

**DEAR FRIENDS, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF COEXISTENCES, AS TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS ARE ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE, HERE ARE SOME NEWS:**

## **CLIMBING OF THE MONT BLANC (END JULY)**

80 % of the budget is now secured, thanks among other to the city of Haïfa, which would pay for the plane fare, and the mountaineer and writer Jean Troillet's fees, which will be paid by his foundation. The Haïfa University also supports actively the project and has published on its internet site an article about the expedition with a picture of the group.



Among our other initiatives to finance this expedition, the sale of the meters of the Mont Blanc climb at the stand on St Francois' square on May 8th brought a little bit more than 1'000 fr.- but more importantly, has allowed us to make Coexistences known beyond our usual circles. We have enjoyed very much this activity and have decided to have another stand on Saturday May 12. Come visit us between 9am and 1 pm, same location.

We will put up for sale the last meters of the climb at the sponsor diner of June 11, about which you have received informations. Don't forget to enlist yourselves with Smadar ([amir\\_smadar@yahoo.com](mailto:amir_smadar@yahoo.com)) and invite, through our electronic invitation form and/or word of mouth those who would be interested or willing to support this nice project.

**In Haïfa**, the 6 Israelis and 6 Palestinians have met and started working together on April 26. Other official events have taken place with the Haïfa University and the program in the Alps has been presented. They met again on May 13 to prepare the first training week-end, and be informed about the common tasks to be conducted in mixed pairs.

The week-end at Mont Carmel (May 21-22) aimed at achieving a better knowledge of the group members, develop trust, get acquainted with the field, identify as a group the goals of the climb (is it only about a successful climb of the Mont Blanc or beyond that, developing trust and seeing that one can work on a common project) and develop an Arab-Jewish dialog.

The members also learned how to use a map and lead a group. Tasks were allocated to all the members of the group (leading, cooking, cleaning, first aid, timing, ecology and dairy of the outing). On top of activities geared towards getting to know one another and building trust (walking blindfolded, leading the group without using words, be on time – a challenge for the Israelis! – finding one's way without instruments, etc), special moments were created for people who already knew each other a little bit to have more personal and in depth exchanges.

### **Main points identified during the debriefing :**

- very special feeling of challenge
- intensive and tiring
- get to know the other one
- a time for inner reflection
- does the project have a political agenda ?
- did not think could do it
- in the Arab society, men are not in the kitchen

According to all, a very successful weekend. Olfat commented on the satisfaction to see the aptitudes for organisation, cooperation of the group, as well as the ease with which it moved in the rugged environment, especially knowing that half of the group (the 6 Arabs) had never trekked and spent a night outside before. The group also displayed flexibility to the changes Olfat et Doron imposed.

2 other training week-ends will take place on the 11-12/6 : in the Golan, and on the 2-3/7 : in the Neguev. On July 5th, the names of the selected 8 students will be announced and on July 8th, a last meeting will take place at the Haïfa University.

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## **YOUTH SUMMER TRIP (JUNE 29 – JULY 8)**

After some uncertainty, the 2010 group will be hosted in families. This group is mixed, with 10 Palestinians et 6 Israélis. They are preparing for their departure. The group facilitators say they are very excited and impatient. Last week, the group finished their program with a creative work and one of writing. The group then discussed about the meaning of this artistic production.

Here in Switzerland, we are working hard to ensure a good balance between host families originating from the Middle East, Switzerland and Jewish ; 5 new families joined the network. The program of the summer trip with the opportunities to meet the youth will be communicated soon.

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## **OTHER NEWS**

### **TÉMOIGNAGES.**

We have always believed that testimonies of youth having attended the YMCA Coexistence program and the summer trip would be worth thousands words attempting to describe what we are trying to achieve and would allow us to understand the impact that these initiatives have on their lives. Shahed, Amira, Eman, Victoria et Miha'li have generously replied to our request. May they be warmly thanked for this as we know the commitment they have shown. Go on-line on our website to read these testimonies, which we believe will move you deeply.

### **STAND / SPONSOR DINER**

We are looking forward to seeing you at the sponsor diner of June 11th and/or at the Coexistences booth on St-François square on June 12th.

**Warm regards,  
for the Communication group  
Fiuna Seylan-Ongen**