



SEEDS of PEACE

Empowering Leaders of the Next Generation

# BULLETIN

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## Reaching Out Region by Region

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At Seeds of Peace, it is essential to maintain and nurture the momentum and learning that results from our young "Seeds" summer camp experience. To that end, the last few months have witnessed some important regional programs in both the Middle East and South Asia.

### In the Middle East

This fall and winter, Seeds have shared holidays, engaged in political dialogue, trained in facilitation, made presentations at schools and in local and international communities, and published a new issue of *The Olive Branch*, the youth magazine written, edited and produced by Seeds of Peace graduates. Some other key highlights from the past few months at the Center are:

- With the Jewish holidays of Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Rosh Hashanah coinciding with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Seeds shared holiday traditions along with their friends from other faiths. Arab and Jewish Israelis opened their homes to fellow Seeds, feasted on special meals, and exchanged holiday customs.

- Hosted by the municipality of Badalona, Spain and their local basketball team, Israeli and Palestinian Seeds traveled to Spain for *Dialogues for Peace*, where Seeds not only played basketball but engaged in dialogue alongside host community members about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the conflict between Catalonia and Spain.



- Expanding into the greater community around the Center for Coexistence, Seeds of Peace organized a weekly dialogue group composed of Palestinian and Israeli students from Al-Quds University and Hebrew University. The group is being monitored, recorded, and watched by 15 graduate Seeds who are using this experience to gain advanced facilitation skills.

- In December, as part of the Seeds of Peace Graduate Program, a 2-day political seminar was held with over 40 Israeli Seeds participating. Guest speakers engaged in discussions with the Seeds focusing on the role of politics and its intersection with Israeli media, economics and religion. *This program was made possible by Dr. Allen Hyman.*

### In South Asia

In January, Seeds of Peace held its first-ever South Asia Regional Conference for almost 100 Indian, Pakistani and Afghan Seeds and adult educators. Held in Karjat, India, this 4-day workshop taught the Seeds and teachers about dealing with conflicts and encouraged them to apply their training to dialogue across national divides.

The overall theme, *Creative Conversations: Building Bridges*, focused on strengthening skills, knowledge and attitudes related to the issues that divide and unite South Asian Seeds and educators. Together and separately, the youth and educators learned about culturally suitable dialogue models, analyzed strategies that support conflict transformation, practiced and applied listening and speaking skills, and assessed ways to keep dialogue channels open, in spite of potentially contentious issues. *This conference was largely supported through a grant from the Department of State, Bureau for Education and Cultural Affairs.*

## The Best Highlights

- The Education Program held a 3-day **Social Entrepreneurship Seminar** for 40 Seeds Scholars from the Middle East, South Asia, and the Balkans focusing on how corporations, foundations, non-profits, and individuals are globally making a difference and creating positive change. At the conference, Seeds engaged, networked, and partnered with each other on socially-conscious projects for their campuses, local communities, and home countries. *This program was supported by a grant from Elihu Leifer made in memory of Rabbi Daniel Leifer.*

- The Delegation Leaders Program launched the **Seeds Café**, a new adult initiative bringing together Palestinians and Israelis through art and culture. These social evenings each month support personal exchanges that counteract stereotyping and fears of the other. The event provides Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, and Christians with the supportive forum for continuous dialogue and exchange. *This program was supported through a grant from USAID, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.*

- Through its network of educators in Gaza, the Delegation Leaders Program launched an initiative for teachers in Gaza called **Toward Tolerance and Peaceful Society**, a course that emphasizes the value of peace and tolerance and how to incorporate these issues within classrooms and communities. *This program was supported through a grant from USAID, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.*



Photo by World Economic Forum/swiss-image.ch

- Addressing world leaders at the **World Economic Forum** in Davos, Switzerland, former President Bill Clinton recognized Seeds of Peace and its people-to-people programs as one of the critical ways to better understand the other side.

- Thanks to **ExxonMobil**, Seeds of Peace ran a public service announcement during the holiday season in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* which highlighted older program graduates and proclaimed "The story from the Middle East that is not being told."