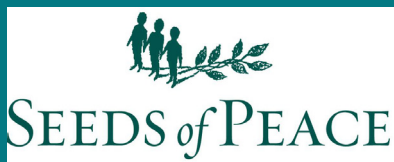


# *Palestinian and Israeli Educators: What Are the Opportunities and Challenges in Leading/Guiding our Children to a Better Future?*



June 4-7, 2009



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Tiberius, Israel

# Introduction



In early June, 2009, a remarkable group of Palestinian and Israeli educators gathered at the Caesar Hotel in Tiberius, a short walk from the shore. They traveled from Jenin and from Haifa, from Ramallah and from Tel Aviv, from Hebron and from Eilat to participate in a workshop, to meet friends and colleagues from the other side. This cross-border educators workshop was supported by a USAID funded set of Seeds of Peace initiatives, PROMOTING PEACE EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE IN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN CENTERS OF LEARNING (PPED).

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

The educators who gathered came with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Together they compose a unique cross-border network that grows out of the Seeds of Peace Delegation Leaders Program. Together the people who met in Tiberius are Seeds of Peace Educators, a growing circle of concern and commitment.

The largest number of those who gathered in Tiberius are Delegation Leaders, graduates of the adult program at the Seeds of Peace Camp in Otisfield, Maine. Every summer, these adult educators make the camp possible; they work with Seeds of Peace staff to support the Seeds while going through their own intense dialogue and coexistence program. Delegation Leaders represent their home communities: they embody the trust required for parents to enable their children to become part of Seeds of Peace. At camp they engage in dialogue; they participate in educational workshops; they share experience and knowledge about education; they meet with American educators; they pursue the possibilities of working with one another back at home for the values of Seeds of Peace.

Other participants in this Tiberius workshop are graduates of the set of USAID funded projects, such as the Model Schools Initiative, a program that focuses on building peaceful learning environments, on encouraging communication skills, leadership, civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding, in both Palestinian and Israeli schools. Still others are active volunteer organizers of the SOP winter and summer camps held in Jenin and Jericho (funded by USAID).

# Introduction, continued



Some participants in this workshop are graduate Seeds, young men and women who participated in the Seeds of Peace Camp as Seeds and who, as graduates of a SOP facilitation course held in Jerusalem, are now educators themselves.

Finally, a few of the Tiberius participants are the parents of Seeds. In the care of Delegation Leaders, they send their children to the SOP camp. As educators and community leaders, these parents are also SOP educators.

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

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

This booklet is a brief record of what transpired in Tiberius, in June, 2009, when these Palestinian and Israeli educators, along with their American colleagues and friends, gathered together.



To put it mildly, the current situation on the ground is not good for Palestinians and Israelis who actively listen to one another, who work together to move beyond the status quo. During such times, it is difficult to know how to move ahead. Moving forward requires bravery and leadership from everyday people, from Palestinian and Israeli educators who want something better for their children--and who have the courage to do something about it.

Meeting in Tiberius, while the hopelessness grows on both sides, is difficult. The challenge: to figure out the best ways to go forward. Because of this, the steering committee for this workshop decided to use an Open Space process. This is a democratic way to collect and share the experiences, the knowledge, the wisdom, the energy of people who work together for a common purpose. Such a process is a small example of what we need at a larger scale.

What happened in Tiberius is a small step toward a better future.



# An Invitation to Gather

May 28, 2009

Dear friends and colleagues:

Seeds of Peace invites you to participate in a unique gathering of Palestinian and Israeli educators and community leaders—Delegation Leaders, graduates of Seeds of Peace programs in the region. The meeting will take place on June 5th from 9:00- 18:00 at the Caesar Hotel in Tiberius. This is the first meeting of its kind in a long time. Using the method of Open Space you will have the chance to bring your energy, your ideas--to meet your many different interests and needs. Open Space is based on the assumption that you, the participants, know what moves you, what challenges you face, what hopes you have, what you want to talk about, what you might want to do. The daylong focus will be:

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

**מריבין פלסטיניים ואסראיליים: מאי הפירס והתחידים אמאנא לביאדה אולאדנא  
וטוהיהם למסתבל אפול?**

**לש הנווכהב/הלבוהב פירגתאהו תויגוסה מהמ: פילארשיו פיניטסלפ סיכנחמ  
רתוי בוט דיתעל ונידלי**

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

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

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

With Respect and Hope,

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



# Schedule of Events

Thursday, June 4th:

5:00-8:00 Arrivals. Check-ins.

7:00-8:30 Dinner

9:15 Welcome and Ice-Breakers (meet in the Lobby).

Friday, June 5th

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-12:30 OPEN SPACE

12:30-2:00 Lunch (and Muslim prayer time).

2:00-6:00 OPEN SPACE

7:30 Dinner (and shabbat).

Evening Relaxation/Enjoying Time Together

Saturday, June 6th

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-10:00 Morning Welcome and Team-Building Exercises.

10:00-1:00 Follow-up Discussions: 1.) How Palestinian and Israeli SOP parents and DLs can work together to support the Seeds; 2.) The next steps for the formation of the Palestinian and Israeli DL/SOP educators' committees (an opportunity to discuss the next cross-border workshop, which will take place later in the summer of 2009; 3.) How to contribute to the Olive Branch Teacher's Guide (an opportunity to support work of the Yale University Bulldogs, to schedule interviews, to provide ideas, thoughts, recipes, to solidify plans about your various ideas and projects). Break-out sessions and full community meetings to report back about what happened in the smaller groups.

1:00-2:00 Lunch

2:00-6:00 Informal discussions; a chance to use the spa.

7:00 Dinner

For those departing, the bus will leave at 8:30 (after the end of Shabbat).

Evening Relaxation; a walk; singing together.

Sunday, June 7th

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

Plans for the rest of this day will be announced. Let's make the most out of this precious time we have together. Please let the SOP staff know if we can help you in any way. If you need anything for your religious practice, please let us know: we will do the best we can to meet your needs. ENJOY!



# The Format: Open Space Technology

By Carol Daniel Kasbari



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

The rules are simple. Do you know how sometimes when you go to a conference or a meeting, the best ideas, networking, brainstorming, and deal making happen during coffee breaks? Open Space Technology is designed to simulate that natural way people find each other and share ideas in all different cultures and countries. It is also based on the understanding that there is a great amount of wisdom and experience in any gathered group of people – that we are all 'experts' and can contribute – a true democratic process. It all starts with a circle of chairs, without a pre-designed agenda. The group sets their own agenda by identifying issues and topics that have heart and meaning for them; topics for which they have passion and interest and for which they are willing to host a discussion group. Small group discussions happen throughout the day, with participants moving from group to group whenever they feel that they can no longer learn or contribute to a discussion, or when they feel drawn to another topic.

There are four simple guidelines:

1. Whoever comes is the right person: Rather than wait for the expert on a given issue, realize that

whoever is moved to come to your discussion group has been moved by their passion for the issue. The best and brightest are convening to discuss something they really care about – across departmental or hierarchal lines.

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

3. Whenever it starts is the right time: Don't wait for the some specific person to arrive; begin with whomever is drawn to the discussion.

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

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

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

# The Results: Open Space Sessions

Here are the topics that you, the educators, found worthy of discussion.



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

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

*-Discussion led by Bahya Aweida*

## The day after Gaza: Working with teenagers

Educators emphasized the importance of facilitating interaction between both sides even during times of conflict through avenues like online chats. Other possibilities are non-educational activities, like sports and colorful games, to bring kids together. We can also work with parents to widen the range of acceptable points of view, and collect letters written about experiences and have students guess whether they were written by Jewish or Palestinian kids. It is essential that we create empathy by showing examples of suffering from both sides, and develop skills by working on active listening for both sides.

*-Discussion led by Najwa Abass*

## We should believe in peace from the inside before teaching it.

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

*-Discussion led by Maysoon Jayyousi*

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

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

*-Discussion led by Manal Abbas*



# The Results: Open Space Sessions

## How do you define a “better future?”

Before we make plans to lead our children into a better future, we should decide what that better future actually is. Each person constructs a “better future” based on his or her own experiences. For some, a better future consists of the freedom to travel. Others see safety, shelter, and the feeling of belonging as the most important values. Still others envision good relations, understanding, and respect as the keys to moral progress. In any case, keep in mind that defining your goals makes it easier to work together in pursuit of a brighter future.

*-Discussion led by Walid Ghozzi*

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

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

*-Discussion led by Avivit Katz*



## Violence at schools

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

*-Discussion led by Claire and Reena*

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

As we know well, Seeds can’t flourish without a carefully cultivated environment. But when Seeds return to parents and communities stuck in pessimism and ignorant of the coexistence experience, children’s enthusiasm and inspiration are too easily extinguished. We need to allow and encourage parents to participate in similar activities as their children. This would allow the message of coexistence to spread beyond one family. Parents should be actively involved in their children’s experiences, getting updates from educators and writing letters to encourage their children. A program of “model families” to forge cross-border connections would allow communities to become gradually more comfortable with coexistence efforts and more supportive of their children.

*-Discussion led by Karen Abuzant*



# The Results: Open Space Sessions

## How do we create trust between hostile groups?

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

*-Discussion led by Menachem (Sandy) Bendelman*



## Teaching cross-cultural awareness and diversity

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

*-Discussion led by Maha Jabere*

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

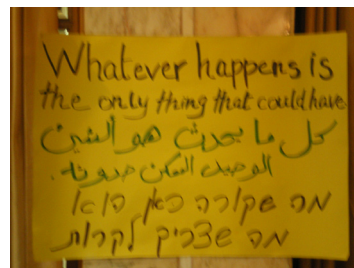
On both sides of the conflict, there exists deep-rooted fear based on the historical and present-day realities of Arab and Jewish existence. That fear can lead us to reject dialogue and resist change. Understanding and addressing these fears are essential to minimizing them. Only by this positive transformation of fear can we humanize the “other side” and move towards productive dialogue and mutual acceptance.

*-Discussion led by Myra*

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

It is essential for the global community to develop a balanced understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order for it to make a positive contribution to peace-building. Bombarded by the biased views of media, government, and the educational establishment, people are too often led to accept stereotypes blindly without pursuing their own investigation of the situation. Students should be encouraged to read primary source documents to develop their independent critical thinking skills. They should learn opposing narratives, and learn the actual teachings of different religions. Cross-cultural communication can be established through e-mail or pen-pal exchanges.

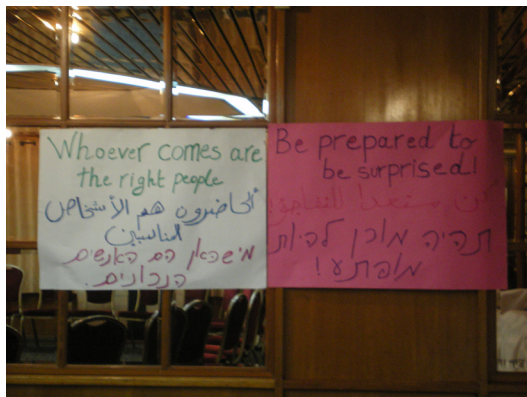
*-Discussion led by Kathleen Borschow*



## Tales of Hope Project

This discussion focused on Tali’s book, Tales of Hope. Tali presented the background of the book, and talked about her hopes and goals for the project. Natali offered the possible help of her student in building a website for the book. Maha agreed to distribute a copy to cross-border teenagers she is working with. Avivit suggested a contact to a program called “A Key to the Heart,” and Shoshana offered a connection to the children’s literature supervisor of the Ministry of Education.

*-Discussion led by Tali Kochavi*



# The Next Steps: Solidifying Plans

When the Open Space sessions had been completed, the group moved into more informal discussions that gave people the opportunity to begin solidifying ideas and forming strategies for certain key goals. One of those goals was to focus on cultivating a supportive environment for Seeds once they return home, a goal that can only be achieved if parents become more involved in the Seeds of Peace process. Below is a summary of the discussion in which parents and educators shared their ideas on strengthening support for Seeds within their own homes.

## Parent Partnerships

How can we provide Seeds parents with sufficient preparation and Seeds participants with sufficient support both pre- and post-camp? The overall consensus of this discussion was that parents should be more involved in supporting and understanding the changes in their children after they return from camp, and also be more informed about their children's progress at camp and the Seeds of Peace process. While some passionately stated that parental involvement should be mandatory in order for a student to become a Seed, others recognized the logistical difficulties in bringing parents from throughout Israel and the West Bank together. For instance, a hypothetical example was presented of the difficulty for a mother of nine in Hebron to travel to Ramallah, let alone Jerusalem—just to sign a form. Furthermore, several Palestinian Delegation Leaders observed that there is a greater lack of information and preparation on the Palestinian side than on the Israeli side.

Another important concern is that camp is a one-time experience that does not succeed in generating lasting change in Seeds' ideas about the conflict. However, camp is neither the beginning nor the end of the process; it is the culmination. Although all agreed, one Palestinian Delegation Leader challenged that it is a struggle for Palestinian Seeds to return home

after a blissful few weeks at camp—back to the same conflict, and with very little support from parents and



peers. She said that she keeps in touch with a handful of Seeds, and they reach out to her when they need to vent to someone who will understand; she suggests that the responsibility for supporting the Seeds lies not only with their parents, but perhaps even more deeply with the Delegation Leaders. Other suggestions included setting up times at which Seeds could call their parents from camp; planning one day of pre-camp debriefing, seminars, and firsthand stories from Seeds for all parents to attend; creating a cross-cultural connection for parents, for example through letters from Israeli Seeds to Palestinian mothers describing the wonderful relationship forged with their children, and vice versa; separate meetings in particular regions to overcome the travel difficulties; and having parents chaperone certain events.

As one educator eloquently described, Seeds cannot remain Seeds; they must be planted, grow, and spread into fields and forests.

*-Discussion led by Karen Abuzant*



# Perspectives on the Workshop

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

## Invaluable Inspiration

By Jason Kim



Before coming to Israel, I had only read about the Arab-Israeli conflict in textbooks and academic journals. As an American university student, I became interested in the conflict and had taken several classes that related to the conflict, namely a course entitled “Religious Dimensions in the Middle East Peace Process.” To learn even more about the conflict, I also followed the news periodically, and like most of my peers, I watched the recent conflict in Gaza on CNN from the comfort of my dorm room.

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

After attending the Seeds of Peace conference in Tiberius, however, I have found that I know close to nothing about the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is true that I am familiar with many of the facts; I have learned about the U.N. partition plan of 1948, the 1967 war, and the Oslo accords. And yet, before I came to Israel and before I attended the conference, I was unfamiliar with the conflict’s human aspect; I did not fully comprehend that the conflict had taken a toll on the personal lives of countless Israelis and Palestinians and that it was still having a profound impact on their lives today.

By meeting Seeds of Peace educators and human rights activists, I am beginning to understand the conflict in a different light, one that stretches beyond the classroom, the textbooks, the newspapers, and the

television. I now understand that beneath all the political discourse, the scholarly articles, and the classroom discussions lay real people.

Though I have learned about the conflict at school, I never thought that I would actually meet people that have been directly affected by the conflict. At the conference, however, I met amazing people such as Karen Abuzant and Faisal Jaradat, who have lived in the West Bank, under military occupation, for many years. While Abuzant spoke of the financial hardships she experienced during the Second Intifada, Jaradat voiced concern of the violence amongst students in his all boys school, a violence that he says is directly linked to the tragedies that many of his pupils have experienced due to the conflict. I also met amazing people such as Rabbi Nava Hefetz, who believes that we must teach young Israelis and Palestinians to respect the basic human rights, namely the right to life, of “the other.”

These are only a few of the amazing people that I met at the conference; there were many others who had interesting, personal stories that were shaped



by the conflict. Most importantly, however, the people at the conference represented both the Palestinian cause as well as that of the Israelis. Though they often held opposing views, the participants of the conference were friends, and they had all come to Tiberius, so that their children might one day live in peace. Of course, there were arguments during the discussions between persons of different views; some participants

# Perspectives on the Workshop

even felt offended by the comments of others. And yet, at the end of the day, they were willing to listen to one another and to try and understand the other's point of view. What's more, they were all united by the common cause of bringing peace to their children. Ultimately, their example of cooperation and understanding has demonstrated to me that peace among Israelis and Palestinians is possible.

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

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

## An Education in Real-World Hope By Ben Mueller



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

I used to think of the world of ideas and the world of real people as distinct and incompatible. Sure, I read in the history books about how certain philosophical proposals found expression in various times and places. But I thought that the world of here and now was too imperfect and confusing for that kind of application. I would have to choose between the

ivory tower of ideas and the dirty trenches of real life, as I saw it.

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



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



# Perspectives on the Workshop

## The Fruits of Open Space Technology

By Jessica Marx



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps, and hopefully, one day this will be true for this country and all of its citizens.



# *“Three Words Each:” A Collaborative Final Story*

As a conclusion to this wonderful weekend in Tiberius, everybody sat around a circle to reflect on what had been accomplished and how to move forward. We decided to create a collaborative final story. Each person added three words and then passed the story on to the next person, who continued right where the last person left off. What came out was inspiring, if occasionally rambling:

When I came here, I was amazed, and I was very happy, excited, and hopeful. I met interesting people whom I appreciate very much because I met some very inspiring educators whom I had the privilege to laugh with. Sandreen, Maisoon, and all of you, we sang songs of happy birthday and happy future for the children that you will lead/guide to a better future where we will hopefully live and flourish and inspire and encourage for a better media understanding for our Seeds of Peace. Hopefully, it will succeed by implementing very good plans. So beware to continue and not just to talk. Let's do!



# *Reactions From the Educators*

The conference was quite great. It brought some of us together again. The subjects that were discussed in the conference were quite interesting especially the media subject which is going to be continued in August. The way of holding the conference was good. Thank you!

*-Walid Ghozzi, Ramallah*

During the last year I had the honor and mostly the pleasure to take part in several events organized by “Seeds of Peace.” This one was a bit more “open” than the other ones, using the “open space” technique. In a time perspective I see that my own educational project – “Tales of Hope”, has come a long way forward lately, and I can definitely attribute it to my involvement in “Seeds of Peace” in general and to the Tiberias workshop in particular. First of all, after presenting my project at an educator forum organized by SOP I felt some responsibility to report on my project’s progress and secondly, I made some very good connections with people during the Tiberias workshop and thanks to some of those wonderful people my project is really “happening” right now, which makes me very happy.

So out of my own experience I can definitely say I got a lot out of this weekend, and not only from the beautiful view and the hot tubs...And I’m really looking forward to the next cross border workshop!

*-Tali Kochavi, Haifa*



After a very disheartening period in the conflict, the Tiberias cross-border seminar refreshed my spirit and renewed my commitment toward improving cross-border understanding and communication. To finally experience a face to face meeting with people whom I share similar thoughts, concerns and interests with gave me the fortitude to carry-on with my work. Moreover, these similarities made me feel welcomed, appreciated and empowered in this gathering.

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

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

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

*-Karen AbuZant, Tulkarem*

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## Cultivating the Environment for Seeds to Flourish