

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF COEXISTENCES,

The projects for 2015-2016 are already on the loom and, here as there, thinking caps are on, action in the throes of preparation and teams are being constituted. Close by, the musicians of the Orchestre Jaune are already tuning their violons for the Grand Bal du Petit Nouvel An.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014

Under the chairmanship of Fiuna Seylan-Ongen and in order to bring a special year to a close together, the general assembly took place on 18 November at the Espace Dickens in Lausanne. Our two projects, Women in Movement this spring and Breaking the Ice this summer, were successful. The latter, in spite of a painful context during which the participants as well as the members of Coexistences kept on dialoguing, and even more so.

According to the latest news, the Women in Movement, back in their villages of Galilee, continue to meet. They carry their name well. As for the young participants of Breaking the Ice, who arrived after five weeks of the war in Gaza, they also keep seeing each other and the project will be renewed next year.

PROJECTS 2015-2016

During the evening, the following projects were presented:

HER VOICE

Proposed by Olfat Haider in collaboration with Beit Hagefen and Sylvie Berkowitsch-Gassenbauer. This project concerns a group of girls aged 16-17 recruited and selected in the schools of Haifa. There will be an equal number of Jewish Israelis and Arab Israelis who will carry on a work of dialogue for more than five months in Israel before coming to Switzerland. Supervised by facilitation professionals, the group will coexist, discover common ground and experience cultural differences within a third (Swiss) culture. The exact dates still have to be determined, but the voyage could take place between the 10 and 20 August 2015.

BREAKING THE ICE

According to the model followed for the past five years, a middle altitude mountain trek will once again be proposed to Jewish and Arab students from Haifa University, accompanied by professional facilitators. It will take place at the beginning of September 2015.

COMBATANTS FOR PEACE (CfP)

This is a group of Israeli soldiers and ex Palestinian activists who say no to violence. In order to reinforce their capacity to testify to their personal transformation from violence to non-violence and to measure the importance of non-violent communication among themselves and with others, they want to practice and deepen together their know-how and techniques regarding this issue. This project is similar to Wounded Crossing Borders, a group hosted in 2009.

Anticipated benefit: The first benefit of such a visit consists in the opportunity to spend a longer period of time together, in a neutral setting removed from the distracting influences of usual daily life. Making available such a prolonged and intensive time in Israel/Palestine is virtually impossible. The participants also hope to “recharge their batteries”, to renew their individual and collective motivations, for transmission to other CfP members, encouraging them to imagine and implement new actions on the ground.

This project gave rise to reactions when presented at the General Assembly. It is presently under discussion.

NEVE SHALOM / WAHAT AL-SALAM

Founded in 1970, this community is a cooperative village inhabited by Jews and Arabs (Muslims and Christians), all citizens of Israel. Located close to Latroun, halfway (30 km) between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salam is a social, cultural and political community, founded on mutual acceptance, respect and cooperation in everyday life – each person remaining faithful to his/her own national, cultural and religious identity. With the purpose of building a common vision for the future with the new generation, the leaders of Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salam want to bring to Switzerland approximately twenty young adults between 20 and 34 years old, born and brought up in this community.

COEXISTENCES IS 10 YEARS OLD!

The project is in the making and a number of possibilities are envisaged in Israel or Switzerland, to celebrate an anniversary which will be the opportunity to link up all the groups over the years. The idea presently worked on is to organize next year a meeting between some members of Coexistences and representatives from all the groups hosted since the beginning of our association in 2006 and prepare together a shared event in 2016.

We will present you with these projects in more detail in our next newsletter (March 2015), and if you are interested to help organize any of them (each will take place between July and October), please contact us at info@coexistences.ch. You are most welcome at any time during the year!

LIONS CLUB LAUSANNE PRESENTATION OF COEXISTENCES

At the end of November, Fiuna Seylan–Ongen and François Feihl were invited by the Lions Club (Bourg section) to present the association in front of an audience of about twenty members. The presentation was followed with great interest and gave rise to many specific questions revealing curiosity and admiration for our objective and commitment. More views were exchanged at the dinner table, and we will submit a support request very soon.



The Bourg Lions Club is relatively young comprising approximately thirty members. It combines friendship and social support by raising funds from close friends and families through private actions (such as the preparation and sale of terrines).

GRAND BAL DU PETIT NOUVEL AN 9 JANUARY 2015

The buzz is already urbi et orbi: in 2015, the best day for dancing will be 9 January at the Casino de Montbenon in Lausanne.

This ball in favour of Coexistences is at its eighth edition and nobody would dream of going anywhere else on that evening. So, come, invite whoever you wish and contribute to its success by giving a helping hand to the team of volunteers who are already getting ready (contact: carole.guinard@atelierk.org). From 8 p.m., well known delicious refreshments and licence until 2 a.m. with the Orchestre Jaune who promises to bring to their knees the toughest of the tough...

Hoping to see you and your friends on this occasion, we wish you and your families a very happy festive season.

We would also like to thank you for your support and availability over the past year, an invaluable and encouraging presence to keep on our commitment to all those who are working for peace through dialogue.

Warm wishes,
The communication group and all the working groups.

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