe this is the power of creative writing. It allows us to access parts of ourselves and our stories that we may not even realize are right under the surface, waiting to be released. And once we see how powerful they are, we want to share them with others.

I don't believe that one needs to be a "good writer" to benefit from this experience. Each of us is full of stories and poems. We have all seen and experienced much in our lives—as mothers, as fathers, as children, as soldiers, as human beings—all of which provides a rich wellspring from which to write.

Creative writing can be used as a tool for peace-building in several ways. In the example of the workshop I described above, the purpose is to strengthen self-awareness and identity, especially among marginalized communities. When people feel valued and seen, they are much more likely to be able to appreciate or consider the "other" and their point of view.

In bi-national or "mixed" groups, the participants not only have the opportunity to validate their own identity, but they are given the chance to experience the "other" in a powerful and unique way.

Once that occurs, it becomes more difficult to stereotype and demonize the other, more difficult to commit violence against them without thinking.

In order to access the vibrant landscape of material that I have been speaking about, the writing activities must be grounded in the importance of concrete detail and of the five senses.

This is where the facilitator plays a key role. It is your responsibility to teach the participants how to use these tools in their writing. Once they make use of these techniques, the writing becomes more unique and alive. For example, if a participant says, "On my street there is a man," this does not tell the reader much at all. So the facilitator might ask "How old is the man? What is he doing? What does he smell like? What makes him different than other men?"

To use all of that information would be too much, but to find the one piece of perfect, specific information makes all the difference. "On my street the man with one leg shuffles back and forth with his wooden crutch."

The following exercises offer a few ways to explore identity of the self and other through writing. The first exercise gives a strong grounding in the senses, so I recommend starting with that one.

In addition to focusing on the senses, participants should be encouraged to use the technique of free writing, meaning that they keep their pens moving the entire time without stopping or worrying about spelling, grammar, etc.

Remind them that whatever they write is private, and they can select later which parts, if any, they want to share.

## I. Senses in a bag

**Objective:** To understand and to practice the power of concrete and sensory detail in creative writing.

**Materials needed:** 1. Objects that will titillate each sense, like cinnamon, pickles, sandpaper, rice in a cup (shaken), a striking photo  
2. Blindfolds (or students can cover their eyes)  
3. Pens & paper

### Directions:

1. Ask everyone to put on their blindfolds and make sure their pens are near by.
2. Explain that they will be engaging with each object that you will bring around to them. Once everyone has experienced it, they will be asked to take off their blindfolds and write for 3 minutes, describing that object to someone who has never seen it. The key is that they must not actually name the object in their description. Instead, what they are encouraged to do is write about what it reminds them of, what it is like.
3. This process is done with each object, with students asked to put on their blindfolds each time.
4. Participants choose one section to share with the group (optional).

### Additional/Follow-Up Exercises:

1. Take the students to a place with a lot of activity, either natural or man-made—for example a forest, or a busy market place. Ask them to write about each of the senses for five min-

utes, trying to capture as much as they can.

2. Sense poem (to be completed after above exercise).

Complete the template using the strongest phrases from the above exercise. Students can put the senses in any order they choose:

*In the/my* \_\_\_\_\_  
*I see* \_\_\_\_\_  
*I smell* \_\_\_\_\_  
*I taste* \_\_\_\_\_  
*I hear* \_\_\_\_\_  
*I touch* \_\_\_\_\_  
*In the/my* \_\_\_\_\_

## II. The story of my name

**Objective:** For participants to share their own personal, cultural, and political background in a structured and positive way.

**Materials needed:** Pens & paper

### Directions:

1. Participants sit in a circle and share "the story of their name": a. What is your full name?; b. Who gave you your name?; c. Who, if anyone, are you named after?; d. What does your name mean, either in a particular language, and/or in terms of historical/cultural/personal significance?
2. Depending on the age group, read a sample poem, for example *My name is Espada* by Martin Espada (appropriate for

high school and above).

3. Ask everyone to free write for 10 minutes about the “story/meaning of their name.” Ask them to use as much imagery/sensory detail as possible.

4. Offer one of the following templates (if necessary):

Line 1 - your first name.

Line 2 - “It means,” then three adjectives that describe you.

Line 3 - “It is like,” describe a color, but don’t name it.

Line 4 - “It is,” and name something you remember experiencing with family or friends that makes you smile to recall.

Line 5 - “It is the memory of,” and name a person who is or has been significant to you.

Line 6 - “Who taught me,” two abstract concepts (such as “honesty”).

Line 7 - “When he/she,” then refer to something that person did that displayed the qualities in Line 7.

Line 8- “My name is,” and your first name.

Line 9 - “It means,” and in one or two brief sentences state something important you believe about life.

5. Share (optional).

Sample poem: **Shawn**

*It means friendly, outgoing, happy,  
It is like the morning sky,  
It is eating Buffalo wings at a buffet,  
It is the memory of Joe Workshop Heckler,  
Who taught me perseverance and good humor,  
When he tried my patience,  
My name is Shawn,  
It means I believe in laughing whenever possible.*

### III. Letter poems

<b>Objective:</b> To empower participants with the opportunity to begin to voice, and have heard, what is important to them—their gratitude, their wishes, their fears—in a creative way.	<b>Materials needed:</b> Pens & paper
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**Directions:** 1. Read the sample poem below.

2. Discuss. What is going on in the poem? What stands out to you about the poem? Why did the poet write to Martin Luther King, Jr.? What is the underlying message he is trying to communicate?

3. Brainstorm a list of people you would want to write a poem to. They can be someone you know, dead or alive, a political figure, a historical figure, etc. It should be someone that you really have something urgent to communicate to.

4. Write for 10-15 minutes.

5. Share (optional).

Sample poem: **Dear Martin Luther King**

by Feliciano Guerrero

*I thank you for changing the world. I admire you—you stopped segregation with the power of your words. Thank you for taking a risk and giving your speech to the nation. Thank you for tearing down the “Whites Only” signs with your words. If it wasn’t for you I might still be a slave today with a tool in my hand while my master lashes me with his fiery whip, sweating until I can’t sweat no more, working with all my might. But when the night comes, I disappear like a ghost. Thank you Martin Luther King, for not making me a slave.*

### IV. Persona poems

<b>Objective:</b> This an excellent exercise for allowing participants to get a sense of “walking in someone else’s shoes.”	<b>Materials needed:</b> Photographs of people that tell a strong story
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**Directions:** Depending on the trust level in the group, you can allow students to try to write from the experience of the “other” in the room, or you can bring in characters from a parallel conflict.

1. Place a photograph in front of each student.

2. Ask them to begin by describing what they see (3-5 minutes).

3. Ask them to switch and write as if they are the character in the photograph speaking to us on the outside.

4. Discuss: Which did you enjoy more, describing from the outside or writing as that character?

5. Read the sample poem below.

6. Discuss: What is happening in the poem? Who is speaking? What stands out to you in terms of the sensory details—i.e. what could you see, hear, taste, touch, smell.

7. Brainstorm a list of people you would like to write in the voice of. The facilitator can also assign this if he or she has a particular idea in mind about what participants should explore. Example: a child who lost his/her parents during the genocide in Rwanda, a soldier in Iraq, etc. ...

8. The participants can either write freely from there, or if they are stuck, you can offer them the following questions to answer in the voice of their character:

Describe your greatest fear.

Describe the most beautiful moment you’ve ever experienced.

Relate your craziest dream.

Who are you really, on the inside?

Describe your most painful moment

Describe your strongest desire

How do you feel about the state of the country?

9. Share (optional).

10. Discuss (again): How did it feel to write in the voice of someone very different from yourself?

Sample poem:

**A Delicious Meal**  
V.I.A., 26, Palestinian

*It is not only a delicious meal  
When yoghurt, rice, meat, and wheat  
Are joined together.*

*You can hear the spatter of boiling oil,  
And you can smell the pine nuts frying.  
It is all in my homeland, in my blood,  
In my past, and in my future.*

*There I can touch my mother’s hand,  
Smell her good fragrance,  
And still hear from her the voice of  
A mother’s love.*

*It is the gathering of loved ones, friends,  
Poor and rich—a gathering of different feelings—  
Love and hate, anxiety and joy;  
I wait for it every year.*

*Every day, every second, I find myself in it.  
It is the meal of my beloved ones in Eid,  
A time of festival.*

*I can see in it their faces, like strong trees  
Rooted tightly to the ground;  
I can hear in it the blowing of the wind  
In a cold winter.*

*I can see the snow when it falls to the ground;  
I can smell the fragrance of the flowers;  
It is a spiritual and physical food.*

*Elana Bell is a Brooklyn poet, teacher and peace-builder.*

# The Impact of Seeds of Peace

Daniel Noah Moses, Ph.D. Managing Editor

**M**OST OF THE SEEDS WHO CAME TO CAMP THIS PAST SUMMER WERE NOT EVEN born when Seeds of Peace started, back in that hopeful year when Arafat, Rabin, Clinton and Peres stood together on the White House Lawn. And yet what do we have to show for it? The Arab-Israeli conflict has in many ways worsened. What good is it to bring together teenagers and adult educators from conflict regions? What difference does this kind of people-to-people “peace-building” or “conflict transformation”—or whatever you want to call it—actually make? Isn’t it just a waste of money and time? These are good questions.

Those of us who experience Seeds of Peace or similar efforts (within communities and between them) believe in what we are doing. We feel that we make a positive difference. We just know it.

These *Olive Branch Teacher’s Guides* are filled with our stories, with examples of how what we do works.

But can we prove it?

People who give money want “deliverables.” They want hard evidence that their money is buying what they want it to buy. When donors give money to build roads, they inspect the roads for quality; they keep track of the distances.

But what do we measure when we are trying to make peace? What are the tangible products of people-to-people peace-building/conflict transformation work?

I have spent most of my career teaching in universities—American, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian and Palestinian. I have also spent time working on the ground with Seeds of Peace. I stay over and work for days in Jenin and in Tiberius, in Hebron, in Tel-Aviv, and in Wadi Rum. At the university, we read books and discuss them. We argue about theories. We look at the big picture.

When I work on the ground we focus on how to make the most out of an overnight workshop; we discuss how to meet the needs of participants; we worry about transportation.

The “Ivory Tower” of theory often seems so far away from what is happening on the ground. But theory and practice must work in tandem; they must support one another. When used properly, a theory is a tool for doing good work.

Donors demand evidence and we need the money. At the same time, we need to share “best practices” amongst ourselves and in the wider community so we can improve. Those of us who support Seeds



of Peace and similar organizations need to reflect on what we do. We need to test the effectiveness of our work. We need to learn from one another. We need to coordinate with one another. We need to figure out how to have the maximum positive impact.

In a sense, Seeds of Peace is a school for conflict transformation: it is a school for peace building. Seeds of Peace staff members have learned something since that summer of the Oslo Accords, when founders John Wallach and Bobbie Gottschalk gathered the first group of Seeds.

Over the years counselors, facilitators, Delegation Leaders staff, regional directors and coordinators have handed down hard-earned wisdom about what works and what doesn’t work. We have learned by making mistakes. People come through Seeds of Peace and then they go on to university, to graduate school, to work with other organizations. These people have something to say. We have something to share. And we have a lot to learn from others doing similar work.

If you want to grow blueberries in Maine—ask a Maine blueberry farmer. If you want to transform conflict, ask people who are doing it day by day.

I am very proud of the friends I have met who combine theory and practice in such a delicate and determined way. In this *Olive Branch Teacher’s Guide*, we offer a taste of what they do.

Ned Lazarus, who shares his research here with us, is one of the founders of the Seeds of Peace follow-up programs in the Middle East; he is now finishing his Ph.D. dissertation, which follows the early generations of Seeds after the Camp experience.

I met Lily Lyman when she was a Harvard undergraduate writing her senior honors thesis about Seeds of Peace.

I met Ben Mueller, an undergraduate at Yale University, through an internship program; he joined us in Tiberius for a Cross-Border workshop (see the third issue of the *Teacher’s Guide*). We spoke about theories behind Seeds of Peace.

Michelle Gawer spent time at the Seeds of Peace Center for Coexistence in Jerusalem; she returned to Jerusalem years later for research.

Phil Hammack and Sonja Kuftinec worked as facilitators at the Seeds of Peace Camp.

These are just a few examples of the people who work in the Ivory Tower and on the ground.

In these *Teacher’s Guides* you will find recipes for good food. Recipes for peace are harder to figure out and harder to follow.

From what I remember as a kid, my great-aunt Sophie was one of the greatest cooks in the world. But when I asked her for recipes she could hardly explain a thing. Real success will not be measured by any evaluation plan: we experience success “out there,” in the world.

Slowly these changes will become impossible to ignore—because they will create the new reality.

PHOTO CREDIT: BASHAR IRAQI

# Long-term peace-building participation by Seeds graduates

By *Ned Lazarus*

MY DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AT American University is a study of the participation of Israeli and Palestinian graduates of the Seeds of Peace Camp in Seeds of Peace follow-up programs and other Middle East peace-building activities over the long term.

The study includes research on all 824 Israeli and Palestinian graduates of the first 10 Seeds of Peace summer camp programs (1993-2002).

The study begins by measuring the rates of follow-up participation of all Israeli and Palestinian graduates of the program's first decade of operation, and then complements these quantitative findings with interviews of more than 100 adult Israeli and Palestinian graduates and staff conducted in 2007-2009.

The longitudinal framework is designed to assess long-term impacts of the Seeds of Peace program, and also to observe the effects of dramatic changes in graduates' personal lives, in the development of the organization, and in the conflict situation, on alumni participation in Israeli/Palestinian peace-building.

The dissertation is still in progress, but I can share preliminary findings that may be of interest:

- Hundreds of Israeli and Palestinian alumni were active in Seeds of Peace, or in other peace-building initiatives, long after their first summer at Camp.

In 2003-4, for example, 51 percent of all Israeli and Palestinian graduates participated in Seeds of Peace follow-up or other peace-building activity. More than half of these were frequent, active participants.

- The findings emphasize the importance of organized follow-up programming. Among the group surveyed, two factors are associated with dramatic increases in long-term alumni activity:

- 1) Selection to return to Camp as Peer Support; 2) The presence of organized regional follow-up programs designed with direct input from graduates.

- Changes in the conflict environment had significant immediate effects on alumni participation, but these were less significant than organizational follow-up over the long term.

For example, alumni participation declined sharply in 2000-01, the first

year of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. However, alumni participation increased steadily in each ensuing year, even as the conflict continued to escalate. The cease-fire of summer 2003, two years later, saw a sudden and dramatic rise in alumni activity.

- On a personal level, overall levels of alumni follow-up participation were high during graduates' first years after Camp, then declined steadily through high school and reached a low point immediately after high school graduation.

The enlistment of most Jewish-Israeli graduates in the military is the chief factor cited by both Israelis and Palestinians as discouraging their participation at that time.

- A significant number of adult alumni renewed Seeds of Peace or other peace-building activity in their 20s, often through employment in Seeds of Peace or similar organizations, or participation in Seeds of Peace-sponsored educational and professional training programs.

- While long-term participation varies slightly according to gender and nationality, the overall trends described here hold among Israelis and Palestinians, men and women.

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## Peace education: Seeds of Peace & Track II diplomacy

By *Lily Lyman*

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM THE *Politics of Peace Education: Seeds of Peace and the Role of Track II Diplomacy In the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, my Harvard University senior honors thesis.

SOP [Seeds of Peace] is considered a successful organization and praised for its accomplishments by a host of public figures, media and academic analyses; it is necessary to reconsider these assessments and break them down to distill the particular elements that contribute to SOP's success.

I have sought to explore the specific components of SOP's model that enhance its potential for success and examine the processes and challenges involved in preserving these features.

I have discovered that the organization as a third-party, mainstream educational organization and its direct engagement in the political sphere (through government relations) are key distinguishing features that influence its potential for success.

Rather than directly evaluate the effectiveness of the organization, my study offers an assessment of the organization's

position in the larger geopolitical context and how its specific identity in this situation affects its potential to make a contribution to peace-building efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In my thesis I analyze the model SOP has constructed and its identity as a mainstream, politically neutral, third-party NGO.

I analyze how this enhances the potential of Seeds of Peace to have a macro-level impact on peace-building because it allows the organization to create an infrastructure for social change through its extensive outreach, strong networks, and Habermasian space for public discourse and action.

At the same time, SOP's engagement in the political sphere, one of the key features of its mainstream model, threatens its potential for success because it makes SOP susceptible to conflicting political agendas and puts it at risk of being used as a hegemonic tool to reinforce existing power asymmetries.

I argue that SOP's potential to have a greater impact relies on its ability to overcome the obstacles presented by its engagement in the external context.

Thus, SOP's ability to walk a political tightrope while preserving its identity as a neutral, legitimate organization is a key determinant of its success.

Based on my research of SOP, I found that the program's success is evident in two things: 1) the lasting support and belief of the people who have participated and 2) the fact that the organization continues to exist, maintain its unique identity, and receive support from actors from all sides of the conflict.

These successes have an even deeper impact because they demonstrate that these kinds of peace education efforts can indeed be successful (within a complex definition of success), and therefore are worthwhile. SOP provides an example for other efforts in the field, a reference for diplomats, foundations, private actors, and individuals.

Of course, it is not perfect; there are endless challenges, and the organization continually walks a fine line in a complex political environment, but there is concrete evidence that it is making a difference, which is reason enough to continue to support it and invest in it (through personal, financial, academic investment).

# Review of Seeds of Peace research

By **Ben Mueller**

As a part of Seeds of Peace, you know that you are doing something special. In the bright eyes of the inspired youth in Maine, in the exhausted smile of a facilitator after a long dialogue session, in the tireless devotion of the Delegation Leaders from the first to the last day of Camp, you see that Seeds of Peace is having an impact in a unique and important way.

But as I've learned in talking to those involved with Seeds of Peace over the past few months, and after experiencing the ups and downs of the dialogue process myself, there come days when that knowledge is harder to access.

These are the days when cross-border meetings feel like all talk and no action.

There are days when the manipulations of politicians make us feel like pawns in a vast charade we'll never hope to influence, or days when the unrestrained anger of extremists seems to destroy years of painstaking progress.

There are days when change feels naïve and days when our efforts in peace education feel small and insignificant.

Seventeen years into this experiment called Seeds of Peace, the conflict is as intractable as ever. We've all had days when we wonder what kind of difference we can really hope to make.

Some people respond to these moments of self-doubt and frustration by going for a swim or curling up with ice cream and a good book. Well, I decided to curl up with 200-page doctoral theses on the theoretical underpinnings of peace education, and 200-year old meditations on the free use of human reason.

And it worked, because I'm back from the dusty depths of the book stacks (or, more accurately, from the sleek two-dimensional glare of online search engines) to confirm that what Seeds of Peace is doing is really, truly big from this scholarly perspective, too.

Ultimately, the satisfaction of this work has to come from the daily interactions—the little transformations, the brief moments of mutual understanding—that give us the energy to move forward.

But it helps to step back and find support for our efforts in the accumulated wisdom of words on the page.

## Sapere Aude: Latin for "All-up!"

Well, not really. But if Camp were being held in another millennium on another continent, "*Sapere Aude!*" would have been the call that rang out to start



the day. So what does the phrase actually mean? It's Latin for "dare to know!" It comes from an essay by the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, but it would work just as well coming from the lungs of Tim Wilson at 7:30 a.m. on a damp summer morning in Maine.

In a sense, the origins of Seeds of Peace go back to Kant's 1784 work, "What is Enlightenment?" In it, Kant calls on human beings to break free from the prejudices upon which we rely out of laziness and cowardice, to seek enlightenment.

Kant writes:

*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude! "Have courage to use your own understanding!"—that is the motto of enlightenment.*

Kant dares us to overcome our comfortable subservience to the "rules and formulas" handed down by our state and our community which form the "shackles of a permanent immaturity." He wants us to think for ourselves.

What do we need to achieve this enlightenment? Nothing except freedom, Kant says—the "freedom to use reason publicly in all matters."

In our role in an official civic or religious post that has been entrusted to us, Kant explains, we have a responsibility to "obey" the traditional dictates of the institution.

Kant understands that certain political or religious institutions would be torn down if members questioned the appropriateness or utility of every order they

were given.

But Kant envisions another sphere in which dialogue and argument are not only harmless, but also essential to the progress of the human race. In our role "as a member of the community as a whole, or even of the world community," Kant says, we must be allowed to make free use of our reason to bring about enlightenment.

In this sphere, we are not representatives of any government or religion; we are human beings, and as human beings we have a responsibility to use our reason to come to autonomous decisions on issues of common concern. This, of course, is what Seeds of Peace does. It brings people to a camp in Maine and invites them to exhibit their beliefs publicly as members of the world community.

It releases people, if temporarily, from their responsibility to obey passively the dictates and norms of their nation and community and asks them to use their own minds to make the world a better place.

So, campers, teachers, parents, all of you who find yourselves a part of this world community—All Up! *Sapere Aude!*

## Recent Seeds of Peace Scholarship

Now that we understand why Seeds of Peace might be called an experiment in Kantian philosophy, let's look at what some people have to say about the preliminary results of that experiment.

It is worth pointing out that many scholars, students, and researchers see strong signs of success.

### "Seeds of Peace Evaluation Report," by Social Impact, Inc.

In December of 2004, an independent American research group completed the first formal evaluation of Seeds of Peace programs and their impact.

It set out to determine the quality and effectiveness of Seeds of Peace's Middle East program for Israelis and Palestinians, and to assess the behavioral and attitudinal impact of Seeds of Peace's operations on program participants and local communities.

Though the research group identified a few areas in need of improvement, including preparation of Seeds prior to Camp arrival and reentry of Seeds from Camp into their home communities, the results were quite positive:

- Sixty percent of Seeds felt that they have an improved understanding of the

PHOTO/ART CREDITS: SARAH BIGNEY, NORA (2007)

other side's "human face." Fifty percent gained the ability to "empathize" with the plight of others, 48 percent had the desire to stay involved with conflict and peace issues, 56 percent of Seeds still believed that the Camp gave them enduring friendships with the other side, and 65 percent felt that they would continue their involvement in peace efforts as a result of the Camp experience.

- With respect to behavioral change, 53 percent of Seeds were committed to staying involved with issues of coexistence; 61 percent were now much more critical in reading the paper or listening to the news; 39 percent used the Seeds of Peace message in their professional work; 37 percent had a desire to further their professional training for assisting their communities.

- Seeds were more willing to be involved in community activities than peer or young people (61 percent versus 50 percent) in the control group.

- On average, Seeds estimated that they had encouraged nine young persons to apply to the Seeds of Peace program.

**“The Political Economy of Seeds of Peace: Critical Evaluation of a Conflict Intervention NGO,”**  
by Ned Lazarus

Ned Lazarus, former director of Seeds of Peace Middle East programs in Jerusalem and now a Ph.D. candidate in international relations at American University (Washington, D.C.), takes a theoretical approach in his 2006 evaluation of Seeds of Peace.

Rather than asking about the impact of the program on participants, Lazarus asks about the theoretical foundations of the program itself.

He undertakes “a holistic study that does not take the organization’s existence and function for granted.” Lazarus uses the strategy of “backward mapping:” going

backwards from practice to theory to justify and better understand the practice.

His question is “if this program, understood in context, plays the “emancipatory” roles to which it aspires.”

Lazarus finds the first appropriate theoretical backdrop in Raymond Geuss’s idea of critical theory.

Just as in Geuss’s vision, the dialogue sessions liberate Seeds from the delusions of a one-sided history, leading them to understand their role in the prevailing social order and inspiring them to challenge their repressive reality.

Lazarus discovers further support for the Seeds of Peace mission in the philosophy of political theorist Robert Cox. Cox proposes a “dialogue between civilizations:”

*“Reality” is historically and socially constructed, and is thus different for different civilizations, not a universal given. (This, it should be said, does not mean adopting other civilizational perspectives or rationalities, only understanding them.) The next problem is to be able to work towards finding common ground among these different realities as a basis for some practical degree of universality within a world of differences.*

As Mr. Lazarus notes, Cox’s call for understanding echoes the words of a Palestinian Seed in a television interview: “We don’t need to convince each other—all that we need is to understand each other.”

Just as Cox sees understanding as a first step towards change, rather than as an end in itself, Seeds of Peace asks its students to be “ambassadors of peace.”

As Seeds stand in front of their classmates in the Middle East or the educated elite of America, they bring with them the story of an alternative reality.

By doing so, Seeds and Delegation Leaders (who participate in their own intense dialogue sessions) undermine the fear and prejudice that deepen divisions and begin

to form the common ground that one day might serve as a basis for Cox’s practical universality.

Finally, Lazarus approaches Seeds of Peace through a political economic lens; he asks in concrete terms ‘what is being produced?’ and ‘for whom or what purpose?’ As Lazarus describes,

*What is being produced? 1) The “Seeds”—a cadre of young, articulate Arab and Israeli “ambassadors of peace”, ready to stand together as living proof that “peace is possible.” 2) The “Seeds of Peace Experience”, disseminated by “Seeds” to American audiences in moving testimonials structured like stories of religious awakening or secular “enlightenment”: A journey from ignorance and darkness to seeing the light.*

Putting aside the ultimate ends of Seeds of Peace, Lazarus points to two concrete, immediate results of this organization’s work. Even critics of the peace education movement can agree that Seeds of Peace cultivates a skilled, confident, and well-connected group of young believers in peace, as well as an inspiring story for an American audience.

And for what purpose? “Humanization,” Lazarus argues, a theme that runs throughout John Wallach’s journalistic and humanitarian life’s work.

As idealistic, innocent youth intensely loyal to their countries, Seeds are uniquely qualified to act as humanizers of the conflict, especially to American and Israeli groups traditionally resistant to the Palestinian narrative. The sizeable media exposure and fundraising success of Seeds of Peace is a testament to the appeal of this “humanization” among American audiences.

One of the strengths of Seeds of Peace has been its ability to translate that media exposure into political capital. President

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Clinton invited the first group of Seeds to the signing of the Oslo Accords, where he singled them out as representatives of a new future.

When Seeds drew up a detailed agreement on final status issues at a highly publicized “Middle East Youth Summit” during a period of political tension in 1996, First Lady Hillary Clinton chose a televised videoconference with the Seeds to announce her support for a Palestinian state.

But don’t accuse Seeds of Peace of being “an American elite collective fantasy, a sideshow of the Oslo process,” Lazarus warns. For then “how and why has Seeds of Peace . . . survived and thrived after the ‘death of peace’?”

Seeds of Peace works on three separate levels, Lazarus argues: the ideal, the material, and the institutional.

The Seeds experience transformational shifts in their understanding of themselves and their world (the ideal), they take advantage of scholarships to American universities and training and job offers in peace education (the material), and they form the backbone of an organization that is the promising face of peace education efforts for diplomats, foundations, and individuals (the institutional).

John Wallach may not have had “the ideal, the material, and the institutional” in mind when he founded Seeds of Peace in 1993.

But by tracing Seeds of Peace to its unique theoretical roots, Lazarus puts into words the feeling that Wallach must have harbored when he declared to the first group of Arab and Israeli campers: “Nowhere else in the world.”

## Conclusion

This brief survey of scholarship explored how we justify the efforts of Seeds of Peace, and proposed a few preliminary responses. By tracing the origins of Seeds of Peace back to Kant, I tried to show that Seeds of Peace is an incredible real-world experiment in ideas that have occupied philosophers for centuries.

I then introduced a quantitative data-based approach to measuring the impact of Seeds of Peace on its participants.

Finally, I offered Mr. Lazarus’s analysis of Seeds of Peace in its larger theoretical framework as another compelling attempt at justifying the efforts of Seeds of Peace.

Measuring conflict transformation will always be a tricky endeavor. No available method can tell us how or if people ultimately change. But listen to a Seed talk about his or her experience. Read the teenager’s body language. People care too much for Seeds of Peace not to be working.

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# Cooking *dialogue through food*

Ghada Al-Asmar Jordanian Delegation Leader (2009)

**L**IKE MANY PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER, Delegation Leaders at the Seeds of Peace camp in Maine like to share stories about food. They swap recipes. They explain their customs, their daily life, where they come from, through food and drink. Ghada, a Jordanian Delegation Leader, is very artistic—one day she will publish a children's book. Meanwhile, here is something that she has shared about the culture of coffee.

## Coffee Culture

In the homes of Bedouins coffee is generally served plain with cardamoms which give coffee a delicious aroma. The Bedouins would greet the guest by serving coffee and saying "Ahlan wa sahan" which in English means "your are welcome to my house and my home is yours." Coffee has always been an important part of the Jordanian tradition and is inherited through generations.

### How do Bedouins prepare coffee?

Plain Coffee is prepared at the homes of the bedouins. First they roast coffee beans till they become brownish. Then they grind coffee beans in a special wooden device called "Al-Mehbash"; while grinding coffee each tribe follows a certain musical rhythm created by the "Mehbash". After that the ground coffee will be cooked with water in a copper pot called "Al-Dallah" and finally cardamoms are added. Coffee is served in a decorated white glass cup called "finjan".



### How is coffee served to the guests?

It should be served to the guests after 2-3 minutes from their arrival. It should also be served with the "Dallah" in the left hand and the "finjan" in the right filled only

with 2-3 sips.

The guest should also receive the 'finjan' with his right hand.

### How to know if a guest would like to have more coffee?

After serving coffee for the first time the guest can ask for more only by holding his empty 'finjan' a little bit high without shaking it, but if the 'finjan' was shaken this is a sign which means that the guest doesn't want more coffee.

### What meanings does coffee have?

1. The first "finjan" which is called "finjan al Heif" should be sipped by the host. In the past this was done to assure the guest that the coffee is not poisoned but now it is only a tradition.
2. The second "finjan" which is called "finjan al Deif" should be served to the guest (Deif means guest) to honour him and greet him. And this one should be taken by the guest.
3. The third "finjan" which is called "finjan al keif" is optional meaning that the guest can take it or not.
4. The fourth "finjan" which is called "finjan al Seif" (Seif means sword) means that if the guests takes it he is obliged to support the host in wars and troubles. "finjan al seif" is considered a contract between the tribes. The guest may leave this "finjan" and not take it. Nowadays this is not done.
5. There is also "finjan Al-fares" (Fares means knight). That was served in the past and not now. If an old man, woman or the "Sheikh" of the tribe (Sheikh means head) had vengeance and couldn't take his own back because of age or other reasons then the tribe gathers and a "finjan" of coffee was poured waiting for someone to sip it. The one who sips it is the knight who will take revenge and he can't come back to the tribe unless he gets proof that he achieved the mission.

### When is coffee served?

So many Jordanian and Arab families serve plain coffee on daily bases but it should be served

1. In weddings, holy occasions like Christmas, Easter, Fiter and Adha etc ...
2. At funerals.
3. At reconciliations between families or tribes.
4. In many different personal occasions.

Ghada Al-Asmar  
Jordan

Faten, a Palestinian Delegation Leader, says:

In Palestine, fatoush is the main dish for breaking the Ramadan fast (the Iftar). It looks like salad, but it's not salad. Each and every family can have fatoush because it's cheap—everybody can afford it, whether they are rich or poor. It contains very small pieces of vegetables—tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, mint, radish, onions, parsley, garlic—whatever vegetables we have in the house. We add toasted bread. That makes it different from other Arabic salads. For the dressing, we add vinegar, olive oil, salt, and spices like allspice. We start our breaking of the fast with fatoush because it is easy on an empty stomach.

## Ghoogni (Cholay) South Asia

Aeshna, Counselor  
(2007, 2008)

This is a Bengali/Bangladesh version of an Indian dish called Cholay (we call it Ghoogni). This particular recipe is the quick way to make it.

When my family lived in New Mexico, our south Indian family friends would make something similar, but would stew tomatoes for a long time and blend them instead of using sauce. They'd also soak dried garbanzo beans before cooking them, rather than buying cans that had already been soaked.

They were surprised at how delicious my mom's quick and easy version tasted and started using some of her techniques.

My mom doesn't really measure when she cooks, so the spices are just estimates—the proportions are more important than the amounts (equal parts of the different spices, but less turmeric) and it's important to taste a lot along the way.

1–2 *tblsp* oil  
¼ *onion*, *chopped*  
*lengthwise, in thin slices*  
⅓ *tsp* turmeric  
1 *tsp* coriander powder  
1 *tsp* chili powder  
1 *tsp* cumin powder  
1 *tsp* salt  
1 *can* garbanzo beans or chickpeas  
½ *cup* plain tomato sauce  
¾ *cup* water  
7–8 *stems* of *chopped* cilantro  
¼ *of* potato, *cubed* (optional)

1. Heat oil in a saucepan. Cook onion over medium heat. When onion is finished cooking, add turmeric, coriander, chili powder, cumin, and salt.

2. Chop ¼ potato in cubes, cook with spices. Add about 2 *tblsp* of water, cover pan. (If without potatoes, cook until water evaporates.)

Fayth, a Seeds of Peace staff member, says:

*For many Americans, food is a link to our heritage. Preparing the meals our parents and grandparents made connects us to family traditions, even if those traditions span continents and entirely different ways of life.*

*As an Italian American, making lasagna helps me to remember the values my grandmother taught me when she passed down this recipe.*

*Lasagna is a hearty dish meant to be enjoyed when an entire family sits down at the table together.*

*Italians value family above all else, and coming together for a large meal is an important part of daily life.*

*Family and friends gather over rich, flavorful food to laugh and talk loudly for hours; growing up, my house was often filled with people, joyful noise, and the smell of my grandmother's cooking.*

*In the US, this tradition can be hard to maintain, but cooking lasagna reminds me of what is truly important in life: having great food and being able to share it with friends and family.*

*It helps me to keep alive the heritage and values that set me apart from other Americans, and it helps me pass them on to my three children, who now love to help me make lasagna.*

Zehava, an Israeli Delegation Leader, says:

*Jewish history is so long and so complicated. It sometimes creates amazing situations and unbelievable events.*

*My parents were born in the east of the Diaspora, my mother in Iran and my father in Iraq. They built their family in Iran. They had a good life in a place with good relationships between Jews and Muslims—they were good neighbors.*

*My father's sister got married to a strict husband. One day when she cooked food that he didn't like, he hit her, so she took her stuff and left her house.*

*Later, she married a Muslim man who was her lover. They had a good life and very beautiful children. In the beginning, my father's Jewish family cut their relationship with her, but after some time they started to communicate again. When my family decided to come to Israel in 1950, they left my father's sister in Iran with her family.*

*After many years, in 1966, my grandfather suddenly received a strange letter in English from the United States. Abdullah, my aunt's son, had arrived in America as a worker with the Iranian Navy. He had then decided to locate his mother's family because she missed them very much.*

*Now Abdullah and his wife and children live in San Diego, in California.*

*We have very good relationships with my aunt and her Muslim family.*

3. When potatoes are almost completely tender, add the garbanzo beans and stir.

4. Add ½ *cup* tomato sauce and ¾ *cup* water. Stir.

5. Add 1 *tsp* sugar (or to taste) and 7–8 *stems* of *chopped* cilantro. Stir.

6. Cover, and let cook on low-medium heat for 5–10 minutes (until it has thickened).

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## Lasagna (Italy/US)

Fayth, Seeds of Peace Staff

1 *lb* *sweet* Italian sausage  
(if you like hot sausage you can add about ½ *lb*, too)

1 *lb* lean ground beef

½ *cup* minced onion

4 *cloves* garlic, crushed

2 *cans* (28 *oz.*) crushed tomatoes

2 *cans* (6 *oz.*) tomato paste

1 *can* (28 *oz.*) tomato puree

2 *tblsp* olive oil

½ *cup* water

1 *tsp* white sugar

a *handful* of fresh basil or

1½ *tsps* dried basil leaves

½ *tsp* fennel seeds

1 *tsp.* Italian seasoning

1 *tsp* salt

¼ *tsp* ground black pepper

4 *tblsp* *chopped* fresh parsley

12 *lasagna* noodles

16 *oz* ricotta cheese

½ *tsp* salt

2 *lbs* mozzarella cheese,

*diced*

¾ *cup* *grated* parmesan

*cheese*

1. In a frying pan, cook sausage and ground beef until browned.

2. In a small frying pan, sauté onion and garlic over medium heat until they are transparent.

3. In a large stockpot, add the meat and the onion/garlic mixture. Stir in crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, tomato puree, and water. Season with sugar, basil, fennel seeds, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, and 2 *tblsp* parsley.

4. Simmer, covered, for about 4 hours, stirring occasionally.

5. Bring a large pot of

lightly salted water to a boil. Cook lasagna noodles in boiling water for 8 to 10 minutes (Do not over-cook the noodles!). Drain noodles, and rinse with cold water.

6. In a mixing bowl, combine ricotta cheese and remaining parsley.

7. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

8. To assemble, spread about ¾ cup of the meat sauce in the bottom of a deep 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange 4 noodles lengthwise over meat sauce. Spread some meat sauce over this and then put small amounts of the ricotta cheese mixture on parts of the noodles. Top with a few handfuls of mozzarella cheese.

9. Repeat this two more times so that you have a total of three layers.

10. On the top of the last layer you will sprinkle it with ¼ cup Parmesan cheese. Cover loosely with foil.

11. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Remove foil, and bake an additional 10 minutes (until you see that all the cheese has melted).

Cool for 15 minutes before serving.

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## Cauliflower with Tahini

Eyal, Seeds of Peace Staff

Every Friday noon since I was a child my mother would cook this dish for me. You can make it at home, or you can find it at some Arab restaurants.

It's very yummy!

*1 small cauliflower, broken into small pieces*  
*2 garlic cloves, chopped*  
*half cup tahini*  
*1 tsp ground cumin*  
*1 lemon*  
*salt, pepper, paprika*  
*chopped parsley*

1. Cook the cauliflower by steaming/boiling until just tender. Do not overcook.

# Recipe for peace

by Rabbi Nava Hefetz

**In early June, I participated in a three-day meeting for Palestinian and Israeli educators. We met in Tiberius under the auspices of Seeds of Peace.**

As one who participated in many, many meetings like this, I came with almost no expectations. I was ready to hear again about the suffering of the Palestinian people and how much the Israelis are to blame for it. I was sure that again we will only speak. But when desperation is widespread, there is no choice but to continue working, and go to the meeting even when it is in Tiberius.

We must keep on trying. My inspiration came from what Berl Katzenelson said when there was a lot of public desperation at the end of the 1920s: "Give us individuals! Give us desperate people! Give us individuals who are not idle and do not abandon the battle, and give us desperate people who invest their desperation in building, one building!" In the word desperation (*Yeush* in Hebrew) we also find the word man (*Ish*) and the verb to man (*Leayesh*).

I came to the meeting with the desperation of me and my colleagues in the background. Desperation touched desperation, and desperation approached desperation, and the first time in a long time there was a true meeting. Not a meeting for blaming each other, not a meeting of weak and strong, but a meeting of educators who want to change the situation, who want to work together for a better future for our children.

During the meeting we dealt with different issues: violence at schools, how to educate for multiculturalism, how to support the young who participate in meetings and are ostracized by their communities; how to encourage human rights education as a way to change extreme worldviews.

One interesting issue that Palestinian participants brought up was how to deal with the way things are represented in the media to the young people. They said they had great difficulties in dealing with this issue, especially during the war in Gaza.

We came out of this Tiberius meeting with new mutual projects. We scheduled another meeting in August to focus on the role of the media in the conflict. We left Tiberius feeling that a few desperate people with awareness could bring about change in their societies.

We came out of the meeting with a feeling that desperate people could bring hope.

*Rabbi Nava Hefetz is Director of the Education Department Rabbis for Human Rights. Over the last year and a half, she has participated in Seeds of Peace cross-border educators' workshops in Tiberius and Wadi Rum.*

Drain and set aside.

2. Mix the garlic with the tahini, cumin and lemon juice. Season with salt, pepper.

3. At this point the mixture is a dense, thick paste. Add a little water until the mixture is creamy, then mix with the cauliflower.

4. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

5. At serving time, garnish with paprika and chopped parsley.

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## Guacamole (Mexico)

Dan, Counselor 2004

Originally from Mexico, guacamole is an avocado dip and side dish that has become very popular across the globe.

The campers in my bunk made this dish as part of a cooking contest. And ... we came in second place! Not bad for a group of 14- to 16-year-old boys.

Part of what I like about guacamole is that everyone has their own set of ingredients they like to add to the mix.

Also, because the ingredients are naturally so variable, the finished product ends up a bit different every time.

That said, this recipe is a traditional one guaranteed to please your guests.

*2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted, and roughly chopped*  
*½ cup red onion, minced*  
*1-2 chiles, stems and seeds removed, minced*  
*4 tbsp cilantro, chopped*  
*4 tbsp of fresh lime juice*  
*salt, black pepper, to taste*  
*½ ripe tomato, seeds and pulp removed, chopped*  
*tortilla chips*

1. In mixing bowl, add avocado, tomato, onion, cilantro, lime, and lightly mash.

2. Add chili, salt, and pepper to taste.

3. Cover with plastic and refrigerate until ready, then serve with chips.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever does.”

MARGARET MEAD