

A group of people, including men and women of various ages, are gathered outdoors in a grassy area. They are holding onto a large, circular net structure made of thin, light-colored ropes. The net is stretched out in a circular pattern, with some ropes crossing each other. The people are dressed in casual clothing, and some are wearing lanyards. In the background, there are trees and a building with a large mural of a face. The overall atmosphere is one of community and participation.

# DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

2017

GLOCAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT





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FRONT COVER PICTURE BY NOA DOLEV

# DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT

- |           |  |           |  |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| <b>04</b> | CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT FROM A GLOCAL PERSPECTIVE<br><i>Prof. Guy Harpaz, Academic Head of Glocal International Development</i> | <b>16</b> | EXAMINING THE EUROPEAN AID POLICY TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE<br><i>Hagar Siboni</i>                             |
| <b>05</b> | A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR<br><i>Liel Maghen</i>   | <b>19</b> | HOME GROUP: REFLECTIONS ON DIALOGUE PRACTICES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES<br><i>Noa Dolev</i>                     |
| <b>06</b> | DEVELOPING A SHARED IDENTITY<br><i>Yalee Azani</i>   | <b>22</b> | LARGE DISPARITIES, INTIMATE QUARTERS: BUILDING A NURSING MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE<br><i>Jordan Hannink</i> |
| <b>08</b> | DEVELOPING PEACE IN RWANDA<br><i>Ernest Ngabonzima</i>   | <b>24</b> | WHAT A PALESTINIAN CAN LEARN FROM MOROCCO<br><i>Marwa Natsheh</i>  |
| <b>11</b> | HOW EFFECTIVE IS 'PEACE EDUCATION' IN REFUGEE SETTINGS?<br><i>Lucy Atkinson</i>  | <b>26</b> | THE LIMITS OF DEVELOPMENT IN TIMES OF CONFLICT<br><i>Ahmed Yasin</i>   |
| <b>14</b> | THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES<br><i>Gal Kramarski</i>  | <b>28</b> | BEYOND NEUTRALITY<br><i>Matan Rosenstrauch</i>   |

# CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT FROM A GLOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Prof. Guy Harpaz,  
Academic Head of The Glocal Program

Since the end of WW2, the world order has succeeded in preventing the outbreak of yet another world war. Nonetheless, since 1945, the world the world has witnessed a great number of international and internal armed conflicts, most of which impacted the world's already under-developed regions and communities. These conflicts can be examined through the lenses of various disciplines, such as international relations, international law, human rights, conflict resolution, economics and religion studies. They can also be conceptualized as a grave challenge for international development. In fact, armed conflicts and international development, under-development and uneven development are intertwined in a circular, tragic manner.

Not only do armed conflicts inflict death, casualties and destruction on families and communities, but they also adversely affect international development: They spread poverty and hunger and they prejudice food security and access to health, clean water, clean air, energy, education and more. It is therefore no wonder that when adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN General Assembly postulated that it was determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development." Indeed, one of the Agenda's goals is to promote "peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development".

Development practitioners around the globe tackle the prejudicial impact of conflicts, contributing directly or indirectly to conflict prevention, conflict containment, conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. This is true with respect to many of Glocal's students and alumni. As this Magazine reflects, many of them either came to us with meaningful knowledge of this theme, or gained profound knowledge of it during their studies and internships.

Since the establishment of Glocal, some concerns have been raised by students and alumni about the fact that the Program fails to adequately address the link between international development and armed conflicts. These critical voices are all the more persuasive in light of the fact that Glocal is established in Jerusalem, a city serving like no other as the focal point of a religious and ethnic dispute and consequently providing a fascinating laboratory for the examination of internal and international conflicts and of their adverse effects on community development. Similarly, Israel's continuous occupation of the West Bank and its policies regarding the Gaza Strip are highly relevant to the study of development. In this state of affairs it therefore behooves us to address the interface between conflicts and international development in the Glocal curriculum.

In response to these critical voices and our scholastic needs, Glocal this year focused, inter alia, on issues of international development and conflicts. For example, our November 2016 Research of Interest Section was devoted to a review of recent research on conflicts, destruction and international development. In the next academic year we hope to offer a tailor-made course on this theme. We also hope that some of our students who are due to pursue the newly-launched research track will research the interface between conflicts and development.

As the Director of Glocal, as a scholar who deals with conflict resolution and as a citizen of the State of Israel, a country embroiled in never-ending conflicts, which, to the best of my understanding, could be avoided with enhanced courage, vision and leadership, I take special pride in those Glocal students who have joined the efforts to confront some of the roots and symptoms of domestic and international conflicts. The experiences of these students, some of which are expressed in this Magazine, are moving and thought-provoking.

I want to thank Liel Maghen and Shira Schonfeld for their leadership in preparing this Magazine and to thank the writers for their important contributions. I hope you will find reading the Magazine to be a rewarding experience.

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Liel Maghen

Development work and conflict resolution are perceived as mutually exclusive concepts. This can be seen both in theory, where they are taught as separate academic fields, and in practice, where international organizations often choose one field of focus without necessarily engaging with the other. This distinction applies noticeably to the Middle East. In this region, especially in the Palestinian Territories, there are numerous development organizations that focus mostly on economic and social empowerment without engaging in conflict resolution, while conflict-centered organizations repeatedly refrain from venturing into economic or social issues as they invest their effort exclusively in human rights advocacy, peace education, or mediation.

However, over the past decade, more and more theorists and practitioners have become aware of the relationship between political conflicts and development, under-development and uneven development. According to this approach, conflicts and development are intertwined; conflicts are affected by development themes such as poverty, inequality, poor governance, immigration of refugees, or natural disasters. Whereas in the course of a conflict, the specific conditions favorable to positive development tend to deteriorate significantly because of the strife.

As we are located in Jerusalem and affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we have decided in this issue of the magazine to explore the interdependence between conflict and development through the experience of our alumni

and students. Through presenting lessons from the world, Yalee Azani and Ernest Ngabonzima examine the role of development projects in promoting reconciliation in Angola and Rwanda. On a more personal level, Noa Dolev and Marwa Natsheh present the lessons they learned on conflict resolution practices from their internships in Myanmar and Morocco. Additionally, the articles of Hagar Siboni and Ahmed Yasin critically discuss the approach of separating development from conflict resolution in the Palestinian Territories while Lucy Atkinson and Matan Rosenstrauch examine the role of peace building education in conflict zones. Lastly, the articles of Jordan Hannink and Gal Kramarski show that shared interests and common languages can develop partnerships between rivals and consequently lead to the promotion of both development and conflict mitigation.

This issue aims to present a different perspective on a complex reality. As this issue shows, the division between these fields can undermine their impact. Thus combining the disciplines of development and conflict resolution, especially in conflict environments, can create a larger impact in the reality on the ground. This interdisciplinary approach can strengthen conflict resolution efforts by introducing effective development initiatives from other areas of conflict or improve development practices by highlighting potential opportunities for collaborating with conflict resolution endeavors. As I truly believe that this collaboration is essential in conflict areas, I can only hope that similar efforts will follow in the future. For now, I hope that this issue will promote this approach further.

# DEVELOPING A SHARED IDENTITY

BY YALEE AZANI

Through examining a project in Angola, the writer discusses the potential of shared interests to promote both development and reconciliation.

In the global era in which we live, there are efforts to improve the lives of poor people through various development programs. In this work, the ability to overcome cultural barriers in order to engage with different stakeholders is critical, especially if practitioners wish to promote reconciliation in an area affected by a conflict and where feelings of hate between groups are widespread and contagious, with severe consequences. This article presents a summary of a research I have done through the Glocal program, where I discussed the potential of agricultural development program to break the symbolic boundaries between different ethnic groups through the Contact Hypothesis.

To meet the challenge, I've crossed through interdisciplinary work, theory and research methods from social psychology and sociology. The first theoretical pillar comes from the discipline of international development, which is considered a relatively young field of research. In recent years, the discourse has focused on violent disputes as a fundamental obstacle to the development of Africa, pointing to the need for peace as a precondition for development. The links between culture and conflicts have been seen from the local and international perspective and include the following: deep distrust and hostility caused by cultural differences, which hinder effective communication and a collective identity suppressed under different forces group relations.

The second pillar comes from the field of sociology and helps to explain the concept of "Symbolic Boundaries". According to Michele Lamont, these boundaries are the patterns of "likes" and "dislikes" that are used to make conceptual distinctions for

categorizing objects, people, beliefs and even time and space. Symbolic boundaries segregate people into groups, building cognitive restructuring that separates "us" from "them". This is an essential tool by which people acquire status, often allowing them to build a monopoly on resources. Accordingly, we can say that a major role of symbolic boundaries is to impose, maintain, and normalize social boundaries, as well as the power to challenge and reformulate the meaning of social boundaries. Thus, social boundaries are objective forms of the social differences that are expressed in inequality of access and the unequal distribution of both material and non-material resources, as well as social opportunities.

In order to best understand how boundaries emerge through relationships, I have combined the contact hypothesis with social psychology. Gordon Allport argues that a person's beliefs can change should that person come in contact with a member of a separate cultural category, allowing them to extend to the same individual the beliefs on the entire category. The main argument of this theory is that with the creation of appropriate conditions, the best way to reduce hostility between groups in conflict is to bring friends together. Though contact between groups and a mixed lifestyle, people are able to understand and appreciate different perspectives of opinions.

My field research was in Angola. The civil war in this country started immediately after the Portuguese left in 1975, and is often characterized as part of the global Cold War. However, in reality, mainly two political groups based on ethnic lines fought each other for thirty years. The MPLA Party, supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, drew their support from the ethnic Kimbundu tribe and intellectuals in Luanda, whereas



Picture by Yalee Azani, Angola

UNITA was supported by the United States and South Africa, with their base located in the center of the country inhabited by the Umbundu tribe. Under this division, the accepted cultural narratives were that UNITA supporters were "members of the bushes", implying that they were "uncivilized". On the other hand, supporters of the MPLA were perceived as more educated and richer.

**"WE USED TO FIGHT EACH OTHER WITH WEAPONS, TODAY OUR SHARED WEAPON IS THE HOE AND THE ENEMY IS HUNGER."**

The war ended in 2002 with the death of Savimbi, head of the UNITA party. After the war, there was a broad understanding amongst government officials and development practitioners that there was a need to respond to the needs of the soldiers that had just stopped fighting. The two groups joined a development project that aimed to build diverse programs at the local level, operating in the rehabilitation and development of family farms, the resettlement of former soldiers and their families from the two rival parties, and investments in physical and human infrastructure.

The unique contribution of the paper was the examination of the relevance of the different theories of the intercultural research fields of social sciences and psychology to the area of international development, via their contribution to the understanding of the breaking of cultural boundaries in the social context of the construction of building ethnic reconciliation programs.

The findings showed that a number of elements were required to break the symbolic boundaries between the two groups. The first was the early selection of people to take part in the project. This initial selection was perhaps the most critical because although the participants were suspicious and held outdated concepts about the other, they did not declare any feelings of

hatred and thus were more flexible to change their perception. Living together in mixed houses with daily contact between sides was also an important element, as people came to know their neighbors from the other group on a personal level and acknowledged that they are similar and have a lot in common. This connects with the contact hypothesis that says that to be effective in reducing prejudice, the necessary conditions that must exist are equal status of the groups, frequent and continuous contact, the existence of a common goal, a mutual desire to obtain the goal and institutional support for the meetings. In addition, an element of equality was significant as well; all participants received similar houses with identical contents. Furthermore, the two groups were represented equally in all professional roles, from farmers, through assistants to the management level.

Despite initial difficulties at the beginning of the project, such as insults between the two groups, social guidance by the professional staff helped to overcome obstacles in the personal level while creating a sense of solidarity between the groups. This was very clear in one of my one of my interviews as one of the participants said: "Our understanding is that we are all equal and are fighting for the same things. No one wants problems. We used to fight each other with weapons, today our shared weapon is the hoe and the enemy is hunger."

This quote gives an example of the new identity that emerged through this project. The cooperation on shared interests promoted a shared identity as well, this time Angolan, which is shared by both parties. This finding is striking as it shows that the process of building partnerships focused on development, can break the symbolic boundaries between rival groups and enable the construction of a new identity that can promote conflict resolution.

Yalee Azani (Israel) graduated from Glocal in 2015. She currently works for TAG International Development, a charity that deploys unique humanitarian expertise and proven social models to create sustainable solutions for developing countries.



*From the Field*

# DEVELOPING PEACE IN RWANDA

BY ERNEST NGABONZIMA

In discussing the work of a local NGO involved in social change, this article presents the role of development as an engine for unity, reconciliation and peace in post-Genocide Rwanda.

It's been 22 years since the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda, and there are still considerable challenges stemming from trauma and other poverty-related hardships. However, when traveling to different regions of this hilly country, you will see smiling faces, which makes it very difficult to imagine that the same individuals underwent a period of conflict and unthinkable pain. Those smiles reflect unity and reconciliation, which did not come by accident. They originate from the government's efforts to unify its people, and from the involvement of development practitioners who have created an atmosphere of unity in the area. The country is now experiencing very fast economic growth compared to the rest of the region, as well as significant progress in the unity and reconciliation of Rwandans. According to the 2015 Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer (RRB), a national survey published by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), up to 92.5% of Rwandans feel that reconciliation has been achieved and that the citizens live in harmony.

Rwanda experienced a disastrous period in 1994 with a Genocide in which over a million people were slaughtered. The genocide took a heavy toll on Rwanda, both physically and psychologically, and temporarily destroyed its advancement. Keeping in mind the end goal to recapture and rebuild a new nation, post-Genocide Rwanda required the commitment of its institutions and people with the help of dedicated international workers to intercede and assist in the nation's recovery and advancement. There are several types of interventions, by both governmental and non-governmental agencies, which focus on Rwanda's progress, while keeping in mind the issue of unity and reconciliation among its citizens.



Picture by Ernest Ngabonzima, Rwanda

As a Glocal Alumnus from Rwanda who had a chance to learn how development could create significant positive change across the globe, I find it essential to highlight the positive contributions development practitioners have made towards conflict resolution in my home country, and acknowledging the fact that they intentionally stood up and did whatever was in their capacity to help Rwanda regain hope and development, and reunite its people. Their success, in this case, underscores the fact that development practitioners have a major role in mitigating clashes. The literature discusses the role of development aid in conflict resolution. Developed by Mary B. Anderson in order to note the importance of not doing more harm than good while making sure to contribute to conflict resolution, "Do No Harm" is a concept embraced by most development aid practitioners.

Considering the large number of development practitioners working in Rwanda, international NGOs are playing a vital role in the reconstruction of the country. The most prominent agents in this cause work with communities utilizing community-centered and faith-based community development models. Jean Habumugisha, the former facilitator of Spark MicroGrants gladly answered when I asked, "The local government has been begging us to work with communities that still have social conflicts, since the model of our organization brings people to work together and allows them lead their own development." As a community-led organization, Spark MicroGrants has engaged and united different communities, among which are both survivors and perpetrators of genocide.

**"IT'S ESSENTIAL FOR ME TO HIGHLIGHT THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS HAVE MADE TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN MY HOME COUNTRY AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FACT THAT THEY INTENTIONALLY STOOD UP AND DID WHATEVER WAS IN THEIR CAPACITY TO HELP RWANDA REGAIN HOPE, THROUGH DEVELOPMENT, AND REUNITE ITS PEOPLE."**

Jean Habumugisha assured us that these communities, based on Spark MicroGrants' work model, are more united now, without anyone being excluded. According to him, before a community starts working on a development project, the facilitators take participants through a community cohesion-building process which brings people closer together. The group then develops a goal, and commits to working towards the chosen goal as a community. "When different communities develop common goals, it is an indication of significant progress in terms of reconciliation among Rwandans".

In addition to Spark MicroGrants, an INGO called World Relief is also among the engines of reconciliation in Rwanda. This organization uses a faith-based development model and calls people to work together, as they are equally created in the





Picture by Ernest Ngabonzima, Rwanda

image of God. Jean-Claude Muhire is a Glocal Alumnus from Rwanda who interned at World Relief Rwanda. He recognizes the contribution of this organization in helping Rwandans see each other as Rwandans, rather than through a divisive ethnic lens. “World Relief’s ‘Saving for Life’ program doesn’t exclude any Rwandan and it is charming to see everyone whole heartedly working together,” Jean-Claude said.

‘Saving For Life’ is part of the Village’s ‘Savings and Loans’ approach to development, and brings individuals together to save money and financially support each other with a little credit. This approach requires the community members to trust each other as the program grows with time, and everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, is welcome to join.

In sum, both World Relief International and Spark MicroGrants are examples of organizations helping Rwanda build a nation of Rwandans rather than a nation of ethnic groups. Thanks to their contributions, community members live together freely and confidently with more trust, as they strive together to build self-reliance. Setting goals and saving together has contributed to making everyone accountable for one another.

Marginalized minorities regained hope- and the chance to work with others, and to take part in their own development.

Despite experiencing a high level of unity and reconciliation among its people, Rwanda still has a long way to go. Development practitioners have to keep working hard and to dig even deeper into more ways to contribute. There is a need to promote Rwandan identity beyond ethnic identity. However, there is also a need to help people remember their history by facilitating conversations about the past, and how the conflicts hindered social and financial development. Finally, development practitioners need to make sure to always consider community values, and help build a sense of community rather than focus solely on the project’s implementation. In the end, this will help unify community members, increase the impact of projects, and contribute to the sustainability of the projects.

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Ernest Ngabonzima (Rwanda) graduated from Glocal in 2016. He currently works as a Consultant in FATE Consulting Ltd., a Rwanda-based consulting firm specializing in gender sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation and capacity building.

## Analysis

# HOW EFFECTIVE IS ‘PEACE EDUCATION’ IN REFUGEE SETTINGS?

BY LUCY ATKINSON

A brief look at the education in refugee settings reveals challenges faced by peace education. This article presents these challenges and suggests shifting the attention towards quality education.

According to a report published by the United Nations Children’s Fund in 2009, “Education was once considered part of long-term development and peace dividend, rather than an essential part of humanitarian aid”. However, education became vital to the process of supporting the movement from relief to development. While fulfilling a human right, education also includes key messages for survival in challenging environments or in supporting peace building. This might include health and hygiene messages, as well as issues such as land mine awareness, conflict mitigation and reconciliation. The provision of basic education and informal learning opportunities face both challenge and opportunity in impacting the lives of refugee children and youth for good. However, appreciation for content, context and hidden aspects of curriculum, highlight the important role of teachers and the value of quality education.

## Curriculum Content and Delivery

According to UNICEF’s 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the aim of education is “The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.” Despite clarity on the intended outcomes of education — peaceful and tolerant citizens - there is no official definition of peace education. However, this popular term is used for a range of different educational activities and programs delivered by INGOs and funding bodies. This leads to the unfortunate assumption that peace education predominantly has priority above and beyond basic education rather than being an essential aspect of it.



**“THIS LEADS TO THE UNFORTUNATE ASSUMPTION THAT PEACE EDUCATION PREDOMINANTLY HAS PRIORITY ABOVE AND BEYOND BASIC EDUCATION RATHER THAN BEING AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF IT.”**

UNICEF, one of the leading agencies in the area of education, defines peace education as “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.” On the practical level, these skills are challenging to facilitate in a refugee camp classroom. In this environment, teachers are born out of necessity and not choice, often feeling anxious and overwhelmed by entry into the profession. They too often have little or no pedagogical training to manage a child-centered, skill-focused curriculum. In addition, it is often difficult to find time to focus on peacebuilding messages in the classroom. Classroom time is highly focused on exam success and often pressured by teachers working in shifts, a system that is often needed for answering the constraints of providing education to refugee children.

The issue of untrained or poorly qualified teachers is not unique to refugee settings. Teachers who are equipped and supported, and who understand these challenging contexts, are more likely to use classroom practices that support inclusive and interactive student engagement instead of exams. This, in turn, supports child rights and the desired aims of education but still is very limited. Could professional development with teachers be as effective as a ‘peace education’ program, and also improve the overall quality of education?

### Curriculum Context

The very idea of combining the discourse of human rights and peace education must also be considered (Notable critics include An-Na’im, 1998; Boyden and Ryder, 1996). In this consideration, these values should be questioned if they empower the students and answer the goals of education or only promote a western idea, which may undermine collective rights and action. As armed conflict that produces refugees is a collective action, focusing on individual or interpersonal behaviors can weaken this dimension. Such worries relate to the cultural impact of teachers in the classroom, and question the ultimate goal of peace education. When peace education focuses on the individual level, the foundations upon which it is built do not correlate with the context in which it is delivered. Thus, it is suggested that there is a need for community engagement with schools. School-based activities should become a component of community-based programming that involves the students’ parents and guardians in the educational process.

In his article published in 2004, Gavriel Salomon calls for the need for “peace education” programs to be aligned with the context in which they are intended. He highlights the diversity of settings, conflicts and community needs, which require inclusion and adaptations for the setting, and are often at odds with centrally prepared educational materials and training. Further discussion of education in refugee settings broadens our understanding of the challenges facing curriculum and context. Should education mirror that of the home country, or provide the same curriculum as the host country? And what impact do both have on the language of delivery, qualification recognition, and finally, the quality of delivery? Greater awareness of the context in which education is delivered strengthens the relationship of teachers and facilitators with the curriculum with which they work. As a consequence, their relationship with the material impacts the manner in which it is delivered and thus the program outcomes.

### Hidden Curriculum

It is important to note the value of the ‘hidden curriculum,’ where learners comment on the fact that teachers also model good values and morals. An important question to ask at the crux of this is: what is the definition of peace? Peace could be defined as the absence of violence (negative peace), but can also go much deeper into the absence of structural violence, such as discrimination or gender inequality. In this context, teachers themselves can model perpetration of violence, for example, giving more “talk time” to boys over girls or in promoting aggressive masculinity and compliant femininity. It is also likely that in these contexts, everyday actions outside the classroom, as well as school policy, will replicate this violence. Consequently, evaluating peace education will be more challenging as the messages delivered in class can differ from general behavior, which is linked to the complex and differing understanding of peace between stakeholders.

### Teachers

Teachers are at the core of education. Their classroom practices and discourse determine how and what kind of education and curriculum are delivered. Their effectiveness as teachers impacts what students learn, and which students learn. Long-term, context-based professional development, which values teachers as professionals, will have a positive impact in the classroom as well as on the community. Improved education quality contains the ingredients of peace education. Would it not be more effective to focus on educational quality rather than to bake a different cake that is a lot smaller?

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Lucy Atkinson (UK) graduated from Glocal in 2015. She is now a PhD candidate at the University of York. Her research title is ‘Refugee Teachers and Their Classrooms’.



Op-ed

# THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

BY GAL KRAMARSKI

Through presenting the fear caused by misunderstanding, the writer discusses the importance of common language in multicultural societies.

This mutual language is necessary as well in development work.

In August 2016, a young journalist named Nader Al-Sarras spotted an interesting bag on the Metro in Berlin, and promptly posted a photo of it to his Twitter account. The bag was carrying the following text: لا يوجد اي هدف لهذا النص الا نشر الرعب في نفوس من يهاب اللغة العربية, meaning: "This text has no other purpose than to terrify those who are afraid of the Arabic language". This message, which was intended to 'terrify' Islamophobes, caused a stir in the realm of social media. Although the message was spread mainly in Europe, as a response to the wave of Islamophobia sweeping the European nations, the bag itself was designed in Israel, by the 'Rock Paper Scissors Factory' - a young team of Palestinian designers living in Haifa.

In an article published by the Telegraph in August 2016, the designers say that the main goal in their art is to make the Arabic language present in the urban sphere, as it is starting to disappear from signs and public places. "Arabic is our language, and a part of who we are, and we think it should be part of our urban landscape. In Israel, anyone wearing a T-shirt with printed Arabic words uses it as a political statement". This small example emphasizes the important role of language in our lives, as both a local and a global issue.

Language is far more than a means of communication. In many cases, language is a significant tool that allows us to reduce alienation, ignorance and racism, caused by not understanding the 'other'. Therefore, there is strong connection between language, identity and politics. In multicultural societies, and conflict areas more specifically, language can be considered a tool to either maintain or resolve conflicts that involve an element of fear, within or between communities. Focusing on the role of the Arabic language in Israel, my point of departure in this article is that language is the gateway to bridging the gap between different communities within a multicultural society.

While Arabic is considered one of Israel's official languages, and despite the fact that over 20% of Israel's population are Arab citizens, a study by the Van Leer Institute finds that most Israeli Jews cannot speak or understand it. A survey conducted last year by Tel-Aviv University, the Van-Leer institute and Dirasat Center, showed that less than 17% of the Jewish population in Israel claims to be capable of conducting a conversation in Arabic, and less than 7% can read or write.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there is a significant gap between the formal status of a language and the de facto reality, which raises the question: in a reality in which knowing the minority's language is not an existential necessity, why should we learn it?

<sup>1</sup> Command of Arabic among Israeli Jews, (Jerusalem: Van-Leer, 2015), p. 17.



"WHILE ARABIC IS ONE OF ISRAEL'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, A SURVEY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR SHOWED THAT LESS THAN 17% OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ISRAEL CLAIMS TO BE CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING A CONVERSATION IN ARABIC, AND LESS THAN 7% CAN READ OR WRITE."

As the demographics and politics in the new-born State of Israel changed, the central status of Arabic in the national public sphere changed as well. After the 1948 War, and the expulsion of over 750,000 Palestinians, Jews became the country's majority, and created a hegemonic Hebrew-speaking community, taking over the place of Arabic as the official first language. After each war, Arabic became increasingly perceived as the enemy's language, feeding into a strong alienation towards it, and even causing Mizrahi Jews originating from Arab majority countries to neglect their mother tongue in an attempt to assimilate in Israel, where speaking Hebrew was a nation-building priority.

Returning to the question: Why should we, as Israeli Jews, learn Arabic? In the context of our reality, and having consideration for the implications of our relationship and shared history with the Palestinians and the Arab world, since 1882 (first Aliyah) until today, one finds, at least, three reasons to do so.

To begin with, language is the cornerstone of communication, enabling us to overcome fears deriving from not understanding each other's world. When one is not familiar with the other, the 'other' becomes far more distant from the 'self', an equation that is valid not only for individuals, but also for communities within a society. This lack of linguistic knowledge increases the potential for conflicts and political instability within a society, since the individual becomes more suspicious and alienated from the other standing in front of him or her. Moreover, in an article published in 2001, Daniel Bar-Tal, whose research focuses on the psychological aspects of conflict, claims that the dominant nature of fear and its implications as an emotion, makes it a crucial phenomenon in multicultural societies, and specifically in divided and conflicted societies. Therefore, he

concludes "the ability to speak the other's language, enables dialogue" and thus significantly reduces the fear of the other.

Secondly, language can help create a more egalitarian environment. The formal status of Arabic as an official language in Israel was declared in 1948, following the mandatory instruction from 1922, but raising the requirement to conduct a bilingual policy, in which Arabic is also present in the government, administration, signs, and the urban sphere. However, the reality (as demonstrated by the bag story above), is quite the opposite. Therefore, a policy of learning Arabic will help reduce the structural inequality, enable the Arab minority to receive their rights, and improve Israel's treatment of minorities.

Lastly there is the issue of identity. It is clear that for the Arab citizens, the presence of Arabic in their daily surroundings is conducive to their sense of identity. For the Israeli Jews, Arabic connects them to their Middle Eastern identity; therefore, used as a common ground for both identities, Arabic can help us to better connect. As Israel is a part of the Middle East, we may strengthen this part of our identity through the presence of Arabic, which will allow us to better know our region, and its people. Another part of this motivation relates to the Mizrahi Jews, who constitute around 50% of Israel's Jewish population. Learning Arabic will enable them to better connect to their family roots, and will allow all Israeli Jews to better connect to elements in Israel's history and culture.

Through education, and learning a language, one also learns the culture, and becomes more open to accepting the other. Therefore, looking ahead, before reaching any future peace agreement, I believe Israel should lay down the infrastructure by teaching spoken Arabic in every single school.

Gal Kramarski (Israel) graduated from the departments of Political Science and Middle Eastern studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2016. She currently studies at Glocal among the 7th cohort and works as the Executive Producer of Madrasa: a new NGO that offers an online free platform for learning Arabic.



*Analysis*

# EXAMINING THE EUROPEAN AID POLICY TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

BY HAGAR SIBONI

The EU's aid and development policy in relation to the Palestinian people, which aims to create the necessary conditions for peace in the region as part of the two-state solution, illustrates how the state-building approach to peace building is used in practice. Aiming to evaluate this aid policy, the following article draws on the OECD criteria for evaluating development assistance, which sets relevance, effectiveness and sustainability as the crucial criteria for adequate evaluation.

When starting my final BA research, I knew I wanted to study development policies. I was quickly drawn to research the EU's aid and development policy in relation to the Palestinian people, which, according to the EU, is aimed at promoting peace in the region as part of the two-state solution. In reality, the policy's outcomes have been effective in the short-term at best, as they contribute to Palestinians welfare, though irrelevant, ineffective and unsustainable for the long-term aim of building a self-sufficient Palestinian state, and creating the necessary conditions for peace. My research findings led me to believe that development assistance should be a complementary strategy when trying to consolidate peace, rather than the main policy. Development assistance should generate independent capacities, build or empower existing institutions, and assist developing the economy and the private sector, by a political dialogue aimed at changing the dynamics of the conflict.

In his 1992 report, "An Agenda for Peace," Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then Secretary-General of the United Nations, introduced the concept of peacebuilding, which generally refers to the creation of the political and economic conditions necessary to sustain peace in war-torn societies. As enhancing state capacities is perceived to create those conditions, the "State Building" approach became an almost integral part of the peacebuilding doctrine both in academia and in practice. The approach is based on three dimensions: a security dimension, where human security and general security sector reforms are the main focus; a political dimension, which features elections, transitional justice and the rule of law; and an economic dimension, which promotes economic development through marketization, liberalization and good governance.

Picture by Mrbrefast, Bethlehem



The EU's aid and development policy to the Palestinians illustrates how the state-building approach is being used in practice, as it focuses primarily on supporting the state-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority, and on aiming to create the necessary conditions for peace in the region. Currently, most of the EU's development assistance to the Palestinians is channeled through the PEGASE mechanism (French acronym for "Palestino - Européen de Gestion et d'Aide socio-économique"), which is divided into two main tracks: DFS (direct financial support), which includes payment of civil servants' salaries and pensions, payment of social allowances to vulnerable Palestinian families and support to East Jerusalem hospitals, and the PEGASE Development Program Cooperation, which focuses on social and economic development. Theoretically, all these actions were meant to consolidate peace in the region in accordance with the state building doctrine. However, according to research published by the Palestinian Monetary Authority in 2011, the lion's share of the EU's aid to the PA is actually used for meeting short-term needs rather than for development actions per se.<sup>1</sup>

According to various economists, a situation where foreign aid is consumed and not invested in development projects is ineffective.<sup>2</sup> In fact, foreign aid can be effective in the long term mainly when invested in the human capital, rather than in the physical capital of recipient countries, as human capital enhances both state competence and human capabilities, reducing human deprivation.<sup>3</sup> Thus, effective peacebuilding efforts, which are conducted through state-building and development activities, should invest in the human capital of the recipient community. However, in the case of the EU's aid to the Palestinians, the Palestinian Monetary Authority found that about 72% of total foreign aid to the PA came in the form of budget support for public spending rather than as investment in human capital.

The first aid track, DFS, was originally supposed to promote human capital and use the leverage of the EU's funds to push for reforms strengthening PA's institutions. However, the EU has been avoiding outcome-based frameworks or using its financial leverage according to evaluation conducted by the EU.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, as there are no public accountability

<sup>1</sup> Palestine Monetary Authority: Research and Monetary Policy Department, The Economic and Social Effects of Foreign Aid in Palestine (2011: 23).

<sup>2</sup> Craig Burnside and David Dollar, "Aid, Policies, and Growth," American Economic Review 90 no. 4, (2000: 861).

<sup>3</sup> Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom (Oxford University Press, 1999: 92).

<sup>4</sup> DRN-ECDDPM-ECORYS-PARTICIP, Evaluation of the European Union Cooperation with the Occupied Palestinian Territory, (2014: 44).

measures relating to the EU's funding of public services, and as there are no integral M&E mechanisms that would report outcomes, the PA's transparency and legitimacy is eroding. Although PEGASE's second track, the Development Program Cooperation, does invest in human capital, and aims at fostering development, it represents only a small fraction of the total financial aid (18%). According to an EU audit conducted in 2014, its effectiveness is also severely limited by constraints on the ground that are not addressed by the EU. Thus, all things considered, it seems that the PEGASE's policy nature is primarily short-term and ineffective in consolidating an independent Palestinian state, and subsequently, creating peace in the region.

The Palestine Monetary Authority adds that the PA's revenues, although improving, still fall behind in meeting government expenditure, even at the short-term level. Palestinian institutions need an economy to sustain them, and as long as the PA does not have control over its external borders, key natural resources and the movement of goods and people, any scope for viable Palestinian economy is very limited. Accordingly, the PA is in practice not able to achieve objectives in the absence of aid, and is therefore acutely donor-dependent. As long as Palestinian economic development is limited, the PA will keep depending on donor funds, and aid will continue to merely alleviate day-to-day hardship rather than generating self-sufficiency. Moreover, the absence of an EU exit strategy, which could have ensured the improvement of the PA's resilience and have guaranteed sustained development, lacks practical plans to mitigate donor dependency. As such, its outcomes sustainability is severely limited.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Anne Le More, "Killing With Kindness: Funding the Demise of a Palestinian State," *International Affairs* 81, no.5 (2005: 994).

<sup>6</sup> Shir Hever, "How Much International Aid to Palestinians Ends Up in the Israeli Economy?", *Aid Watch*, 2015.

Under International Humanitarian Law, Israel should be responsible for delivering assistance and services to the Palestinian population. As Israel does not meet this obligation, it is often argued that aid is in fact relieving Israel of its responsibilities. Moreover, critiques of the current aid policy indicate that Israel benefits economically from donor funds. As exports to the Occupied Palestinian Territories account for approximately 5% of total Israeli exports, and as the majority of these exports are financed by international aid, aid funds are contributing to the Israeli GDP in sums totaling of billions of dollars.<sup>6</sup> As the EU does not apply the principle of conditionality, neither in the case of the PA nor that of Israel, and it is also not willing to use the economic leverage at its disposal to address constraints on the ground, the de facto implementation of EU development assistance to the Palestinians has been at odds with its main objective. Accordingly, the EU's aid policy lacks relevance, and, to a certain degree, its activities are inconsistent with its intended outcomes.

From the Field

# HOME GROUP: REFLECTIONS ON DIALOGUE PRACTICES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

BY NOA DOLEV

Organizations involved in conflict resolution often use universal theories on conflict resolution for promoting their objectives. This article presents a direct experience from the field which questions this approach by calling for a more inclusive involvement, cultural adaptation and a close look at the local communication practices.

Communication is one of the most essential keys for making connections. Especially in conflict areas, the lack of contact between rival sides leaves each side with a distinctive impact on the perspective about the "other." Thus, both communication and personal contact are essential for creating empathy and transforming conflict. However, while writing these words, I need to take into consideration my own specific concept of "communication" or "empathy" and its relevance to different cultures and conflicts.

Speaking of conflict transformation, the concept I hold true about the "right" type of communication had slowly changed and expand when I started to encounter a different culture through my internship in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Coming from the field of peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian context, I hold a deep conviction about the importance of an open, honest and direct communication as a foundation for creating a shared understanding and increasing general compassion.

With that in mind, I started my internship in a local peacebuilding NGO in Myanmar. This country suffered a coup d'état shortly after the declaration of independence in 1948. Since 1962, a violent military regime ruled the country with extreme nationalist-socialist practices, including isolating the country from the international community for 49 years. That period created one of the world's longest civil wars resulting in growing violence, extreme human rights violations, displacement and ethnic oppression. Since 2010, with general elections following the rise of the democratic opposition and the establishment of a federal state by Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar has started a process of opening itself to the world and healing its internal conflict. However, despite the launch of the 2011 peace process initiative, the transition is slow,





and the country is still bleeding from the internal religious-ethnic conflicts, which result as well in hate speech, distrust, discrimination and the displacement of the minority group, the Rohingya people.

The NGO at which I interned focuses mainly on the broad context of interfaith dialogue and human rights advocacy. Reviewing the agenda of one of the interfaith dialogue projects, I was critical of the lack of interpersonal encounters. Hence, I suggested adding to the schedule an activity that I was practicing and using regularly in different dialogue encounters in Israel/Palestine, known as the “empathy group”. This activity, I believe, could catalyze the transformative effect by initiating interpersonal encounters. In this practice, a small diverse group of individuals meet habitually at the end of each day, aiming to achieve a personal connection with the other side. Through giving and receiving empathy, sharing life stories and regular reflections, participants are able to understand one another more deeply, connect to the other, and transform their conflictual perspective into one of connection.

As much as I was trying to explain the intention of an open circle of sharing feelings and personal experiences, built

on the concept of empathy as I know from Non-Violent Communication, I felt that the locals did not understand what these concepts truly meant (or, perhaps, more accurately, what I MEAN by using these terms). My local colleagues decided eventually to adapt these ideas and name the activity “home groups”. This adaptation deeply resonated with the basic concept of empathy but in practice it missed the main purpose of the activity as the sharing in the groups remained on the intellectual level, while avoiding sharing deep feelings or life stories.

In the beginning I felt frustrated and misunderstood. But with time I learned that I was just judging it from my own biased perspective. Being forced to confront our own judgments is a very common experience in the field of development. As our judgment reflects our backgrounds, beliefs and the divisions of “right” and “wrong”, it should be changed or at least be flexible when it engages with a different culture. If not, keeping the prejudices and preconceptions can lead to intrusion and eventually to causing more harm.

In some ways, a judgment that is not open to local contexts resembles what happens in conflict areas. In conflicts, each side holds strong views and believes about the other which

creates the division of us vs. them, the “right” vs. the “wrong”. In order to be able to transform a conflict, we need to adopt a development practitioner’s approach, which highlights the importance of local perspectives. Meaning: the tools to transform conflicts, like raising communication between rival sides, must emerge from a cultural context, and more specifically, from local communication practices through which we are expressing ourselves, communicating with the other, and are able to bridge those divisions.

This was very clear in my experience in Myanmar. The culture in this country is more reserved than the direct communication I know from Israel. Influenced as well by the history of oppression, fear and mistrust are present in the already indirect communication practices of Myanmar’s local culture of communication. Thus, when planning a project according to the local context and using the ethic of ‘do no harm,’ I was asking myself how we could practice empathy in an indirect culture. Since “empathy groups” as a means for interfaith dialogue may be successful in a direct culture but unsatisfactory in reserved cultures.

Therefore, especially in a conflict area, where the power had been taken away from the local people, there is a special need for a community-based approach to peace building. In this approach, locals will determine their peace building activities according to their own values and needs and not according to general theories of conflict transformation. Such approach will not only advance conflict resolution but will serve as another method for local empowerment as well. In this context, giving power to individuals to decide upon their peace-building activities will mean giving them a voice that probably had been taken away due to the presence of the conflict. When referring to communication practices such as feeling-based sharing in empathy groups, that voice can be given a new meaning, even if that meaning might be translated differently into different communication practices.

Hence, a community-based approach to peace building might look quite different in different community contexts. Development, from its holistic perspective, must look at the wide influences on society and accordingly modify its methods creatively. This does not negate incorporating successful practices of different peace-building activities such as empathy groups, but encouraging extra attentiveness to and awareness of the cultural context and creative adaptation led by the community itself.

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We should bear in mind though, that especially in development practice there is the element of cultural exchange that impacts the local society. Especially when speaking about communication, in that exchange between different cultures, like development practitioners and the communities, the key is in communication. That key is opening both the direct and the indirect communication doors. Thus, we must not hesitate to act, as we never know when our activities might inspire the opportunity for a shared growth.

**"AS OUR JUDGMENT REFLECTS OUR BACKGROUNDS, BELIEFS AND THE DIVISIONS OF “RIGHT” AND “WRONG”, IT SHOULD BE CHANGED OR AT LEAST BE FLEXIBLE WHEN IT ENGAGES WITH A DIFFERENT CULTURE."**

I felt that growth when a local co-worker invited me to her village a few weeks ago. After a long walk in the village visiting several relatives, we were sitting in a circle on the floor with her family. While they were speaking, she whispered to me how much she enjoys these moments with her family. She explained that she used the term “home group” for the activity I introduced in that interfaith project since for her, her family is her empathy group.

I was deeply touched by this moment. And when she asked me if I understood what she meant, I told her that I did. Because maybe the term was used differently, but that day was so full of love, respect, togetherness and care; which is everything an empathy group is supposed to be. Empathy is universal, and though it might be called by different names, found it in different circles and situations, and expressed differently in different cultures, it remains part of peace building work. In Myanmar, as I learnt, empathy groups can be different and can mean simply sitting on the floor with the close family. However, and despite the difference, it can still transform our views of the “others” through empathy, and through his address the main goal, which is peace building, and not the activity itself.



*From the Field*

# LARGE DISPARITIES, INTIMATE QUARTERS: BUILDING A NURSING MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE

BY JORDAN HANNINK

Through examining the work of nurses, this article shows how common challenges can promote basic communication in a reality shaped by conflict.

The summer of 2012 is memorable to me for three reasons: it was the first time I was in Israel, it was the summer I spent in a hospital after almost dying in a pedestrian-bus accident, and it was the time I realized that nurses are on the frontlines of conflict resolution.

Down the hall from my isolated room in Hadassah Ein Kerem's plastic surgery department was an Arab family who were victims of Jewish radicalism in East Jerusalem. The entire family-- a father, his two grown sons, the wife of the oldest son and their six year-old child-- all left with excruciating burns. Each day, I watched the nurses-- most of whom were Ashkenazi Jews and Russian immigrants-- celebrate this family's victories, share their pain, and guide them towards a clear goal: healing. The political dimensions of the nurses', patients', and family members' identities seemed only to matter as they affected care of the patient-- how to share culture, language, family, and physical touch in culturally competent ways.

When speaking to the hospital's trauma coordinator about my observations, she told me about a group of Palestinian and Israeli nurses who were trying to meet to discuss their profession in a region where the difference of one street address can be the difference between first world and third world healthcare. With time, and though not a nurse, I have become involved with this organization as their "chief administrator," which includes grant-writing, logistical management, social media and website maintenance, in addition to dialogue facilitation, strategic development, and public activism work.

Despite the disparities in materials and knowledge, the most pressing need for nurses and patients in Israel-Palestine is a nursing network. Since patients cross the borders to obtain medical care, nurses have to be able to transmit the patient to the next caregiver. This connection also means that nurses will have follow-up, which ultimately serves the patients' welfare. Our strict political, physical, and linguistic borders have prevented such a network from existing, until we started building it. Though the process has been arduous, we have depended on the "snowball" method to generate involvement. We started with Jerusalem nurses who were interested in a collaborative nursing organization, and each nurse was responsible for reaching out to her or his personal networks to add nurses to the overall network. We span as far north as Naharia and as far south as Eilat, as far west as Gaza and as far east as Ramallah. It is currently accessible through informal communication: email, phone calls, and WhatsApp. After five years and hundreds of nurse contacts, our network (Nurses of the Middle East, NME) has outgrown informal channels; we will release a members-only database in 2017.

The group was trying to get off the ground, but met with obstacles on both sides of the border and from every aspect of society. Most urgently is the threat of violence towards our Palestinian nurses from the Palestinian Authority and institutions. In the early days of our organization, one of our founding members was a professor at a university in the West Bank. When social media revealed she was at a meeting with Israelis, the University threatened to fire her unless she ceased her "normalization" activities. In the past year, three of our nurses have been investigated for normalization by the PA, which is punishable by law, and can result in job loss and social isolation.

**"FOR US, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT NURSES HOLD A PART OF THE SOLUTION TO OUR NATIONAL OR GLOBAL CONFLICTS. NURSES SEE THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE DIFFERENTLY THAN MOST PEOPLE, AND TAKE SERIOUSLY THE DETERMINANTS OF A PERSON'S HEALTH AND ABILITY TO THRIVE."**

In addition to navigating the tense situation in the West Bank/East Jerusalem, we also face the problems of our own Israeli security forces. Some members of our organization are unable to join us in East Jerusalem because they cannot cross the border. Additionally, whenever security forces enter health institutions in East Jerusalem and use force against patients and employees, mutual trust and belief in healing structures is compromised. While we have condemned these actions, the damage is done. How does one resolve conflict when there is a power imbalance that pervades daily life? While hospitals are supposedly non-military zones under the Geneva Convention, hospitals in East Jerusalem are occasionally made war zones.

Not only do anti-normalization and security policies hinder our individual members, but they also threaten our ability to provide meaningful, on-the-ground support. We have watched patients suffer because the supplies they need aren't available where they live, though they're readily available in Israeli clinics, and are sometimes silently pushed across the border. We have helped nurses circumvent the limitations of having a degree from Al Quds, which isn't accredited in Israel, so they can complete necessary advanced courses and bedside research. These discrepancies and policies that maintain the status quo have a profound negative impact on the development of a sustainable health system in the Palestinian Authority. The nature of the conflict is intimate- we often share geography, resources, culture, collective trauma, and health systems. Because the stakes are high personally and structurally, building a bilateral health system is essential to any degree of conflict "resolution."

As with many borders we navigate, we have managed to make a difference on the ground because of the bravery of our members who have involved themselves in building the nursing network and in political activism. While the nursing network is not complete, our connections have better allowed us to keep track of patients as they cross from hospitals to clinics to home care. But more incredibly, we have built a group of nurses who trust each other with their lives, and the lives of their patients.

While building and maintaining the nursing network is the organization's practical mission, NME has a broader political agenda. For us, there is no question that nurses hold a part of the solution to our national or global conflicts. Nurses see the intrinsic value of human life differently than most people, and take seriously the determinants of a person's health and ability to thrive. Forming alliances with other peace-through-health organizations and international government organizations has resulted in a platform for nurses advocating to be represented in peace negotiations.

While we recognize our efforts are only triage for a critical-status health system, we believe that one day we will be able to stop the bleeding long enough to work towards sustainable peacebuilding. Until then, patient by patient, nurse by nurse, we are proving to one other and to ourselves that there is care beyond conflict.



Picture by Gal Kramarski, Jerusalem

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*From the Field*

# WHAT A PALESTINIAN CAN LEARN FROM MOROCCO

BY MARWA NATSHEH

Through her internship in Morocco the writer has been inspired to think differently about interfaith relationships. This article presents this experience and highlights the lack of global perspectives of those living in the midst of a conflict.

From the first day I landed in Morocco for my internship, I have learned more than I expected from Moroccan society and the Moroccan people, primarily regarding the coexistence between the Muslim and the Jewish communities. In this experience, especially in Marrakech, I have been able to contrast the Moroccan experience with my own in Jerusalem.

As a Muslim Palestinian woman from Jerusalem, I am used to daily interaction with the Jewish Community whether in school, work or business, and I understand well how both communities feel about the other in our country. Emotions on both sides are very intense, and deeply connected to politics, which ruin the social, economic and religious realities for everyone living in the city. Jewish and Palestinian kids are educated on different historical narratives and learn from their societies to react to the other community mostly with hate and fear. As the other side is so demonized and clearly seen as the enemy, violence and destruction are legitimized as an action to defend your people. Although there are still people who believe in peace and coexistence, it is very hard to act according to these ideals when confronting the political situation, which seems to get worse every day as both sides continue to disrespect to each other.

I have discovered that Jewish-Muslim relations are not the same in Morocco. In the High Atlas Foundation, the local NGO in which I interned throughout my studies at Glocal, I encountered different moments that showed how beautiful it can be to forget the religion of those around you and just to see them as humans. I was also inspired by the CEO of

the foundation, Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir, a Jew who moved to Morocco twenty years ago, especially in his work with human development projects, which target Moroccan communities across the country, focusing on those who live in rural areas.

One of the Foundation's projects is planting trees for carbon dioxide sequestering. Thus, I was offered a trip to one of the sites planted earlier in the year in order to visit the site. When I arrived, I noticed that the site happened to be a Jewish cemetery, located in Akrich, 25 kilometers from Marrakech. Immediately, I felt a range of emotions visiting the cemetery. Firstly, it felt familiar, coming across Hebrew, a language I speak from home. Secondly, I was really happy to see a Muslim man taking care of a Jewish cemetery and knowing its history perfectly, while remembering that in other places, particularly in Palestine/Israel, religious sanctuaries are generally looked after exclusively by members of the same faith. I was also struck by the fact that the Jewish community donated this cemetery, among other cemeteries, for the benefit of local Moroccan farmers to use the land for growing trees, such as pomegranate, figs and olives, which are symbolic for both Muslim and Jewish religions. Furthermore, I was surprised to learn that the Akrich cemetery contains a seven-hundred-year-old shrine of Rabbi Raphael Hachohen, venerated as a miracle worker in ancient Moroccan tradition, and is visited by both Muslims and Jews, who celebrate together at this place.

After the visit, I compared our reality in Palestine and the one in Morocco. The difference was significant as while in



Morocco both faiths are collaborating for preserving the cemeteries, in our country both Israelis and Palestinians invest in destroying each other's history, by harming historical monuments and religious places and by disrupting religious holiday celebrations.

Furthermore, specifically, in Palestine/Israel, religious cemeteries are not treated with the same respect as in Morocco. For example, the Muslim burial ground, Ma'man Allah (Mammilla) in Jerusalem, which is believed to be the oldest Muslim burial site in the city, dating back to the 7th century, has been under threat of destruction from the Israeli government for decades. Although it is believed that the companions of Prophet Muhammad were buried there, as well as soldiers and officials from the Saladin conquest or leading nobles from the Hussein and Dajani families, Israeli officials converted the cemetery into a public park, named the "Independence Park", after 1948, marking Israel's victory in the war. In this process, the graveyard was disturbed, including the disrespectful actions of opening graves or moving remains of bodies.

Furthermore in 1970, a school was built in a section of the cemetery, and in 1986, UNESCO dropped investigations after Israel promised that "no project exists for the deconsecration of the site," and that "its tombs are to be safeguarded". However, in 2008, Jerusalem families, together with the Northern Islamic Movement, failed to persuade the Supreme Court to stop the construction of the "Museum of Tolerance", which is expected to open in 2017 on the same land.

In a journalistic investigation by Haaretz, workers on the site revealed that in preparation for the construction in 2011, excavated skulls and bones were stuffed into cardboard boxes. Moreover, over the years, the cemetery was disrupted for luxury developments such as hotels, restaurants, museums, shops and other Israeli building projects that can now be seen clearly at the site. It is clear by Gideon Suleimani, an Israeli archaeologist who worked on the Museum of Tolerance excavations, that "The policy is to dismantle what is left of Islamic heritage in Jerusalem piece by piece, to clear the area and make it Jewish."

This is not the only example. In August 2015, the Bab Al-Rahmeh cemetery, dating back to the 8th century, and located outside Jerusalem's old city walls close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was fenced by the Israeli authority. Although it is still used by Muslims, they fear it will be confiscated in the near future. This feeling contributes to the general fear of Palestinians that their history and religious sites are threatened by the Israeli government, which does not honor them.

**"I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT JEWISH-MUSLIM RELATIONS ARE NOT THE SAME IN MOROCCO."**

I question why this cemetery was chosen for the park. Was it impossible to establish the park or the museum in a location other than the cemetery, where Muslim soldiers and heroes were buried? It makes me sad to see that Palestine/Israel, which is considered to be the sacred place of the three major world religions, lacks the mutual respect that can be seen in Morocco. Instead, the Palestinians and Israelis let politics and conflict regarding land disputes be mixed with religion, while destroying other aspects of life or opportunities for interfaith partnerships. Instead of raising the next generation on hate and fear, I only wish that the model I have seen through my internship in Morocco can be replicated in Palestine/Israel, in peace and with greater respect.

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# THE LIMITS OF DEVELOPMENT IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

BY AHMED YASIN

Despite the international aid poured in to support Palestinians, development is not achieved but even reversed. The writer discusses the effect of development work in the absence of political or systematic change.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the longest of the 20th century and has continued into the 21st century. While development in Palestine is seen in different shapes and measures, there is a continuous debate around whether development under a military regime is truly possible at all.

The answer to this question is not easy to answer. Four million and eight hundred thousand Palestinians reside beyond the 1967 borders, about 3 million of them in the West Bank and 1.8 million in the Gaza Strip. However, the local government is not able to shape the economy according to local needs or to sufficiently confront the social challenges.

And the outcome is calamitous. Over the last year and despite the work of international development organizations, the poverty rate in the West Bank has reached 26%, while in Gaza it reached 40%. Furthermore, in 2015, the unemployment rate for youth aged 25-34 increased and has reached over 30%, and is projected to continue to increase with no answer in sight.

When looking at a long term perspective, the picture becomes even darker. A recent paper by the U.N has declared that Gaza will become unlivable by 2020 (in only 3 years) if the current trends persist. According to this report, published by UNCTAD, "conflict has accelerated de-development, a process by which development is not merely hindered but reversed."

These statistics unmask the challenges Palestinian development faces. While there are different factors which contribute to poverty or unemployment rates, which can be confronted by development practice, the roots of these phenomena can be traced back to the conflict and especially to Israeli policies against Palestinians.

For example, the daily presence of the Israeli military in Palestinian areas limits the movement of labor or goods, crucial for sustainable trade. Moreover, the expansion of Israeli settlements on account of local farm land reduces the ability of farmers to execute their sources of income. Furthermore, the inability of Palestinians to control above 60% of rural areas in the West Bank (defined as area C), limits

Picture by Gal Kramarski, Bethlehem



the ability to develop industrial areas (the World Bank reports that local economy could earn USD 918 million a year in developing only the Dead Sea Area), infrastructure or even desalination or sewage treatment plants, necessary for basic livable conditions. And lastly, the blockade on Gaza for almost a decade now, plays a major role in the deterioration of the local economy.

These circumstances have created many needs in our daily lives which require immediate interventions through development. Many local and international NGOs execute various projects and missions in Palestine, many of which focus on economic and educational development. As a development practitioner, I participated in different projects aimed at reducing unemployment rates, reducing poverty, and increasing awareness about vocational education. These projects proved to be effective in the short term and on the personal level, by building the capacity of individuals, but were unable to produce long-term impact in solving root reasons.

I can portray this through my own personal experience. A few years ago, I noticed that the Glocal Program offers scholarships for Palestinians to study community development at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As I wished to strengthen my social involvement in my society and to raise my academic and professional level, I decided to apply for this special program.

However, studying in the program was a lot more challenging than I thought. As I am a Palestinian resident of the West Bank, my studies involved not only filling out the required paperwork, but rather daily challenges, dealing with my status as an unwelcome Palestinian.

Although education is essential for overcoming social challenges, I still faced daily restrictions on my movement. As matter of fact, I had to receive a special permit which was issued by the Israeli Civil Administration to attend the studies and even after obtaining it after a rigorous process, it was limited by the following restrictions; a) I was only allowed to enter Jerusalem and no other cities in the country. b) I could only be present in Jerusalem between 7 AM and 10 PM and c) I only had access on the class days of Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays.

As a result, I lived in stress, fear, and frustration during the two semesters of my studies. During that time, I needed to commute for hours, including standing in long lines at the military checkpoints before and after every school day. Unfortunately I also missed several classes and conferences because of these restrictions and was absent from important activities that were outside of my permitted times. I was also absent from extracurricular activities and could not participate in group projects, study in the library or even enjoy the social gatherings outside of school hours.

Although my experience at the program was rich and helped me develop my professional and academic skills, it also shows the limit of organizations to effect the reality without engaging with the conflict. This program, such as other development organizations, wished, and still wishes, to support the Palestinians directly, but its operations and the impact, were limited and even shaped by the reality, and in my case, the Israeli control of Palestinians.

Therefore, development practice for supporting Palestinians under the Israeli military regime often seems like providing pain relief rather than curing the infection. Significant funds are poured into the region but they manage to affect many people personally rather than creating tangible, systematic, changes on the ground. We have a high percentage of motivated, educated and skilled individuals who are working hard to better themselves and the place they live in, but nevertheless true development requires a fertile environment to succeed, an environment which is unfortunately lacking on Palestine.

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# BEYOND NEUTRALITY

BY MATAN ROSENSTRAUCH

From his experience in the field, the writer asks if politically neutral NGOs can really promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

As a peace activist and facilitator for groups in conflict, I have tried to find out what makes people become active in fighting for justice and equality for minorities living among them, especially in intractable conflicts such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and what it takes for an individual process to translate into social change. From my experience, after participating in different dialogue programs with both Palestinians and Jewish settlers, I have realized that while some grassroots NGOs are driven by an explicit political agenda, such as Combatants for Peace ("lead a non-violent struggle against the occupation"), other dialogue promoting NGOs, such as the Peres Center for Peace (PCP) and Search For Common Ground (SFCG), operate under an alleged neutrality and avoid declaring any political objectives.

While studying in the Glocal program, I have become more aware of the international interests driving conflict and peace and more specifically of peace reconciliation programs which use dialogue as a tool for social change. An especially good case study is the American intervention programs that promote reconciliation in Israel and Palestine. In this program, discrepancies between the mission statement and the reality on the ground can be found in two levels: On the macro level, there's a noticeable gap between the formal support of peace, as stated by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) formal mission, according to which they are "committed to supporting a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict", and the de facto U.S. foreign policy of opposing that commitment by, for example, vetoing the Palestinian statehood bid in the U.N. Moreover, on the micro level, there are differences between the formal mission of the USAID, the political objectives of the NGOs that it supports and the agenda leading their field workers in the field.

In this column, I will focus on some of those dynamics, based on the literature, my experience in dialogue work, and interviews conducted with SFCG's CEO, Mrs. Sharon Rosen, and with an educational program manager in the PCP, Mrs. Mili Midlash Romi. I would like to challenge the school of thought claiming that politically neutral dialogue programs preserve and perpetuate Jewish dominance and control while encouraging Arab submissiveness and passivity. I would like to call for a different school of thought, which suggests an alternative to the political-neutral characteristic of the existing USAID financed dialogue programs, yet would acknowledge explicitly that real coexistence can only be achieved by a political change in the current power relations.

The literature defines 4 types of dialogue models, based on programs conducted in Israel Palestine since the 1980s, and their evolution: 1) the Coexistence Model, which emphasizes interpersonal similarities and cultural and lingual commonalities 2) the Joint Projects Model, which focuses on building partnerships based on common interests 3) the Confrontational Model that focuses on forming dialogue dedicated to speaking about the conflict and the atrocities it entails and 4) The Narrative model, which aims to reconstruct the narrative about the conflict while encouraging a greater awareness among Jewish participants regarding the asymmetrical relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

A common critique found in the literature about encounters of the first and second type is their intentional perpetuation of existing asymmetrical power relations by focusing on changing individual-level prejudices while ignoring the collective and institutionalized bases of discrimination. The preferred model for USAID financed programs such as SFCG and the PCP is the 2nd type of 'the Joint Projects Model'.

According to Rosen, "this type is chosen because SFCG does not only bring people together in dialogue but also aims to initiate concrete actions that affect reality". An example for political neutrality, or refraining the political sphere in this type of dialogue, can be seen in how SFCG transforms the "blaming and shaming" discourse (which includes using terms like colonialism, occupation and terror), into a dialogue which instead promotes a use of emotional expressions like sad, angry and hopeful, thus ignoring the reality of discrimination and segregation of the conflict.

Furthermore, In their operation of this dialogue model, both NGOs remain apolitical in their mission statement, in contrary to one of their biggest funders, the USAID, which explicitly promotes a specific solution to the conflict (the two state solution). According to a personal communication with Romi in November 2016, this political neutrality is beneficial [not only to the donors, but also] to the NGO's interests as there is an opportunity [by being apolitical] to reach more people, who wouldn't come to promote an agenda they oppose had one been formally stated. Meaning, as the goal of these organizations is educational; this political neutrality offers the ability to attract the general public and expand the circles of impact, including people with different political views, such as Jewish settlers and Hamas supporters, who often refrain from it.

Hence, nonpolitical encounters between Jews and Arabs, leave an open framework that can be shaped by specific political agendas supported by the educators on the ground. Different actors operating in these frameworks can push forward their own agendas, even if they contradict the specific political agenda of the donors. For example, as dialogue cannot be fully supervised by the donors or board members, over the various sessions the educators can lead the beneficiaries to understand the asymmetric power relations of the conflict, abstaining from the political neutrality.

Unlike politically neutral NGOs, explicitly political NGOs, which many times are funded by the same donors (such as USAID) are less inclusive of people who hold different political agendas but are clearer in the message they promote. In contrast to PCP and SFCG, such political NGOs usually would not be appealing for people who do recognize the Occupation, for example. This approach off course does not attract the same number of people, but it allows a stronger engagement in an active political change.

The different dynamics between NGOs, donors and their beneficiaries in intractable conflicts are complex and ever-changing. Dialogue programs in a reality of violent conflict cannot be apolitical, nor can agendas which promote peace. In the NGO's declared vision statement, this alleged neutrality



Picture by Gal Kramarski, Jerusalem

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may bring into dialogue people with various political views, and should be expanded in numbers to reach bigger impact in society. On the ground level, ignoring the power relations that shape the conflict would just contribute to its status quo. Politically driven NGOs have a lot to learn from alleged politically neutral NGOs on how to include more segments of the societies into the dialogue process, but the latter have to come up with a more structured strategy, to spurt their participants into real action and promote a very clear goal - the end of the conflict – as political as that may sound.

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