

THE
OLIVE BRANCH

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Teacher's Guide

The Educators' Magazine
of Seeds of Peace
International



Special Issue: "Expressive Arts;
Educational Transformations"

from the editor

DANIEL NOAH MOSES

I WILL START BY ASKING YOU, dear reader, to put aside any talk of “peace.” I ask you to refrain from such terms as “conflict resolution.” I ask you to stop trying to “resolve” conflict as if it is a puzzle: the pieces don’t fit.

Peace in any true sense is absurdly far away: the ethnic, national and religious conflicts that are aflame in our world—in the Middle East, in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, in the United States, for example—will keep burning after we are gone.

And yet the old story about the tortoise and the hare has relevance for those of us who work actively to create a world that does not yet exist. From far away, war can seem exciting. It grabs the attention of newscasters, politicians, and pundits. The tortoise plods along, mostly unnoticed.

Instead of waiting or even working for a “resolution,” let’s keep our eyes focused on what is closer at hand.

Let’s talk about how we can create opportunities to engage in the most productive kinds of conflict possible.

Let’s give people the chance to fight—with their very presence as human beings; with words; with arguments; with evidence and with stories that reflect their perspectives, their experiences, the needs that they (we) have if they (we) are to flourish in this world.

It is critical to understand both the limitations and the potential of Seeds of Peace. The organization contains conflict. It is a greenhouse for “public spheres,” where individuals engage directly with one another on matters of common concern. It creates safe environments to unveil—to unleash—conflict.

At the same time, Seeds of Peace equips people with experiences and skills to engage in conflict that is productive—that transforms the conflict into something that remains conflict but at the same time becomes something else.

This something else sparks the imagination; it connects us to a common humanity while giving us a

tangible sense of the radical gaps between us; it encourages respect even with these gaps; it opens horizons and empowers us to explore possibilities; it empowers us to live up to the various values that we claim to uphold.

At the end of each session at the Seeds of Peace International Camp, Bobbie Gottschalk, the organization’s co-founder, distributes turtle necklaces to second year Seeds (campers). On the last morning, the buses wait while the Seeds, Delegation Leaders (educators), and Seeds of Peace staff bid goodbye. If we bottle the tears that have fallen on such days, we might have enough to turn Pleasant Lake into an inland sea. And then the buses roll away.

When graduates of our youth and adult programs return home, they continue to be in conflict with one another. I know many people from different “sides” who went to Camp 10 years ago or more: I see them arguing about fundamental issues. And yet their conflict has become a positive relationship of mutual respect and even love alongside the gaps that exist.

Camp is the beginning of a long and slow process—at a pace that a tortoise or turtle would appreciate. Beyond Camp, Seeds of Peace works in communities and across borders. We meet people where they are. We acknowledge the realities (that are in flux). Seeds of Peace offers educational opportunities. Participants in Seeds of Peace programs engage in an educational journey, an educational process. Seeds continue in Seeds of Peace programs as they go through high school and as they become adults; these programs are expanding as the Seeds themselves age.

At the same time, we offer programs for educators and community leaders of all ages so that they have opportunities to continue the mission of Seeds of Peace in their home communities.

Back home, trying to bring people together from different sides in a conflict is an exercise in the surreal. It is often disheartening and deeply sad. Although Ramallah and Tel

Aviv are within commuting distance, legal barriers and checkpoints make it extremely difficult for colleagues and friends from the different sides to meet. Gaza City and Jerusalem are also a short drive, but it is easier to go from either place to China than to visit one another. Residents of the West Bank city of Tulkarem can sit on their rooftops and smell the nearby Mediterranean Sea; they cannot get to the beach without special permission; it is against Israeli law for Israelis on the other side to visit Tulkarem. Indians and Pakistanis live across far greater physical distances. But here, too, conflict transfigures the physical geography and limits what is possible to do in everyday life.

Alongside the tangible obstacles are the challenges of emotional and psychological geography, with their own barriers that keep people from reaching beyond the familiar and seemingly safe. Such barriers are built from heavy blocks of public opinion, of stereotyping, misunderstanding, ignorance, lack of imagination and loss of hope. By lack of imagination, I mean an uncritical acceptance of the status quo, a closing off to “the other,” a closing off to the possibilities for positive change.

So the hare gets the attention, while the tortoise (like the turtle) plods along. To create the change that they want to see, people at some point must work through politics. *Politics are essential. But politics alone are not enough. The assumption behind Seeds of Peace is that education is at the heart of any hopes we might harbor for a more humane future, for a more just future, for a future where people from different sides of conflict can live in dignity, and for a future where people have a greater chance to flourish.* We have not spoken at all about the specifics of such a future: that becomes a political question. Here we are in the realm of values, of skills, of education that equips us to overcome obstacles—to persevere.

You are now reading the introduction to the fifth *Olive Branch Teacher’s Guide*. This magazine is an

An introduction to Seeds of Peace terms

SEED: A Seed is a graduate of the Seeds of Peace program for youth at the Seeds of Peace International Camp in the United States.

GRADUATE SEED: A Seed of more than 22 years of age.

DELEGATION LEADER (DL): An educator or community leader who has led a delegation of Seeds to the Camp. DLs initiate programs for educators and for youth in their home communities and across borders.

EDUCATORS who participate in these outreach projects for educators are NOT DLs, but they are Seeds of Peace Educators. For this reason, what was once the Delegation Leaders Program has expanded to become Seeds of Peace Educator Programs.

Over the last years, Seeds of Peace has created “educator courses” at the Camp; participants in these courses do NOT bring Seeds. They come as educators with a focus on a specific theme, such as the arts (2012) or the learning and teaching of the past (2013). These graduates of the Seeds of Peace Educator sessions at Camp also become part of the network of Seeds of Peace Educators.

COUNSELORS: The people who work with the Seeds at the Camp. Most are in their 20s. At Camp, they are educators. Beyond Camp, many become educators. Many pursue graduate degrees in education, in conflict transformation, and in related fields.

FACILITATORS: Professionals who create the safe process of dialogue. Many of the facilitators for the Seeds are graduates of an intensive Seeds of Peace facilitation program in Jerusalem. Delegation Leaders have their own facilitators. Peggy and Tarek, who contribute an article to this issue of *The Guide*, are DL facilitators.

A **SEEDS OF PEACE EDUCATOR** in the broadest sense is an educator who is somehow part of our network, as a presenter, as a participant, as an ally in this difficult, important, and wonderful work.

attempt to collect and disseminate reflections, materials, and tools by educators who are doing the work of Seeds of Peace. These educators are graduates of Seeds of Peace Educator Programs at Camp and in the regions in which we work.

Seeds of Peace Educators—Afghans, Americans, Egyptians, Indians, Israelis, Jordanians, Pakistanis, Palestinians and others—cultivate the environment, so that seeds of respect, dignity, and even peace can survive and flourish in environments that are often hostile.

This magazine is part of an evolving vision. Our objective is to strengthen and enlarge the network of educators—in the broadest sense—who are working in their communities and across borders for the kinds of education reflected in these pages.

This magazine is made possible by support from USAID as part of “On Common Ground,” a set of initiatives for youth and for educators.

The magazine includes a section

about the Seeds of Peace Camp experience—the Delegation Leader program and the recent educator course focused on the arts. It includes material about projects that we are doing beyond Camp. It includes reflections from Educator Programs graduates; from counselors, from facilitators, from educators who are part of a large and growing network. It includes tools and resources that we hope you will put to good use. If you like what you see, please get in touch. Please explore ways to get involved with Seeds of Peace or with other organizations that you believe can make the difference that you want to make.

This is only one step among many. We will continue to update our website. We are planning for new programs; we will have a new *Teacher’s Guide* next year. The tortoise walks slowly, but, *Inshallah*, she gets to where she wants to go.

The landscape is treacherous. We will make the road by walking together ...

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

big picture

LIGHT A CANDLE

a Board Member's perspective on Normalization

By Matt Courey

"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." Confucius, Ancient Chinese Philosopher

I recently read the quote above while visiting the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. Weeks later, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the European Union in recognition of the 50 years of relative peace that Europe has seen since its formation.

On Facebook, many friends disagreed viscerally with the choice. Why give the award to the EU—a governmental administration based in a peaceful northern European city that hasn't seen conflict in generations? Why not give it to a more worthy grassroots organization or to inspiring individuals who put their lives on the line to make the world a more peaceful place?

The answer to these complex questions offers key lessons for many of us at Seeds of Peace on several levels. It also provides a good opportunity to address the Normalization Argument: that Seeds of Peace dialogue programs affirm and validate the status quo.

Conclusion 1:

Many of us working for a more peaceful future get a little too caught up in what *seems right* in theory, or what *feels right* to our sense of right and wrong. *Instead, we should focus on what has in the past and continues in the present to functionally create change and transform conflict.* The European Union is an excellent example.

Conclusion 2:

The Seeds of Peace model of dialogue and leadership development emphasizes key elements of the foundation of change seen in other episodes of conflict transformation. Even a brief assessment of other conflicts will demonstrate that those elements of our program most attacked by the Normalization Argument are clearly and in every case the most basic prerequisite for



creating change:

- Actively respecting each other's culture as the backbone to functional communication.
- Functional cross border communication to coordinate efforts to create change.
- Understanding the structure of power and influence in each other's societies to optimize all efforts meant to create change.

PART 1: WHY THE EUROPEAN UNION IS A WORTHY RECIPIENT

Another Ancient Chinese proverb says, "The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their right names." There has been a lot of press in the last couple years about the possible breakup of the Eurozone. I run a trading desk at a large Swiss bank and I have watched the current crisis unfold day after day, hour after hour since it began. But the Eurozone (the 17 countries that share a currency) is not the same thing as the EU.

In short, the EU was a political project created in the wake of World War II and the series of similar conflicts that preceded it. Its formation created a platform for social and cultural exchange on a scale previously unseen on the planet.

At the center of the EU from the beginning are France and Germany—two countries that suffered increasingly devastating wars in 1870, 1914 and 1939. On paper, the EU started in the form of an economic customs union, but in practice it meant exchange programs, cultural exchanges, and a new respect for the application of language: after the formation of the EU the second language in France became German, and in Germany the second language became French. This was previously not the case.

Exchange programs on a massive scale were carried out to introduce kids from one country to families in the other. The human infrastructure behind 50 years of peace in the most violent continent of the last century was built in this fashion, at the core of the European Union.

I have lived in Europe for 10 years now and during this time (as well as my first six months in France in 2000) I have heard, time after time, from the generation that lived through the formation of the EU, of the importance of this world-changing episode of conflict transformation.

I would go so far as to say this: *because* the European Union seems

*“Imagination is not a talent of some men
but is the health of every man.”*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



like such a unexciting choice for the Nobel Peace Prize, it deserves it. Keeping the peace for 50 years is by its nature uneventful and therefore “boring.” Because Europe is peaceful, there are, by definition, countless lessons to learn from how it came to be this way. It starts with the EU, because peace in Europe did not take shape until the two countries at the core of countless death and destruction engaged in Seeds of Peace-like programs on a massive scale.

The European Union is one of the world’s best examples of a peace process that has worked and withstood the test of time. It is not glamorous, it does not involve inspiring or famous people on the front lines of conflict doing dangerous humanitarian work, it is not an organization that high school students volunteer for and dream about working for. *But it has worked.*

As advocates for a more peaceful future, we sometimes ignore what works in favor of what feels right. At Seeds of Peace, we need to devote our energies to conflict transformation that works. Understanding and emulating successful initiatives like the European Union is essential to what we do.

PART 2: WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE NORMALIZATION ARGUMENT?

Since the Second *Intifada* effectively ended collective belief in the Oslo Accords, Seeds of Peace graduates in the West Bank and Gaza have been attacked by friends, family, and others for “normalizing” with Israelis. In my travels to see my campers there, I have borne witness to these discussions.

The Normalization Argument is, in this context, the assertion that by getting to know Israelis and having dialogue with them, Palestinians are effectively accepting the status quo—especially the Israeli Occupation—as acceptable, normal, and not in need of change. Therefore, says the argument, no Palestinian should engage in dialogue UNTIL Palestinians are granted equal rights, UNTIL the Occupation is over, UNTIL the reality on the ground suggests that Palestinians are indeed equals with Israelis. Then, goes the argument, and only then, can we sit down and talk.

I am an Arab American, and I am particularly familiar with these arguments because I hear them all

the time as well, when I do Seeds of Peace outreach into my community.

I can see how the Normalization Argument works on a theoretical or a moral basis. For many people, it *feels* like the right argument. It *feels* inappropriate for one occupied nation to send young people to represent them and talk to young people from the occupying nation in an idyllic setting which seems to completely ignore the reality on the ground.

The problem is that the Normalization Argument ignores empirical evidence. It is impractical. It is incorrect. There are two key areas where it fails.

First, the argument suggests that Palestinian Seeds who go to Camp return home feeling more accepting of the Occupation. In 10 years with the organization, I have yet to meet a single Palestinian Seed returning from Camp with views any more accepting of the Occupation than when they arrived.

When my fellow Arab Americans make the argument, I have the ultimate response: on the spot, I call one of my Palestinian campers and put them on the phone with whom-ever I’m talking to. Very quickly, this

exercise (of dialogue, I add) quickly negates any notion that Palestinians who go to Seeds of Peace are weak, have turned against their own people, are less inclined to fight for equal rights, or are in any other way less motivated to work to end the Occupation. Palestinian Seeds are articulate, well-educated, inspired—and inspiring.

The second critical way in which the Normalization Argument fails is how it ignores historical precedent. War is as old as history, and peace is too. History cannot provide a specific road map to end conflict in the Middle East, but it is filled with examples that demonstrate the supreme necessity of purposeful dialogue at all levels of peacemaking.

Take one example from the life of Nelson Mandela. While in jail, Mandela started learning about Afrikaner culture and language. Nearly every one of his fellow prison inmates, who had until that point considered him wise and learned, were completely against this. His friends made the Normalization Argument—how can you go learn the enemy's language and speak to him as an equal while ignoring the reality on the ground?

Mandela, of course, was learning Afrikaner culture and language to strengthen his platform for negotiation. In Mandela's words, "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."

It is tempting to think that Mandela is famous because of his fight against Apartheid. I disagree. Thousands of people fought Apartheid. Mandela is famous because he beat the system. He is famous because he transformed the conflict. He built a platform for dialogue by learning about his oppressor and carried out his effort for conflict transformation through that platform. It is easy to see how his fellow inmates considered his effort to learn about Afrikaner culture to be a betrayal of the cause. But they were wrong.

We need to learn from Mandela's example and others. Fortunately, we are starting this process. Last summer, 30 Seeds travelled to Ireland to learn from organizations working on the ground throughout the Troubles. The youth empowerment and joint education programs, efforts to develop a healthy private economy,

respect for each other's narratives, and leadership capable of transcending the forces of violence that played and continue to play a central role in moving beyond decades of conflict, were all presented for Seeds of Peace graduates to consider as parallel needs for their own conflicts.

I am not claiming that the underlying elements of these other conflicts are the same as the modern day conflict in the Middle East. But I choose to look at the violent clashing of narratives, nationalities, ethnic or religious identities that has peppered the history of mankind as a library of lessons for us to learn from.

I look at the battle for civil rights in the United States over the last century and conclude that it would not have been possible without blacks and whites working together at all levels of society: from policy-makers in Washington to groups of mixed-race activists like the Freedom Riders who rode buses through the segregated south in the early 1960s.

Take the time to learn the details of these episodes of history—they teach us that elements from both "sides" of a conflict need to work together. These lessons are already playing out, in places like Sheikh Jarrah, Budrus, and Bi'lin. These efforts are not yet on the scale necessary to transform the conflict, but the parallels in history are unmistakable.

Seeds of Peace recognizes that real change requires new generations of leaders equipped with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and relationships necessary to transform the status quo.

The more you examine the history of conflict resolution, the clearer it becomes that dialogue and coordination across borders are necessary to advance lasting peace.

CONCLUSION

This is not to say Seeds of Peace is a success yet. But our critics can be broadly categorized in two groups and they should be addressed separately.

Critics who think our entire platform of dialogue is equivalent to normalization need to examine the history of conflict resolution. Rather than further entrenching or normalizing the status quo, Seeds of Peace graduates—both Palestinians and Israelis—are actively working to change it—and it is the experiences

they have engaging in dialogue that inspire them to do so. These critics should consider the possibility that attacking dialogue programs which are essential to creating change is in itself a form of normalization.

Other critics simply believe that Seeds of Peace needs to do a better, more effective, and larger scale effort to promote the level of dialogue that can facilitate positive change.

These critics should be encouraged, but should heed Confucius's words above—it's not enough to identify our weaknesses. Suggest alternative approaches and help us evolve as an organization and as a community. In fact, I am a Seeds of Peace Board Member and I consider myself part of this group.

Walking around the Nobel Peace Center and learning about all former winners of the Peace Prize, I could not help dreaming a bit of Seeds of Peace finding our place among all of those peacemakers throughout history who have left a legacy for us to learn from.

We are all part of the great onward journey of mankind, working to save the planet and ourselves. So long as we are focused on what actually creates change, on creating the relationships, skills and experiences necessary to transform a conflict, history suggests we are on the right path.

SUGGESTED READING/ WATCHING

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THERE IS NOTHING NORMAL ABOUT IT

An Israeli Seed's perspective on Normalization

By Iddo Felsenthal

"As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend." Rabbi Yisroel Salanter (1810-1883)

There is an old Hassidic story about Rabbi Yisroel Salanter who walked the streets of his city of Kaunas in Lithuania. One night, he saw a shoemaker sitting and working with a small candle that had almost burned out. He turned to the shoemaker and said: "What are you doing? It is very late at night and the candle is almost out. Why are you still repairing shoes?"

To this, the shoemaker answered: "As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and mend."

Rabbi Salanter made it into an educational and moral motto. Reading Matt Courey's article and the quotes that accompanied it, I was reminded of this exchange between the rabbi and the shoemaker.

THREE PROBLEMS

Problem No. 1:

A Discouraging Dream

The European Union has become a kind of ideal environment that inspires different people around the globe. In Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, the economic and political success of the EU is a model or example of the way life should, and could, be. When entering the state of Maine, the welcome sign reads: "Maine—the way life should be."

For many young campers who go through the experience of Seeds of Peace International Camp in Maine, those few weeks near Pleasant Lake embody that saying. Dreams, however, can be discouraging as much as they can be inspiring.

In Israel, one of the most common sayings is that the Middle East is not Europe and that there can never be peace like there is in the EU, nor can democracies work in the same way that they do in the EU. This is one of the arguments heard against Seeds of Peace. Campers who come back from the International



Camp in Maine return to a harsh reality. In Maine, they spend all day together, eating the same food, sleeping in the same bunks, engaging in "dialogues", and participating together in the same activities.

However, when they return home, they come back to a reality where Arabs and Jews are segregated and separated.

In Maine, Palestinians and Israelis get to see each other without the threat of violence. In the region, they go back to the day-to-day threat of violence.

Experiencing the dream and then going back to reality can be very discouraging.

Problem No. 2:

Consorting with the Enemy

The Normalization Argument is heard more on the Palestinian side (and more broadly across the Arab world) than on the Israeli side. This is part of the nature of an asymmetrical conflict. However, Israeli campers and Graduates do face similar accusations.

My friends and I, and younger Israeli Seeds, are often asked how can we talk and be friends with Palestinians who are viewed by many Israelis as a threat. For many Israelis, Palestinians are not a population under occupation: they are the enemy. Years of bombings, lethal attacks, and separation have taken their toll on the way Israelis, and especially young Israelis, view the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The "global war on terror" that has falsely depicted Islam as a threat has intensified that notion. Being friends with Palestinians is considered problematic and is not necessarily a thing to be proud of.

Again, I emphasize that, because of the asymmetry of the conflict, in Israeli society there is no Normalization Argument. It is not illegitimate to meet Palestinians, but it can be considered problematic.

Problem No. 3:
Politically Tainted

A lot of Israelis think that Seeds of Peace is brainwashing youth towards left-wing views. Israeli campers who participate in Seeds of Peace programs do not become more left-wing, or more inclined towards territorial or other concessions to the Palestinians. But in some parts of Israeli society, simply meeting with Palestinians, talking to the "other side," or trying to understand their perspective, is politically tainting.

From some perspectives, whoever is willing to sit down and talk to the enemy is left-wing. If that person is willing to try to understand the other side, then he or she is even considered radical.

A Single Solution:

Continue Meeting Each Other

A dream can be discouraging. But it can also be inspiring. Having been a member of Seeds of Peace for the better part of my life, I can personally testify to the inspiration

that comes from such meetings. Whether at the Camp in Maine, or seminars in different parts of the Middle East, each meeting is as difficult as it is inspiring. In a reality where there are hardly any encounters between both sides, every encounter is a dream come true. Every meeting reminds us that reality can be different and that it is possible to change it.

This is my first answer to the Normalization Argument. There is nothing normal or normalizing in peaceful encounters between rival sides of a conflict. In a situation where Israelis and Palestinians don't talk at all, meetings and dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli teenagers or adults is not normal.

To Palestinians and others who denounce Seeds of Peace as normalization, I ask them to discover for themselves what Seeds of Peace is about. The meetings that Seeds of Peace organizes for Seeds are

not negotiations and they might not affect the political situation on the ground now, but they do have some effect on the lives of Seeds and the ones surrounding them. They change the way people think and act.

Seeds are not more left-wing. Israeli Seeds do not become pro-Palestinian. Palestinian Seeds do not become more pro-Israeli. But both Israelis and Palestinians do become more knowledgeable, more aware, and more understanding towards the other side.

This is my second answer to the Normalization Argument. Seeds of Peace doesn't look at the current situation as normal. Seeds of Peace is certainly not about maintaining the status quo. Awareness of the situation, knowledge of the conflict, and understanding the other side are all part of creating change.

Across the board, people on both sides of the conflict are unhappy

about the situation. The inspiration for a better life, a peaceful environment, or a "European Union" is neither left- nor right-wing.

Seeds of Peace inspires change and it creates change. Change is not a revolution. It does not happen in a day or two. It is a long process that must overcome many difficulties and obstacles along the way.

However, as long as there is light, that is, as long as there are young and older Seeds, and educators and community leaders, who meet, talk, and exchange thoughts, then change is possible.

As long as the candle is still burning, we can still mend.

Iddo is a high school history, Arabic, and civics teacher. He has been a Seed since 1997, when he became a camper. He has been a facilitator for the past seven years at Camp.

SEEDS OF PEACE 20 YEARS ON

The educational model and secrets of its success

By Claudia Colvin

The summer of 2012 was a special summer, a milestone, for Seeds of Peace: It was the 20th consecutive summer of Camp. After my experience as a facilitator that summer, my continued interest in education and conflict resolution led me to analyze the organization's educational model, its history, the key elements of the model, and the secrets to its success. This research turned into a Master's Thesis that was presented to King's College London this past fall.

Seeds of Peace was born from an idea that was experimentally put into practice. It then developed into a complex and unique educational model of its own. This was the result of extremely diverse theoretical and practical elements added and adapted throughout the years.

The core structure of Camp remains similar to the first experiment in 1993. Teenagers from regions in conflict are brought together for three weeks to the summer camp in Maine, where they have the opportunity to meet their historical enemy face-to-face. In my thesis, I argue

that these three weeks at Camp are carefully structured so that the students are confronted with two "universes". One universe is the Camp itself. Camp is where the teenagers play together, eat together, sleep together, and get to know one another in a conflict-removed context where all members are equal. This equality is represented physically by the mandatory green Seeds of Peace t-shirts that every camper and staff member wears. I argue that the second "universe" exists within the dialogue that commences between the campers. Every day, for 105 minutes, the teenagers meet in small groups and, facilitated by professionals, engage in difficult and uncomfortable discussions about the conflict that divides them.

On closer observation of the model, it seems obvious that these two universes hold deep and intrinsic contradictions. Camp is set in an isolated space, removed from the conflict. The setting also represents for the campers a hypothetical future—the way life could be, as co-founder Bobbie Gottschalk tells the campers while introducing them to Seeds of Peace. It is envisioned as

an experimental dreamland of coexistence, somehow suspended in time and space, where all individuals are equal in their human qualities.

Dialogue, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. Conflict is not only present but also accepted in the dialogue huts. These huts represent a microcosm of the regions in conflict from which the teenagers come. The time and space where the dialogue exists therefore represents "the here and now" of the conflict that the campers face in their lives back at home.

The creation of these two "universes" is intentional. The universes are kept separate by a Camp policy known as: "What happens in dialogue stays in dialogue."

This policy allows the Seeds to roam between conflict and coexistence. Reflecting on the patterns underlying these two spheres and exploring how they can relate to each other is part of the challenge of the transformative experience that Camp offers.

The confusion often generated in this crossing of universes serves as a stimulant for reflections on self and identity. The Camp framework al-

lows a safe environment for the participants to interact as individuals, alongside the opportunity to confront their identities in dialogue. The question is, then, what becomes of these two universes after Camp? Which one do they take home with them? Throughout the process of Camp, they learn that these two worlds can become one within them. They learn to accept one another both as individuals, and as part of a national group, acknowledging that the acceptance of the other's identity does not imply the weakening of their own.

Contrary to the beliefs of some critics of Seeds of Peace, the educational model does not aim to eliminate the Seeds' national identities with the new identity of a "Seed of Peace."

Instead, becoming a Seed means having gone through a process that allows a more profound and intimate understanding of the identity they have always had, but had not yet had the chance to explore. The findings of my research demonstrate that the model presented is indeed effective; the secret to its success was the organization's ability to

constantly revisit and improve the model, adapting it to the needs of the teenagers.

What are the three most important lessons that Seeds of Peace has learned over the past 20 years? The first is recognizing the importance of leading dialogue according to case-specific cultural frameworks. This realization has led to developing the methods used during Middle Eastern dialogue in accordance with well-studied, format specific techniques to address the conflict, facilitated by Israeli-Palestinian facilitators.

The second is that dialogue is the most important part of the educational model, and is no longer considered a simple, additional element of Camp's activities. It is now the backbone of the model itself.

The third is that Camp is only the first step. The process relies on the necessary continuation of what the campers learn at Camp when they return home. Therefore, Camp is not considered a complete process in itself. Seeds of Peace has provided regional follow-up programs that allow the Seeds to continue their dialogue and peace-building commitment at home.

This does not mean that the Camp model is perfect. There are many obstacles that still need to be overcome, such as the enhancement and further development of the South Asian and regional follow-up programs.

However, Seeds of Peace has demonstrated the maturity and resilience necessary to constantly improve its commitment to constructive peace-building. Just as the organization encourages dialogue and self-criticism for participants in its programs, it has been able to achieve dialogue and self-criticism as an organization by adapting and revisiting the educational model it offers year by year.

In this way, Seeds of Peace is able to offer to the Seeds the most meaningful experience possible.

Claudia is a British-Italian interfaith and interconflict dialogue facilitator currently living and working in London. A recent Conflict Resolution MA graduate from King's College London, she facilitated the South Asian dialogue this summer at Camp and analysed the Camp's educational model in her thesis.

A TENT IN THE DESERT

By Daniel Noah Moses

Imagine a sturdy tent in an environment of intense conflict and howling winds. This tent is a haven, a place where warring sides meet in safety. In the tent, there is the opportunity to speak one's mind to those from "the other side;" there is the opportunity to listen to them as well.

A group from one side of the conflict stops by for coffee. They say to the people who keep the tent steady

and strong, "Why spend your time with this tent? We need you to help us in our fight."

A group from another side of a conflict stops by the tent for tea; they say, "Why don't you come and fight on our side against them?"

But the tent cannot be pulled in any one direction. It must be safe for those who want to come in from the harsh environment, where such tents are in short supply.

Once safely inside, people have

the opportunity to get out of their "comfort zones" and into their "learning zones." They have the opportunity, perhaps, to build mutual respect and trust—and to reflect on how to transform the conflict outside into something more productive, more hopeful, more humane.

Seeds of Peace is such a tent. The educators who participate in Seeds of Peace programs help to hold this tent up even as they make good use of it.

KNOWING THE OTHER

By Nabil Kayali

Is it possible that a 12-year-old boy thinks that a Jew means a soldier or a settler and nothing else? That "Jew" means fear and occupation? This has nothing to do with textbooks or schooling. It is as if time stood still from years past, before 1967, when Palestinian children heard of Jews but never saw them.

I was very surprised when I spoke with a boy from Nablus and heard his expressions. Since the Second Intifada things have gone backwards regarding the feelings of coexistence.

Communication is essential for people to understand the mutual dreams of life.

Nabil was born and raised in

Jerusalem and became a successful businessman in the United States before returning home. He is the founder of the Bridge Schools in Beit Hanina (Jerusalem) and Al Ram.

A leading educator, he is a graduate of the Seeds of Peace Arab Educator Program, and a facilitator and trainer for the Model Schools Initiative and the peaceful learning environment workshops.

By Tarek Maassarani
and Peggy Smith

Delegation Leaders (DLs) are the educators and community leaders who accompany the Seeds of Peace International Camp. Once at Camp, they go through a challenging encounter program of their own.

Two years ago, DL program coordinator Tarek Maassarani noticed a pattern in both sessions of the Delegation Leaders' dialogue: adult professionals from different, adversarial, homelands eagerly built personal bonds as individuals, but lurched into a metaphoric pile-up when expressing their pain, identity, and beliefs about the conflict in dialogue. They invariably found themselves bent out of shape, exasperated, stuck, and afraid to continue down the road of dialogue.

So what would help the Delegation Leaders' dialogue program be more effective?

With this question in mind, Tarek Maassarani and Peggy Smith, co-facilitators of the DL dialogue program for the first session of 2012, decided to focus on enhancing listening skills in order to increase the quality of dialogue at Camp and to give the educators skills that they could apply to their work at home.

Three strands were woven into the typical dialogue processes:

- 1) elements of peacemaking circles
- 2) elements of Nonviolent Communication™ (NVC)
- 3) the visual arts

Acknowledging the wisdom of the Native peoples of western Maine, where Camp is located, we introduced the technique of a Talking Stick during the first session. Everyone agreed to try this tool. Only the person holding the Talking Stick is invited to speak. Everyone else is invited to listen intently to what is being said. The speaker can focus on expressing themselves clearly, knowing they will not be interrupted because they are holding the Talking Stick.

In addition, we began each

session with a predictable ritual. We lit a candle, rang a bell, and participated in an "inspiring activity." Usually, this activity was the recitation of a poem or quote. We also used the Elm Dance and other movement based centering practices. Then, we moved into dialogue. After dialogue, we closed the circle with the same "inspiring activity" that began the session. We also provided DLs with daily journal prompts to cultivate personal reflection that would further support their individual process of integrating what they were learning at Camp into their personal lives.

Both of us are skilled NVC trainers. Our goal was to share with the DLs as many NVC tools as possible during our two hour sessions. To begin with, we chose NVC-based empathy as the focus. In NVC, empathy is best described as "presence" — the ability to be with one another, while listening from a place of inner calm and stillness.

In general, we are conditioned to listen from a place of agreement or disagreement—already composing our response, even while the person is still speaking. In empathic listening, the listener wants to listen so carefully that they can mirror back what was said, regardless of whether or not they agree. This takes careful practice.

Another aspect of empathic listening is focusing on the feelings and needs of the speaker instead of our own thoughts and judgments about the content of the words. This cultivates deep understanding and requires careful attention and practice. We used the "Feelings and Needs" card game to help the DLs practice this style of listening.

You can download the English versions of these cards here: www.opencommunication.org/resources.html#cards

Ideas for using the cards can be found here: www.opencommunication.org/how-to-use-cards.html

We had the experience of working in dyads, first with someone who speaks the same language as us. We asked the speakers to share a

joyful experience in their life. The listener was asked not to speak and, instead of words, offer their presence. Then we had people work in a dyad with someone who spoke a language they didn't understand. This time, the speaker was asked to share a tender, vulnerable moment in their life. The listener was not able to 'understand' due to the language difference. However, they were able to be fully present as they listened. The connection was deep, even with no intellectual understanding of the words being spoken.

To learn more about empathy and the blocks to empathy please read www.mainenvcnetwork.org/newsletter1.html

When it came time for exploring national narratives, we used art as a tool for expression. Tarek designed a process where delegations deliberated upon what constituted their national narrative and how it could be represented in images.

With the guidance of Program Coordinator and art teacher, Rachel Nagler, the delegations painted their images on a large, 3 ft. by 12 ft. canvas. This process itself took negotiation skills, as each delegation worked out how to paint their part in relation to the others. Afterwards, each delegation had five minutes to talk about their narrative.

The following day, each person was invited to use a Fish Bowl format to express what part of the painted canvas, or verbal explanation, they found triggering. In this process the listeners were invited to practice empathic listening. The speaker said whatever they wanted, in whatever way they wanted. Those invited into the Fish Bowl were expected to respond in a prescribed way.

In this way, people practiced connecting to the speaker before either

In one or two sentences mirror what the speaker said ...

(then add) This is/isn't what I have learned. Hearing this is true for you, I am guessing it speaks to the need(s) of

“Live out of your imagination, not your history.” STEPHEN R. COVEY



agreeing or disagreeing with them. This is an important skill in dialogue. The purpose of this skill is to connect people who have different beliefs or experiences. This was one of the most powerful exercises of our session. People got to say something difficult and experience being heard.

After this activity, one participant shared that this was the first time she had spoken about “the conflict” with someone from the other side without screaming. She relished this new possibility.

From such a place of empathic connection, we believe it becomes easier to move towards a shared reality, inner healing, and even concrete and viable solutions.

We used art again to help people share their personal narratives. We invited participants to use paint in order to represent something from their lives that had been affected by “the conflict.” Some people painted representational scenes; others used colors to convey meaning. These pieces were used as the backdrop for each person’s sharing. As each person shared, the rest of us practiced listening with presence.

When open dialogue began, we invited participants to use one of

the many tools we had practiced to assist us in listening and speaking for connection: a talking piece and round format, Fish Bowls, mirroring, and Feelings/Needs cards. In this way, the journey of dialogue, which began with a highly-structured format, now gave way to more freedom and choice. The delegation leaders used the skills they had learned in order to be comfortable sharing their pain, identity, and political beliefs.

In addition to peacemaking circles, NVC, and art, another element unexpectedly supplemented the journey for many of the Delegation Leaders: water. Many of the adults had never learned to swim, and some even held a visceral fear of water. Therefore, the process of submerging themselves in Lake Pleasant, and learning to find movement in its weightless embrace, was a transformation akin to discovering a new kind of empathy-based conversation.

Reflecting back on our original question, we used exit interviews with participants to evaluate the effectiveness of our dialogue process.

A DL who had been to Camp multiple times said that this was, by far, her most productive experience.

She felt that the tools she learned helped her experience dialogue in a far more satisfying way. She felt that others listened to her and that she was able to listen, too.

Another DL said that, during this process, she was able to, for the first time, talk about the conflict with somebody from the “other side” without yelling.

A third member, a trained facilitator, said that his experiences during this session far exceeded anything he had ever been taught before. Many others expressed similar feelings about their experiences with this dialogue process.

Since the summer, DLs report that they have integrated what they learned at Camp into their own work at home. As one participant wrote upon his return:

“I want to thank you again for (the) process I went through at the Seeds of Peace Camp. Today, I feel more experienced with the tools I acquired at Camp. When I sit with family and friends and tell them about the experience I had, it reinforces the value of the process every time.”

As staff, we celebrate and look forward to building upon what we have started.

INTERVIEW

Seeds of Peace Group Challenge Director Emily Cohn

By Julianna Acheson

Emily Cohn has a Master's Degree in Education from Antioch University, New England, in the academic area of Place-Based Environmental Education.

Q: Why is Group Challenge used at Seeds of Peace?

A: Group Challenge at Seeds of Peace consists of activities that build teamwork through the use of games. Here at camp, each dialogue group participates in a group challenge so that they have an opportunity to work toward increased communication, trust, and a feeling of safety. All of these skills help to create more effective dialogues.

Q: I have heard you mention before that you think Group Challenge is particularly helpful when a group is having difficulty in dialogue. Could you explain a bit more why you think this approach is so helpful?

A: Taking a Group Challenge philosophy is helpful because there are a few things that all groups have. For example, all groups contain some conflict and all groups are learning together. We also know that many new issues will arise and that no group is the same as any other.

One of the important things about Group Challenge is that I am able to observe the group dynamics while they participate in an experiential based problem solving activity.

So, for a group experiencing conflict, one thing I do is set up a kind of social experience for them and, as the leader, it is my job to observe the individuals in the group.

I observe the process of their problem solving while looking for leaders and followers. It is really difficult not to step in and solve the problem myself, but that wouldn't teach them the skills they need to problem solve.

I once led an advisory group for middle school homeroom teachers. I was interning at a middle school in Vermont as I was completing my Master's Degree Student Teaching



Internship. There was one class of about 15 kids that was struggling. New students were making the group dynamic difficult and it was really impeding the learning environment because the kids lacked a feeling of safety. So my co-intern and I applied a Seeds of Peace challenge, leading a few team building initiatives similar to ones we lead here.

The kids enjoyed these very much because it was a challenge that also tapped into kinesthetic learning and spatial skills, which students don't usually use during the school day.

Games, such as the one I am describing, can be found on the Silver Bullets and The Processing Pinnacle websites. One of my favorite games is one that I use with adult learners. It is called "I walk the line." I set up partners who have to hold hands across an imaginary line that runs down the middle of the group. One partner is on one side of the line and the other is on the other side of the line. The job is to get people all on one side of the line. We hold hands, with crossed arms: some people try to straddle the line, some ask people and invite them, some drag and pull people.

Most of the games are intended to challenge people to push them past the polite stage so that they end up

having to communicate and give and receive feedback.

Q: Is there any one particular game that you would use for all the groups you work with?

A: No, there is no magic game and no magic initiative. One of the biggest learning skills that I always apply though is observation of the group. My advice to teachers who are having difficulty with one student—a student who bothers the teacher or other students emotionally—is to just watch the student and ask yourself: how can I change the circumstances so that the student can have his or her needs met?

Most likely, the difficult student is not having his or her needs met—whether it is safety or food or anything else. Sometimes these things don't surface until you observe the child and see how she or he acts in a group setting.

There is a great article we read called, "Look at Your Fish," about observation. In this article, a man is asked by his famous professor to look at the fish. Eventually he finds out how much the fish can teach him and he grows to love the fish after days and days of observation. So, as a group leader, we need to look at our "fish" and see what we observe.



Q: Do you have any advice for someone who is not familiar leading group challenges?

A: Yes. Try to get to know many games, try new things, and go into each new group with an open mind. Even if your game fails, think of your success. When a game fails, we see the dynamic of “safety in numbers.” The group will usually still support each member IF the group member can state his/her needs. The group won’t think s/he is stupid or selfish. That is the beauty of group challenge. Members need to communicate their needs and therefore start to learn how to feel safe doing it.

For a Group Challenge Leader, sharp questioning skills are essential. At the end of a game, you need to talk about what just happened and really get the kids to look closely at their experience. Sometimes they are really hard on themselves. Sometimes they fear upsetting the group by saying how the group should change. You have to really start off with more concrete questions and then move to the more abstract aspects of what the kids mean by what they say. If they give a one word answer—just follow up and ask them more questions (ex. “What do you mean by ... ?”). You have to really try to get at the heart

of what kids are saying. One of the big problems between kids and teachers, I’ve noticed, is miscommunication. Very often, teachers do not understand what the kids mean by what they say.

A good Group Challenge Leader needs to finish with the question: “What now?” First, they should ask: “What happened?” and “So what?” For example, if someone puts someone else down during the group process, a leader might ask the ridiculed child: “What do you want that person to know? Why does that matter to you? Someone touched you in a way you didn’t like, why does it matter to you? What do you want from that person?” The final question to ask is: “Now what?”

We have moved towards conflict, we did not walk away from it, and we gave you the tools to navigate conflict. Now that we have these new tools to deal with conflict, what

can you use these skills for in the classroom?

Q: Can you say from your experience what types of specific skills you see in the kids after they participate in group challenge?

A: Yes. After the group challenge, they are able to communicate their needs, summarize, and problem solve as a group. We often talk about critical thinking, but not divergent thinking. We don’t see divergent thinking as part of a classroom of sheep in a hateful atmosphere. You want kids who are going to break the rules and you want context ... not to reward the smart kids, but reward everyone for their own unique talents and skills. That is a big part of the group challenge philosophy: everyone has something to contribute to the group.

Emily’s recommended reading for Group Challenge and trust building games

Silver Bullets: A Revised Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games, and Trust Activities by Karl E. Rohnke

The Processing Pinnacle: An Educator’s Guide to Better Processing by Steven Simpson, Dan Miller and Buzz Bocher

“Only he who can see the invisible can do the impossible.”

FRANK GAINES

“I FEEL LIKE THE LUCKIEST APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGIST IN THE WORLD!”

By Julianna Acheson

After 20 years of teaching anthropology in college classrooms, I knew I was up for a new challenge. I needed to get back to my original training with the work of hands-on, experiential, applied anthropology. Being a staff member in the Seeds of Peace Educator Programs offered me just the opportunity.

Cultural relativism reflects a deeply-rooted anthropological premise. In order to fully understand another culture, we must suspend judgment of right or wrong.

Applying this term means that we must put aside our own ethnocentric explanation for the way things “ought to be.” We trade in our own cultural bias, our well-learned norms, and even our own comfort zone, to fully focus on a new culture—in other words, we develop a completely new point of view. We attempt to understand that new culture through the eyes of those who live in it.

One way that we do this is through a method called “participant observation,” whereby we live in, eat in, sleep in, breath in, and simply take in another culture in order to more fully understand it.

Only when being fully entrenched in this other culture, may we start to understand it through the eyes of its own people. Although we may never actually become “fluent” actors and understand every aspect of a society, we do seem to be able to gather a much fuller understanding and a more profound appreciation of how norms, beliefs, values, and behaviors make sense from within a cultural context.

Applied anthropology takes all this living, eating, and breathing in another culture to a whole new level.

Applied anthropology uses anthropological concepts to bring about marked change in the world—amongst and between people who need a voice, need assistance, and ask to be seen and recognized.

Applied anthropology is about making change happen—transformation for the good of the people.

Applied anthropologists do not talk about the people with whom they work as “subjects of study” but rather as “collaborators” in a mutu-



ally-defined social project.

Applied anthropologists are par excellence people-to-people diplomats—not only interlopers in a culture, but facilitators of cross-cultural communication voicing the concerns and desire for policy shifts, and helping to tell stories for the betterment of the lives of those within a particular culture.

Just like a good midwife, applied anthropologists are very often silently present, assisting in every way possible with the birth of newly created cross-cultural understanding. The help needed by a group of people may come in many forms: the need for a voice, the need to broadcast one’s narrative, the need to have basic human needs and rights met, the need to be seen and heard in the news, in journals, in academic discussions, in government and non-governmental conversations, in the world of commerce, in museums, in eco-tourism, on stage and in theatre.

While anthropologists are but one of many professionals that seek to assist people in “singing their own songs,” they are specifically trained in a host of skills like recording complicated kinship charts, looking for meaning in non-verbal behavior, searching for patterns in otherwise inconsequential behavior, and taking the time for deep empathic listening.

Seeds of Peace International Camp, on the shores of Maine’s Pleasant Lake, offered me a chance in a lifetime to put those anthropo-

logical concepts to work.

One day, I woke up and was asked to bring one of our Israeli participants to the doctor’s office. While I waited for her, I spent time on my computer, typing up notes from the previous day’s interviews with our Gazan musician and Jordanian drummer. When Reya (not her real name) emerged from the doctor’s office 45 minutes later, she was absolutely astounded by the excellent service and professionalism of our central Maine doctor.

“He said I could even call him in the middle of the night at his home. Can you believe it?” She flashed the doctor’s card at me, showing me his plainly written home phone number on the back.

After the doctor’s appointment, I was given another job: I needed to purchase kosher snacks for our participants who were Orthodox Jews and who could not eat the everyday American pretzel. I had already found out that “kosher-like” food from Portland’s Full-Belly Deli was not sufficient, but that if a product was called “kosher” it was exactly what I needed.

How does one find out if a food qualifies as kosher? I learned that fish with fins and scales (fresh or frozen) would be acceptable but absolutely no lobsters or shellfish of any kind.

Kosher dry goods are marked on the outside with a circle around the letter “O” or “U” in which the circle stands for the letter “O” as in “Orthodox” and “U” for “Union”.



A “K” can also mean “kosher.” I never noticed it before, but after running up and down every aisle of a large wholesale market, I was afforded a newfound skill! Now, I can spot what is kosher from six feet away.

I loaded up what I guessed would be a week’s worth of kosher snacks and food for Shabbat, and then headed back to Camp over the bumpy rural roads of Oxford County. Thank goodness the Camp chef took care of all Ramadan needs because finding Halal meat would have taken a trip to Portland!

Upon returning to Camp, I backed my car right up to the kitchen to unload. I was immediately greeted by a participant who had been on the lookout for me. She wanted me to give her another swimming lesson during our free time. This Palestinian woman helped me unload all the kosher food into the kitchen and we headed off to change for swimming—of course I would be honored to help her learn how to swim!

Swimming with this lady was amazing for me. Being Palestinian had not afforded her with an opportunity to swim in open lakes. She trusted me as I edged her, almost on my hip, into the water.

If you have never seen an adult move into water for the first time, I highly recommend it. It forces you to witness how someone enters a whole new universe while still on this planet.

She entered the water on the first day much like I picture myself suspended in gelatin—with no context from which to judge my body’s gravity when submerged neck high into a lake.

Of course she had on a flotation device, but she couldn’t trust it yet. She had no idea of the degree to

which the device would hold her up. She had never seen her legs and arms move in water and she had no idea that swim breathing is really only a matter of learning systematic deliberate inhalations and rhythmic exhalations.

“Don’t let me go, don’t drop me. I want to float but can you hold me up?” she said. “Yes,” I responded, “I’ll never let you go.”

Overcoming the obstacle of language barriers, I needed to make it clear that she could relax in the water. She had 100 percent of my attention and there was no way she was going under with me by her side. I could say this with conviction because I had brought her to thigh-high water in the calm-clear lake.

“I am going to cry,” she said, “I’ve never seen the water from this position. The view from the lake’s surface and the hills in the distance are so beautiful.”

I could see that the view and the cold water experience literally took her breath away.

“Breath in and out, deep, easy, relaxed breaths.”

I modeled this with my own breath.

My anthropology background taught me to be present—to walk with someone else in complete empathy. Her tears brought on my own as I held her up in a floating position with that cold, clear lake hugging us both.

Our salty tears dropped into the water surface and I felt as if we became one with the universe for that instant. We were no longer two people from two different cultures, who spoke different languages, in a multi-national setting. We were of one human spirit—just people whose bodies were cold and happy to be alive in the lake.

I was her teacher and she was

mine. It is important to note that this lovely lady was also suffering from cancer and had had chemotherapy a short time ago. She wore a turban into the lake to cover her head.

As I helped her suspend herself in the calm, clear lake water, she was holding me in her figurative arms as I embraced, like all living humans do, my own death through her experience with life—and swimming.

After I was out of the lake, dried and cleaned-up, one of my Muslim friends approached me and asked, “Are you coming to the Muslim service this afternoon?”

“What time?” I thought to myself, who would ever miss an invitation like this—to attend a Muslim service being held on the edge of Maine’s lake. “What time and where?”

She told me it would be held in the Big Hall in 10 minutes and that everyone was invited. The first service had been held for Muslims alone. This one, however, they would open to everyone so that we could all experience and learn from it.

Such was the case of many religious services at Seeds of Peace—even though we may not be members of a particular religion, we are often invited to attend a service so that we may come to a fuller understanding of others’ beliefs and practices.

“Do I need to cover my head?” I asked quickly, remembering the time I had been the Matron of Honor at my Muslim friends’ wedding.

“No, you can just observe in the back so it’s not necessary to cover your head.”

I found myself running again that day, this time to put on my Seeds of Peace uniform—a solid, deep green t-shirt with my Capri pants and my toe-covered all-purpose Keens.

I soon found myself moving quickly



Every day at Seeds of Peace is like 1,000 years and 15 seconds at once. Don't ask me how.

to the Big Hall on the other side of Camp. It looked different from its usual set up, which was generally geared toward various campers' evening talent shows or a place for large active games on rainy days.

This evening, however, it had floor mats covering two distinct areas of the gym-sized wood floor. On the front mats, men and boy campers kneeled in silence.

On the mats behind them sat our Muslim female participants and a handful of female "Seeds." The men wore small caps and all the women were clearly in a *hijab* or covering of some sort—head scarf, faces showing, and a long sleeved shirt. A couple of the girls wore the beautiful, traditional Palestinian overdress with elaborate red embroidery. All were very quiet and clearly in a

prayer-like mood.

I sat in the back on a bench with some of the Seeds. A young Seed, about 15 years old, came to sit with me—she could see that I was sitting alone and, in Seeds of Peace fashion, she joined me in a sense of community and friendship building.

Since the service had not yet begun, I took the opportunity to get to know this teenage girl. In a few short whispers, as so often happens at Seeds of Peace, we became fast friends. She had come to the United States with her family as a very young girl. She was a refugee.

We were both amazed that she had actually first immigrated to my hometown. I could relate to her experiences immediately. I, too, had "immigrated" to Westbrook, Maine. As a young child, I moved

to my grandmother's home after my parents divorced. I remember the huge paper mill that dominated the town. I walked the streets where French and Irish immigrants had walked in large numbers during the last century.

And yet, I had done this with white skin and no scars from a political war. I was also related to a good many of the French people in the city. I knew the positive and negative sides of living in a small Maine city—there is a high praise for a strong work ethic, but the propensity for xenophobia is immense. This young girl and I had both left that city for new places—we had that in common, as well. I was so happy to have her join me on the bench.

While we were talking, one of the Orthodox Jewish men in our group

TAKING THE PLUNGE: IMPOSSIBLE? REALLY?

By Thaddeus Dsouza

Until a month ago, I was certain I'd never learn to swim in water above my head. I loved swimming in five feet of water, in the pool, but I always longed to swim in deeper water ... or out at sea.

What stopped me was my own fear that I'd drown if I went in over my head—until I met an unusual swimming instructor.

"Why don't you first try going in with a life jacket," she said. "You're very safe with a life jacket; you know you won't drown ..."

Putting my faith in her, I nervously put on a life jacket. I tested it again and again, to see if the buckles were tight enough. I took it off and read and re-read the fine print label that said it can keep a 90 kilogram man afloat. Then I put it on again and entered the water.

I took my instructor's hand and walked out ... out ... beyond my usual depth, to a point where my feet could no longer touch the floor!

I was now out of my depth. I was terrified. "I'm going to drown, I'm going to drown now," I thought as I held on for dear life—until I looked into my instructor's amused and laughing face.

"Relax," she said, "take a look around. You *are* in the deep, and



you are *floating*. If you want to get back, I'll take you back, but first just enjoy this feeling of being here and not drowning."

I stayed for a while longer, and yes, it felt so good. To be out there, where I always wanted to be, but thought impossible. It felt sooooo good. I thanked her from the bottom of my heart!

Why had I been so convinced that it would be impossible for me to do what I did?

Perhaps a lot of the stuff that I believe to be impossible, may be just that...my own belief that it's impossible. What if I stop listening to the voice that tells me it's impossible and just try it for myself? I began my journey of breaking barriers, doing things I thought were impossible. Me drive a car? Yes. Back in India, I sat in a car with a good instructor...and learned to drive. Eat non-spiced European/American meals? I decided to try them. You know what? I think their food is



pretty good now. Can I ever have a healthy political discussion with a Pakistani (I'm Indian you know)? Now THAT really seemed impossible ... till I tried it. And it turned out to be very insightful. So here I am now, discovering new possibilities. All thanks to my swimming instructor. Thank you so much Christine. You liberated me.

Ted is a creative writer and veteran digital content consultant. In his free time, Ted works with local youth organizations. He attended the International Camp in Maine in 2012.

Today, Ted does the digital advertising for a sailing company and has now moved on to a new challenge: he is taking his first steps towards learning to sail.

Christine is a program coordinator for the Delegation Leaders. She has a vision about the transformational power of water. With her guidance, the waterfront program for the adults is reaching its potential.

joined us. Then the prayer service began and we followed along the lines of praise to Allah, for His wisdom, and for a peaceful world. To be humble and thoughtful was our lesson. The prayer service was led by a Muslim staff member, so quietly, so peacefully, so earnestly in a huge building on the shores of Pleasant Lake. It was truly beautiful.

Many hours later, in the evening, we attended the Ramadan *Iftar*, the dinner that breaks the fast. I had done an empathy fast the day before, which means I didn't eat or drink anything from the time I woke up in the morning until 8:15 p.m. I only did this for one day, but our Muslim participants were fasting every day for the entire time they were at Camp. Ramadan had started just when the second session began. I was so exhausted and thirsty the day before so I knew how appreciative they were when it was

time to break their fast.

Our meal consisted of figs, soup, a chicken curry with rice, pita bread, and a rice cinnamon desert.

While I hadn't done much formal interviewing that day, our regular staff meetings at 8 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m., all of the programming, scheduled events, and everyday conversation, certainly gave me a fuller understanding of our participants' lives and views. I had attempted to achieve this understanding by suspending judgment—by applying cultural relativism and by facilitating them in their quest to make the most of their Seeds of Peace experience together.

As I drifted off to sleep that night, I heard the quiet drumming of Middle Eastern rhythms around our Maine campfire. The gentle, complicated strokes of an *oud* played and I knew our musician participants were getting ready for the show they were to

produce in the coming week.

I could hear a Maine loon answering back to the *oud* and I knew that the fireflies were dancing in time, high above the embers of the campfire. I knew that tomorrow would be an entirely new experience, but still the same in that every day at Seeds of Peace is like 1,000 years and 15 seconds all at once.

Don't ask me how.

Julianna is a cultural anthropologist who has worked for over 18 years in higher education both as a professor and as an administrator. She is dedicated to facilitating cross-cultural relationship building.

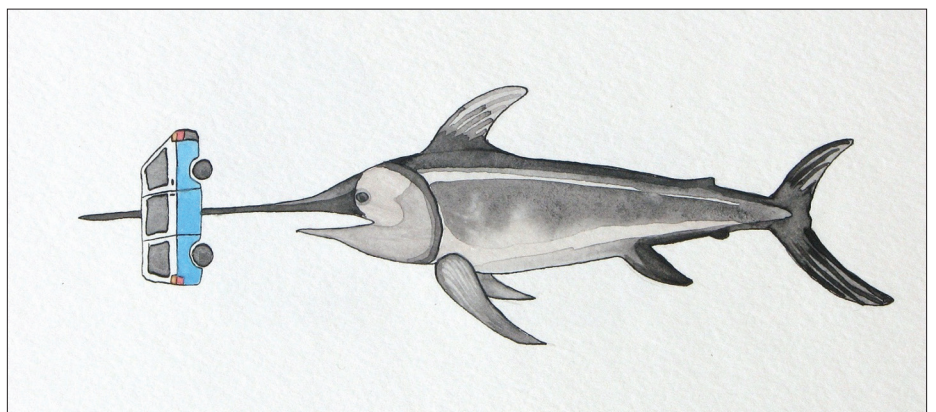
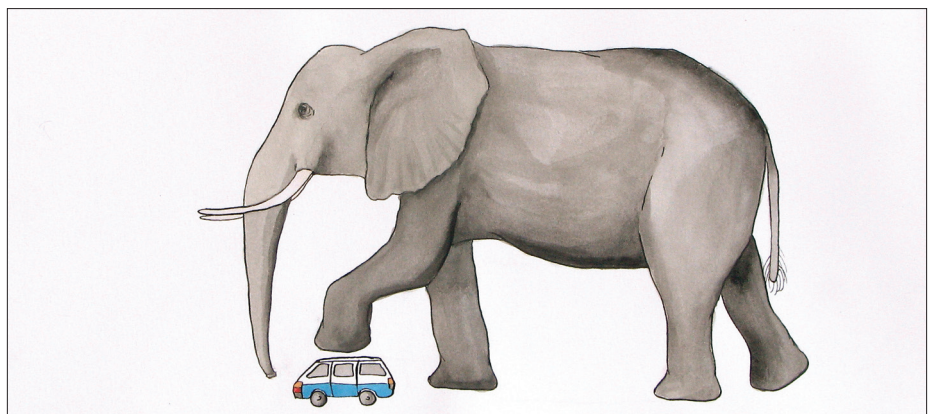
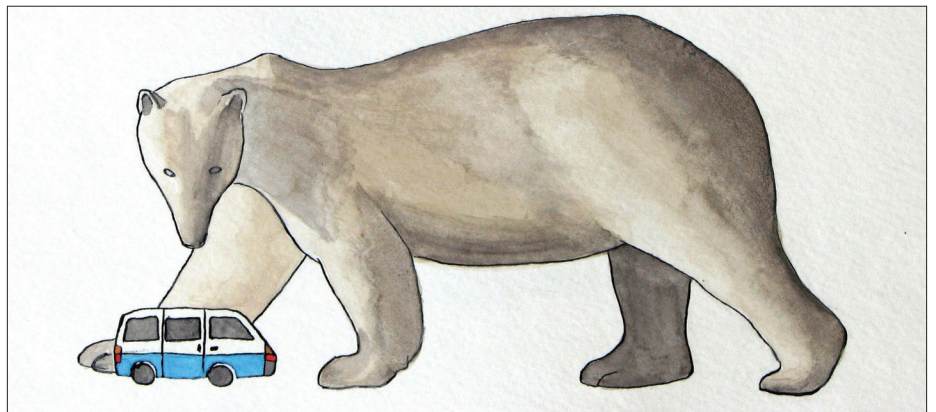
She teaches part-time at the University of New England, volunteers at Reiche School in Portland teaching English to refugee children, is a native Mainer, mother of three daughters, and finds pleasure in painting, swimming, hiking and singing.

expressive arts

By Sarah Badran

I was born into an Egyptian family in Canada, where I spent the majority of my life. My neighborhood was quiet, peaceful, and green; I liked it that way. I was taught Arabic and religion at home by proud Egyptian parents who were determined to pass on their culture and traditions to their children. I grew up in two worlds, not fully fitting in to either of them.

In 2009, I made a spontaneous decision to move to Cairo. The apartment that I moved into is above a microbus station. A microbus is a loud and aggressive mode of transportation. They honk a lot, the drivers yell a lot and drive recklessly, and they play loud obnoxious music at all hours of the night. When I came to Cairo, all of my senses were overloaded. I didn't know where to begin artistically, so I began to paint watercolours of animals just to get my hand moving. But the noise of the microbuses always made its way through. I began to imagine what the animals could do to these buses. The work is a commentary on my two worlds coming together. Sometimes it's harsh, sometimes playful, and sometimes peaceful. It's like having two homes but not really feeling "at home" in either of them.



WHY THE ARTS?

By Daniel Noah Moses

You might ask, dear reader, what paintings of wild animals and micro-buses (or mini-vans) have to do with anything even remotely connected to themes we are talking about—experiential education, cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking, NVC, civic engagement, mutual respect, dignity, empowerment, leadership, active transformation of the status quo, even “peace.”

What use is a giant polar bear’s apparent inquisitiveness about a micro-bus (or perhaps it’s a regular sized polar bear and a tiny micro-bus).

What should we make of a seal twirling a micro-bus on his nose?

Why should we be concerned with one bird putting a micro-bus to his beak and another swallowing a micro-bus whole?

What really is the significance of an elephant about to squash a micro-bus or of a micro-bus pierced violently by a swordfish?

It boils down to the imagination. The artist Sarah did these paintings as a creative response to a difficult reality around her (please see her accompanying explanation of her work). Instead of just getting angry or upset—she created surprising beauty.

When I see these paintings, I smile. Through the arts, human beings transform sadness, suffering, pain, joy, celebration, laughter, love, and mundane details of everyday life, into creations that exist beyond us and that enrich our lives. Through the arts, we communicate; we express ourselves; we enlarge our perspectives. We exercise our imagination.

Inside a museum in Yerevan, Armenia, are tiny portraits sketched on bottle caps by Sergei Parajanov, a famous Armenian film-maker who did time as a political prisoner of the Soviet Regime. To me, these tiny sketches are monuments to the human imagination. Although done under radically different conditions, I think of Sarah’s paintings of animal and micro-bus paintings in a similar way.

At this level, the arts—the focused application of the imagination—help us to survive and even flourish in the midst of difficult circum-

Why the Arts? Another Take

One answer is that we are usually constrained by the shortness of our lives and extreme limitedness of our experience. Through the arts, we multiply our experiences, our perspectives. We open up doors to inner worlds that are difficult to gain access to otherwise. Through art of a certain quality, we enlarge our perspectives. We enlarge our scope of empathy.

To put it another way, good art—whether a painting, a sculpture, a novel, a song, a play, a film—has potential educational force. It can shake us up. It can empower us to see the world in different new ways—beyond the status quo we experience around us. The arts have the potential to spark within us a sense of possibilities.

stances. Through the imagination, we strengthen ourselves. But this use as a tool for coping with and even flourishing is only part of what the arts (and the imagination) have the potential to do.

In my 13 years working in places in conflict—in the Caucasus, in the Middle East, in South Asia, in the United States—I have noticed that a disproportionate number of people who imagine and work actively for a different world, one beyond the status quo, are involved in the arts. They are visual artists and musicians; they are involved in the dramatic arts; they are writers and filmmakers.

This is not an accident. The imagination grows stronger with exercise. Because people engaged in the arts have strong and well tuned imaginations, they are able to see what does not exist around them; they are inspired to create what is out of the realm of possibility for those confined to existing reality. At the same time, those involved in the arts are equipped to express themselves; they are able to depict and project experiences that can be obscured for others. Through the arts, they are able to resist the status quo.

The situation between Israelis and Palestinians today, for example, is bad. Most on both sides have lost hope for positive change. The people who persevere are so often (though not only) involved in the arts. Among the most inspiring people and small organizations are the ones that focus on music, on visual art, on theater. This insight is what inspired the second Seeds of Peace

Educator Camp Course, which we did in 2012. We called the course “Expressive Arts; Educational Transformations.”

With participants and staff, we were more than 40 people—Americans, a Cypriot, Egyptians, Indians, Israelis, Jordanians, a Pakistani, Palestinians—working at the intersection of the arts and education. The staff included veterans of Seeds of Peace from around the world, and newcomers from Maine.

The course took place for two weeks at the end of July and the beginning of August. It was during Ramadan, so the schedule was shaped accordingly: for those fasting, there were meals before day break; there was breakfast and lunch for those eating, snacks in the late afternoon (meals and snacks were apart from those observing the fast); we ate dinner together at an *Iftar* after night fall (which in Maine in the summer comes after eight o’clock in the evening).

Participants engaged in a range of activities: hands-on practice in facilitation through the arts, expression through the arts, small group discussions, workshops and lectures, play back theater, site visits to organizations related to the arts and education, coaching and supporting projects, action planning for the future, cooking together, swimming and walking, getting to know one another, enjoying the time together. Some of the images that we are left with reflect the joy. Such images reflect a truth, but not the full picture. Participants used the arts to express their perspectives, including their suf-

fering, their rage against injustice; their resistance to the status quo. There was genuine laughter by the shores of Pleasant Lake. There were yoga classes for those who wanted. There was beauty all around. There was magic. Imaginations were aflame. There were also serious discussions, active listening, and a share of tears.

In a sense, participants struggled with one another through the arts—in a productive way. It was a struggle for mutual understanding and the imagination of a different future. At the culmination of the course, participants planned and organized a performance which took place on August 5 in Portland, Maine.

I learned first-hand this past summer that professional performers do not take an opportunity to perform lightly. As the session progressed, our days and nights became consumed

by our practice and preparations.

When the lights went on to a full house, what happened on stage exceeded my highest expectations.

I write these words now in the spring of 2013, a few weeks after a three-day workshop in Petra, Jordan, where many Educators from this past summer gathered again.

Many are staying in touch and continuing projects that started at Camp. Among other things, we are recording the music from the August performance. Another participant will soon finish a short film. What we started is still unfolding.

Faculty who stayed for at least a few days included Charlie Murphie and Nadia Cheney from PYE (who have shared their wonderful resources); Doc Miller from Facing History; the New York-based poet and writing teacher, Elana Bell.

Faculty who were with us for

shorter periods of time included Deb Nathan, the founder of Artsbridge; Jessica Litvak and Mads Palihiptiya of the Acting Together Project; Steven and Linda Brion-Meissels, veteran educators from Cambridge, Mass., and core faculty members of the Seeds of Peace Model Schools Initiative and peaceful learning environment workshops (who have contributed to previous issues of *The Teacher's Guide*); Kate and Maura Claurke, dance and drama teachers who have also done Seeds of Peace peaceful learning environment workshop with us in Jenin; actor and playwright, Ibrahim Miari, the visual artists Robert Katz and Robert Shetterly.

What follows is an attempt to capture some of what transpired this past summer, for this Seeds of Peace Educators course, and some of what we imagine as next steps.

WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING 35 participants, nine countries, one show

By Deb Bicknell

August in Maine is one of the most glorious times of year in this area of the world. During the summer months in Maine, the sun shines and people are out on the streets enjoying music, art, and the good food of the city.

This past summer was a particularly special summer in Portland, Maine, as it was the site of the first ever Seeds of Peace community performance—a performance that was a collaborative artistic event between Maine artists and Seeds of Peace educators.

Not only was this show the first of its kind, making Seeds of Peace history, but it was a night of magic to remember. Why was it special you may ask? How did it come to be? What did it take to make it happen? Read on!

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

As many of you know, the director of the Seeds of Peace Educators programs is Daniel Moses, a historian among other things, so it is my hope that he will put this event down in the annals of the Seeds of Peace history books. Seeds of Peace International Camp is situated in Otisfield, Maine (if you don't

know where this is, check it out online and see that it is a place with more trees and water than people) and has many connections to other people, organizations and places across the state.

Because of this intimate connection between Seeds of Peace and

the State of Maine, this summer we increased the emphasis on outreach and connection to the Maine community.

As a native Mainer, I was overjoyed at being able to further connect Seeds of Peace with more local Maine people.

How to plan a peace education performance and visual art event

If you or your organization are interested in a large scale community collaboration, here are a few things to note:

- Plan, plan, and plan some more! Be sure to allow time for cross-cultural understanding (even if those “cultures” are just different organizations or groups. Allowing time for talking and listening is key).
- Share a simple and singular goal. Don't try and do (or be) too much the first time around—keep it simple so that you feel and know success as a group.
- Ask for help and be sure to have roles for those who are volunteering to get into the mix—confusion and hard feelings can be avoided by being clear.
- Use your internal resources—all of us are full of a wealth of resources, be that money or connections or intelligence or creativity or all of these. If you feel you do not “have enough” to do what you want, just keep looking.
- Allow the magic to happen—don't be so full or attached to your plans that you don't allow for spontaneity or a change of plans to happen. Change can often bring unexpected magic.



The concert was envisioned as the culminating event of the Seeds of Peace Educators course. Because it was a collaboration between Seeds of Peace and the Maine community, several key partners were involved in its creation.

Emilia Dahlin and the Transcendence Project stepped forward to lead the way, and lead she did! Emilia sang, raised money, attended meetings, created flyers, wrote thank you notes, recruited other Maine performers, drove to Camp, and generally did whatever was needed to help make the show a reality. It took four months to collaboratively create this show and, even though it was hard work, it was worth every minute of it.

The night of the event, the theater (a local, well-known venue) was packed with over 250 people and the performers, who had very little time to prepare, put on a multi-media show that featured original music and art, theater performances, poetry, and dance. Each of the Educators in the program participated in some way, and the effort to create together yielded many lessons for all, as well as an artistic expression that left all of us with hearts filled with hope and joy.

WHY THE SHOW?

The Educator Programs this summer at Seeds of Peace consisted of both the Delegation Leaders Program and, for the second summer, the Educators Course, which this year

featured a two-week seminar on social and community change using the arts. The course was specifically geared toward educators and artists (of all disciplines) who are working around the world using theater, music, movement, film, and art to build peace and create change in their communities.

As a culminating aspect of the course, the group was invited to create a show for the community. Additionally, Maine musicians, artists, and dancers joined in and managed a miraculous multi-media show full of truth, culture, and imagination.

Maine artists and collaborators included Emilia Dahlin, Shamou Shamou, Marita Kennedy-Castro, Elana Bell, and Martin Steingesser.

But why? What about music and performance transcend and heal?

This topic was one that the performers both lived and discussed over the time that it took to put the show on. Hard work, disagreements, perseverance, and the will to come together for a single goal all helped make it happen. Experiencing those things together with our green Seeds of Peace t-shirts on was perhaps our greatest motivation for the show and the reason for the show's success.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The shores of Pleasant Lake in Otisfield, Maine, have been home to the Seeds of Peace International Camp since the Camp's inception,

and although many Mainers know of it, many others do not.

One of the benefits of collaborating with local Maine artists and community members was simply to help people living in the state to learn about Seeds of Peace and its amazing people and programs.

Once people learn about Seeds of Peace, or have a chance to meet one of our Educators or a Seed, they are "hooked" and want to find ways to continue being involved.

For this community collaboration, local artists and musicians were able to form meaningful relationships, make beautiful music, and share their experiences in the ways that music and the arts can (and often do) transcend cultural differences.

The Seeds of Peace Educators felt grateful for the connection to Maine in a more profound way, and the Maine artists were in awe of the talent, humor, and intellect of the Seeds participants. They especially noted how much they were able to work together to put together a show with so little time.

Because it was an inaugural event, there were a bunch of bumps in the road, but many locals volunteered their time and talent (and pizza and cookies too) and the artists from across the globe put on a show that was not to be missed.

For all of the performers (and audience members for that matter too), there was magic, hope and love that reverberated for weeks and months to come.

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

Educators' Course performs peace in action

By Annie Jacobs

It was "Morning Circle," just a few days into the intensive two weeks planned for us. We were a group of 35 educators, artists, and musicians from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus, the U.S, India, and Pakistan gathered together in Otisfield for the second annual Seeds of Peace Educators' Course. This year's focus was on the role of the arts in peacebuilding. We were eager and ready that morning for whatever our skilled and ambitious staff had to offer one another. Or so we thought.

Deb Bicknell stepped into the circle holding the poster proudly, as if she was already applauding our imagined accomplishments. She told us the poster was posted around Portland. Tastefully designed, it read: "9 Countries, 35 artists, One Concert."

That would be us—yes, we were the 35—and the performance was planned for the Portland Stage Company in less than two weeks.

This pre-planned concert was stressful to many of us, for a variety of reasons. Some in the group were educators, not performers. Some were professional musicians, and professional musicians need to plan and practice in preparation for a concert. Some, myself included, took on the role of core planner, hoping, grasping for some way to make this work.

And whether or not the Seeds of Peace staff wished for this assignment to exercise our abilities (as a group and as individuals) to be creative and collaborative under pressure, it did just that.

The planning team was a wonderful mix of musicians, theater artists, visual artists, and educators. Each person drew from their expertise and their creativity, as one idea fed another. I approached the challenge as a writer and editor, and imagined: what if the group—all 35 of us—could create and perform text that would embody the rich array of voices among us. The group liked the idea, and the theme of a "journey" emerged that would somehow represent our different places of origin.

A journey. An exciting, yet laborious, task. The theater artists and I brainstormed how to collect writing



'SILENT SCREAM' BY ANNIE JACOBS

and story imagery from everyone in our group who wished to share. During a Morning Circle, we set a few minutes of quiet writing time aside to focus on one of four different prompts given to us. (See these prompts at the end of this article.)

A few days later, I offered a writing workshop in which I shared poems that make use of memory and all five senses, and asked participants to close their eyes to receive the sound, smells, and imagery of the poems. Participants then worked in pairs to create poems that reflected one another's memories. (This process is also outlined at the end of this article.)

I admit I was overwhelmed. I was afraid that we, on the planning team, would fall short in representing the group in a satisfactory way. I even lost sleep over it. Luckily, my tireless team members continually inspired me over breakfast meetings and late-night script writing. Their skill and dedication as artists, and eventually as directors and choreographers of what would become something of a play within a concert, was literally awe-inspiring.

So too was the contribution of the entire group. Participants wrote stories and poems, shared them, and trusted me to edit them into a narrative. They became actors, practicing until midnight several nights in a row, under the skillful direction of the theater artists.

The musicians in the course prac-

ticed so much that I fell asleep and woke with their songs in my head. They included: a percussionist from the Amman Symphony Orchestra; guitarists, drummers, and singers from Heartbeat; an oudist, a violist, and a cellist; and accomplished singers and dancers. The group congealed into a masterful band with a beautiful set of songs from across cultures. Before long, many of us were humming and dancing to these stirring songs, anticipating the day when the group might get back together to record them.

And within two weeks of first meeting each other, we were ready (or not) to perform the play and the musical concert for an audience of hundreds at the Portland Stage Company.

Minutes before the performance, having seen the stage for the first time only hours before, we stood in a large circle that filled the practice room. Led by Emilia Dahlin of The Transcendence Project* we took a few deep breaths and united the way performers must, letting go of angst and shortcomings, unifying as performers.

The performance itself? Unforgettable, and a little unutterable. It is easier to describe the late bus back to Camp: calm singing and quiet conversation. Tired, but deeply satisfied. I believe we succeeded.

What follows, after a description of writing exercises, is the text written by the group in the order in

which it was performed. While this does not show the actors on stage, it at least shares the words that they composed and read.

MORNING CIRCLE EXERCISE

Participants were asked to take out their journals, choose one of these questions, and spend ten minutes writing. Four questions/prompts were offered to evoke a theme of "journey," memory, and movement within the variety of our experiences.

1. You are on a journey and you come to a barrier. How will you get across?
2. What is your earliest memory of home?
3. Can you remember a time when you had to leave your home for another life somewhere else?
4. What is one thing you would like to take with you? What is one thing you would like to leave behind?

After writing, participants who wished to contribute their story handed it to the planning team.

POETRY WORKSHOP

1. Poems that make use of memory and the 5 senses were read aloud. Participants were asked to listen for sound, touch, smell, sight, and taste within each poem. Discussion points included: a) attributes of the poems including the sounds of alliteration, rhyme, slant rhymes, and repetition; and b) the mix of sensory experiences (emotional, physical) in the poems and how the physical and less physical observations can complement each other.

2. The group was asked to think of a place that is, or was, at one time "home." They were then divided into pairs. Partners were instructed to reflect on one another's memories of home in this way:

a. Partner A describes a memory of a place that is, or was at one time, considered home. Partner B listens and records on paper everything that they hear. (5 mins) Partners switch roles. (5 mins)

b. Each partner works alone from the list to choose the strongest words and images to create a poem based on their partner's memory. (5 mins)

c. Partners share their writing with each other, and discuss whether or not to share with the large group. (5-10 mins)

d. The group comes back together into one circle. Those pairs who have chosen to share one or both of

their writing samples with the group do so.

Writing from these two exercises were included in the performance in this order:

Small stone

I want to send a message
to the other side of the river
To make a connection
To write a letter
put a small stone
into an envelope
to send to the other side
Wondering what is there
Wondering of what to be aware

Silent Scream

I had gone there for the first time
Everyone had been so
kind, warm, hospitable
Still: us and them
Supposed to be enemies
Families torn apart
by arbitrary maps

On the flight back, late at night
I looked down
and saw a long, long line of lights
in the absolute darkness
The line started I don't know where
disappeared who knows where ...

... An unending line of lights

I ask the person sitting beside me
if he knows what it is
He says it is the border
We put lights along the partition

Blackness on both sides
and the line of lights—a wall
Like a silent scream

First memory

Smiling reflection
bathroom mirror
soft, warm, rosy

My earliest memory of home
is seeing my smiling reflection
in the bathroom mirror
as my mom held me
snuggled to her chest
We were soft, warm, rosy

My home

Read by two actors alternating lines

My home
Small house
Red floors, open windows, open door
a little bundle of toys
A mattress
play pens
safe
A colored fence
blue, yellow, orange, green
Blue skies
Mid-day siesta with grandma
the smell of her sweat
Ice cream, my father's laughter

My home

Summer hot air flowing through the window
Sitting under the table
Square, blue
Home cooked food
smell of watermelon and cheese
dirty feet
cold marble floor
Sunset
white clouds
grown up sounds and baby cries
waiting for their moms to come
cold orange juice

Monsoon's Coming

Eight months of searing sun
Everything's turned brackish brown
Us waiting, waiting, just

waiting for June

To drench us
The sky, whole day now, is dark
Clouds roll in from the horizon

Then the rain comes, bringing
a mossy smell to the earth
far down below our 10th story flat

Kids dance dizzily
mothers catching the rain
in their gaping mouths

Silenced

After my father returned from war we were sent to a foreign land. While he was away my little sister stopped speaking and I began to speak for her.

In our new school, I was standing on a marble balcony overlooking a playground full of children. I saw my sister standing alone, looking lost and afraid. I wanted to yell to the children, "Please be kind to my sister!" ... but I was too far away for them to hear.

We didn't have time to pack

"You should leave, they are coming, and very close," we were told. We didn't have time to pack. My grandfather took the key of the house and this is all that came with us.

No real suitcases

After mom got the fake certificate for my eldest brother we had to flee as quickly as possible. We had no real suitcases so we made parcels and tied them with a rope and like this we went to the train station

What I want to leave behind

I want to forget
The war memories in my heart
The look of fear
in my daughter's eyes
The smell of blood spreading
over the town

I would like to live in peace
to raise my daughter with
love and care

How to get across

I am on a journey
walking through a field
I come to the end and the only way out
is down a very steep slope

If I can cross
I will enter a land where I will never die
I lie down in defeat
And I fall asleep
And dream of a way to cross

Credit to the participants of the 2012 Seeds of Peace Educator's Course.

*The Transcendence Project of Portland, Maine co-coordinated with Seeds of Peace to conceive, plan, and perform this performance.

The following paper-cut illustrations are the start of a project to turn the text into an illustrated book, in the hopes of sharing this journey of ours with the world.

Annie is a poet, writer, and visual artist whose work relates to home and place, cultures in conflict and coexistence efforts, and the environment. She was a 2012 poetry fellow at Constance Saltonstall Arts Colony, a 2011-2012 staff-artist at Vermont Studio Center, and a student and staff at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies. More at www.anniejacobs.com.

REFLECTIONS ON SEEDS OF PEACE

By Nadia Chaney

Sharing our Creative Facilitation workshop during the Educator's retreat at Seeds of Peace last summer reminded both Charlie Murphy and I of the power of engaging the arts for social and personal transformation. The flow of activities in our workshops, which are carefully structured and focus on fun, creative risk-taking, community building, and personal reflection, allowed participants to bring their own stories and reflections to the group. We witnessed moments of deep connection across difference, individuals struggling to hear stories and opinions from perspectives other than their own, moments of insight about

how to continue to empower and connect with youth and children, personal reflection and transformation, and, of course the exuberant release of exploring personal and group creativity.

This was not always easy. Certainly, for us as facilitators, some soul-searching was necessary. The backdrop of international conflict, and its toll on the personal stories in the room, meant that we needed to be sensitive without being protective. Questions of the balance of power and voice kept us working hard on our activities and reflection questions in the evenings. We were amazed (once again) at the power of the arts to hold space for complex and often contradictory narratives. For partici-

pants, I know there were moments of deep challenge and resistance. We remembered how creativity can allow us to re-think positions, to engage with the childlike wonder and sensitivity inside each one of us, and to expose and share our stories. We were also reminded that creativity is a powerful mirror that can reveal stories and emotions that have been long hidden. The process of working together to hold these was challenging, and the maturity and compassion that emerged was unforgettable.

We remain very grateful for the profound lessons we learned from each participant in last summer's group. We remember you fondly and are humbled by your courage, strength, and passion for change.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM

By Daniel Noah Moses

If you want to understand the conflict in Jerusalem, put aside whatever notions you have about what it means to be a city. Jerusalem is not an ordinary city.

In Jerusalem, the past continues, every day. A construction project becomes an archeological dig. Events that took place thousands of years ago reverberate as if they are happening still.

If you want to understand Jerusalem, do away with your sense of

geography. Distances in Jerusalem cannot be measured with the usual tools. The city is composed of sacred places, emotional spaces, existing on parallel maps.

Jerusalem is a city of love songs to God. It is a city with a syndrome named after it (for good reason).

When it comes to Jerusalem, nobody is giving you the full story. Keep asking questions. Keep asking questions. Keep asking questions.

Jerusalem is more than a city. And Jerusalem is everywhere. Lahore in Pakistan is Jerusalem. Mumbai

in India is Jerusalem. Amman in Jordan; Kabul in Afghanistan; and yes, even Cairo in Egypt: they are each Jerusalem. Portland, Maine, is Jerusalem. But even now we are not in the Portland, Maine that could be, that might be. We are not in Jerusalem even when we are in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not yet Jerusalem. We are in the desert. We are walking in the desert. We make the road by walking. Jerusalem is in the distance. We must keep walking. Let's keep walking.

“Reconciliation is never about returning to a former state, though there is often great longing to do so. It is about building relationships, and relationships are about real people in real situations who must find a way to work forward together.”

JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

PROFILE

Almas Butt, Director of SOS Village, Pakistan

Almas Butt—director of an orphanage, volunteer trainer, maker of dozens of “homes,” and educator—is a source of inspiration for anyone looking for a role model.

She is someone who makes lemonade from lemons on a regular basis. When I interviewed her, I immediately grasped that Almas is an amazing woman and quickly realized what an inspirational and experienced director she must be.

Within minutes of beginning our interview, I could already imagine how thorough and thoughtful her volunteer training must be for any, and all, who want to heal the world.

When asked what her job consists of as the Lahore, Pakistan Director of Save Our Souls Children’s Village (SOS), Almas was clear. She stated, “We are one of eleven Children’s Villages in Pakistan, each province has its own children’s village.”

“We provide a home for orphaned and abandoned children and they are brought up in a homelike environment. They live like brothers and sisters with eight to ten children in every home. There is also a mother whose goal is to raise the children with love and compassion. This is the first part of our mission. The second thing that SOS provides is education. Without education the children cannot go far.”

Almas described how the villages are organized as follows:

“There is a school adjacent to every village. In each village there are three projects: a village of homes, a school, and a youth home for adolescent boys. We support all of the children through their education with a director who looks after their educational needs.”

“There are 150 children living in Lahore Village, 18 homes, and 20 mothers. If the mother falls sick, there is an auntie who substitutes for the mother. The children range from a few months of age to 22-23 with the girls. The girls get married and only then do they leave. Even if they have completed their education, they move out only when they get married. And even after they are married, they come back and visit with their children.

With a big smile, Almas said, “When they come back with their children they say, ‘We’ve come



to Nanu’s house (Grandmother’s house).”

I asked about the “mothers” who raise the children. Almas explained that some are widows or divorcees—they are women looking for shelter so the SOS village becomes their home and they raise the orphaned and abandoned as they would their own children. She also told me that many European volunteers also come to work there and that she trains these volunteers.

I asked Almas about her educational and training background which prepared her for what must be a very challenging job.

She says that she was a teacher for nine years, a school principal for five years, and that she has been working with SOS for 14 years.

She used to visit SOS often and she fell in love with the idea of a home for abandoned and orphaned children. She lives on the premises so she is there 24 hours a day.

In a soft voice, Almas described her dedication to the village.

“Children are welcome to visit me even late at night. Sometimes this happens if a child is sick and I need to take him or her to the doctor or hospital. At our village, there is a nurse available 24 hours a day.”

“We also have our own library, play room, and in the summer there are exchange programs whereby children from Lahore visit other cities such as Islamabad. The children are very proud that they went to their aunt’s house to see their cousins who live there. It establishes a sense of kinship. They can say, we have

cousins living in Karachi or Islamabad and establish bonds with other children and ‘mothers’ who live far away.”

There is also a proper school up until 10th standard and then they move on to different colleges and universities on their own merit. She explained how they have many success stories of children who have gone on to college and university. They even have two sons who became a Major and Captain in the army. They also have an architect, a doctor, and many more children who have done well in life and of whom they are very proud.

Q: Almas, I am wondering if you could discuss a bit further how you found out about Seeds of Peace and what it has meant for you to be here.

A: I heard about Seeds of Peace from a colleague who was working in some school and she happened to mention it. She told me someone from Seeds of Peace was visiting us. I met with the Seeds of Peace visitor and she was very impressed by SOS and its philosophy. Then, I came to the Seeds of Peace International Camp as a Delegation Leader in 2004, bringing 14 children from Pakistan.

I was there for three weeks. It was a wonderful experience. The conflict was discussed and I wanted so much that this history of blaming each other should be forgotten so that we can move forward. I really believe in this. Now I am here as an educator and I have learned so

many things.

I have learned a lot from these sessions and workshops. I am also the Director of Training at SOS Children's village, so all the directors of training for the other villages come to the main office where I work. I know I am going to use all that I've learned here at Camp to train the employees of SOS Children's Village. I hope to take back what I've learned here so that SOS villages in Pakistan can teach what I've learned at Seeds of Peace to their own children. So this is going to be very useful for me.

The program has already evolved in my mind: some activities for the mothers, other activities and games for the children. I think I will also hold workshops for the directors and involve them in these programs. It is going to be wonderful. We have never heard of these things that I am learning here now. I will reproduce everything. There are people in Pakistan living in remote areas such as Quetta, Baluchistan, or the northern frontier, for example. They will also benefit from my being here. I will first have a workshop for the directors who run the villages.

I will also be using the philosophy of Seeds of Peace, like the exercise about deep listening. That goes well with our system. Deep listening to children and then giving them

Volunteer opportunity

Educators who seek a volunteer experience working with orphans should contact Almas Butt at:

SOS Children's Village,
Ferozepur Road, Lahore
54600 Pakistan

Email:
buttalmassos@hotmail.com

support. Listen without nodding or moving—it is so important for these children especially. They should have the confidence that there is this person that will listen to them and give them their full attention because they don't have anyone else in their lives.

I joined SOS because I love children and I enjoy being with them. It has become my life now. My life revolves around them only. Being here with all these people from so many different countries, cultures, has helped us all to learn how to co-exist. This is what we teach our children at the SOS home as well.

For example, I was the first one who thought of having a Christmas party for the Village and now all the others have one. Children should learn to respect other peoples' be-

liefs. We have a big party with the Christmas tree. There are Hindus, Muslims, but mostly Christians. There are also Christian mothers. There is no discrimination.

Q: How are the SOS Children's Villages funded?

A: SOS is an NGO and not funded by the government. Every child is sponsored by someone outside. Pakistanis are very generous and we look after our children. Our village is totally funded by Pakistanis either living in Pakistan or living abroad.

We are expanding and we want to reach out to every orphan in the country. We are currently establishing another village in Peshawar and the northwestern frontier KPT.

Q: Any last thoughts on your Seeds of Peace experience?

A: Yes, I have met people from all over the world and I wish we could do away with all these boundaries and live happily in this beautiful world that God made for us.

We should learn from how [Seeds] interact with each other. In the beginning of Camp, the children were so hostile. It is unimaginable. But then they become the best of friends. This is what we all need to do—become the best of friends.

“Music, among other things, is based very much on sound, and sound is based on vibration. So the way we experience music is much more holistically—it’s a whole body experience. And music, sound, smell ... are among the things that permit us to move and transport us in time, actually. You can hear a song and it will take you back to a moment. Or you can catch a certain smell and it will suddenly feel like you’re transported. And this notion of transportability, we think, is a window into several places in which reconciliation and healing would do well to give more consideration to.”

JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

PROFILE

Heartbeat Israeli-Palestinian youth music program

For the Summer 2012 Educators Course, "Expressive Arts: Educational Transformations", Seeds of Peace hosted four members of the nonprofit Heartbeat.

Aaron Shneyer, Heartbeat's Founder and Executive Director, and Tamer Omari, the Co-Program Director, have a long history with Seeds of Peace and were both counselors at the Camp in Maine.

In addition, Shoshana Gottesman, Heartbeat's Development and Communications Associate, and Ami Yares, Co-Program Director, were participants in the Course.

Each member discussed their hopes and ambitions to use music as a mechanism for peace education.



AARON SHNEYER

Aaron Shneyer was born in Washington, D.C., and has been living in Jerusalem since 2006. It was there that he founded the organization Heartbeat to use music and popular media as a mechanism for peaceful transformation of conflict.

On his website (www.heartbeat.fm), he says that it is important to engage citizens in the Middle East and worldwide in the movement towards peaceful social transformation.

Aaron founded Heartbeat in 2007 with an MTV-Fulbright grant to study the power of music in building mutual understanding between people from conflict areas. Aaron graduated from Georgetown University in 2005 and has since worked for many years as a dialogue facilitator and program coordinator with

various youth empowerment and civil society peace-building efforts, including Seeds of Peace and the Sulha Peace Project. Aaron performs with music ensembles throughout the United States, Israel, and Palestine, including Mashrou3 Jidi L'Hadat Bal, SAZ and TuRap, a Palestinian hip-hop band.

He has also performed with White-Flag, the Palestinian-Israeli street fusion band.

In addition to Heartbeat, he is the founder of Jamaa, a musicians' community and record company that promotes social change and unity (www.jamaa.in).

Aaron was an active staff member in our numerous workshops and a leader in facilitating the music group for the Seeds of Peace performance: "We Make The Road by Walking."

Heartbeat works to build trust across a critical mass of Israelis and Palestinians. The organization works to help people both understand, and trust, that they have a partner on "the other side" in order to accomplish peaceful social transformation.

Some of the ways in which Heartbeat does this is by sending their All-Star Band into local communities to share their music and their experiences through performances.

Heartbeat also offers a series of camps and retreats for youth which create opportunities for young Israeli and Palestinian musicians to work together, hear one another, and amplify their voices in order to influence the world around them.

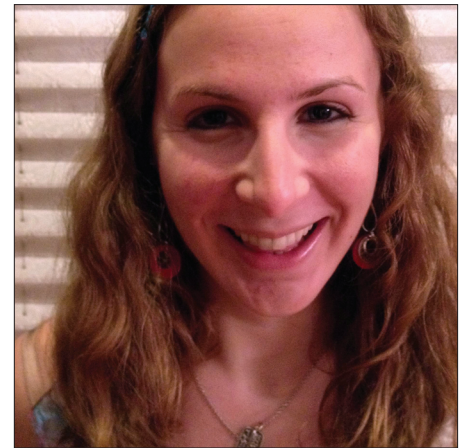
Shneyer says that Heartbeat's goal is to erode the fear, violence, ignorance, and pervasive lack of trust which define the political and cultural reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Music has an amazing ability to connect people, build trust and inspire hope in the darkest of places," he says. "Modern, popular music has long been the voice of change all around the world, and a powerful means for youth expression and non-violent action."

"By bringing together young Jewish and Arab musicians and strengthening their voices, we are working to build a global culture of trust, compassion, and respect.

"Until Heartbeat, Jewish-Arab youth music programs exclusively used classical music as the medium for communication and exchange."

"While a number of popular adult music ensembles featuring Jews and Arabs playing together have existed for years, before Heartbeat, there had never been an organized effort to bring together Jewish and Arab youth musicians through the modern, popular music that youth are often most connected to."



SHOSHANA GOTTESMAN

Seeds of Peace offered me a one-of-a-kind experience. I learned more about Palestinians, as well as the music of the Levant, just from singing so many songs on the bus!"

I started playing the violin when I was six and took up the viola when I was 21. It was my hope to combine the two things that I love the most: my music, and the atmosphere that music creates by bringing together people from different backgrounds.

My involvement with the conflict resolution network began with my interfaith work at the University of Miami. It was there that I co-founded a student organization called JAM, which stands for Jews and Muslims. JAM was a group that brought together Jews and Muslims to do a variety of activities—some of which focused on socializing or learning about one another's personal narratives. In addition, we participated in community-building activities.

However, what stood out to me was the ways in which we learned together. We put together a big con-

cert called Sounds of Faith which combined the music of the Abrahamic religions. It was very successful because it brought together clergy and students from all over the Middle East.

Performing in this event was the first time that I was able to bridge my passions. Later, I was a co-organizer for a summer music camp for Tunisian youth in Hammamet, Tunisia.

Today, I am still connected with the youth in Tunisia on Facebook.

While I was working on bridging interfaith connections and music, I was told about the organization Heartbeat.

During my participation in a course entitled, "Citizen Diplomacy in Israel and Palestine, Rebecca Steinfield informed me of her connection with Seeds of Peace and Aaron Shneyer.

I reached out to Aaron when I went to Jerusalem, and began interning with Heartbeat.

I've been working with them since March of 2011.

Now, I'm here at Seeds at Peace for the Expressive Arts Session.

I also had the opportunity to travel for one week to an Arts and Passion Driven Learning Institute with Yo-Yo Ma at Harvard's Graduate School of Education.

The Educators Course at Seeds of Peace has been very important to me. I have been able to interact with other members of Heartbeat and we have been able to build a sense of community amongst each other.

We have had the opportunity to share ideas and brainstorm in a very productive setting.

Personally, a lot of the exercises from PYE [Partners for Youth Empowerment] were excellent for our group.

The fact that they were both facilitators and educators was very helpful and I'm not sure that I would have been able to have this experience anywhere else.



TAMER OMARI

Q: What are your responsibilities in the organization, Heartbeat, and why did you join the organization?

A: For the last two years, I have been both the program co-director and a musician for the organization.

I joined Heartbeat because it combines activism and music. That is who I am...I've always been a musician. I started when I was four years old and music has always been a big part of my life.

Whenever I try to move away from it, I am always pulled back into a musical direction. After living away from the Holy Land for nine years or so, I felt like I was running away and that I wasn't doing enough to help. I came back and I started working.

Q: How did you find Heartbeat?

A: I got back in touch with Seeds of Peace and I started to volunteer in the local villages. Then, I came back as a camp counselor and I heard about Aaron Shneyer. I heard he worked on what I like to call "non-violent resistance against inequality." That is, facing resistance in the Holy Land by bringing together youth from different sides of the conflict—especially young musicians who come together to play music. I set up a meeting with Aaron and

we just clicked! It was immediately obvious that we were going to work together. I play music in Heartbeat and I also organize and direct other events and facilitate music sessions for Heartbeat as well.

Q: How big are these events and sessions?

A: It's varied. I usually have about five to twenty kids per group. I've worked with about 100 musicians that have been through Heartbeat.

Q: What do you think Seeds of Peace-Session II will do for you as a professional working with youth in peace education?

A: It is affecting me as a participant as well as who I am as an individual... Being a staff member was transformational. As a staff member, I had never worked with adults. This was new to me. Until now, I had only worked with kids and I had no idea what to expect in working with adults. I was expecting the worst—and I was scared. But at the same time, I was confident enough to know I could meet the challenge. I found that it was really satisfying to work with adults, especially artists.

As an artist myself, I automatically was able to find common ground with the educators... I realized that it doesn't matter where you come from or who you are, you have that common ground.

It was very reassuring. I also feel like I am ready to work with more artists and more adults as I still have a lot to learn.

As a participant, I was definitely positively affected by the PYE global workshops. I've been a fan of them and have watched their YouTube channel...but working with them in person and feeling the energy that they brought to camp is insanely inspiring.

I am going to use all the tools from PYE, their attitude, energy, teaching skills...and everything else they taught me. In conclusion—Session II was an eye-opener, a new experience!

*“Logic will get you from A to B.
Imagination will take you everywhere.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

PROFILE

Micah Hendler: Music in Israeli-Palestinian encounters

By Micah Hendler

FROM SEEDS OF PEACE TO THE JERUSALEM YOUTH CHORUS

I am a Seed of Peace. I am also a musician. As I have become more involved with both music and with Seeds of Peace, I have realized that the two are critically intertwined.

Through an analysis of the function music serves at Seeds of Peace, I began to understand how to harness music as a tool that can unite, inspire, and express identity among youth from conflicting backgrounds.

After researching this further in Jerusalem in 2010, I formed my own Israeli-Palestinian music program, the Jerusalem Youth Chorus, at the Jerusalem International YMCA.

In this article, I will share some of the insights about musical peace-making that I have gathered from my involvement in these various programs, as well as the model of musical-dialogue encounter that I have put into practice in the Jerusalem Youth Chorus.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Theorization of “encounters” between members of conflict groups has produced a body of strategies and structures that are useful in different encounter situations.

One fundamental concept is the distinction between interpersonal and intergroup interaction. Interpersonal interaction stresses the individuality of each participant over his or her national or ethnic identity and aims to connect participants in an encounter on a personal level. Intergroup behavior, on the other hand, occurs when the participants interact in terms of their group identities and attempt to understand each other in light of those identities.

Each is useful on its own but each also presents limitations. A purely interpersonal encounter may change individual relationships, but is unlikely to change broader attitudes about the opposing group if the participants’ collective identities are never discussed.

On the other hand, an encounter consisting entirely of intergroup inter-



action threatens to strengthen the differences between the participants, if these conflicting group identities are the only thing that is stressed. The literature shows that a mixed model of interpersonal and intergroup interaction in an encounter setting will generate the best chances of creating both meaningful relationships and political understanding. I found this to be true in my 2010 research in Jerusalem.

I have also found that, unsurprisingly, reality significantly complicates the application of theory. Only participants who already believe in the humanity of the other side, at least to some extent, may be willing to embrace interpersonal interaction.

At the same time, the participants who are most skeptical of the other side are likely to try to force an intergroup model upon the encounter.

However, it is the more open-minded participants who need intergroup models the most, and the more skeptical participants who need interpersonal contact. Creating a program that successfully combines both is truly a challenge.

MUSIC

Seeds of Peace, which combines elements of a summer camp (interpersonal interaction) with a facilitated dialogue process (intergroup interaction), offers one example of such a mixed model.

In this context, music helps create a forum for interpersonal interaction. Particularly, it is a powerful means of creating and strengthening a new group identity (that of the “Seed”)

through shared performance that helps lessen the dominance of the national identities that the Seeds bring with them from home. This new, shared identity is what makes it not only permissible, but expected, for these Seeds to be open to one another in dialogue.

I have attempted to replicate this model in the region through my Jerusalem Youth Chorus.

The chorus combines a performing musical ensemble with a dialogue program.

Singing together provides the interpersonal element of interaction, and creates a safe, cohesive group in which a potentially divisive, but ultimately important dialogue process can occur on the intergroup level.

There is room for further innovation, particularly if one begins to explore ways to use music itself as a vehicle for both interpersonal AND intergroup interaction. But however you do it, it is a great gift that music, and in many ways the arts more broadly, can be used to provide the basis for a mixed model of interpersonal and intergroup interaction.

It is this model that offers the best chance not only to change the lives of its participants through personal relationships and prejudice reduction, but also, through performance, to inspire others to do the same in their lives.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Music & Arts in Action (www.musicandartsinaction.net)
A journal exploring the connection between the arts and social change

- Hewstone, Miles, and Rupert Brown, eds. *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1986.

For the psychological literature on interpersonal and intergroup processes in encounter situations

- Hendler, Micah, “Music for Peace in Jerusalem,” Senior Thesis, Yale University, 2012 (<http://traubman.igc.org/hendlerpaper.pdf>)

A comprehensive literature review and the results of my research in 2010

ARTSBRIDGE, INC.

Using art & dialogue to empower young leaders

By Debbie Nathan

Artsbridge, Inc. is a Boston-based nonprofit organization with partner sites throughout Israel, Palestine, and the USA.

The goal of Artsbridge is to create a safe environment for its students, which fosters understanding, curiosity, creativity, and leadership.

Using art and dialogue to bring them together, Artsbridge empowers its students to become leaders in the quest for a brighter future in and between their own communities.

A key component to the Artsbridge model is the continuation of programming, year round, once the students return to their home communities.

Upon returning to their home communities, the Artsbridge graduates



serve as peer leaders to younger students from their communities and encourage their participation in activities that promote community building, effective communication,

artistic expression, English language enrichment, and respectful listening. The training received during the Artsbridge summer program enables our graduates to act as role models and mentors, thereby imparting the knowledge and ideas they learned in the summer program to these new students.

The artistic process serves several purposes in the dialogic process. It teaches the participants to think creatively. Art enables individuals to begin to explore issues non-verbally and safely. Through art, one moves beyond words, allowing for greater expression of ideas and feelings.

It also allows students to work together towards a common vision. Through the joint art projects, participants realize that they are able to work together despite differences.

PEACEBUILDING AND THE ARTS

Join the Global Conversation

By Cynthia Cohen

In Belgrade, Serbia, courageous and creative theater artists acknowledge crimes committed in their names and speak truth to power. In the small town of Perquin, El Salvador, survivors of a massacre from both sides of the political divide memorialize their losses together while painting colorfully vibrant murals of the better future for which they yearn. In Australia, a series of small reconciliation rituals grew into a movement that led to an official apology to the "Stolen Generation," aboriginal children forcibly taken from their families. There, and in cities all over the world, young people are building relationships across differences through the shared rhythms of hip hop.

All of the arts—music, theatre, visual arts, literature, architecture, film, and more—can be crafted to contribute to the creative transformation of conflict. Why? Because they engage the cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of people in works that can escape from the constraints of everyday language, which, in zones of violence,

is usually "infected" with the thought patterns of the conflict. The arts can be crafted to reach beneath defenses, to open our minds to new ways of thinking, our hearts to new kinds of feelings, and our whole beings to new perceptions.

It isn't that the arts do this automatically. In fact, we know that the transformative power of the arts can be mobilized for great harm as well as for good.

But artists whose ethical sensibilities and intentions align with justice and peace can invite their communities to engage with contentious issues and topics that are otherwise taboo. Artists can offer creative approaches to resist abuses of power and to help communities under siege restore the full range of human emotions. Art processes can be crafted to nourish the communicative capacities for peacebuilding, enhancing people's abilities to listen and to express themselves so others can hear.

Because art symbols communicate on so many levels at once, the arts can address the complexity of situations and help us to embrace the paradoxes that are part of any

peacebuilding process.

I recently completed the production phase of a major international action/research project called *Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict*.

Through 14 case studies, artists, community leaders, and peacebuilders explored how theatrical works and rituals contribute to peacebuilding in the midst of violent conflict, in the midst of structural violence and oppression, and in the aftermath of gross violations of human rights. These examples are drawn from every continent, including case studies from Palestine and Israel.

In reviewing all 14 of the case studies, as well as interviews with artists, peacebuilders, and evaluators, we identified eight lessons from the project.

- The arts are powerful and can be crafted to contribute to the transformation of violent conflict.
- Peacebuilding performances have the potential to support communities to engage with painful issues and to navigate among apparently conflicting and contradictory imperatives.

- Art projects in zones of violent conflict have the potential to inflict harm; precautions must be taken to minimize these risks.
- Aesthetic excellence and socio-political effectiveness need not be competing imperatives; they are often mutually reinforcing.
- Artist-based works, community-based works, and collective expressions such as rituals, lullabies, embroidery patterns etc., can all be crafted to make substantive contributions to justice and peace.
- The fully transformative power of the arts depends on respect for the integrity of the artistic project.
- Arts-based peacebuilding projects could have greater impact on societies in conflict if more non-arts agencies and organizations recognized their peacebuilding potential and helped extend their reach.
- Peacebuilding performances bear witness to the human costs of war and oppression and to its gendered nature. They tell the stories of the children, women, and men whose lives are diminished by the fear and humiliation, the shame and dislocation, that accompany violence.

In addition to a two-volume anthology, we also produced a documentary and a toolkit. The documentary features examples from Serbia, Uganda, Argentina, Peru, the United States (New Orleans), Australia, and Cambodia. They are quite relevant to the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the

film is now available with Arabic and Hebrew subtitles. I encourage readers of *The Olive Branch Teacher's Guide* to take a look at the documentary and to reflect on their own work in light of its examples.

The documentary is accompanied by a second disc, a toolkit of 18 short videos, and 18 print documents. These short videos include a clip featuring Iman Aoun of Ashtar Theatre, who offers a history of theatre in Palestine and describes the work of Ashtar as it uses the techniques of Augusto Boal, the creator of Theatre of the Oppressed, to engage people throughout Palestine. It also features theatre scholar Lee Perlman describing the work of the Arab Hebrew Theatre of Jaffa, which staged an imagined future Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The toolkit's print documents include guidelines for planning and documenting peacebuilding performances and for minimizing the risks of doing harm. It is our hope that artists throughout the Middle East and around the world find these resources useful in strengthening their work.

All too often, artists are called upon to promote their work, to compete with each other for scarce funding. In the Peacebuilding and the Arts Program I direct at Brandeis University, we work to create spaces where artists and peacebuilders can reflect on their work, examine both its successes and failures, and build relationships of both challenge and support with artists from other regions of the world.

We invite artists throughout the Middle East to join a growing international arts and peacebuilding movement by signing up for our e-newsletter *Peacebuilding and the Arts Now*, at sys2.unet.brandeis.edu/bwebforms/view/acttogotify. There you can read about artists working for peace around the world, as well as opportunities for training and other resources.

I was happy to play a role in the Seeds of Peace 2012 summer course, "Expressive Arts; Educational Transformations." Then, in November 2012, I enjoyed the day that I spent at the St. Andrews Guest House in Jerusalem for a workshop with Israeli and Palestinian alumni of this course and of other Seeds of Peace Educator Programs. We look forward to learning what new projects emerge from these initiatives. We would be happy to feature your work and your projects in future editions of *Peacebuilding and the Arts Now!*

Cynthia directs the program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at Brandeis University, where she teaches and conducts action/research projects.

She is co-creator of the film Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict, and co-editor of the anthology of the same name. In the 1990s, she worked as a coexistence facilitator at Seeds of Peace.



'BABY MIRRORS' BY ANNIE JACOBS

WHY THE ARTS? Partners for Youth Empowerment

"Why The Arts?" from the *Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE), Creative Facilitation Activities Manual*

ELICITS JOY: Creative expression in a judgment-free environment is simply a lot of fun. Worries about the past or future disappear, and we find ourselves in the flow of the present moment. When we express ourselves without trying to be perfect, we experience happiness regardless of our circumstances.

PROMOTES HEALTH: Numerous studies point to the benefits of creative expression for health. Notable is the work of Dr. James Pennebaker, who found that writing with emotion about one's life experiences increases immune function and decreases reliance on healthcare.

BUILDS CONFIDENCE: Arts-rich learning communities provide opportunities for everyone to shine and be seen and appreciated by one another. When people take creative risks and are appreciated by peers and mentors, their confidence jumps. Through repeated opportunities to take creative risks, self-confidence develops quite naturally.

DEVELOPS EMPATHY: Neuroscientists have discovered that our brains have mirror neurons that fire off when we witness emotions in another. Young people drop into empathetic resonance when they hear their peers expressing authentic feelings through poetry, music, and other arts.

BRINGS LEARNING ALIVE: Creative expression creates relevance by putting us in touch with our thoughts and feelings. It creates excitement by putting us on our creative edge. It creates a sense of vitality by bringing our imaginations into play. Human beings are designed to make meaning of our lives and much of this happens in the inner world of our imaginations where heart and head work together.

STRENGTHENS HUMAN CONNECTION: Daniel Goleman,

the author of a series of popular books on social and emotional intelligence, says that the first job of a leader is to create emotional resonance with his or her group. Creative expression brings down the walls and builds trust, connecting us across cultural, religious, socioeconomic, and generational divides.

PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE CREATIVE RISKS: Young people love to take risks. The arts provide an adventure with no right or wrong answers and an outlet for positive risk-taking without physical danger.

TEACHES 21st CENTURY LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Through the arts we learn how to see the big picture, synthesize information, live with paradox, collaborate with others, tell our stories, and so much more. These are all right-brain skills that leading thinkers claim are crucial for success in the modern world.

The Big Ideas

WE ARE ALL CREATIVE
Creativity is one of our primary human capacities, and we use it every day. And yet, too many of us don't think we are creative. We suspect this is because creativity has been over identified with art making—at least in Western culture. Very early on, parents and teachers begin to identify the "artistic" children and point them in the "creative" direction. The rest of us grow up to join the great mass of adults who think we are not creative.

Creativity is simply the ability to think things up and make them happen. Cooking breakfast, planting a garden, or coming up with a budget for an organization are all creative acts. Most of us express our creativity in large and small ways throughout the day.

Creativity, of course, also has to do with artistic expression, and we believe that each of us has a birthright to express ourselves through the arts—without having to be good at it. In many traditional

cultures, dance, song, music, visual art, and drama are woven into the fabric of everyday life. Expressing ourselves creatively without trying to be perfect leads to a flow state. As psychologist Rollo May put it, "Self-expression is most often accompanied by a feeling of shimmering joy."

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST TO USE THE ARTS IN YOUR WORK

You don't have to be an experienced painter to use visual arts activities with youth or an experienced actor to lead theater games. You don't have to be an experienced writer to engage young people in creative writing. All you need are some easy-to-lead activities and the courage to present them. As you become proficient in leading arts-based activities, the enthusiastic response from your participants will reinforce your desire to lead more. Before you know it, you will be searching for more and more activities to add to your toolbox.

You also don't have to worry about taking opportunities away from professional teaching artists by working with the arts yourself. Quite the contrary, we've found that when teachers and youth workers use arts-based practices themselves, they are more inclined to partner with teaching artists. As one youth worker said, "After I started using the arts with my youth, I became less intimidated by artists. I had more confidence in my own creativity, and I could speak their language."

WE ALL HAVE A VALID DESIRE TO BE SEEN AND HEARD

When we play with babies, what do we do? The baby smiles, we smile. The baby frowns, we frown. As we mirror the baby's actions, the feeling of love literally explodes in us and the baby is bathed in love, connection, and validation. Studies show that babies who do not receive attention eventually fail to thrive. As we grow older, we need to be seen and validated as well. The unheard child or adult suffers and often either shuts down or acts out.



'FIELD' BY ANNIE JACOBS

In arts-infused cultures, people are seen and appreciated through their shared participation in the arts. Through drumming, dancing, singing, or storytelling, everyone gets to be part of the game. In Western cultures, however, performance is reserved for those who can play, sing, or dance well. Performance is all about mastery and with that comes the heavy hand of judgment. Certainly there is a place for fine art, but not at the exclusion of the participatory arts.

When you encourage a young person to take a creative risk by making something up and sharing it, you give them a chance to be seen and heard. The cycle of affirmation that develops through taking risks and "performing" builds self-confidence and the courage to put one's voice out in the world.

THE ARTS ARE THE DOORWAY TO THE INNER LIFE

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance," wrote Aristotle. When we engage in creative expression, we enter the inner world of imagination. It is in this inner realm that we make meaning in our lives. It is here that motivation takes root, helping us to make core

decisions about our lives.

Young people are capable of profound thought and deep compassion. Creative expression—in a judgment-free context—tills the soil. At arts/empowerment camps, we often find that the most broken youth flock to the art barn where they have the chance to express themselves privately. As they make meaningful objects using paper and pastels, glue and magazine pictures, paints and sparkles, it's as if you can see their scattered inner selves move into coherence. As Karl Paulnak, pianist and director of music at Boston Conservatory said, "Music [and we would add all of the arts] has a way of finding the big, invisible moving pieces inside our hearts and souls and helping us figure out the position of things inside us."

A Recipe for Engagement

We are often asked questions like: "How do I get youth to participate?" "How do I deal with difficult participants?" or "How do I keep everyone engaged?"

Our first suggestion is to use activities that call on the imagination.

Here is a basic model of group formation that informs what to do at

the start of a program and what to return to whenever the group energy falls flat.

IPC stands for:
IMAGINATION

When you engage participants in an activity that invokes their imaginations, you are letting them know that their whole selves are welcome—their personalities, their quirks, and their ideas. This leads to P:

PARTICIPATION

When people's imaginations are activated, they are simply more inclined to participate. This in turn leads to C:

COMMITMENT

When people participate with their imaginations engaged, they tend to commit to the process or the program. Once participants are committed and fully involved, you are well on your way to success.

Keep the IPC model in mind during the course of your camp, class, or program. Whenever the group energy falls flat, move to an activity that brings in the imagination. This will reengage the cycle of Imagination, Participation, and Commitment.

To read more about PYE and to see the rest of the PYE Creative Facilitation Activities Manual, please visit www.pyeglobal.org.

By Daniel Noah Moses

I first met Archana when she came to Camp as a Delegation Leader in the summer of 2005. Archana is an artist from Mumbai. She is also an artist in the kitchen. That summer of 2005, she suggested the idea of creating a cookbook together. She started to collect recipes. And then she went home. In the following years, we continued her project. Each summer at Camp, we cook great feasts. If you look at previous issues of *The Teachers Guide*, you will see recipes and stories about food. This is one way for us to learn more about one another. Slowly, we are creating a book.

This past January (2013) I visited India for the first time for Seeds of Peace. I was very happy to meet Archana again. One night, she invited a group of us to her apartment. We sat on pillows and on the floor; we talked and laughed. She gave us little snacks. We drank good Indian beer. And then, somewhere between 10 and 11 p.m., she announced dinner.

After enjoying an exquisite meal, I said, "Archana, you are a magician. This food is delicious. Remember your idea to create a cookbook?"

Archana smiled. "Yes, of course; I still have the recipes that I started to collect." We agreed, like turtles, to continue this food project together. Below are a few of the recipes, for you, dear reader—and eater—to enjoy.

EASY RECIPES TO SHARE An introduction by Archana

I believe food connects people. It connects people but it also talks to an identity. Cuisine and its spices will tell you the story of the land and place, as well as the people and the culture. If you start following the journey of the spices, you will stop generalizing about the world and stop being judgmental. When you start sharing, you start connecting through the five senses of your body—sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

When I attended the Seeds of Peace International Camp in 2005, we all wanted to share our stories in different ways and one way was through conversations about food. The recipes I am sharing here are what my DL friends shared with all of us. When I make them, I remember my friends. I share their food and stories with others. That is how the chain becomes bigger ...

CHICKEN KARAHI

Chicken Karahi, also known as Gosht Karahi (when prepared with goat or lamb meat instead of chicken) and Kadai chicken is a Pakistani and North Indian dish noted for its spicy taste and usage of capsicum. It is said that only one pan is enough to cook this dish and that is a karahi (wok).

Ingredients:

Chicken : 1 kg (small pieces)

Onion: 1 big (chopped)
Garlic: 1 tsp (ground)
Tomatoes: 3 big (chopped)
Yogurt: 1 c.
Oil: 4 tbsps
Ginger: (thin sliced) according to your taste.

Spices:

If you have San Karahi masala then use it—according to your taste

Otherwise:

Red Chilli: (grind) 1 tsp
Black pepper: (grind) ½ tsp
Salt
Cumin: ½ tsp
Dry Coriander: ½ tsp

All the spices you can use according to your taste—you can add more if you need it spicier.

Directions:

Put 4 tsp oil in the pan. When it is hot, put chopped onion and let it turn light brown.

Then put 1 tsp garlic and stir it until it gets mixed up.

Before it gets browner, add chopped tomatoes and stir it. Then add all spices, and lather chicken in it.

After 3-5 minutes, add yogurt.

Keep it on the stove until the meat is cooked.

Remove it from the stove and garnish it by sprinkling sliced ginger.

MAQLUBA

Although Maqluba, sometimes pronounced as Maaluba or Magluba, is known as famous Palestinian dish, it is eaten across the Arab Levant and Persia.

The dish includes meat, rice and fried vegetables placed in a pot, which is then flipped upside down when served, hence the name "maqluba", which translates to "upside-down."

Maqluba is usually served with either yogurt or a simple Arab salad (*salata arabia*) of diced tomato, cucumber, parsley and lemon juice, often mixed with a tahina sauce.

Ingredients:

One chicken, cut into four pieces, cleaned and ready to cook.

Rice: 1 kg

Cauliflower or Eggplant: 1 kg

Carrot: 300 grams

Onion: 1

Salt and Indian Spices:

1 tsp Ground Cinnamon

¼ tsp Ground Black Pepper

¾ tsp Turmeric

Directions:

Boil the chicken in water for an hour. Add the salt and spices and some onion to make the chicken sauce (use a pot that can contain the chicken and all the ingredient)

Meanwhile, fry the cauliflower or eggplant in deep and hot oil.

"The future is not there waiting for us.

We create it by the power of imagination." PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN

Boil the chopped carrot for 15 minutes.

When the chicken is nearly cooked, remove some of the chicken sauce in another pot.

Add the fried cauliflower or eggplant and the carrot to make a layer above the chicken.

Add the rice to make the third layers

Add the remaining sauce to the pot, which should cover the surface of the layers.

Put the pot on the cooker for about 30 minutes. When it is ready, turn the pot upside down on a tray.

Serve with salad and yogurt.

CHULENT

Chulent is a traditional Jewish stew. It is usually simmered overnight for 12 hours or more, and eaten for lunch on Shabbat (the Sabbath).

Cholent was developed over the centuries to conform with Jewish laws that prohibit cooking on the Sabbath. The pot is brought to boil on Friday before the Sabbath begins, and kept on a blech or hotplate, or placed in a slow oven or electric slow cooker until the following day.

There are many variations of the dish, which is standard in both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi kitchens. The basic ingredients of cholent are meat, potatoes, beans and barley. Sephardi-style hamin uses rice instead of beans and barley, and chicken instead of beef. A traditional Sephardi addition is whole eggs in the shell (huevos hamina-dos), which turn brown overnight. Ashkenazi cholent often contains kishke or helzel—a sausage casing or a chicken neck skin stuffed with a flour-based mixture. Slow overnight cooking allows the flavors of the various ingredients to permeate and produces the characteristic taste of cholent.

Ingredients:

Potatoes: 20

Eggs: 20

Chicken/meat

Onion: 3 (big)

Tomato sauce: 1 big can

Garlic: 2 cloves

Carrots: 4-5

Grits: ½ kg

Bean or Humus: ½ kg

Rice: ½ kg

Salt/pepper/kurkum

Water 1lt

Directions:

Boil eggs and keep aside.

Cut the onion to small bits and fry them, add chicken or meat and fry them little add washed vegetables in a big pot with water.

Add washed rice with spices in a cooking bag in the pot.

Add grits, beans/humus with spices in a different pot.

Add tomato sauce in the pot with the entire ingredient including eggs and mix it well.

Put the pot in the oven for 12 hours at 100 degrees Celsius; you can also put it in an electric pot for the same time.

From time to time, you should check on it—add water if you think it needs.

SAYADIA

Rice with fish from Yemen.

Recipe for four people.

Ingredients:

White Fish: ½ kg

White small grain Rice: 1 ½ cup

Oil: corn or sunflower

Red Chili paste: 2 tsp

Tomato paste: 2 tsp

Garlic: 2 slice (small) or 1 slice (big)

Crush Cumin: 1 tsp

Cardamom (crushed): 2

Black pepper crushed: ½ tsp

Onion: ¼ kg

Potatoes: ½ kg

Directions:

Half fry fish in a vessel.

Remove the fish.

Peel the potatoes (don't cut); make holes in the potatoes.

Slow fry the potatoes; fry till it is half cooked.

Remove the potatoes.

Fry sliced onion in the some oil.

Half boil rice with salt.

When the onion is yellow, remove some oil from the pan.

Add tomato paste and red chili.

Cook for some time and add potatoes. Add crushed garlic, cumin,

black pepper and cardamom.

Fry little and then add one small cup of water add fish and rice above it.

When the rice is cooked, garnish it with brown fried onion.

LASAGNA

Ingredients:

1 box lasagne noodles (long flat noodles with wavy edges, about 1 ½ in wide)

1 egg

1 ½ lb. cottage cheese or ricotta cheese

2 c. spaghetti sauce

½ c. grated parmesan or romano cheese

1lb mozzarella cheese, grated

1 lb ground meat(or 1 ½ cups cooked spinach for vegetarians)

1 clove minced garlic

½ cup chopped onions

2 tablespoons dried basil.

Directions:

Boil noodles until tender and drain. Brown round meat with garlic and onions in frying pan, drain fat.

Add sauce and set aside.

Beat egg and add to ricotta or cottage cheese with basil.

Take large deep pan about 9"x13".

Layer ingredients as follows: sauce/meat mixture first, then noodles, then ricotta cheese mixture, then mozzarella and sprinkled a bit parmesan.

Continue to layer until all ingredients are gone, ending with mozzarella/parmesan.

Bake in oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 30-45 minutes until brown and bubbly.

PEANUT BUTTER MERINGUES

1 jar natural peanuts butter (non-hydrogenated oil)

4 egg whites

1c. honey

Beat egg whites until stiff.

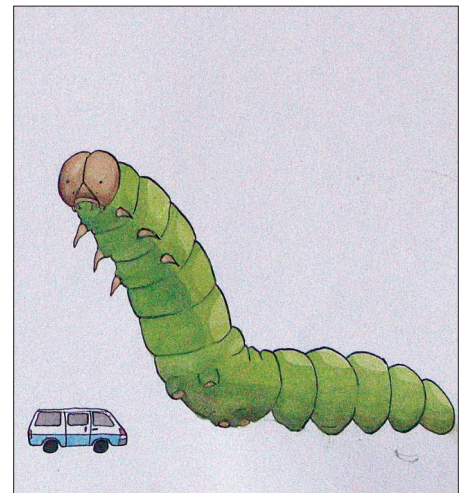
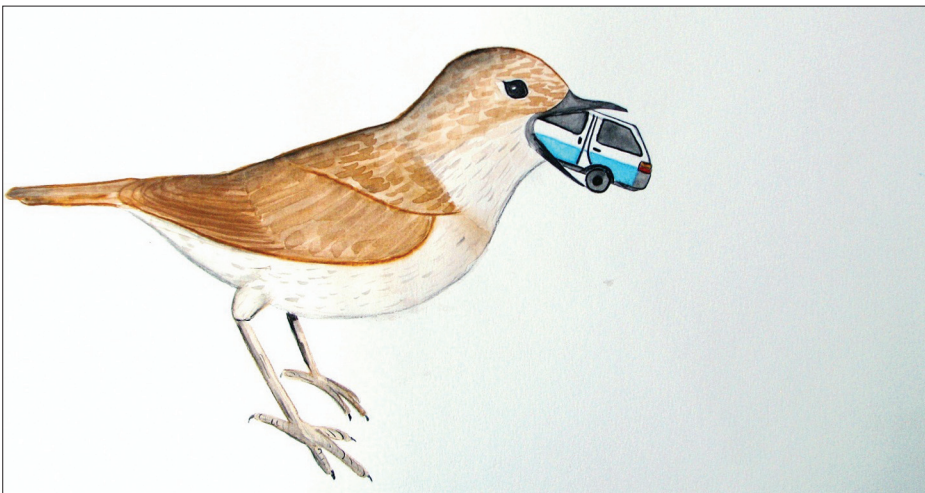
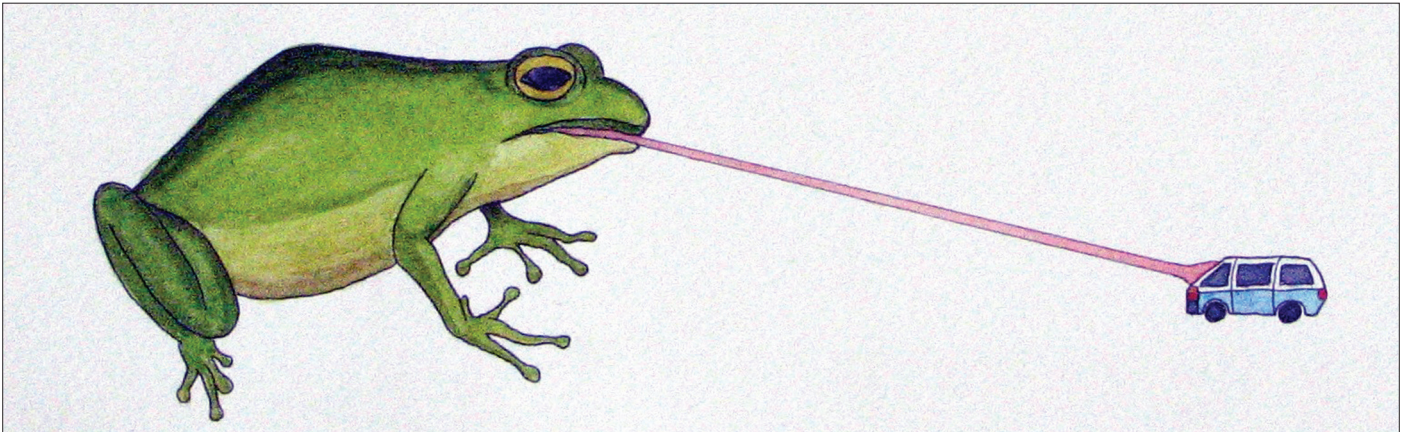
Add honey to peanut butter.

Add two mixtures together, stirring lightly to keep eggs fluffy.

Drop by teaspoons onto a flat baking sheet; flatten with a wet fork.

Bake about 10 minutes at 400 degrees Fahrenheit or until firm and slightly brown.

SARAH BEDRAN



HOW I WENT FROM BASEBALL, HOTDOGS apple pie, and chevrolets to football, shawarma, knefeh, and any-make-but-american automobiles

By Karen AbuZant

Growing up in the Midwestern United States in the late 60's and 70's, I never felt that I was secluded from the rest of the world or encapsulated in a cultural bubble, especially where food was concerned. We ate tacos, spaghetti, polish sausage, and sauerkraut. On Christmas we had exotic Brazil nuts and even the occasional 'pierogi' (a potato or cabbage stuffed dumpling that,

to me, was akin to gourmet food). These accompanied the blue plate special from our local Polish deli.

Little did I know that, as an adult, my senses would be bombarded by the food I would experience in Palestine. Although I enjoyed my mother's simple, yet tasty, cooking when I was growing up, I can't recall ever being wafted away to paradise by aromas in the way that I was in one of the humblest of kitchens here in Palestine. The cardamom spiced

Arabic coffee, served at the end of a neighborly visit; the pungent scent of roasting eggplant (that in my childhood I had never seen, let alone eaten) for Baba Ganoog; garlic fried to top off most children's favorite meal of Mukleih (a stewed green leaf); and let's not forget the hypnotic smells of street foods, like falafel, fried to a crispy golden brown, or nuts and coffee freshly roasted to order in every neighborhood in town.

*"The world of reality has its bounds,
the world of imagination is boundless."*

ROUSSEAU

As if the aromas alone aren't enough to get your head spinning, the tastes and textures seal the deal! Once you try it, you are hooked on Palestinian food for life: the smooth and lemony hummus; tart and cool yoghurt; spicy and chunky stews; the mixture of earthy flavors in the grainy dukka/zaa'tar, a mixture of thyme, sumac, sesame seed, cumin and salt enjoyed with locally produced creamy olive oil and fresh baked pita. To top it all off, you have the choice of a menagerie of locally-grown fruits and vegetables

when you go to the market. You can find treasures, like jewel filled pomegranates; tasty and medicinal wild herbs such as sage, oregano and mint from the mountain tops; and one of my favorites 'Akoob,' a kind of cactus that is stewed with yoghurt, or added to omelets.

As a parent, it's only natural that I'd want my children to have a better life than I did. Although I don't like the fact that my kids have lived their entire lives in a conflict zone, I do appreciate that they were exposed to a rich culture that has been

influenced by Asia, Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. This fact is never so apparent as when we enjoy the many aromas, tastes, textures, and pure art of the foods served on every family's table here in Palestine.

Karen is the Director of the Peaceful Education Community Center in Tulkarem and the Palestinian Coordinator for the Women of Action group. She is actively involved in Seeds of Peace workshops for Palestinian educators and youth, in addition to cross-border activities.

cooking

COMING TOGETHER THROUGH FOOD



Good food brings people together like few other things in this world. Making food together requires communication. Through food, we express who we are.

One of the highlights of each camp session is The International Dinner. Seeds of Peace Educators, Delegation Leaders and participants in the Educator courses spend many hours planning and cooking. They use sharp knives and share limited space. It is a challenge.

Out of what often looks like chaos, the chefs create magic.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

By Meher Marfatia
and Nandini Purandare

It all started right after Morning Circle. During the first Seeds of Peace Educators Course, Elana Bell had us completely engrossed with the daylong poetry workshop she conducted. As she helped us creatively and honestly find both our individual and collective expressive voice, a new idea was born in our minds.

We shared it with our friends gathered that fortnight, to share and learn how best as educators we can use this as a tool with which to fire the moral imagination of the young people we interact with back home in our respective countries.

Here in India, we have begun to work towards realizing a rare but beautiful dream: to publish a book, "Where I Am From," compiling poems and writings submitted by young people who live in some of the worst-hit conflict areas of the world. We see this as an anthology informing people about the recent history of conflict in South Asia and the Middle East. The compilation hopes to connect to the human impact of what are often otherwise "remote" news stories by introducing the reality of children whose lives have been severely disrupted by the politics of intolerance, and whose own resilience, spirit, and creativity can be seen in their writings.

The book's audience is the young adult ages 13 years and up. It will cover 8 to 10 conflict zones. Each of these will include: (a) A short introduction/overview about the region and a balanced, concise and informative description of the history of the conflict through which these young people have lived; (b) A selection of poems by the children themselves. Each poem would be accompanied by a write-up offering an idea of the background of the child who has written it and something about the trauma they personally lived through.

We intend to choose these with great discretion and we (as editors along with Young Zubaan, our publishing partner in New Delhi) will be guided by the book's contributors about the best way to do this—when to change names and how far to protect identities without compromising on the documented details. The challenge here is to reach out

Educators,

As you can see, we have a dream to publish a book ("Where I Am From"), a compilation of poems and writings by young people who live in some of the worst-hit conflict areas.

This is an appeal to put together a "Where I am from" workshop with your group (they could be Seeds or other young adults in your school/ community). The workshop will not take more than half a day. Send us the poems for selection. If you have a young artist in your midst who would like to graphically describe his/her thoughts, that is welcome too. We would love you to collaborate with us and answer and queries that you might have—write to us at nandini.purandare@gmail.com or Daniel Moses at daniel@seedsofpeace.org

Sincerely, Meher and Nandini

to young people in conflict zones, understanding that young people everywhere have different circumstances but are bound together by similar dreams and desires.

What can emerge from these writings is a realization that there is rich diversity but also a common bond that brings human beings together. It can sensitize young people in non-conflict zones, giving them an idea of people like them leading very different lives, where a simple, basic right of going to school is the most impossible act in the world.

We have already embarked on this journey of understanding, networking with people in India's conflict areas such as its Naxal belt and Kashmir. We have also been writing, as a start, to fellow Seeds of Peace Educators in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel and Egypt.

We now request Seeds of Peace to network for us and get educators from conflict zones to send us work by their students or other young people. It is our task to sift through these and collate the voices we think most impactful for our publication. In some cases, we may need them to hold workshops on the lines of Elana Bell's workshop Camp (please see accompanying guide for organizing an "I Am From workshop"). It is our fervent hope, too, that Elana can visit India and perhaps hold her workshops in places like Kashmir and Jharkhand, two conflict-ridden areas of India.

Here are excerpts from poems by Indian teenagers, reflecting their view of the struggles of day-to-day life and what they read in news reports on their part of our country.

Background of Manipur

Manipur is one of seven North Eastern states in India, the others being Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura.

Inhabited by more than 30 indigenous communities, rich in biological diversity and natural resources, it was a sovereign state until its subjugation by the British in 1891.

Regaining sovereign status on August 14, 1947, a constitutional monarchy was established under the Manipur Constitution Act after electing a State Assembly and Council of Ministers, through adult franchise. But the nascent democracy was summarily dissolved with the annexation of Manipur to the Dominion of India in 1949.

No referendum or plebiscite of the people was solicited, thereby denying its right to self-determination. The forcible annexation and subsequent military occupation has been resisted democratically ever since and escalated into an open armed conflict by 1978.

This protracted conflict has escalated with the Government of India insisting on a military response to Manipur's political struggle with emergency legislations.

Massive military actions are undertaken under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, and other legislation such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, and Official Secrets Act.

The decades of conflict have claimed thousands of innocent lives and civilians continue to die.

Manipur in Agony

by Sneha Devi

I woke up one morning
and heard the elders of my house
discuss the news in a local daily.
Mr. X had been killed the previous night.
The police say he was a militant,
His family say he was not.
His young widow cries for justice
His young son is waiting for his return.
This is Manipur today—
My sweet motherland
where the pealing of bells
mingles with gunshots and stifled cries.

(L. Sneha Devi (13) is the eldest daughter of Laipubam Saratkumar Sharma and Khumukcham Susheela Devi. Her father works in the Income Tax Department and her mother is a botany lecturer.)

My Motherland is Weeping

by Soubam Daniel Singh

A state like my Manipur is hard to find
There isn't a single day
when peace and order reign.
Bomb blasts and gunshots
are nothing new now
in this big battlefield.
My heart aches
as I ask myself:
Is it a curse to be born in a state like ours?

How can we still call it a land of jewels,
when no more gems
but bullets of lead are easier to find.

(Soubam Daniel Singh (16) is the youngest of the three sons of Haobam Pushparani Devi and Soubam Dhanabir Singh, who died last year of liver sclerosis. A very bright student, he won third place in the 2011 High School Certificate examination. His lower middle class family now subsists on the father's pension.)

Conducting a "Where I'm From" Poetry Exercise

Have students write a poem about where they are from. Use the following elements to help facilitate the flow of thoughts:

Place
Smells / Food / Other sensory details / Colours
Seasons / Flowers, plants, trees
Traditions/ Religion
Memories (of childhood, family, places)
Angst / distress / sadness and other emotional expression

The resulting poem should give the reader a sense of all the above elements and create a picture of where the poet is from.

Meher is a freelance writer and editor who has 30 years of experience with leading newspapers and magazines in India. She was a participant in the first Seeds of Peace Camp for Adult Educators in Maine titled "Narratives; Moral Imagination; Educational Action."

She has recently introduced her own publishing label, 49/50 Books, an imprint seeking to contribute quality publications on little-known aspects of the humanities, oral histories of threatened cultures, and heritage conservation through a variety of narrative strands.

Nandini is a core team member of the Avehi-Abacus Project, involved in developing a curriculum that provides an integrated approach to a child's learning. This published curriculum, called Sangati, for Grades 5 to 7, is currently used in 978 municipal schools in Mumbai, besides District and Private schools across India. Nandini was a Delegation Leader at the Seeds of Peace Summer Camp in 2004 and a participant at the first Seeds of Peace program for Adult Educators in Maine titled "Narratives, Moral Imagination and Educational Action."

Here in the Lake

By Avi Harel

Here in the Lake, all quiet and calm
Here in the Lake, swimming and singing
Here in the Lake, there's room for everyone
Here in the Lake we see the wind
Here in the Lake your image is reflected
Here in the Lake you find yourself
Here in the Lake you miss the place
Where you came from.

Avi is a spokesman for the Israeli Ministry of Education and was a DL in the summer of 2012.

Where I am From

By Angelica Flores

Where I'm from you can hear the oil
frying and smell the plantains and chicken
cooking.

Where I'm from you can hear music
and laughter all night, and the swift quick
movement of

Feet everywhere, from the dirt roads to the
kitchen floor.

Where I'm from the beaches are beautiful
like a little paradise, the ocean a deep
aqua color.

The waves clash, then fall back down

silently.

Where I'm from I feel the hot sand slip
from my toes
like rain trickling down a glass window.

Where I'm from my people go way back
to the time of Christopher Columbus,
Where our cultures—black and white and
Spanish—mixed.

The sun shines on that little island and you
can almost see it from outer space,
a marvellous light.

Where I'm from the palm trees grab the
ground holding on for life
as the powerful winds and storms shake
and sweep everything in their way.

Where I'm from the dirt roads are tracked
with tire marks,
the air is still and it's hard to breathe, the
heat trickles down my body
making it shine.

Where I'm from each step you take is a
walk into history,
and I am part of it, every single tree, rock
and shore,
I am part of it!

Angelica is a poet and performer born in the Bronx, New York and of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent. Her poems have been translated into Hebrew, Arabic, and

Urdu.

She currently studies and performs at the Stella Adler Acting Studio. She hopes to write and perform for the rest of her life and fight for social justice.

Where I am From ...

By Fadia Odeh

*I'm from a place where I've been told is
paradise ...*

*I'm from a place that I haven't the chance
to see ...*

*Where the beautiful gardens are
everywhere ...*

*The smell of oranges will take you
somewhere ...*

*Where waterfalls are what you drink and
feel ...*

*Yet, Palestinian food is what I eat;
Palestinian blood is in me ...*

*I'm from a place that floods honey and
cream ...*

I'm from a place that I fear never to see ...

*Fadia is a teacher in Amman. She was a
Seeds of Peace Delegation Leader in 2012.
Her family is originally from pre-1948
Palestine.*

THE OLIVE BRANCH TEACHER'S GUIDE



"Transcending violence is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilize and build the MORAL IMAGINATION ... Stated simply, the moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence."

JOHN PAUL LEDERACH