

The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies  
The Teddy Kollek Center for Jerusalem Studies

**Going Against the Wind**  
**The Role of NGOs in Jerusalem under an Ongoing Conflict**

**Nimrod Goren**  
With the guidance of Dr. Maya Choshen  
and in cooperation with Mohammed Nakhal

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## Preface

Jerusalem, despite the separation barrier built within it, is the single place where Israelis and Palestinians can still meet relatively easily. However, many emotional barriers separate the two populations. Barriers of fear, hatred and prejudice cause estrangement and tension between the populations who, under different circumstances, could have served as a model for Palestinian-Israeli coexistence. Despite their physical proximity, the two separate ethnic groups living in the city enjoy but few points of contact. The potential for friction between the groups, having a direct connection to the regional political-security reality, gives the tone to their relations today.

It does not, however, necessarily have to be so. There are many individuals and groups in the city who are trying to change this reality, and fashion a different structure of relations between Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants: a structure creating a positive public atmosphere toward attempts at reconciliation and peace-making in the city and overall, that will bring about an atmosphere more conducive toward achieving a political settlement of compromise, and aid in successfully applying such a settlement.

From March till July 2002, research has been conducted at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, aimed at assessing the role of civil society in Jerusalem in improving relations between Israelis and Palestinians in the city and in creating coexistence based on tolerance, mutual understanding and discourse. The research attempted to chart the joint Israeli-Palestinian activities taking place in Jerusalem; discuss their various characteristics; analyze the change that occurred in the scope of these activities following the *al-Aqsa Intifada*; identify the factors influencing the degree of success or failure of the activities in surviving the present violent clash, and formulate recommendations for encouraging additional activities and supporting existing ones.

The first section of the research presents a theoretical introduction about the role of civil society in peace processes.

The second section of the research will focus on data collected about the various bodies in Jerusalem that are conducting or have previously conducted Israeli-

Palestinian activities, and about their activities. This section will analyze the nature of the joint activities held in the city, as well as their scope, the problems they face, the potential for their expansion and the impact of the current crisis upon them.

The third and final section will assess the joint activity conducted in the city, identify projects with a potential for expansion, and present recommendations regarding the types of activity to be encouraged and ways to enhance them.

The limited scope of the project enabled only examination of the activities of the main organizations amongst those charted. In light of this, as well as the dynamic character of civil society in general and that of Jerusalem in particular, it is quite likely that additional organizations active in the city were not included in this study.

I wish to thank The Jerusalem Foundation and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, who initiated this study and enabled its realization. Special thanks are due to my partners in the study: Dr. Maya Choshen, who guided me through all stages of the project, and to Mr. Mohammed Nakhal, who helped me with the study of Palestinian organizations. My thanks to the Steering Committee of this study: Prof. Abraham (Rami) Friedman, Mrs. Ora Ahimeir, Mr. Israel Kimhi, Dr. Hagai Agmon-Snir and Mr. Alan Freeman – as well as to the Head of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies Prof. Ya'acov Bar-Siman-Tov – for their enlightening comments. My appreciation also to Hamutal Eppel's assistance in bringing this manuscript to press, and to Dr. Idan Yaron for his translation and editing of the manuscript.

## **Civil Society and Peace Processes – Theoretical Discussion**

The change from a long-standing violent conflict toward peace and reconciliation is not embodied merely in a political decision and the signing of a political agreement. It is a transformation encompassing total change in the national ethos and in the social beliefs about the “self” and the “other.” It is a long-term and difficult transition, for which it is no longer possible to depend on the political leadership alone. Civil society has a great part in it; it can contribute to the ripening of circumstances that may lead toward the signing of the political agreement, and create a social process enabling the application of these agreements in the best possible way. The role of civil society in this respect is to ensure that the political path to conflict resolution will not remain exclusive, but will be accompanied by a broad social-psychological process in which the parties to the conflict establish a relationship based on coexistence, trust and acceptance, cooperation and respect of each other’s needs (Bar-Tal 2000, pp. 351-365).

Galtung divided the transition from a violent conflict to peace and reconciliation into three stages: peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping. Peace-making is the stage in which most of the work is in the hands of the political leadership, who negotiates with the opponent in order to arrive at a political agreement. However, the success of the other stages is dependent to a large measure on the action of NGOs who work toward establishing a social process. During the stage of peace-building, these organizations can contribute toward transforming the conflict, creating alternative avenues of discourse, finding common denominators and changing the public atmosphere. Thus they create more amenable circumstances for the leadership to conduct negotiations – circumstances in which the political leadership feels that it has the public’s trust and is leading a process favored by the public. The results of civil activities at this stage will aid the political leadership in gaining public approval for a peace agreement (Gidron, Katz & Hasenfeld, 1999, pp. 15-19).

At the peace-keeping stage, the organizations must direct their activities from the advancement of peace toward the consolidation of the emerging peace, and its

transformation from a peace between leaders to a peace between peoples. The NGOs' contribution is expressed in creating new relations between the formerly rival populations, based on values reflecting the new political reality and on extensive cooperation. The success of such a process depends in no small measure upon the will of the leaders and the societies on both sides to establish a "warm peace" between them. Broad international support by funding joint people-to-people projects and by the involvement of international NGOs may be quite significant at this stage (Gidron, Katz & Hasenfeld, 1999, pp. 15-19).

Gidron et al. (1999, pp. 275-298) conducted a comparative study in South Africa, Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestinian Authority, in which they analyzed the role and influence of peace and conflict resolution organizations in each case. The results of this study show that despite the difficulty to pinpoint direct influences of NGOs on the peace process, due to the complexity of the situation and the many actors on the stage, it is possible to identify the significant contribution of these organizations. Despite historical and cultural differences of the countries under study, it was found that peace organizations in all three conflict areas served as a means for the validation of the peace process in the eyes of the public, and for the introduction of new and more moderate terms and concepts into public discourse. Thus, Israeli peace organizations provided legitimization to talks with the PLO, legitimized Arafat as a partner for negotiation, presented to the public alternatives to a military solution to the conflict, raised awareness of the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian State, etc. The NGOs had two main roles: preparing public opinion for a compromise solution, and creating areas of activity via the creation of a new language, the introduction of new metaphors, and cultivation of the trust needed for negotiations and the belief in their success. In addition, hundreds of organizations conducted throughout the years programs of coexistence, meetings on both sides and student exchanges. All of these contributed toward the mitigation of estrangement and the willingness to move from a military solution to a peaceful solution of the bloody conflict (Katz, 2002, p. 325).

Gershon Baskin, head of IPCRI – the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information – mentions this issue in identifying the causes for the failure of the Oslo Process (Baskin, 2002). He claims that Oslo was based on a top-down process: the assumption was that a political agreement between leaders would cause an immediate transformation of reality on the ground, sweeping with it both

populations. Only later, with the signing of Oslo B, did the leaderships call for the establishment of people-to-people projects in order to bolster the emerging peace. Baskin states that despite the sums of money spent by foundations, institutions and foreign governments on these projects, none of them succeeded in bringing about a widespread social change. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority did not treat this channel with due seriousness and did not contribute their own resources toward its advancement. Most of the projects were haphazard and had no clear strategy for leading social change; most Israelis and Palestinians did not take part in the joint activities, and many never even heard about them. During the Oslo years there was no significant bottom-up process parallel to the political process. Therefore it is no wonder that with the breaking out of the *al-Aqsa Intifada*, almost all joint Israeli-Palestinian activities collapsed: the common basis was not strong enough.

Hagai Katz, of the Israeli Center for Third Sector Research at Ben-Gurion University, found in his research that the *al-Aqsa Intifada* brought many organizations for peace and coexistence to a state of paralysis. The shootings and the growing extremism on both sides led to a loss of faith of even the most dedicated peace activists in their ability to bring about change. The willingness of individuals, foundations and business organizations to contribute to peace movements dropped sharply, due to both the deteriorating economic situation and the general atmosphere of despair. Many peace movements ran into severe economic difficulties and had to reduce their activities to a minimum. Although the crisis did not cause a complete collapse, it did lead to irreparable damage, in Katz's opinion. This damage was expressed organizationally, in the public image of the organizations and the discourse they represent, and in their ability to mobilize the resource most necessary to their success – public support and widespread participation (Katz, 2002).

At a time of violent confrontation, the real strength of civil society is put to the test. Conducting joint projects in peacetime is a relatively easy task. To do so at a time of conflict, sometimes at the risk of being regarded as traitors to national interests or as being completely irrelevant, is much more difficult. However, it is yet possible, and may influence the public arena and enhance a possible political breakthrough. We have seen such an example in Cyprus in 2003. Under public pressure, the Turkish and Greek leaders in the island decided on several significant political steps, primarily opening the borders between the two parts of the island

after some 30 years. Cyprus is by no means the only such case. Northern Ireland (see Appendix A below) is an even more relevant example when we examine the ability of civil society to build relationships and bridges between rival ethnic groups, aiding significantly in the enhancement of a peace process.

# Joint Israeli-Palestinian Activities in Jerusalem under an Ongoing Conflict

## A. Background

Over the years, civil society in Jerusalem filled an important role in promoting relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Many NGOs and institutions in the city (both public and private) were involved in conducting joint Israeli-Palestinian activities that, in addition to their contribution to the dialog between the communities, emphasized the mutual goals and interests arising from living in a shared city. The peace process that had begun with the Oslo discussions and continued with the interim agreements reinforced, expanded and enriched the joint Israeli-Palestinian activities.

The outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifada* in September 2000 dealt a hard blow to the efforts to bring together Israelis and Palestinians for joint activities. The breach of trust between the sides, the fear to enter each other's neighborhoods and the restrictions on the Palestinians' freedom of movement, rendered joint projects more difficult to implement than in the past. The instruction of the roof-organization of the Palestinian NGOs' (PNGOs) to all its members to stop joint activities with Israelis was a severe blow to discourse possibilities between the sides. Planned activities were cancelled, discourse mechanisms collapsed, and the break between the two populations of the city seemed complete. The older Israeli frameworks in Jerusalem did try to rally back within two-three months of the *Intifada* and began to consider together the appropriate response to the new reality; but this did not alter the grim general situation.

Actions taken by these NGOs at the initial stage of the *Intifada* were: joint brainstorming by representatives of several organizations; a shift to intra-national work; a shift toward interaction with Palestinian partners via e-mail instead of face to face; informal and sometimes covert interactions in order to find solutions to day-to-day problems of the populations; efforts to find ways of quick response to violent occurrences in the city, in order to calm them down; efforts to conduct

dialogs following the break (sometimes outside the region, mainly in Turkey); and a shift in content of activities (e.g., a change from programs of peace education to programs of conflict management). An outstanding body that continued activities in the Palestinian-Israeli arena even after the outbreak of the *Intifada* was the community administrations, the Palestinian employees of which continued to take part in welfare activities for the East Jerusalem inhabitants, often in cooperation with Israeli factors (Ahimeir and Weingrod, Jerusalem 2001).

It should be noted that the Arab population in Jerusalem is comprised of two groups that are central to our discussion. The first – a few hundred Palestinian families who are Israeli citizens, who came to reside in the city from other parts of the country (students, government officials and professionals); the second – Palestinians who until June 1967 had been citizens of the Kingdom of Jordan and residents of Jordanian Jerusalem. These two groups differ from each other in their attitude toward joint activities in the city. There are also many variations within each group, with significant divisions into sub-groups. As a whole, the Palestinian citizens of Israel have a positive attitude toward projects of coexistence in the city, including projects initiated by Jewish organizations and institutions in West Jerusalem. However, there are some extreme religious elements within this group, who came to the city with the rise of the Islamic movement. These oppose all cooperation with the Israeli establishment or participation in joint projects, and have led to increased religious tension between the Israeli and Palestinian populations of Jerusalem, as well as to increased tension within the Palestinian group.

The second group, comprising Palestinian Jerusalemites, is divided into old and new residents, urban and rural, Muslims and Christians. Many are of Hebronite origin, and maintain close ties with Mount Hebron and the city of Hebron, which are a religious and nationalistic Palestinian stronghold. Members of this group generally avoid participation in joint projects since the outbreak of the *Intifada*, as they do not wish to grant any legitimization to Israeli rule over East Jerusalem, or to promote normalization with Israel as long as the conflict is not resolved – thus identifying with the Palestinian struggle. However, many of them tend to participate in activities of a political nature taking place in neutral sites in town.

In this study, the involvement of each of these population groups in joint activities could not be determined with certainty, mostly due to the lack of awareness

on the part of Israeli leaders of these activities to internal divisions among the Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The basic premise of the present study was that joint Israeli-Palestinian activities serve in themselves as a positive mechanism. They bring together rival groups, thus contributing to a transformation of the conflict and to the creation of a better climate between the two populations – a climate that may not only make coexistence in the city simpler and more harmonious, but may also serve as a basis for building relations of peace, mutual understanding and tolerance between Israelis and Palestinians in the city.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. Method**

The study encompassed organizations and activities that bring together Israelis and Palestinians residing in Jerusalem. These are not official activities, but occur as a result of a voluntary decision of the various bodies. The study focused on NGOs, but examined also semi-official bodies whose activities fit the above criterion (e.g. museums, the Jerusalem Municipality, etc.). Relevant organizations were located according to this criterion. This stage was complex, and included data collection from various sources: The Abraham Fund; the Jerusalem Foundation; databases of The Intercultural Center, Jerusalem, and the network of organizations engaged in Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel (established by the Citizens Accord Forum); professionals and Jerusalem researchers; electronic databases, and reference books. The aim was to locate organizations active in practice, not to make a list of organizations existing “on paper” only or listed as NGOs but not actually active “on the ground.”

More than 70 organizations were thus located (see Appendix B), involved in some way in joint Israeli-Palestinian activity in Jerusalem; as well as some foundations and bodies supporting and funding such activities. Most of these were headed by Israelis; Palestinian or jointly-run institutions comprised about 15% of the total number. This figure may be explained by fact that the study, carried out by an Israeli researcher and an Israeli institute, focused on Israeli organizations. However, this also seems to represent a trend: Palestinian organizations tend to see Jerusalem as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and therefore most of them

do not focus on relations between the communities in the city. These organizations mostly refrain from any joint activity that may be construed as promoting normalization between the communities, and focus on political activities or on those providing vital social needs (such as health services). Since the outbreak of the *Intifada*, Palestinian organizations act less freely than in the past, and direct their attention mainly toward community development in the Palestinian society, and day-to-day problems caused by the political-security situation. Promotion of peace and understanding with the Israeli side seems to them less relevant for the present, in which they view themselves as struggling for the most basic needs. Those organizations that do have joint activities with Israeli partners do this many times covertly, and justify their actions as fostering Palestinian national interests. Publicizing such activities or the names of their participants may sometimes jeopardize the chances for their continuation.

With the list of organizations in hand, a list of topics was formulated with the help of the Steering Committee, to be used as a basis for interviews conducted with heads of the organizations. The following categories were included: general information about the organization and its Israeli-Palestinian activities; the impact of the *Intifada* on the scope and success of activities; assessment of the activity and its social influence; budgeting and financial sources for the activity, and future plans. Next, a series of interviews was conducted with over 45 leaders of the listed organizations (see Appendix C). In addition, background talks were held with representatives of the bodies funding joint activities in Jerusalem and with experts on Jerusalem, and written material was gathered about the organizations whose heads were not interviewed, and about their activity (through the media, Internet and publications of the organizations themselves).

The study was limited in its scope, and this fact limited the findings. It was not possible to conduct in-depth interviews with representatives of all organizations and institutions listed, or to carry out participative observations of the joint activities studied. Such observations might have added an important aspect to the study of joint activities in the city, as they might provide direct information free of the bias that is sometimes typical to information provided by the studied body itself. It was already stated that the list does not encompass all joint activities in the city, whose scope and the factors involved in it change frequently. However, the list of organizations and the rich information obtained through interviews and other means

provide a broad database that opens possibilities for more comprehensive research on this issue. It is worthwhile to conduct a follow-up research that will handle those organizations not included here, enable a deeper analysis of elements not fully treated, collect more detailed information about activities of Palestinian organizations, and examine whether the various organizations in the city try to apply the recommendations made at the end of the present study. Such a follow-up research would also attest to whether the tendency found at the beginning of the third year of the *Intifada* – that there seems to be a rise in joint activity – is not a temporary occurrence.

## C. Findings

In spite of the relatively large number of organizations located, the *Intifada* had a devastating effect on the scope of joint activities in the city. The interviews clearly showed that after the outbreak of the *Intifada*, many projects collapsed due to budgetary problems, difficulties in mobilizing participants and loss of faith of project leaders in the idea of coexistence. However, the second year of the *Intifada* saw a reawakening, and at the beginning of 2003, certain attempts were observed to expand these activities. The findings show that those organizations committed to the idea of coexistence and determined to continue their activities, were successful in doing so – sometimes by adopting new and original ways of thinking.

### A. The organizations and the nature of their activities

The organizations conducting joint Israeli-Palestinian activities may be generally classified into the following six categories:

1. **Organizations specifically involved in fostering Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem:** the Bilingual School, the Peace Kindergarten at the YMCA, the YMCA Youth Club, The Jerusalem Link (operated by Bat Shalom and the Jerusalem Center for Women), The Center for Jewish-Arab Experience, the Jerusalem Tennis Center.
2. **Organizations involved in promoting multi-cultural relations in Jerusalem,** in which members of the various sectors work together, including Palestinians.

This category includes the Intercultural Center, Jerusalem; the Multi-Cultural Dance Ensemble, WIZO Jerusalem's School for Women's Political Leadership, the Wellspring for Democratic Education, and others.

3. **Research institutes and academic centers** that study together, *inter alia*, the future of the city and relations between its ethnic groups. Among these are: the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies; the International Peace and Cooperation Center; IPCRI; al-Quds University; the Van Leer Institute, and the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace.
4. **Organizations focusing on the overall Israeli-Palestinian issue**, not only in the context of Jerusalem: organizations active in encouraging Jewish-Arab co-existence in Israel (such as Givat Haviva and Peace Child Israel); those fostering relations between Israelis and Palestinians (IPCRI; the Peres Center for Peace; the Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation); those working toward both objectives (Ossim Shalom: Social Workers for Peace and Social Welfare, Play for Peace); or toward the advancement of interfaith understanding (such as the Interfaith Encounter Association; the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel [ICCI]; The Israel Interfaith Association; Beit Hillel; Boustan L'Shalom).
5. **Social and cultural institutions** not focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, but engaging in it as part of their ongoing activity, whose joint activities focus mainly on children and youth: the Bible Lands Museum, the Ein Ya'el Living Museum, the Jerusalem Khan Theatre, the Jerusalem Cinemathèque, the Youth Department of Hapoel Jerusalem Basketball Club, and others.
6. **Public institutions conducting cooperative professional or volunteer activities** carried out by Israelis and Palestinians, mostly in the health services: Magen David Adom; the Hadassah hospitals, St. John's and Augusta Victoria hospitals.

As a whole, three main approaches guide the various organizations in conducting joint projects aimed at promoting coexistence in the city. **The meeting approach** ascribes importance to the very meeting, claiming that the key to achieving understanding between the groups is to convene their members to a series of short and intensive meetings, during which they contend with their own prejudices about

the other side and discuss issues at the heart of the conflict. **The experiential approach** maintains that talking about coexistence does not suffice; one must actually apply it. This approach brings together Israelis and Palestinians for relatively long periods of time, to partake in activities of mutual interest. **The educational approach** believes that educating members of rival groups (mostly separately) toward values of democracy, tolerance and mutual respect is the key to improving relations between them (Brad, 1998).

## **B. The sites of mutual activities in the city**

The vast majority of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities, especially those intended for children and adolescents, take place under the sponsorship of Israeli organizations located in Jerusalem's Jewish neighborhoods. These organizations also employ Arab personnel, who take part in leading the joint activities.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that most of the activities take place in West Jerusalem presents a serious challenge to the Palestinian participants, since the security situation hinders their freedom of movement and especially their sense of freedom to move throughout the city. Nonetheless, the research findings show that when Palestinian partners did express interest in taking part in joint activity, the issue of the site of the activity was mostly not the main obstacle (except in cases of objective constraints such as blockades, etc., which prevented access the site). The evidence for this was provided by those Palestinians who refused to take part in joint activities but did agree to go to institutions in West Jerusalem (theaters, cinemas and museums) in order to participate in uni-national activities, even when led by Jews. The precondition for their participation was that they would not meet with Israelis (except for the activity's organizers); therefore, they sometimes preferred to come to those institutions at times when they were empty of visitors.

Institutions and organizations enjoying a longstanding positive reputation for their activities advocating peace and coexistence – such as the YMCA and the Israel Museum – were more successful in their efforts to organize joint activities for Israelis and Palestinians during times of conflict, especially when the participants were children and adolescents. However, as far as activities for adults, this reputation was not always sufficient in overcoming the test of reality. A case in point is Beit Shmuel, which had been conducting a broad range of Jewish-Arab

activities for adults since 1992 with great success, even Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority having taken part in them. All this was to no avail for Beit Shmuel when, upon the outbreak of the *Intifada*, these activities came to a complete stop despite the organizers' efforts to continue them. Participants from both sides no longer showed up for the scheduled meetings.

The organizations and institutions situated close to the boundary line, such as The Center for Jewish-Arab Experience and Museum on the Seam, remarked that their location played a positive role in encouraging Palestinians to participate in activities held there. Although it was easier for Palestinian school principals to justify their students' participation in activities held in the vicinity of their neighborhoods, the overall picture shows that the degree of success in carrying out activities was not clearly dependent upon their location – institutions and organizations situated in the heart of Jewish neighborhoods also succeeded in carrying out joint activities with great success. Furthermore, a good location does not ensure that both sides will wish to continue meeting with each other during times of conflict. The Jerusalem Tennis Center, for example, situated near Mount Scopus, conducted a joint tennis club for children of the adjacent neighborhoods Isawiya and the French Hill. This club, highly successful before the *Intifada*, ceased its activity after the outbreak of the *Intifada*. Although children from both neighborhoods wished to continue playing tennis at the center, they no longer wished to do so together.

A number of places in Jerusalem proved to be effective centers for joint Israeli-Palestinian activities. One is the YMCA, despite its location in a Jewish neighborhood. Not only does the YMCA run a broad spectrum of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities for diverse age groups (from a pre-school to the youth club), it also helps organizations in search of locations for their activities, as well as those needing assistance in recruiting participants. Besides the YMCA, a number of other institutions in the city attract joint activities, especially those whose target population is adults and which are situated in non-Jewish areas on the borderline: the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies in the southern section of the city, the Notre Dame Monastery and the Imperial Hotel adjacent to the Old City.

The site of the activities does not constitute an obstacle only for Palestinian participants who are forced to go to West Jerusalem. On the Israeli side as well, some people mentioned the limitation of the site of activity, and the fact that almost no joint activities take place in East Jerusalem. Thus, for example, the non-profit organization The Wellspring for Democratic Education maintains learning centers throughout Jerusalem, run by Arab and Jewish students from the Hebrew University. Before the *Intifada*, the Jewish students used to visit the centers in East Jerusalem regularly and help in their operation. Today such visits have ceased nearly completely, the only meeting-place for this NGO's activities being the joint training sessions of Arab and Jewish students. Similarly, other organizations that used to operate in Palestinian neighborhoods stopped going there during the *Intifada*. Nonetheless, the awareness that reciprocity in the meeting site is of great value, since it can help to build trust between the sides and provide impetus for the success of the entire activity, led a few bodies to make an attempt to continue operating in East Jerusalem. In this context, the activity of women's organizations/groups is outstanding: the Bat Shalom organization maintains ongoing contacts (including reciprocal visits) with the Jerusalem Center for Women situated in East Jerusalem; and the women's dialog group of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel holds half of its meetings at the homes of Palestinian participants. Beyond this, the Ossim Shalom organization initiated in 2002 a new project in East Jerusalem, in cooperation with al-Quds University, to bring together Israeli and Palestinian students and professionals in East Jerusalem.

However, even in West Jerusalem, organizations interested in holding joint activities faced many hardships. Small non-profit associations and organizations sometimes found it hard to locate sites for their joint activities, due to the opposition of residents of the neighborhoods where the activities were scheduled to be held. A case in point was that of The Jerusalem Circus Association. Prior to the *Intifada*, the Association held its activities in the Giv'at Gonen neighborhood. Despite the neighborhood's moderate image, after the outbreak of violence the neighbors refused to allow Israeli-Palestinian activity within its boundaries, and refused its members entry to the hall in which they had practiced. The directors of the Circus were forced to seek an alternative site for its activities, and only after much effort did they find a place willing to host them, in the Baq'a neighborhood.

### **C. Participants in joint activities and ways of their recruitment**

More than half of the joint activities in the city are geared towards children and adolescents. In the past, most of the activities targeting this population were held in the framework of meetings between pairs of schools. A class from an Israeli school would meet with a corresponding class from a Palestinian school throughout the school year. Immediately upon the outbreak of the *Intifada*, activities of this sort were discontinued. On the Palestinian side, the school principals vetoed continuation of the meetings; while on the Israeli side, this stemmed mainly from security and cost considerations, which were borne by both the parents and the schools. In general, the Israeli schools were more willing than the Palestinian schools to continue joint activities even in times of confrontation, especially those serving a population identified with the peace camp, such as the Experimental School and the Hebrew University Secondary School (“Leyada”). The only Palestinian schools that expressed any willingness to continue the meetings were those located in neighborhoods populated by Palestinians who are Israeli citizens (such as Beit Safafa). In light of this complex reality, in which it was no longer possible to continue meetings between pupils in the existing form, a shift of focus occurred among the West Jerusalem schools – from schools in East Jerusalem to schools in Arab villages adjacent to the capital on its west, mainly Abu Gosh and Ein Rafa. Thus, Jewish children in Jerusalem could continue to meet Arab children, yet not those who share the same home-town.

The issue of the involvement of school principals from East Jerusalem in joint activities is particularly interesting. During the first year of the *Intifada*, the principals were under heavy pressure from extremist factors not to continue any meetings whatsoever between pupils from their schools and those from West Jerusalem. In many instances, Palestinian school principals admitted to the Israeli heads of NGOs and organizations that they would be happy to continue maintaining joint activities, but they simply could not. During the second year of the *Intifada* the pressure on the school principals eased a bit, but they were still reticent and cautious about engaging in bi-national activities. However, they had a relatively positive approach to uni-national activities held in Israeli institutions and/or by Israeli organizations. In 2002, another positive change took place: more and more Palestinian principals have been expressing support of resuming joint activities with Israeli pupils. They informally helped in recruiting participants from among

their students for joint activities in the areas of sport, culture and the sciences, as long as the latter did so individually and not as representatives of the school. At the beginning of 2003, a number of principals were reported to be willing to resume formal meetings with corresponding schools in West Jerusalem.

The difficulty in recruiting children and adolescents for joint activities through their schools led the organizations and institutions conducting activities of this type to take three different courses of action:

1. A total freeze on Palestinian-Israeli activities and on attempts to conduct them. Some of those who adopted this method stated that they preferred to wait for better days; while others began conducting uni-national activities, aimed at preparing the pupils for future meetings and instilling in them values of tolerance and multi-culturalism.
2. Changing the target population. Instead of trying to bring together Jews and Arabs from both sides of Jerusalem they began, as previously mentioned, to try recruiting for these meetings Arab schools from the vicinity of Jerusalem (Abu Gosh and Ein Rafa) and from other regions of Israel (especially from the north). Consequently, the focus of the school meetings changed from Israeli-Palestinian to Jewish-Arab.
3. Changing the method of recruiting participants. This was done by organizations and institutions highly committed to holding Israeli-Palestinian meetings in Jerusalem, and refusing to give up on continuing the meetings even during times of crisis. Unfortunately, their number was small. They sought creative ways to recruit participants: publicizing the activities through former participants, recruiting personal acquaintances, and receiving assistance from third parties (e.g., the Municipality, community centers, teachers and others). Moreover, they tried to attract new populations for the activities – the Ein Yael Living Museum, for example, contacted the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and had great success in bringing together youth in distress from hostels in East and West Jerusalem. In general, the efforts exerted in changing the recruitment method and in finding alternative target populations was fruitful, and most of the organizations committed to continuing joint activities succeeded in their mission. An interesting by-product of the change in recruitment method was that while with the traditional recruitment method (through schools) it

was easier to recruit Israeli participants, with the new recruitment methods the number of interested Palestinians often exceeded that of Israelis.

The method of recruiting participants was less significant for adult activities. In contrast to activities geared towards children and adolescents, adult activities are based less on the Israeli-Palestinian encounter itself and more on a joint sphere of interest or activity: educational (IPCRI, the Middle East Children's Alliance), political (Bat Shalom, The Israel Palestinian Peace Coalition), interfaith (the Interfaith Encounter Association, the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel), academic (the Jerusalem Center for Israel Studies, the Truman Research Institute, al-Quds University, the International Peace and Cooperation Center, Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights), professional (the Musrara School of Photography and New Media, the Hadassah, Augusta Victoria and St. John's hospitals), or social (WIZO, Magen David Adom). Adult activities open to the public at large were publicized, for the most part, in the local Jerusalem press. The participants in other activities were often employees and/or members of the organizing bodies; or announcements of the activity were disseminated according to each organization's mailing list, according to the type of activity. In general, adult activities not defined as promoting co-existence succeeded to survive despite the *Intifada* (again, this depended on the organizer's commitment to continue them), and their initiators did not report special difficulties in recruiting participants. Those organizations that tried to bring together a broad population and focused on the encounter itself and not on a sufficiently broad professional/social common denominator – failed. Organizations that found it difficult to continue the bi-national activities sometimes switched to uni-national activities; this occurred with some of the activities of IPCRI, Ossim Shalom and the Peres Center for Peace.

#### **D. Financing joint activities in the city**

One of the ramifications of the *Intifada* is the ever-increasing difficulty in raising funds for Israeli-Palestinian activities in Jerusalem. In view of the failure of a significant number of organizations to continue operating during times of confrontation, and of the domestic and global recession, fewer and fewer bodies are willing to allocate resources to activities that may not materialize. Moreover, it is clear that many organizations in Jerusalem are unaware of financing possibilities

available to them, lack the manpower necessary for recruiting resources, or are not versed in the field of finance.

Another difficulty faced by fund-raisers for joint activities in Jerusalem predates the *Intifada*: the unclear status of Palestinians in the city. Israeli foundations and bodies that help finance activities promoting Arab-Jewish relations in Israel are unwilling to support initiatives focusing on Jerusalem, as they do not always view the city's Arab residents as part of the Israeli collective. On the other hand, foundations and bodies contributing to Israeli-Palestinian projects often do not consider projects in Jerusalem relevant, as many of Jerusalem's Arabs do not officially belong to the Palestinian Authority. This ambiguity results in a situation whereby fund-raising is easier for organizations and institutions that do not focus only on Jerusalem, and whose activities in the city constitute part of a broader gamut of activities – whether on the Jewish-Arab domestic Israeli plane, or on the Israeli-Palestinian plane.

Israeli-Palestinian activities in Jerusalem benefit from the support of three main local financing bodies: the Jerusalem Foundation supported in 2001 about 17 projects whose objective was to bring the Israeli and Palestinian populations in Jerusalem closer together; The Abraham Fund, a non-profit organization committed to promoting co-existence between Jews and Arabs in Israel, supported 13 projects in Jerusalem during 2001, seven of which also received support from the Jerusalem Foundation. The Education Administration of the Jerusalem Municipality (EA), which coordinates the educational needs in the city, supports many educational initiatives in the city, including grants to museums and other cultural institutions that organize joint activities for Israeli and Palestinian pupils. The New Israel Fund as well as foreign diplomatic missions are also important sources of funding.

Naturally, it is easier for organizations focusing their activity in Jerusalem to raise funds from local sources in the city – such as the Jerusalem Foundation and the EA – than from national sources such as The Abraham Fund, which receive hundreds of applications annually from all over Israel. However, a majority of the organizations and institutions do not obtain financing from the three sources mentioned above. The overlap that exists amongst those institutions that receive support from two or three of these sources attests to a certain problem: most of the money finds its way to a limited number of organizations, while many others do not win any support from the main sources of financing available to them.

In our interviews we often heard complaints about severe financial difficulties that undermine planned projects. One of the main problems mentioned in this context was that financing bodies condition the granting of assistance upon proof by the applicant organization that it has succeeded in recruiting Israeli and Palestinian partners committed to participation in the project. However, as noted earlier, during the *Intifada* recruitment of participants, which in the past had not presented special problems, became a complicated process in itself, necessitating considerable investment. The organizations have not succeeded in obtaining financing for the recruitment process, and therefore those without independent financial resources enabling them to finance the recruitment process, forego in advance the implementation of such projects.

It sometimes seems as if the organization directors use this complaint as an excuse for their failure to implement joint projects. We believe that had the organizations been extremely interested in doing so, they would have succeeded in recruiting participants even without significant external support. Many organizations take a passive stand and not exert special effort to conduct joint activities. They are willing to do so if conditions are amenable, but lack the enthusiasm to take action to create these conditions themselves. At the beginning of 2003, this hypothesis was further substantiated. During this period, the Jerusalem Foundation put out a call for nominations for the Marthe Prize, to be granted to a project encouraging tolerance and co-existence in the city. On the face of it, this was an excellent opportunity for those organizations that had complained about the lack of resources to try to win a substantial amount of money for their activities. However, the number of organizations that actually submitted their candidacy for the award was minimal, despite the fact that the procedure for submitting candidacy was quite simple and did not require much investment.

Another financial obstacle is the paucity of resources from international sources. With the signing of the Oslo Accords, considerable funds flowed into the region from Europe and the United States for implementing joint Israeli-Palestinian projects. However, since the beginning of the *Intifada* (and also as a result of the global economic crisis) many financing bodies, mainly European, have changed their priorities and are less willing to invest in joint projects in general, and in those held in Jerusalem in particular. The feeling that such projects are doomed to fail in a period of confrontation, as well as the concern that funds invested in them

would be wasted, are setting the mood amongst these bodies. Consequently, promised grants have not been transferred, and projects whose budgets were expended were unsuccessful at renewing support or raising funds from other sources. This situation directly led to the discontinuance of a number of projects in the city, and rendered the initiation of new projects increasingly difficult. Another problem in this context is that some foundations condition their support upon the initiation of new projects, refusing to support ongoing projects. This requires the organizations to conduct short-term expendable projects, whose social impact is poor, at the expense of long-term projects that may eventually bring about real social change.

## Effectiveness of Joint Activities in Promoting Shared Existence in Jerusalem

As long as the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation that began in October 2001 continues, joint activities in the city function as an instrument for conflict-transformation. Many of the organizations listed are not peace organizations as such, and do not bring together Palestinians and Israelis for the promotion of one or another political solutions. These are socially-oriented organizations aiming to improve relations between the populations of the city. As such, they focus in times of conflict on keeping open communication channels between populations and in developing new channels, in an effort to reestablish mutual trust, tolerance and acceptance of the “other” and prevent exacerbation of the inter-group conflict in the city. This activity may, in the long run, bring about an opening of the hearts toward the political breakthrough which politically-oriented organizations are trying to promote.

The violent confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis renders the very existence of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities, for whatever aim, a much more complex task. However, reality proves that those bodies committed to the idea and ready to make an effort to be flexible and use innovative modes of action and thought, succeeded somehow to maintain their activity and sometimes even to expand it. Israelis and Palestinians continued to meet each other in Jerusalem and to work together in diverse frameworks, albeit to a lesser extent than before the *al-Aqsa Intifada*. The fact that about seventy organizations are operating in the field proves that the phenomenon is widespread and that a great potential exists in the city; and that ways to tap it must be found. This chapter will examine the extent to which ongoing joint activities in Jerusalem succeed in practice to lead social processes in the city that may enhance shared existence of the populations living in the city.

Joint projects for the rival groups may bring about a better mutual understanding of the existing collective needs and fears among these groups. Such an understanding forms the basis for a common denominator among the groups, even in times of conflict. However, this opportunity is not always realized. Sometimes

the meetings may foster good interpersonal relations amongst the participants, but this is not accompanied by adopting a more positive general attitude toward the “other.” A person coming to a meeting with a member of his outgroup, brings with him/her the entire gamut of stereotypes he/she has internalized over the years from personal experiences and from the many socialization agents with whom he/she came into contact. Meeting an “other” whose character and image do not fit existing stereotypes is liable to give rise to cognitive dissonance. Such dissonance may be resolved by viewing that “other” as anomalous, as an exception to his group. Despite the importance of the single meeting, it does not suffice to create a true cognitive change in relation to an entire group. In order to do this, a long series of consecutive meetings with a positive context are needed (not that disputed issues should not be discussed during them), with a number of circles of participants (e.g., activities targeting a population of parents and children together). In such a case, the positive attribution would not be reduced to the level of the individual or the specific meeting, but to something more inclusive that may be projected to the entire outgroup. Such a process may bring about a change in deep social beliefs about the “self” and the “other,” a necessary step in transforming the social ethos of a conflict to an ethos of reconciliation (Brehm & Kassin, 1996, pp. 134-138; Bar-Tal, 2000). This is a difficult task, requiring meticulous thought and planning prior to the meeting. Unfortunately, we do not see many of those in Jerusalem. The task becomes doubly difficult during a period in which many organizations consider even a single meeting to be a great achievement. Nevertheless this is possible, as a number of bodies in the city are proving, and it is vital in order to prevent the situation described by a peace activist in Northern Ireland in relation to the children’s peace camp at which he was a counselor:

They’d been doing all this work with these kids [...] and as soon as they brought them back and let them go, it was like letting animals go out of a cage; they went back into the wild and they weren’t changed in any way. They were changed for the days that they were away and made friends and all of this, but their understanding soon went away when they came home (Cochrane & Dunn, 2002, p. 156).

Many bodies in Jerusalem exert considerable efforts to conduct joint Israeli-Palestinian activities. However, it is evident that the social effect these organizations

and institutions are trying to create has not yet been achieved. One may attribute this to the very existence of the sharp and violent ethno-national conflict between Israelis and Palestinians; but also to other reasons that are easier to deal with. I will outline here the principal reasons, and present a list of recommendations that may help to realize the potential inherent in the broad network of organizations described.

1. **The small number of participants.** Despite the wide variety of organizations and institutions conducting Israeli-Palestinian projects in Jerusalem, the vast majority of the city's residents have not taken part in any joint activity since the outbreak of the *Intifada*. Israelis and Palestinians who share a common city have no real opportunity to meet and get to know each other. This fact is especially disturbing for Israeli and Palestinian children and adolescents, who grow up alongside each other without understanding that the reality is more complex than the absolute negative stereotypes they hold in many cases about the "other." Prior to the *Intifada*, programs bringing together pairs of schools throughout the entire school year (and sometimes even beyond it) served as an excellent opportunity for changing attitudes toward the "other" amongst Jerusalem's children. These programs supplied a framework for continuous meetings over time – not only with members of the peer group of the "others" but also with their families and their cultural environment. However, these programs were insufficiently widespread in the past, and today with the *Intifada* they are so rare that only very few Jerusalem children can benefit from them at all. In view of the difficulty to bring together children and adolescents from both sides within Jerusalem itself, the alternative of running joint youth camps in a neutral environment should be considered. Such camps have proven their effectiveness more than once in shattering stereotypes and creating inter-communal understanding and friendship, mostly when the camp served as an incentive for continued activities upon the return home (Ungerleider, 2001, pp. 583-587). Unfortunately, although Jerusalem children and youth participate in Israeli-Palestinian peace camps conducted by such organizations as Seeds of Peace and Givat Haviva, these camps are not intended specifically for residents of the city, and the latter play only a marginal role in them.
2. **The tendency to convince the convinced.** The graver the political-security situation, the more difficult it became to find Israelis and Palestinians willing

to take part in joint activities. This led to a significant drop in the impact of these activities, not only because of the smaller number of both participants and activities, but also because of the character of those willing to take part in them. In the past, for example, children were brought to joint activities collectively by the school, without actually choosing to participate in them; thus, the participants were not always those with positive attitudes toward the “other” and/or toward the effort to build relations of understanding and tolerance between Israelis and Palestinians in the city. During the *Intifada*, when participants are being recruited for the most part on an individual basis, a vast majority come from families belonging to the peace camp. Even in the few organized meetings held between schools during the period of the *Intifada*, the schools did not make participation in the activity compulsory, leaving it to the discretion of the pupils and their parents. Consequently, children coming to these meetings were mostly from families belonging to the peace camp. Such a situation facilitates joint activities in that there is a lower threshold of hostility amongst the participants, and this relieves the facilitators from spending most of their time neutralizing negative feelings of participants toward one another. However, such meetings do not contribute much to creating a comprehensive change in positions among the various populations of the city, although they do deepen cooperation between populations who are ready for this in any case – not an insignificant achievement in itself at a time of violent confrontation.

Some organizations and institutions continue to bring together Israeli and Palestinian children from the lower socio-economic classes. It is interesting to note that precisely amongst such populations, traditionally characterized by more negative attitudes towards the “other” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the joint activities enjoyed remarkable success (for example, those at the Ein Yael Living Museum). After the difficult initial stage in which the children sometimes refuse even to talk with each other or hurl harsh and hurtful epithets at each other, they succeed in discovering the broad common denominators between them, and even develop special friendships. The success of activities involving such populations requires preliminary groundwork as well as a high level of sensitivity and professionalism, as it is difficult for the participants to traverse the initial stage of the activity, and the entire project may be doomed to failure. Sometimes, another scenario is also possible: an initial meeting

with the “other” may lead to attempts by the participants to repress the conflicts and prejudices. In such a case (as transpired in the project “Young Entrepreneurs”), the participants focused only on the joint work and ignored the inter-group conflict. This situation may continue throughout the activity, but is liable to burst into the open following an external event of one kind or another.<sup>3</sup> The way of coping with such an event and the emotions it arouses is likely to determine the future of the entire project.

Attempts to expand the circle of participants in the joint activities, rather than focusing only on those holding moderate views about the “other,” are of great importance. Experience has proven that although it is harder to bring together populations with mutual negative attitudes, when this is accomplished the intensity of the change that occurs is extremely significant. This is true for all aspects of activities, with children and adults alike.

3. **Limited scope of adult activities.** Relative to the activities with children and adolescents, the number of joint activities targeting the adult population is limited. These activities are different in another aspect – while the Palestinians who are Israeli citizens are prominent in activities with children and adolescents since the *Intifada*, a higher level of participation of Palestinian Jerusalemites in adult activities is evident. This stems from the political dimension, central to adult activities that survived the *Intifada* or are carried out because of it.

The *Intifada* led to a situation whereby the people-to-people meetings that took place among adults in Jerusalem and dealt with social and cultural topics, ceased almost entirely. Those activities that survived recognized the political need for a compromise in Jerusalem, and emphasized the Israeli-Palestinian dimension more than the Arab-Jewish dimension. This led to a situation whereby Israeli participants in adult activities were mostly associated with the left, which is ready to recognize the validity of at least some of the Palestinian national aspirations in East Jerusalem. During difficult times, when it is nearly impossible for peace activists and professionals interested in promoting peace to meet and/or cooperate with their colleagues, Jerusalem has become the prominent meeting place in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. Assorted activities are taking place in the city in the form of think-tanks, joint work groups and professional cooperation.

Nonetheless, although these activities are very important and may sometimes influence decision-makers, at present they cannot lead to any significant change in Israeli-Palestinian relations in the city. Most participants in them hold dovish political views, and this narrows their potential number and their effect on the public at large. This fact derives in no small measure from the general characteristics of the city's residents, who mostly hold right-wing political positions and are not eager for cooperation with the Palestinian population in the city. Most Palestinian residents are also not interested in participating in joint activities, for reasons mentioned above, mainly refusing normalization and avoiding activities that may be interpreted as recognizing Israeli rule over the entire city.

It is therefore necessary to enlarge the circle of participants in joint activities. The organizations must reach out to those sectors of the populations that traditionally avoid meeting the "other" and automatically affiliate those who take part in dialog with the left. Organizations that will succeed in doing this while combining political contents with socio-cultural contents, may fill a significant void in the city and achieve welcome results. The Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation (YIFC), for example, attempts to do so, and has organized several Israeli-Palestinian conferences and projects, in Jerusalem and in Europe, in which various aspects of the conflict (including the issue of Jerusalem) are discussed. Jerusalemites from both parts of town as well as others, of varied political backgrounds, have taken part in these activities.

4. **Not enough use of international sponsorships.** The solution to a reality whereby many Palestinian elements refuse to have direct contact with Israeli organizations, may take the form of increased involvement of international bodies. The sponsorship of a European or American organization for a proposed project may significantly increase its chances for success. Such involvement may be expressed by granting outside sponsorship to an event conducted in Jerusalem by local bodies; initiating local activities by outside bodies; and inviting local elements to take part in activities conducted in a neutral place – even abroad. Needless to say, a trip abroad is an appreciable incentive to both sides for participating in joint activities. Thus, a Palestinian Jerusalemite participant in an Israeli-Palestinian-European seminar organized by the Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation, told that she concealed from her acquaintances

the fact that Israelis were participating at the seminar and said that she was going to meet European youth, so as not to be accused of being a traitor to Palestinian national interests. She would not have taken part in a joint project without the foreign sponsorship. It was the European participation that justified the journey in her own eyes and those of her surroundings, and gave her the opportunity to achieve her personal aim to conduct a dialog with Israeli partners. I believe she is not alone.

In addition, it is possible to use the experience gained by organizations and people the world over who took part in multi-cultural activities in times of conflict (e.g., inviting an outside expert to lead a joint dialog group; inviting experts for lectures and workshops; adopting projects and activity patterns proven elsewhere to be successful, etc.). Such sponsorship places the project in an international context, and facilitates participation on both sides. The presence of a neutral mediating figure may mitigate the difficulty of meeting the “other,” and may help the Palestinian participants to avoid accusations that the project promotes normalization.

The importance of international involvement is proved by the following examples:

- a. An Israeli-Palestinian seminar on the subject of mediation held in October 2002 by the Jerusalem Center for Conflict Resolution and Mediation, became possible only after it received an American umbrella – that of the American Bar Association and the American Embassy in Israel. American experts took part in the Seminar, chaired several of the joint workshops, and shared their experience with the local participants. Sponsorships of external foundations, such as the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, made a decisive contribution to the possibility of conducting joint seminars and projects in the city.
- b. In 2003, an Israeli-Palestinian-European Seminar took place in Europe, with the participation of young leaders from all sides. The seminar was organized by the Jerusalem-based Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation, together with a Palestinian organization active also in East Jerusalem and with a European student union. One of the Palestinian participants, a resident of East Jerusalem, stated that she hid from her acquaintances the

fact that Israelis participated in the seminar, in order not to be accused of betraying national Palestinian interests. She told them only that she was going to meet young Europeans. This participant would not take part in a joint project not under foreign sponsorship. The European presence gave her an excuse for the trip, for herself as well as for her society. It also afforded her an opportunity to carry out her personal will to conduct a dialog with Israeli counterparts. My impression is that she was not the only one to face such difficulties.

Sometimes a single representative from abroad suffices to bring about change. A women's group for dialog and social activities functions within the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. During the second year of this group's activities, an American woman facilitator, who had come to Israel to offer her assistance, joined the group. In this case her presence was not vital to the existence of the group; but the participants claimed that the very presence of a neutral professional woman contributed tremendously. She succeeded in adding depth to group discussions and in channeling them into new directions. The result of the group process started by the foreign facilitator was the initiation of a search by the members for ways to direct their resources toward the outside, and to initiate ongoing activities in the community.

However, the involvement of international organizations in the Israeli-Palestinian activities in Jerusalem is quite small. Foreign funds are less willing than in the past to assist in financing joint projects, and far less willing to become involved in the actual implementation of the project. Only few international non-governmental organizations (such as Play for Peace, the Middle East Children's Alliance, Search for Common Ground and Seeds of Peace) have programs designed for the Israeli and Palestinian populations in the region. An increase in the involvement of foundations and of international non-governmental organizations in financing and implementing joint activities could make a significant contribution toward expanding their scope and increasing their chances for success. This may be achieved by convincing the foundations and organizations that their contribution is of vital importance, that the planned activities have an honest chance for succeeding and for generating social change despite – and perhaps also because of – the violent confrontation in our region.

5. **The absence of a coordinating body.** Many organizations and institutions in the city face strikingly similar problems in implementing joint projects in Jerusalem. Some succeed in contending with these problems, while others give up. Yet the city lacks an influential Israeli-Palestinian coordinating body that would engage exclusively in encouraging joint activities in the city. Such a body should include key figures in the Israeli and Palestinian societies in Jerusalem from the public, social and professional arenas alike. The establishment of such a body would help organizations and institutions operating in the Israeli-Palestinian arena in the city to learn from the experience of others, and empower them to collaborate on a joint objective and cope with complex difficulties deriving from the political-security reality in which we live. It would provide professional guidance and consultation to ongoing and planned projects; assist in fund-raising; increase public awareness of the existence of the joint activities; lend a hand in efforts to increase the number of participants in the activities and to introduce the activities to new populations; identify projects that may be expanded as well as interfaces between existing projects; create a network of people involved in joint activities; establish a website; publish a newsletter and a directory of organizations.

The coordinating body must not be identified with the Israeli Establishment, nor can it ignore the religious and national aspirations of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. It may even have two distinct sections: one focusing on social-cultural activities carried out mostly with Israeli-Palestinians residing in Jerusalem; and another focusing on activities of a political nature, in which Jerusalemite Palestinians also participate. If established, such a body could lead to a significant increase in the scope of joint activities in the city, and in their effectiveness.

## Recommendations

Based on the overall data that arose from the research conducted and from the study of the Northern Ireland example (Appendix A below), it is possible to present a number of recommendations and additional guidelines. Their implementation can lead to a significant increase in the number, scope and efficacy of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities in Jerusalem.

- Since the end of the second year of the *Intifada*, a positive momentum has developed in the city in all aspects of joint activities. Organizations that withdrew from such activities at the outbreak of the *Intifada* are now ready to resume their involvement. Financing bodies should encourage this momentum and support it in every possible way, in order to enhance it.
- Cooperation among organizations and institutions working in the field of Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem should be encouraged, *inter alia*, with the aid of the coordinating body recommended above. This could be carried out on a number of levels: (1) The organizations can help each other in recruiting participants through the mutual assistance of intermediaries, existing mailing lists, previous participants etc.; (2) Pooling resources: organizations with access to potential financiers may adopt activities of organizations lacking such access, and work together with them to implement the planned projects; (3) The professional staffs of organizations focusing on a similar target population from different aspects may assist each other in order to enrich the activities; (4) Existing activities may be expanded and developed by adding spheres that already exist in other organizations' activities.
- An Israeli organization desiring to work with a Palestinian population needs to exert considerable effort in finding influential intermediaries for the target population. Furthermore, the distinct characteristics of the target population, its needs, its social, economic and particular political structure, must be learned. Any attempt to "force" joint assistance/activity on a Palestinian population without adequate groundwork or appropriate intermediaries, is destined to failure in most cases.
- The majority of joint activities in the city are managed by Israeli institutions and organizations that locate Palestinian partners. In East Jerusalem there are

a number of Palestinian organizations, institutions and NGOs that hardly share any joint projects with Israelis. An attempt should be made to encourage more Palestinian bodies to initiate joint projects and establish connection with Israeli partners, in correlation with the formers' needs and sensitivities.

- Adult activities succeeded to survive the period of the *Intifada* when they focused on the inter-faith or gender aspect. The latent potential in activities of this sort has not been fully exploited, and there is room for expansion (use could be made of the Museum of Islam and the Bible Lands Museum).
- Organizations working for all communities in Jerusalem, such as Yad Sarah, should be encouraged. These have a positive image in the eyes of all populations of the city as they respond to a real need, and their activities are conducive to a more positive atmosphere among the populations.
- Joint activities for the elderly should be encouraged. No activity in Jerusalem today focuses on this sector. The elderly have a latent potential for cooperation, also because most elderly Oriental Jews speak Arabic, which could facilitate contact with Palestinians. In instances when the elderly did participate in joint activities (such as activities in schools, when they served as translators in their grandchildren's activities), a great success was reported. Furthermore, this would constitute an example for the younger generation, and involve them in activities as well.
- The language barrier encumbers basic communication between Israelis and Palestinians in the city, and deepens mistrust and alienation between them. A city-wide project of mutual study of Arabic and Hebrew in community centers, accompanied by encounters between learners' groups, could aid in removing this barrier.
- Sports or other projects that entail physical activity (dance, circus) achieve major success, and may be broadened. The language component in them is secondary, and it is easier to find a common denominator among participants speaking different languages. In addition, such activity creates a team spirit and mutual trust among participants.
- Presenting joint activities as focused on encouraging co-existence should be avoided. The concept of co-existence evokes opposition on both sides. It would be preferable to focus on some field of common interest or activity, and through

it create discourse between the participants (also on matters concerning shared existence). Many activities fail due to concern on the part of potential participants that they are being manipulated to participate, through various pretexts, in activities advocating co-existence.

- Cooperation with al-Quds University should be encouraged. There are elements at the University ready to promote joint initiatives, which are often carried out with partners in Tel Aviv and not in Jerusalem (the Peres Center for Peace, Tel-Aviv University). It is recommended to try to create cooperation among students in similar fields of study, as well as to deepen cooperation at the institutional and research level with corresponding institutions in West Jerusalem.
- Only few activities in the city have a professional steering committee to guide them. Such a committee, composed of experts in fields related to the particular activity, could assist in developing and implementing programs and in coping with challenges liable to arise from the political-security reality. An effective steering committee may make the difference between a successful project and a good idea that failed in its performance.
- Working together on a common vision should be central to adult activities. Experience has proven that while disputes and conflicts with respect to reality are many and threatening, working together on aspirations for the future may narrow the gaps and expand the space of joint action. A joint Israeli-Palestinian Forum, composed of representatives of various sectors of both populations could develop a common vision and initiate a series of long-term projects encompassing all groups in the city. Such projects can aid in building trust and tolerance among the groups, and may enhance the sense of belonging of members from the various groups to the city and its whole population, without regard to political status.
- Encouraging reciprocity in the venue of activities is of major importance. A reality in which nearly all activities take place in West Jerusalem is problematic. Activities that were also carried out in East Jerusalem met with greater response on the Palestinian side, and attested in their view to a true Israeli willingness to work together. Moreover, Israeli participants arriving “behind the lines” – i.e. East Jerusalem – will prove that this is not so bad, foster knowledge about

the living conditions of the other and help to overcome psychological barriers between the sides.

- In order for joint activities to have a significant and sustained effect on Jerusalem's society, preference should be given to multi-stage projects, in which each stage of an activity leads to the next (e.g., a dialog group which, after a series of internal meetings, will initiate some form of community action), over short-term projects that end after a conference or a single meeting. Thus, the success of one activity would be utilized as a catalyst for the next. The number of participants would grow, and with it the overall impact of the project on society. The circle of participants of an existing activity may also be broadened, for example, by organizing a joint activity for parents whose children are meeting in the framework of the schools. An initiative of this kind requires collaboration among various organizations that conduct activities different in character and in target populations.
- It is possible to adopt a new method of resource allocation for joint projects. Thus, seed money could be allocated to factors interested in initiating projects, to be used for recruiting participants, developing the program, implementing its initial stages; and for attempting to raise additional, more significant funds from other sources in Israel and abroad. This allocation method would enable the establishment of a kind of hothouse for social organizations and initiators working in the Israeli-Palestinian arena in Jerusalem.
- The YMCA youth club seems to be one of the more promising initiatives in the city in Israeli-Palestinian relations. This activity and its potential must be closely examined, and if found worthy, should receive adequate support in order to enlarge it.
- This study has supplied a valuable yet partial database. A further comprehensive study is recommended, in order to also examine in-depth developments within the Palestinian society.
- It is recommended to establish an Israeli-Palestinian working-group in order to implement the above recommendations, and to crystallize additional methods of work for the short, middle and long range.

## Summary

The political future of Jerusalem will be determined at the negotiation table. However, the future of relations between its Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants is not necessarily dependent upon the results of official diplomatic discussions between the sides. The civil society on both Israeli and Palestinian sides can take an active part even today in designing inter-community relations in Jerusalem. NGOs on both sides can act to mitigate the conflict between the groups and promote shared existence between them, by finding common denominators among their members and by establishing mutual relations based on respect, trust, tolerance and appreciation of the needs and fears of the “other.”

Theoretical studies about conflict resolution attribute great importance to civil society in promoting processes of transformation of the conflict, peace building and reconciliation. Although this importance is not measurable, it is claimed that NGOs may serve as a mechanism for legitimizing the peace process in the eyes of the public, introducing new concepts and attitudes that may lead to the signing of a political agreement, as well as create a social process enabling the implementation of such agreements in the best possible way. Civil society’s role is to see to it that the political channel of conflict resolution will not be the only one, and will be accompanied by a broad social-psychological process restructuring relations between the rival groups.

The case of Northern Ireland (Appendix A), strengthens this claim. Many studies examined the role of civil society in Northern Ireland prior to the “Good Friday Agreement” of 1998. It was concluded that although civil society did not directly aid in the achievement of the agreement, joint activities between Catholics and Protestants – who had NGOs before and after the signing of the agreement – could provide an atmosphere enabling progress towards such an agreement. These organizations introduced to the public discourse concepts of cooperation and dialog, and their widespread activities (uni-national and by-national) co-opted ever increasing sectors of the population to their ideas. This was a significant contribution to the creation of a culture of peace, helped the ratification of the agreement in the referendum and enhanced its consequent implementation on the civil level.

Israeli-Palestinian joint activities in Jerusalem may contribute toward improving inter-group relations in the city and enhance processes of fostering shared existence between the two populations. Over the years, and especially after the signing of the Oslo Accords, many joint projects were carried out in various areas – education, culture, sport, politics, welfare, health, research and others. However, the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifada* at the end of 2000 not only hindered the expansion of such activities, but made even the maintenance of existing functions quite difficult.

Many organizations surrendered to the difficulties and the erupting conflict. However, this research located about 70 organizations in the city determined to continue to bring together Israelis and Palestinians, who began reexamining their projects and restructuring them to fit the changing political-security situation. Despite the relatively large number of such organizations, the scope of joint activities in the city remains limited. Most of the city's inhabitants have never taken part in activities with "the other side," or are even unaware of their existence.

The organizations located may be divided into six types: those dealing specifically with promoting Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem; those trying to promote multi-cultural relations in Jerusalem (not only with an Israeli-Palestinian emphasis); research and academic institutions; organizations engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian scene as a whole (not exclusively in Jerusalem); social, cultural and sport institutions; and institutions who carry out Israeli-Palestinian cooperation on the professional level.

Most of the organizations located were Israeli, carrying out joint activities with Palestinians recruited ad hoc. Few organizations are managed jointly by Israelis and Palestinians, and in few cases there is a close and continuing cooperation between an Israeli organization and a parallel Palestinian one. This is one of the greatest difficulties of civil society in Jerusalem in leading a true social change in relations between communities in the city. Most of the Arab participants in joint activities in the social and cultural areas are Palestinian citizens of Israel, who have come from other parts of the country to reside in Jerusalem. Most of them (except for members of the Islamic Movement) do not see cooperation with Israelis in these areas as problematic. However, Palestinian-Jerusalemite organizations are not eager to cooperate with Israeli organizations in people-to-people projects that appear to them as promoting normalization. They believe that it is first necessary to work toward a political solution and ensure the basic rights of the

Palestinian people in East Jerusalem, in the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. In view of this, cooperation with Palestinian-Jerusalemite organizations is limited, focusing on political aspects and on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The erection of physical barriers within Jerusalem renders it even more difficult to conduct joint activities with the Palestinian residents. International auspices for joint activities and responses for true needs of the Palestinian-Jerusalemite society (for example, on health problems) may contribute to the expansion of cooperation with this population.

Difficulties also exist even on the Israeli side. Since the outbreak of the *Intifada*, many of those who formerly advocated meeting and coexistence have lost their faith that “there is someone to talk to.” This – in addition to the fact that most of the Jewish population in Jerusalem has right-wing political attitudes, mostly accompanied by an avoidance of any joint activities at times of violent conflict – has limited the number and character of residents who take part in joint projects with Palestinians. Thus, most of the Jewish participants in these projects come from the peace camp, and this blunts the social impact of the activities – they “convert the converted.”

Nonetheless, the very existence of ongoing joint activities even in times of conflict, by a broad spectrum of organizations and institutions having diverse objectives and characteristics and in different sections of the city, is a positive sign for the future. The fact that these organizations and institutions manage to survive even during difficult times and keep open channels of communication and cooperation and sometimes even develop new ones, testifies to the fact that this is possible. Devotion, determination and creative thinking can lead almost every organization to success in carrying out a joint project with the “other” – even those who have all but given up with the outbreak of the *Intifada*.

In order to fulfill this task – taking into account that many organizations in the city do similar things separately and face similar difficulties individually – one of the central recommendations of this study is to form an Israeli-Palestinian coordinating body in Jerusalem. Such a body, much needed as soon as possible, will enable the formation of links between NGOs working to promote Israeli-Palestinian shared existence in the city. I believe that it could lead to a significant advance in the scope of joint activities and in their ability to bring about a true social change in the city, regardless of its political future. Expanding the activities

of NGOs in the city and exposing various sectors of the population to them could convince the residents of Jerusalem that they do not have to wait until the statesmen succeed in formulating a process for appeasement and reconciliation, and that ordinary people can carry out large parts of the work by themselves. Some of them are already doing so today.

## **Appendix A**

### **The Northern Irish Case-Study<sup>4</sup>**

The Protestant-Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland has many points of intersection with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem. In both cases two distinct populations, differing in religion and national aspirations, live in a relatively small area. Despite the fact that the cultural differences between the groups in Jerusalem are more significant, as they contain an additional ethnic component irrelevant to the Irish case, we may learn a great deal from the activity of dialog organizations in Northern Ireland in reference to the Jerusalem case.

The “Good Friday Agreement,” signed in April 1998 by the rival parties of the Northern Ireland conflict, was achieved after many diplomatic and international efforts. The mere achievement of the agreement between the leaders was insufficient to enforce it, as it faced another obstacle: the need to win a majority in a referendum on the issue. Although the citizens of Northern Ireland did not take an active part in the political negotiations that led to the agreement, they could decide its fate by their vote and determine the direction their country would take – whether toward peace or toward perpetuation of the conflict. The high rate of support given the agreement by the citizens of Northern Ireland raised the question whether this support soared on the wings of the euphoria and optimism at the very achievement of the agreement, or was the outcome of a long and heavily invested social process during which the populations of both groups were gradually drawing nearer to each other – a process whose very existence prepared the populace and its leadership for peace, created legitimacy for the very existence of the peace process that the statesmen were leading, and ensured support amongst both Catholics and Protestants.

Studies examining the roles of the third sector in Northern Ireland prior to achievement of the peace agreement concluded that, even though this sector did not directly assist in achieving the agreement, it did create a public atmosphere that enabled action toward such an agreement. The NGOs in the country introduced new concepts into the public discourse – concepts of cooperation and dialog – and harnessed through their extensive activities ever more sectors of the population to

the ideas they espoused. No doubt that this contributed significantly to the creation of a peace culture that would welcome a political agreement and take action toward its approval and the implementation of its various components at the civil level.

I shall dwell below on the characteristics of the NGOs in Northern Ireland that worked toward bringing together Catholics and Protestants before peace was achieved: the scope of the third sector in Northern Ireland, the *modus operandi* of dialog organizations in the country, and their effectiveness *vis-à-vis* a prolonged conflict. The data will serve later as a basis for comparison with the findings in relation to Jerusalem. They may prove helpful in finding ways to encourage, expand and expedite the activities of dialog organizations in Jerusalem, and in proposing solutions to problems that these organizations are facing *vis-à-vis* the protracted confrontation.

The population of Northern Ireland numbers about a million and a half residents, concentrated in a relatively small area. Nevertheless, about 5,000 NGOs are active in the country, engaging in a broad spectrum of topics in which the government does not supply the needs of society. In the reality of Northern Ireland, it is difficult to define a completely distinct category of organizations engaged in dialog and in joint inter-group activity; a majority of the organizations, regardless of their sphere of activity, declare that their activities contribute in one way or another to the creation of a peaceful society. On the other hand, very few will state that their main objective is to take action toward resolving conflicts and promoting peace. Thus, when defining the organizations in Northern Ireland engaged in joint activities of Catholics and Protestants, it is customary to include not only those stating as their main objectives peace and inter-community reconciliation, but also organizations for community development – provided they are actually (even if indirectly) engaged in promoting bridge-building and relations between the two rival groups. The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council published in 1998 a list of 133 organizations of this type. These organizations may be divided into three categories, according to their target populations and methods of operation:

1. Cross-community groups – organizations conducting joint activities for Catholics and Protestants
2. Inter-community groups – organizations working with both communities simultaneously, but separately

3. Single identity groups – organizations working with one community only, under the assumption that preparing this community for a later dialog with the other side is the initial stage of conflict-resolution strategy.

In general, one may say that these organizations were established in order to deal with the symptoms of the conflict and not with its actual causes (or with those perceived as such by the sides). Only rarely did the organizations attempt to deal with core issues of the Northern Ireland conflict. They preferred instead to engage in the daily aspects of the conflict, among them its impact on the lives of specific population groups (such as women); reactions to incidents of politically motivated violence; perceptions of community discrimination, or a community's sense of inferiority in relation to its neighbor in matters pertaining to its political, social, cultural and economic situation.

When examining the role of civil society in Northern Ireland in promoting peace, six main channels of action may be identified:

1. Community development and work on inter-community and intra-community relations. These create new opportunities for dialog and cooperation between the rival groups
2. Dialog about political disputes and their settlement, with the participation of politicians and others
3. Assuring equal access of members of both communities to power centers and means, and encouraging economic development in order to help achieve this objective
4. Educational work creating new opportunities for encounters and mutual understanding amongst children and youth
5. Community initiatives dealing with issues pertaining to the physical division of neighborhoods and the boundaries between them
6. Cultural work, with the aim of presenting the cultural diversity amongst the communities as positive and enriching, not as negative and divisive. This activity included the media, who encouraged multi-cultural acceptance and offered opportunities for discussing disputed issues.

It is very difficult to assess the overall impact of the peace organizations in Northern Ireland on the negotiations that finally led to signing the “Good Friday Agreement.” However, one may state unequivocally that the civil society organizations did not have a direct impact on opening the negotiations or on their results. The factors that led to political negotiations were, for the most part, violent events that shook both sides. The fear that events would deteriorate to civil war was a far more significant catalyst for the leaders of both sides to start working together than any joint inter-community activity or any peace rally organized by civil society organizations. Nonetheless, the peace organizations did have an impact on the political process. The peace organizations’ guiding values – tolerance, dialog and consensus building – slowly began to permeate the political discourse, and finally became an important component of the discussions that preceded drafting of the peace agreement. The work of the NGOs in Northern Ireland was vital in devising mechanisms of discourse and training methods, and building public support for the political solution both prior to achievement of the peace agreement and during the campaign for approval of the agreement by referendum. The work of these organizations was also significant subsequent to the referendum, being a central component in the efforts to implement the agreement and to finally bring peace to the torn society in Northern Ireland.

# **Appendix B**

## **Organizations Included in the Study**

This list includes Israeli, Palestinian and Israeli-Palestinian organizations that hold or have held joint activities in Jerusalem. The list also includes foundations and other bodies financing joint activities in the city.

### **1. Organizations whose representatives were interviewed**

The Association of Italian Jews

Beit Alpert Music Center

Beit Hillel

Beit Shmuel

The Belamonte Science Center for Youth – The Hebrew University

The Bible Lands Museum

The Biblical Zoo

The Center for Creativity in Education

The International Peace and Cooperation Center

Citizens Accord Forum; the network of organizations involved in Jewish-Arab co-existence in Israel

David Yellin College of Education

Ein Ya'el Living Museum

ELEM – Youth in Distress

Ginogli School of Art

Hapoel Sports Club, Jerusalem – Youth Program

The Hebrew University, the Unit for Social Involvement

The Intercultural Center, Jerusalem  
The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel  
IPCRI – the Israel-Palestinian Center for Research and Information  
The Israel Museum  
The Jerusalem Center for Conflict Resolution and Mediation  
The Jerusalem Cinemathèque  
The Jerusalem Circus Association  
The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies  
Jerusalem Swimming Association  
The Jerusalem Tennis Center  
The Jewish-Arab Experience Center  
Jewish-Arab Center for Peace, Givat Haviva  
The Khan Theater  
Magen David Adom  
MECA – Middle East Children’s Alliance  
The Museum of Islam  
Museum on the Seam  
The Musrara School of Photography and New Media  
The Nature Museum  
Ossim Shalom: Social Workers for Peace and Social Welfare  
Peace Child – Israel  
The Peres Center for Peace  
Play for Peace  
Rockefeller Museum  
Rosh Pina for Cooperation

The Science Museum  
The Wellspring for Democratic Education  
The Without Borders project  
WIZO  
Yakar  
YMCA – youth club  
Young Entrepreneurs  
The Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation

## **2. Organizations with which no interviews were conducted**

The Abraham Fund  
Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace  
al-Hadaf Peace Center  
al-Quds University  
Association of Community Centers  
Augusta Victoria Hospital  
Bat Shalom  
Boustan Ha'Shalom – Peace Garden  
Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF)  
The Experimental School  
The Friedrich Ebert Foundation  
Hadassah Hospital  
The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace  
International Peace and Cooperation Center  
The Israel Interfaith Association

The Israel Palestinian Peace Coalition  
The Jerusalem AIDS Project  
The Jerusalem Center for Women  
The Jerusalem Foundation  
Joint – Medical and Emergency Services  
Kol Ha-Isha – The Woman’s Voice  
The Konrad Adenauer Foundation  
Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy  
Multi-Cultural Dance Ensemble  
Municipality of Jerusalem – Education Administration  
The National Insurance Institute  
The New Israel Fund  
Panorama  
Prayer for Peace  
Reiki for Peace  
Search for Common Ground  
St. John’s Hospital  
Tolerance  
The Van Leer Institute  
Yad be’Yad (Hand in Hand) – Bi-lingual Education  
YMCA – kindergarten

## **Appendix C**

### **Joint Activities Conducted in Jerusalem**

This Appendix presents extended information about the activities of some of the studied organizations. The information is based on interviews conducted with representatives of the organizations and on additional data when available, and constitutes a sample of the types of activities conducted in the city and the problems with which the organizations are faced.

The organizations included in this Appendix are:

1. Ein Ya'el Living Museum
2. The Jerusalem Circus
3. Beit Shmuel
4. The Musrara School of Photography and New Media
5. The Jerusalem Cinemathèque
6. The Without Borders Project
7. Play for Peace
8. The Belamonte Science Center for Youth
9. YMCA – Youth Club
10. The Peres Center for Peace
11. The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI)
12. The Center for Creativity in Education
13. The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and the International Peace and Cooperation Center

## 1. Ein Ya'el Living Museum

### Meetings between schools

Meetings were held throughout the school year between elementary school classes, culminating with a joint summer camp. As a result of the *Intifada* and despite efforts with a great number of schools, the meetings ceased. Both sides were unwilling to continue.

### Summer camp

During the *Intifada*, the Museum ran a summer camp for 25 children of grades four to six. The children were recruited on an individual basis and via newspaper advertisements, and not through institutions/schools. The Museum intends to continue running such camps in the coming years.

### Meetings of youth in distress

In light of the inability to continue the school meetings, the museum staff looked for a new way to continue joint activity. Young people in distress from hostels in West Jerusalem (Armon Hanatziv, Ora) and East Jerusalem (Shu'afat, and possibly Beit Hanina) are brought together in this project. In addition, the Museum holds training workshops for the youth counselors.

**Participants:** Each mixed group consists of 10-12 adolescents aged of 13-17, Boys and girls separately. Each group is led by two counselors – a Jew and an Arab. In all, there are eight to ten counselors from each side. The adolescents share a difficult background, are staying in hostels by court order, and not all of them are from Jerusalem.

**Recruitment of participants:** Recruitment is done via Youth Sponsorship. The museum does not recruit directly.

**Mode of operation:** A five-day training workshop for the youth counselors prior to the meetings, which are held on four consecutive days, each session lasting four hours. The meetings include personal acquaintance, creative and social activity.

**Assessment of the activity:** The counselors' workshop has proven to have significant value in itself as a social get-together. The pupils themselves come from a difficult background with negative stigmas about each other, and with many doubts about the meeting. However, their similar backgrounds create a common denominator, and in the course of the sessions friendships and good relations have developed, which continue later as well.

**Financing:** The Jerusalem Foundation.

**Future plans:** To continue the meetings of youth from hostels as well as the summer camps. The Museum continues its efforts to reach schools and youth movements in order to resume joint annual activities.

## **2. The Jerusalem Circus Association**

### **Theatre group for Jewish and Arab children**

The Jerusalem Circus holds theatre classes. Alongside classes in which Arab children participate individually, a group of Jewish and Arab children has been working together for about three years.

**Participants:** Around 20 Jerusalem children aged 10-16 take part in the activities. The children from both sides come from a diverse socio-economic background, among them religious, traditional and secular. The Arab group includes Muslims only (there was a single Christian child, but the family left the city due to the situation). The father of one Jewish child is a settler. Most of the Arab children come from Beit Safafa, and a few from Abu Tor. Budgetary constraints allow for only few new children each year, although there is a waiting list of Jews and Arabs wishing to join.

**Recruitment of participants:** Recruitment is done on an individual basis only – by word of mouth. Attempts to recruit participants via institutions and schools failed: school principals in Jabal Mukabar and Beit Safafa refused to allow the Association's representatives to present their activities at the school. An attempt to recruit Jewish youth via a branch of 'Hashomer Hatzza'ir Youth Movement met with a lack of cooperation. At first, children came from families of 'Peace Now'

activists; but they were a closed clique and treated the meetings as internal-social recreation, showing low levels of interest in the Arab participants. The Association is disappointed with the peace camp and with the bodies advocating co-existence – “they talk much, but when it comes to action most of them do nothing or even draw back.”

**Mode of operation:** The group meets once or twice a week, and is very advanced professionally. It consists of a core group that has been working together for three years, and additional children who have joined over the years. The circus teacher is an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, and the Arab social counselor (a student at the Hebrew University from Umm el-Fahm) is experienced in working with Jewish-Arab groups, as well as being a sports instructor. Eight children from the group traveled abroad recently to perform together. Four performances were held in Israel, at the YMCA for Jewish and Arab summer camps (in cooperation with the Jerusalem Municipality); four more performances are scheduled in Haifa, Carmiel, Jaffa and Nazareth. Performances in Jerusalem require an additional budget, which is lacking at present.

**Site of the activity:** At the beginning, the Association operated in Abu Tor. The place was unsuitable, and operations were moved to Giv’at Gonen. Despite the politically moderate character of this neighborhood, once the *Intifada* began the residents opposed hosting the Jewish-Arab activity, and locked the Association out of the auditorium. It then moved to the Baka’a neighborhood, where the activity is attracting interest. At the time of the interview they were searching for an alternate sports auditorium (due to the group’s professional requirements).

**Assessment of the activity:** Significant relations have developed among the children. Surprisingly, relations are growing closer despite the security situation. The group has a life of itself, and the children are very much involved in what is going on outside, and discuss the situation in privately among themselves; the Association’s directors request the children to speak out about difficulties but not to focus on them. The close ties among the children also affect their parents and families. There are bi-lateral cultural exchanges, and the children are experiencing adolescence together. Staff members feel that the Arab children enjoy very much being in the group, especially since the group enables them to express themselves and influence their surroundings. During the *Intifada*, after a terrorist attack in Jerusalem, one of the Association’s Arab employees was lynched while on his

way to the session. At first this was concealed from the children; but they and their parents were subsequently told about it, and the issue was thoroughly discussed.

**Financing:** The activity is financed by the Jerusalem Foundation and The Abraham Fund. The Association is looking for additional funds; in this context they report an interest expressed by three well-known Palestinian sources.

**Future plans:** The Association hopes to maintain and develop the present group. If the budget allows they would like to develop a second group, in which lessons learned from the present group will be applied.

### 3. Beit Shmuel

Since 1992, Beit Shmuel has been conducting a Jewish-Arab project on co-existence for adults. The project ceased to function due to the *Intifada*.

#### a. Before the *Intifada*.

**Participants:** Jewish and Arab adults between the ages of 18-50, both women and men. The majority was from Jerusalem, but some also came from the territories of the Palestinian Authority and even from Jordan.

**Recruitment of participants:** The activity was publicized in the media (such as the *al-Quds* newspaper) and received a tremendous response. The program operated successfully for many years, and earned a positive reputation among both the Jewish and Arab public.

**Mode of operation:** Courses offered included: Arabic for Jews; Hebrew for Arabs; a joint course on 'Judaism and Islam;' joint trips for students of both languages, and cultural evenings. There were 1,500-1,800 participants each year.

**Assessment of the activities:** The operation was a great success educationally, culturally and socially alike. A great portion of its success is attributed to the staff of teachers and the image of the place: Beit Shmuel was perceived as promoting cooperation, understanding and pluralism between populations.

**Financing:** Financing came from a number of sources, among them The Abraham Fund (until 1998), as well as through self financing.

### **b. Impact of the *Intifada***

The *Intifada* erupted while courses were operating. Efforts were made to continue as usual, but the number of participants gradually fell – the Jews had reservations about the activity in itself, while the Arabs had physical problems to get to the courses and to paying for them. Also, their sense of national identity intensified, and pressure may have been exerted upon them to stop coming. The courses were officially closed in February 2001. The program's directors realized that sad as it may be, what they were trying to do does not suit the prevailing reality. In addition, it was no longer financially possible to continue, as promised support did not materialize.

No bi-national activity is taking place at Beit Shmuel today, and there is no plan of pursuing any until better days. Among the project's leadership there are those who do not believe that it is proper to hold joint activities as long as the *Intifada* continues. Nonetheless, they emphasize that should a financial allocation arrive it would be possible, despite the difficulties involved, to resume joint activities and projects.

## **4. The Musrara School of Photography and New Media**

### **Jewish-Arab seminar for documentary photography and journalism**

In 2000, prior to the outbreak of the *Intifada*, the school opened a Jewish-Arab seminar for adults. In 2003 it began its third year of operation as usual, despite the *Intifada*.

**Participants:** Each group has 20 participants, 10 Jews and 10 Arabs. The target population is relatively young artists, yet older than most of the regular students at the school (most participants are 25 years old and above, some above 40). These are artists in the fields of photography, cinema, video, etc. The group is mixed – men and women together; Muslims, Christians and Jews, religious and secular. Most come from Jerusalem, but some Arab participants come from the central region of Israel and from the Galilee.

**Recruitment of participants:** Recruitment was originally conducted via the press (on the Arab side, in *al-Quds* and another national newspaper). Many irrelevant applications were submitted by Arabs, most of whom thought that a basic photography course was being offered; this necessitated a prolonged screening process. Today, recruitment from the Arab side is done through graduates of the course, personal acquaintances of the Arab counselor and local institutions (community centers etc.) where suitable people may be working. The staff believes that the recruitment process still needs improvement and organization.

**Mode of operation:** A year-long program, during which the group meets weekly for lectures, joint exercises (e.g., exercises for pairs of Jewish-Arab students) and creative work. The group is led by a Jew and an Arab, and the activity is conducted in Hebrew, for practical reasons only. At the end of the year the participants present their work in an exhibition, screenings, etc.

**Assessment of the activities:** The program is very successful, and has proven to be viable despite the *Intifada*. It opens a good channel of communication among the participants, some of whom remain in contact after the end of the program. The interviewee stated that there is a feeling that the Jewish participants are at a slightly higher professional level; but that this may be his own subjective impression.

### **Impact of the Intifada**

The *Intifada* broke out a short time after the first seminar began, and three participants left the group. These lived in the territories of the Palestinian Authority or had a strong Palestinian identity. The events had an impact on the dynamics of the seminar, and led to political tension and arguments; nevertheless, the group continued to function with good interpersonal relations. The *Intifada* did not cause lesser willingness to participate or make recruitment of participants more difficult; yet it did cause the seminar to shift from being predominantly Israeli-Palestinian, to Jewish-Arab with an Israeli context.

**Financing:** The Jerusalem Foundation and Eva Fisher (in memory of her husband) finance the project. The Abraham Fund was approached, but did not offer assistance.

The Peres Center for Peace conditioned the granting of assistance upon participation of Palestinians from the territories of the Palestinian Authority; and as none arrived, no support was granted.

**Future plans:** To continue in the present framework, with improvement in the method of recruiting participants. The possibility of opening a basic photography course for residents of East Jerusalem is being considered, in light of the demand.

## 5. The Jerusalem Cinemathèque

### **Video workshop for Jewish and Arab pupils**

For the past few summers, the Cinemathèque has been operating a video workshop for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade Jewish and Arab pupils.

**Participants:** Twenty-five pupils participated in the workshop of summer 2002, as in previous years, with a similar number of Jews and Arabs. These are pupils from all over the city, of diverse backgrounds, and not necessarily having prior knowledge about cinema.

**Recruitment of participants:** Participants are recruited from schools in West and East Jerusalem with whom the Cinemathèque has regular contact through film screenings throughout the school year. Each year participants come from different schools, not necessarily the same ones. Recruitment is also done through ‘a friend bringing a friend,’ whereby participants of previous workshops help in recruiting new ones.

**Mode of operation:** The workshop lasts one month during the summer vacation. It includes lectures and meetings with people in the field of cinema, as well as basic camera lessons. The workshop is primarily devoted to the production of films by the participants on the subject of identity, in integrated groups. Each year about five documentary films are produced, and are screened also at festivals abroad.

**Assessment of the activities:** The workshop is very successful. Very good relations are established in its course between Jewish and Arab participants.

**Impact of the *Intifada*:** The *Intifada* does not seem to have a significant impact on the activities. Cooperation with schools in East Jerusalem has been maintained, and there is no record of participants withdrawing from the workshop. During 2001 terrorist attacks occurred in Jerusalem during the workshop, and this caused concern amongst Jewish parents, mainly since some of the films were being shot in neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. It was therefore decided in 2002 to shoot films in closed, contained sites (such as at the mall), for security reasons. No serious terrorist attacks occurred during the workshop in 2002, and this enabled a smooth operation of the workshop.

**Financing:** The workshop is financed by the Jerusalem Foundation.

**Future plans:** It is intended to continue in the present framework during the coming years.

## 6. The Without Borders project

The Without Borders project is a joint project of the Unit for Social Involvement at the Hebrew University and of the Isawiya Community Center. The Hebrew University's Beit Hillel also takes part in the project. This is a tutoring project, in which about ten Jewish and ten Arab students participate each year. The project continues throughout the school year and consists of bi-weekly study meetings of students amongst themselves, as well as tutoring sessions of needy children by the students.

**History of the Project:** The project began during the latter part of 2000, when the *Intifada* erupted, and has been operating continuously since. The *Intifada* has affected the framework of the project, which has already passed through three stages:

1. Original plan: bringing together a group of Jewish and Arab students once a week, to discuss study subjects and jointly tutor children at the Isawiya Community Center. The idea of joint tutoring was discarded when the *Intifada* broke out.

2. The first year of the project: joint study meetings for students; uni-national tutoring – Arab students tutor at Isawiya, Jewish students at the Kiryat Ye'arim boarding school.
3. Second and third years of the project: joint study meetings for students; tutoring in a 'common space' – all children and tutors meet together at Beit Hillel, and social and educational activities take place there individually and as a group.

**Participants:** An equal number of Jewish and Arab undergraduate students (about ten from each side); likewise with respect to the children. The Jewish students, for the most part, have a central-leftist political outlook. The Arab students are Muslims (one Christian woman left the project), some are religious and traditional, originally residents of the northern part of the country. In 2002, only one participant was originally from Jerusalem (a resident of Wadi al-Joz).

**Recruitment of participants:** Students are recruited through bi-lingual notices posted at the University and by word of mouth on campus. Participants receive an annual grant higher than the regular Perach grant [tutoring and mentoring project]; this serves as a recruitment incentive. The project is in great demand among Arab students (they have difficulty integrating in Perach projects), and less so among Jewish students (during the first year only eight Jewish students were recruited). There are more female than male students; some preference was given to Jews with an Oriental background – with the idea of creating a similar cultural background for the participants.

Jewish children are recruited through the René Cassin School (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades). Initially there were certain reservations about the project at the school, but afterwards there was full cooperation. Many of the children are from Oriental families, suffering from learning difficulties and family problems. Arab children are recruited from Isawiya's junior high schools via the local community center. They also have learning difficulties and come from families with problems.

In Isawiya there is opposition to projects of coexistence, and the Hebrew University's participation in the project also raises opposition. Therefore, the project is presented to parents as a learning project (not about coexistence), and sometimes even as two separate projects (Jewish and Arab) being held in the same space. This has mitigated the opposition.

**Mode of operation:** The children's joint meetings last three hours each. The first hour is devoted to joint social activity; after that – a study center with emphasis on English and mathematics, during which the students tutor the children (sometimes a Jewish student will tutor an Arab child, and vice versa).

**Assessment of the activities:** The joint theoretical meetings among the students are very successful. They do not directly touch upon the conflict, but it arises out of the social topics discussed. The group went on a joint outing, and good social relations developed. Tension exists between the Jewish and Arab children, and joint activity is difficult. The tension is also gender-based – between Jewish and Arab girls (traditional versus modern attire, etc.). The children possess many stereotypes about children of the other side, and the project has not yet succeeded in overcoming them. Nonetheless, the children are willing to accept students from the other side.

**Impact of the *Intifada*:** Aside from changing the character of the activity and a certain difficulty in recruiting Arab children, there were two noteworthy incidents: the father of one of the Jewish children was killed by terrorists in Kiryat Yovel; this led to uni-national meetings with the children, and later to a joint meeting. No significant crisis arose following this incident, and the child whose father had been killed continued to participate. Tension also arose when houses were demolished in Isawiya; this also did not have a significant impact on the activity, but did give rise to discomfort.

**Financing:** The students' grants are financed by Perach and by the Unit for Social Involvement at the Hebrew University. The project also receives support from a private source. Applications to the Abraham Fund have thus far been rejected.

**Future plans:** It is planned to develop a two-year program in the existing framework, so that the children will take part in the group program for two consecutive years. The Unit for Social Involvement plans to initiate a Jewish-Arab women's leadership project during the 2002/03 school year, among female students at the University.

## **7. Play for Peace**

This is an example of the potential effectiveness of an international organization working in our region in cooperation with local factors.

Play for Peace is an American organization whose objective is to bring together children and teenagers in regions of conflict for the purpose of common play. The organization operates in various locations throughout the world (e.g. India). The organization has been operating in Jerusalem since the beginning of 1997, in an attempt to prepare Jewish and Arab secondary school students from adjacent neighborhoods to try and initiate meetings between elementary school pupils from their neighborhoods.

Two stages may be outlined in the activity since the *Intifada*:

**a. Upon the outbreak of the *Intifada***

The *Intifada* broke out just when there was an attempt to open a new Arab-Jewish group.

**Objective:** To improve relations among children and teens residing in adjacent neighborhoods along the borderline. Joint training of high school students, who will later work voluntarily with children in their neighborhoods (within the 'Personal Commitment' school program).

**Participants:** Contacts were made with two adjacent schools: René Cassin (Ma'alot Daphna) and the Abdullah School (on Route 1, near the police headquarters). There had been several confrontations between pupils of the schools on the way to/from school, especially on days when terrorist attacks had occurred.

**Recruitment of participants:** Participants were recruited through the school principals, who were cooperative at first. After the outbreak of the *Intifada*, René Cassin was still willing to meet, the Arab side was not. Tremendous pressure was exerted on the principal of the Abdullah School to cease all joint activity, despite his own personal interest in it. The school continued to express interest in joint activity, but thought the time was not ripe.

**Mode of operation:** It was decided to carry out uni-national activities, with the intention of holding a bi-national meeting at a later stage. Each side had its separate team of Jewish-Arab counselors. The Jewish side met at the René Cassin School, and the Arab side at the YMCA (they had no problem to come to West Jerusalem). In view of the deteriorating situation, no joint activity could be held.

### **b. During the *Intifada***

At the beginning of the 2002/3 school year, it was decided to start another group in a different format

**Objective:** To bring together Jewish and Arab secondary school pupils and train them to lead uni-national activities in their own neighborhoods, in order to prepare them for future bi-national activities.

**Participants:** Teenagers aged 15-17, 12 Arabs and 10 Jews (seven of them from the Experimental School).

**Recruitment of participants:** Recruitment was no longer carried out through the principals, due to difficulties on the Arab side; but on an individual basis through the YMCA. The intent was to reach teenagers interested in meeting personally and not via institutions. The response on the Arab side was great, and it was necessary to reject participants in order to maintain a numerical balance.

**Mode of operation:** The meetings were held on Tuesdays 17:00-19:00 at the YMCA.

**Assessment of the activity:** The joint activity has been successful to date; however, the possibility to carry out bi-national activity with elementary school pupils did not seem realistic yet.

**Financing:** The organization is funded mainly from overseas sources.

## **8. Belamonte Science Center for Youth – The Hebrew University**

### **a. Joint biotope for Jews and Arabs**

The Belamonte Center of the Hebrew University has been conducting a joint project for several years about the environment, for Jews and Arabs from Jerusalem and surroundings.

**Participants:** Six Jewish and six Arab secondary school pupils from two schools in the city, who are studying biology for matriculation (the schools change from

year to year). The students conduct a joint biotope study in the pools of the University's botanical garden. During the school year 2002/3, the ORT school and a school from Abu Gosh participated in the project. Formerly the participant was a school from Beit Safafa, and prior to that – schools from other neighborhoods of East Jerusalem.

**Recruitment of participants:** The project coordinators work with the schools, which recruit participants from among their pupils.

**Mode of operation:** The activity is conducted throughout the school year. Six sessions are held, during which the pupils are divided into two integrated groups of six pupils each. The program is in Hebrew, although many of the instructors are Arabs. During three meetings (the first, the middle and the last), social activity is also held (also on the topic of mediation), together with the Rosh Pina Mainstreaming Network.

**Impact of the *Intifada*:** At the beginning of the *Intifada*, the atmosphere among the children (at the time – from Beit Safafa and from the Boyer School) was very tense, and some of them wondered whether the activity should be continued. However, after airing their feelings, the project continued and cooperation was good. Actually, the pupils holding extreme views were the ones who, in the end, cooperated best. Later on there were difficulties on the part of Beit Safafa – parental opposition and the like – and the project turned to the school in Abu Gosh. It is not known whether there was opposition on the part of the Jewish schools to participate in the project.

**Assessment of the activity:** The activity is successful, and the pupils are cooperating well with each other. The activity continues for the entire year, and therefore facilitates the forging of interpersonal relations and a good atmosphere. Despite difficulties, the project continues.

**Financing:** The Jerusalem Municipality, the Jerusalem Foundation and the Hebrew University are financing the project.

**Future plans:** The plan is to continue the current framework, with the hope of resuming cooperation with schools in East Jerusalem in the future.

### **b. Visits by schools from the eastern part of the city**

The Center also carries on a uni-national project for pupils from East Jerusalem who come there for science lessons. The pupils come even now from all over East Jerusalem (A-Tur, Sho'afat and others). At the beginning of the *Intifada* there was a drop in the number of pupils (who feared going to West Jerusalem), but this changed later on. The fact that there are many Arab instructors at the Center is a significant key to the success of the visits.

## **9. YMCA – Youth Club**

A project of co-existence has been operating for about ten years at the Jerusalem YMCA, encompassing until this year about 25 youths annually. In 2002 this activity was expanded, and included three courses (theatre and drama, and two groups of Youth Leadership) and a social club. In all, about 150 Jewish and Arab youth benefit from the services of the site.

**Framework of the activity:** The youth club operates three times a week, a different course offered on each afternoon. After the class and until 22:00, the place is also open to youth who are not enrolled in courses, who can come there to play billiards, ping pong etc. The courses are conducted by a pair of instructors, a Jew and an Arab. In the summer, after the conclusion of the year's activity, the course participants travel together to the United States.

**Participants and recruitment:** Independent recruitment from various schools. The instructors visit schools and present the club. On the Jewish side, recruitment was done at ten different schools – a diverse population (immigrants, right and left adherers, and others). On the Arab side, the majority come from Beit Safafa, some from other places. Most of the Arab participants are boys, with some girls, including orthodox Muslims. Difficulties in recruitment arose on both sides.

**Professional support:** A Steering Committee was formed, composed of a youth psychologist, an expert on youth in distress, an expert on peace activities, and a teacher. The committee convenes quarterly and receives reports about the activities, offers guidance and solutions.

**Assessment of the activity:** Many young people come also from East Jerusalem, as the place fulfills a real need – they don't have many options for afternoon social activities in their own neighborhoods. When the group was in the United States during the summer and the terrorist attack at Mount Scopus occurred, the children supported and consoled each other, attesting to the close relations developed among them.

**Future plans:** To receive help from graduates of the Youth Leadership course in conducting activities for about 400 younger children at schools, with the aim of establishing 'the YMCA Scouts.' In addition, an effort is being made to find interesting content in a variety of subjects to be offered to the youth. Help is sought from various professionals in planning the content, as well as assistance in expanding the activities.

**Financing:** The Jerusalem Foundation provides some assistance. Contributions from private sources and from the YMCA hotel have helped in furnishing a counselors' lounge equipped with couches, a television, and such.

## **10. Peres Center for Peace**

The Center's objective is to promote relations between Israelis and Palestinians through joint projects. The Peres Center relates to residents of East Jerusalem as Palestinians, similarly to residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Aware of differences between the populations and various groups within the East Jerusalem society, the Center declares that it is making considerable efforts to study the city's populations in order to identify their various needs and desires.

In its first years, the Center avoided explicit involvement in the sensitive Jerusalem issue. However, Jerusalem residents did take part in nationwide activities of the Center. Nowadays the Center is ready to engage in the Jerusalem issue, and a number of projects relating to the city have been initiated. Nonetheless, the objective of the projects is not focused on the city but on a general improvement of Israeli-Palestinian relations. Even when the Center had activities in and for Jerusalem only, this was explained as a preparation for broader Israeli-Palestinian activity in the future.

### **a. The Sur Bah'r community project**

The project began in 2001, with the objective to serve as an initial stage in forging relations between the village of Sur Bah'r and the Armon Hanatziv neighborhood, or with *Kibbutz* Ramat Rachel. The Center tried to run in Sur Bah'r its entire repertoire of projects, wishing to "adopt" the village and encourage community development. The Center engaged in identifying the needs of the residents, and joined other bodies in an effort to respond to their needs. They conducted many social, welfare, sports, and other activities, as well as establishing a computer center in the village. Peres Center personnel report that the residents were very satisfied with the activities, which met their concrete needs. However, some groups there opposed the activities, viewing them as steps towards normalization with Israel.

The Center succeeded in overcoming initial difficulties that arose on the part of the local residents. At the beginning of 2002 a crisis arose, expressed in incitement in the mosques against the Center's activities (they alleged, for example, that the Center is taking village girls to the beach for joint activity with boys).

As a result of the opposition, the plan to link the village's computer center with the one set up at Armon Hanatziv was not implemented. The hope that the children would contact each other via the Internet, and later meet face to face, has not yet materialized.

The residents of the village do cooperate with Israelis in the area of sports – the sports teams from the village have participated in competitions in Tel-Aviv, and the swimming team has participated in joint activity in Jerusalem.

### **b. Jerusalemite Forum**

In 2002, the Peres Center initiated the Jerusalemite Forum, comprised of prominent members from al-Quds University, the Municipality of Jerusalem and other organizations in the city. The Forum, led by Prof. Sari Nusseibeh and Yehoram Ga'on, met twice with representatives of the Peres Center, and drafted a plan of action. The idea was to establish discourse between the leaderships of the populations in the city and to transmit a message to the city's residents that it is possible to work together. However, the Forum did not succeed in bringing to life the proposed action plan.

### **c. Cooperation with Ossim Shalom**

During the summer of 2002, the Peres Center provided assistance to Ossim Shalom in establishing a workshop in Germany for Jewish and Arab social workers from Jerusalem. The aim of the workshop was to create a professional dialog, in order to later help populations in distress on both sides. The Center helped fund-raising for the workshop and its implementation. The Center also helped Ossim Shalom to raise funds for expanding its activities in Jerusalem.

### **d. Joint sports activities**

The Peres Center emphasizes encouraging joint sports activities between Israeli and Palestinian groups and individuals. It has succeeded in establishing a soccer school in Isawiya and in holding other joint sports activities with groups not necessarily in Jerusalem. The key to success was a strong intermediary in Isawiya (vice principal of a local school), who recruited participants from the village.

In addition, Jerusalem youth and adults (from East and West Jerusalem) are taking part in joint nationwide activities. Thus, Beitar Jerusalem's children's football teams participated in a nationwide summer camp with Arab children, at Kibbutz Hagoshrim, which was very successful.

The Center is trying to assist in financing specific sports initiatives. It may assist bodies already conducting joint activities who are interested in adding such activities to them, for example holding a joint sports day.

### **d. Additional activities**

The Center cooperates with al-Quds University (through Tel-Aviv University), and encourages cooperation on health issues between hospitals in West and East Jerusalem.

**Future plans:** The Center plans to initiate joint training for Israeli and Palestinian students of communications in Jerusalem.

**Financing:** The Center is funded by contributors in Israel and abroad. It assists bodies initiating joint projects to raise funds from other sources. The Center reports

that foundations and contributors have changed their priorities since September 11<sup>th</sup>: there is less involvement in the Middle East peace process, and the worldwide recession is also taking its toll. This makes fundraising much more difficult.

## **11. Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI)**

The Council has been active for over ten years. It incorporates a network of organizations and carries out a row of activities in cooperation with other organizations. Until the *Intifada*, the majority of activities were with bodies outside Israel; but today, the emphasis is more intra-Israeli, with the objective of fostering relations between the three religions.

The Council operates in four main directions: interfaith and intercultural dialog; development of local leadership; religions and the environment; and peace and education for coexistence. The Council is unique in that it views religion not as a source of the problem, but as a means toward resolving it. The Council integrates activities for conflict resolution from an interfaith aspect, and according to its staff, this is the secret of its success. The Council's leaders claim that there is a greater potential for interfaith activities in the city than has been tapped; the gap derives mostly from a shortage of finances.

**Financing:** The Jerusalem Foundation and the Abraham Fund help to finance the Council's activities. The Council hopes that these organizations will in future provide more significant funds, which will help it expand its activities.

The Council has two projects specific to Jerusalem:

### **Face to Face, Faith to Faith**

This is a new project to develop youth leadership, which started in the summer of 2002 in cooperation with the Search for Common Ground organization and the Auburn Theological Seminary. Within the framework of the project, a Jewish-Christian-Muslim delegation of 12 youth (10 from Jerusalem) spent two weeks in the United States, where they participated in a summer camp together with youth from other countries. The camp succeeded beyond all expectations. Upon their

return to Israel the young people continued to meet for about six months, until the meetings came to a halt due to technical and logistic difficulties.

At the beginning of 2003, the Council was recruiting 12 Jerusalem youth to participate in a similar camp. During the following year they were to participate in a Young Leadership course, including weekly meetings at the YMCA and monthly meetings at the ICCI. The intention was to expand the project and create a core group of committed youth who will work together in the future, along the same lines as Seeds of Peace.

There were no difficulties to recruit participants; on the contrary, there was a surplus demand. Recruitment was carried out through schools with a pluralistic approach toward religion (Re'ut, the Traditional School, Beit Safafa, and others). Recruitment was individual, and relied among other things on the organization's reputation and on the experience of those who participated in the summer camp of 2002. The fee is symbolic, and this is an important factor.

### **Women's dialog and social activity group**

It was decided to establish a women's group, on the assumption that women conduct a different discourse from that of men and forge different ties between them, with a greater chance of success. Also, men are more prominent in interfaith dialog, and this would be an effort to change that. This initiative was born after the outbreak of the *Intifada*. Previously, the Israeli women had worked with a group of women from Beit Safafa, who stopped attending the meetings with the outbreak of the *Intifada*. The core group is comprised of women who are active in ICCI, and these recruited additional participants from among their acquaintances.

The group was established in 2002, and includes about 18 Jerusalem women from the three religions. The group is heterogeneous: religious, secular, Israeli, Palestinian, immigrants, native-born, etc., the common ground being a high education and social status. This common denominator is important for generating common language. The group meets every three weeks. The activity had been running for two years, and was entering upon its third year at the time of the interview.

The first year – meetings in a neutral place (e.g. Tantur), without a facilitator. They engaged in the study of texts, in the conflict, and in formulating a definition for the group and its objectives.

The second year – work with an American facilitator. Meetings were held at the homes of the participants in East and West Jerusalem on an alternating basis. The emphasis during the meetings was on Jerusalem affairs, the reality in the city and the vision for its future.

It is very interesting that while the reality in which each member is living is different, the vision they present at the meetings is quite similar. The presence of the facilitator has helped to lend the discussion additional depth. The very convening of the meetings in homes in East Jerusalem is of tremendous importance, in creating a feeling of reciprocity and encouraging Palestinian women to participate. The Israeli participants traveled to Shu'afat and Beit Hanina even in difficult times and in the evenings, and this earned them a great deal of appreciation from the Palestinian women.

Today, the group is designing a plan for social activities – it wants to lead some sort of social activity encouraging Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in the city, and considers directions and possibilities together with the facilitator. Perhaps this will also lead to the expansion of the group (or to the creation of a parallel group, as they do not wish to enlarge this group).

## **12. The Center for Creativity in Education**

The Center has been active since 1993 in bringing together pairs of Jewish and Arab elementary school classes throughout the country. The meetings take place nearly each month of the school year, and focus on folklore. The meetings are held at the schools (reciprocal visits) and with the participation of the parents, with the aim of bringing the communities closer together through joint activities for the children. Some of the activities have continued for more than a year, and close relations have developed between the children and the families.

The Center's staff is small, comprised of Jews only, and its main task is training teachers to conduct the workshops at the meetings. The Center's representatives take part in the activities, which are mostly managed by the teachers.

The schools participating in the project receive an allotment of weekly study hours for this purpose from the Ministry of Education. Every year the Ministry warns that this allotment may be discontinued, but so far this has not happened.

### **Before to the *Intifada***

There was joint activity between the Pisgat Ze'ev school and a school in Jabal Mukabar beginning in 1997/8. The fourth year of operation was supposed to open in October 2000. The participating schools were selected by the Jerusalem Foundation and the Jerusalem Educational Administration. Since the children from these schools had already participated in joint activities at the Science Museum, it was believed possible to expand this trend through the Center for Creativity in Education and to harness the entire school and community around this topic.

The children could hardly talk to each other during the activities, due to language problems; but they played together and cooperated in doing handicrafts. The meetings were excellent, both sides showing a strong desire to make them successful. Parental involvement was considerable, and sometimes Arabic-speaking grandparents from the Jewish side came as well, to help serve as translators for the children.

### **Upon the outbreak of the *Intifada***

The Jabal Mukabar School never gave notice that it meant to stop taking part in the project, but cancelled its participation before each scheduled meeting on the pretext that it was inconvenient. Thus, the activity came to a stop. However, the school stated its willingness to participate in principle in future activities.

The Pisgat Ze'ev school did not face the dilemma of whether to continue this activity or not, because Jabal Mukabar took the initiative in ceasing the activity. The project leaders assumed that problems would have arisen from the Jewish side as well, but they could have been overcome by finding a neutral site for the project (without continuing the reciprocal visits to both sides of the city).

### **During the *Intifada***

Today, the Center is working in the Jerusalem area only with the Experimental School and with the school in Ein Rafa, outside the city limits of Jerusalem. This is the project's tenth year with this pair of schools, and it is very successful. Some classes have been working together for a long time, and the parents and communities know and appreciate each other.

The meetings are meant for fifth and sixth graders. Pupils in the seventh to eleventh grades who participated in the activities in former years would like to resume meeting, but this is impossible for financial reasons.

### **Additional activities**

During 2002, the Center held a successful educational program for Arab and Jewish teachers of English from Jerusalem and other places, and encourage them to instill the spirit of the project into their classes.

### **Financing**

The Center is currently financed by the Ministry of Education, overseas funds and private contributors from Israel. The Center reports great difficulties in recruiting funds, and this has a damaging effect on its activities: (1) The Jerusalem Foundation is not ready to finance encounters with pupils from Ein Rafah, as this village is not within Jerusalem's municipal area; (2) the lack of funds prevents broadening the encounters with Ein Rafah to include high school students; (3) an Arab school in the Old City has shown readiness to join the projects, but no funds were available; (4) foundations condition their participation upon a commitment for participation by other bodies, but there are no funds to search for such bodies; (5) a plan was drawn up for a joint training course for Jewish and Arab teachers in Ramle, in order to try and implement the model there (as it was impossible to implement it in Jerusalem) – but this initiative was cancelled for lack of funds; (6) limitations by the foundations affect the selection of schools: some foundations only fund projects involving residents within the "Green Line," others – only projects with residents of the Palestinian Authority. The European Union has refused to fund encounters between Pisgat Ze'ev and Jabal Mukabar, as they consider Pisgat Ze'ev

(which is within Jerusalem's municipal borders) a settlement – although the Palestinians agreed to participate.

**Future plans:** It is hoped to conduct training courses for teachers from West and East Jerusalem and to locate schools in East Jerusalem willing to take part in the project – but the means for this are not available. In addition, the Center is now engaged in writing a book about its unique model, encouraged by Prof. Abraham (Rami) Friedman. The Center's employees are frustrated: they see hope and wish to take the opportunity to implement it, but cannot do so for lack of funds.

### **13. The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and the International Peace and Cooperation Center**

These two research institutes set an example of long-term and fruitful cooperation between an Israeli and a Palestinian institution. They maintain a series of joint projects dealing with Jerusalem, and each also works on this topic independently and with other factors. Two of the joint projects of the two institutes are described below.

#### **The Jerusalem Center for Conflict Resolution and Mediation**

The Jerusalem Center for Conflict Resolution and Mediation was founded in 1996 by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and the International Peace and Cooperation Center, at the initiative of Dr. Ifrah Zilberman and Rami Nasrallah. The goal of the Center is to create alternative mechanisms for resolving individual, social and religious conflicts between Israeli and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, at the individual and group level alike.

Since its founding, the Center has trained a few dozen Israeli and Palestinian Jerusalem residents in the field of mediation (in uni-national and bi-national courses); held workshops and lectures for the group of mediators with the participation of experts from Israel and abroad; mediated in about 20 cases of Israeli-Palestinian conflicts in the Jerusalem area; created a network of connections with organizations and institutions with similar objectives in Israel and abroad;

and designed a theoretical working model, which has been successfully applied in other places in Israel.

**Participants:** The group of mediators trained by the Center is composed of Israelis and Palestinians of diverse professions tangential to multi-cultural mediation and conflict resolution (educators, social workers, lawyers, Middle Eastern experts). The participants were recruited by the two institutes that founded the Center, and some of them are staff members of the institutes themselves. The Center aims to increase the number of people engaged in multi-cultural mediation in the Jerusalem area; thus, mediators and participants in the Center's activities are encouraged to recruit other interested parties. Most of the participants reside in Jerusalem, although some live elsewhere (including in the territories of the Palestinian Authority).

**Impact of the *Intifada*:** After the outbreak of the *Intifada* it was no longer possible to hold joint mediation sessions, and joint educational programs for the mediation team also became more difficult. Regular contact between the Center's staff on both sides continued; however, most of the meetings of the mediation team were uni-national. Nonetheless Dr. Zilberman led a training course in Beit Hanina for Palestinian mediators from East Jerusalem. With the help of American professional sponsorship (the American Bar Association and JAMS, a mediation organization) and financial support (USIP – United States Institute for Peace, and the United States Embassy in Israel), the Center succeeded in holding a two-day joint mediation seminar in October 2002, with the participation of 30 Israeli and Palestinian mediators and a large number of experts from the region and from the United States. The seminar was a great success, and at its conclusion a team of mediators from all sides drafted a plan of action for the future.

**Financing:** The Center's activities were financed by American and European funds (among them the USIP and JAMS). The Center is in constant search for additional funding, which will enable it to expand its range of activities.

**Future plans:** The Center would like to continue convening the team of mediators for a series of conferences and advanced training under American sponsorship. In addition, there is a plan to set up a task force to study and contend with foci of conflict in daily life in Jerusalem. This group would think together about the web of relations in the city, identify foci of conflict, expand the understanding of what

is transpiring in them, and make a practical attempt to handle them by using methods of mediation and conflict resolution.

### **Jerusalem-Berlin Forum**

During the summer of 2000, the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation initiated the establishment of a group of German, Israeli and Palestinian researchers to engage in the study of divided cities, mainly Berlin and Jerusalem. The project's objective was to see what experts from different fields in Berlin and Jerusalem can learn from each other about life in divided cities and about solving problems that arise in cities of this type. The Israeli and Palestinian researchers in the team were recruited by the Jerusalem Center for Israel Studies and the International Peace and Cooperation Center.

The team of researchers met in Berlin in the summer of 2001 and in Jerusalem in the summer of 2002. The discussions during these meetings, in addition to internal discussions held by the Israeli and Palestinian researchers among themselves, led at the beginning of 2003 to the publishing of a book entitled *Divided Cities in Jerusalem*, edited by Prof. Abraham (Rami) Friedman and Rami Nasrallah. The book contains 26 articles written by the team's researchers (Israelis, Palestinians and Germans), dealing with various aspects pertaining to Jerusalem and Berlin.

This project proves that, despite the difficult security situation, experts from both sides can work together to identify common problems and try to find solutions for them. The international sponsorship by the German foundation not only financed the project, but helped also in its very existence. The dialog between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem was enriched by exposing them to another test case – that of Berlin – and by the exchange with the German researchers.

The project continued in 2003, and its products will lead to additional publications.

## Notes

1. In this regard, I must remark that there are elements in the city that see these activities in a different light. Thus, Shalom Goldstein, political advisor to the Mayor of Jerusalem for East Jerusalem affairs, stated in an interview (26.6.2003) that in his view, many of these activities are caused by lucrative ambitions of their initiators, corrupt the populations taking part in them, and actually lead toward the division of the city.
2. In most cases, these employees are not Palestinians who are native Jerusalem residents, but rather are students or graduates of The Hebrew University, who came to Jerusalem for their studies (and sometimes remained in the city afterwards), while their families live in other regions of Israel (mainly in the north). As stated above, a population of this sort shows a more positive approach to cooperating with Israeli institutions and organizations in west Jerusalem than do Jerusalem Palestinians, who mostly view themselves as a sector that is separate from the Jewish population of the city.
3. Such cases were reported by Beit Hillel, during whose project (Without Borders) a family member of one of the participants was killed in a terrorist act; and by the Jerusalem Circus, when one of the Palestinian instructors was lynched on his way to a meeting on a day when a terrorist act occurred.
4. In examining the case of Northern Ireland, I made use especially of the following sources: Cochrane and Dunn, 2002, pp. 154-171; Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, 1998; Fitzduff, 1999.

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