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COEXISTENCES / MAY 2016

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Dear members, friends and sympathisers of
Coexistences,

A new year is always like a promise, and in order to honour the promise of 2016, three projects are scheduled for this summer as well as the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of our association. Participants, organisers and host families are busy backstage. They are all working together to ensure the success of these projects which mean so much and are mobilising us, here and there.

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A LAST GLANCE AT THE “GRAND BAL DU PETIT NOUVEL AN” ON 15 JANUARY 2016

The ninth ball organised in favour of Coexistences was a tremendous success. This annual rendezvous has become a must. The musicians had hundreds of people dancing into the small hours of the morning and we got home exhausted but happy.

But what went on before the curtain went up on this memorable evening? How is such an event organised?

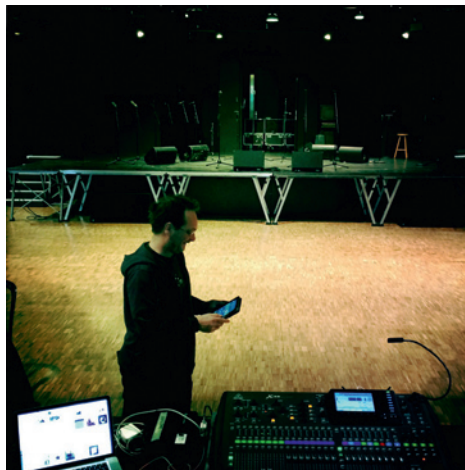
The day before, while the musicians are rehearsing, some were preparing the mezzes. Four hours of culinary complicity gave way to an appreciated result: we would sell 70 dishes! Others were preparing meals for the musicians and volunteers: 8 kilos of tasty lasagne in order to be in form all evening. In their own kitchens, others were preparing cakes, boreks and other delicacies from here and elsewhere for sale.

On the big day, while the sound engineers were preparing their material, we arranged the tables, lined up the chairs, put up the fairy lights, prepared the sandwiches, stocked up the bar with barrels of beer and the fridge-freezer with drinks delivered that morning. The musicians finished the sound check and the meal for the volunteers is served. About twenty people came to help at the bar, with the clearing up, and at the reception desks. At 8 p.m., as the doors opened, it was the musicians' turn to sit down and eat. Cash tills are filled with change, all the volunteers are at their post, candles are lit on the tables and the public can enter. And, at 9 p.m., on with the music! The first dancers approach the floor. And they rock and roll, and waltz, and chat, and over and over again. Sheer bliss!

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During the evening, between two dance steps, some of us clear the tables, others empty the beer barrels and, at 3 a.m., still a little giddy, we finish clearing up to the air of an accordion, while the musicians put away their instruments. We kiss each other goodbye before leaving, to meet again on 13 January 2017.



Preparation of the mezzes the day before and the sandwiches on the spot.
Sound setting and starting up of the music!

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HER VOICE - 14 TO 23 AUGUST 2016

After the first success in summer 2015, a new Her Voice group will be coming to Switzerland as part of a second collaboration with Beit Hagefen.

16 girls from Haifa (aged 16-17) will continue the exacting and patient work started in Israel autonomisation and emancipation in a multicultural society.

What is for women the meaning of self-awareness, self-esteem and identity maturation in a multiple social, cultural and religious environment? How is it possible to build one's self confidence in order to listen to others in their difference, but also in their resemblance? How is it possible to believe in a common capacity to bring about necessary and vital changes in a region so man-handled by History? Such are the questions and challenges confronting these students, the women and citizens of tomorrow.

Accompanied by two facilitators, including the Palestinian coach Olfat Haider, the stay in Switzerland of the aptly named Her Voice will provide a unique opportunity for the participants to live, away from the conflict, the daily requisites as a group and the life in a Swiss host family.



Before their stay in Switzerland, the girls come together for ten 3-hour bimonthly meetings. On their second meeting, they defined and signed their "constitution": respect, cooperation, honesty, dance and music!

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BREAKING THE ICE - 22 AUGUST TO 5 SEPTEMBER 2016

In 2016 and for the 7th consecutive year, a group of Jewish and Arab students from the University of Haifa will come to hike and dialogue in our Alps. The mediators will be, as for the last two years, Olfat Haider and Asaf Ron, from Beit Hagefen. The group has already been formed and has started its work in Israel. The travel dates have been scheduled with the arrival in Geneva on Thursday 25 August, and the return flight on Thursday 8 September.

Once again, we are very grateful to the Kohler family for lending their chalet in Le Fouly, and for the road transport ensured free of charge by the Civil Protection of the Canton of Vaud. The farewell evening is scheduled for Wednesday 7 September, in a site as yet to be defined.

An innovation aimed at creating new contacts between young people from here and there: for the two nights that the group will spend in Lausanne, just before returning to Israel (i.e. from 6 to 8 September), we are looking to lodge the participants by pairs with students from Lausanne who have enough room, to live together in colocation. Friends of Coexistences, if you have any children who are in this situation and who would be interested, please get in touch with François Feihl (ffeihl@coexistences.ch).

SPOTLIGHT ON THE TALI-JCJCR- PROJECT 7 TO 13 JULY 2016

In July 2016, Coexistences will receive a group of 13 to 17 headmasters and headmistresses from Jewish and Arab primary schools in Israel who collaborate in the “Dialogue and Identity” programme. In 2011 and 2013, two groups of teachers who steer this programme followed a one-week seminar in Switzerland. During their stay, these teachers were able to broaden their mutual knowledge by an experience of living together, meeting and exchanging with people active in the domains of education and interreligious dialogue in Switzerland and presenting their work during conferences open to the public. Following a discussion with those in charge of “Dialogue and Identity”, it became apparent that it is the headmasters and headmistresses who have the power to expand and perpetuate this programme in their respective schools and that they feel a genuine need to explore this project. That is why they want to take on this new experience.

DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY

“Dialogue and Identity” is organised in association with Keren Tali, an organisation which works in Jewish secular schools in Israel in order to develop teaching of an open Judaism (<http://www.schechter.edu/Page.aspx?ID=109925997>), and the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relationships which is mainly involved in the mutual understanding between Christians and Jews in Israel, but also intended for all the religious minorities in the country (<http://www.jcjr.org/>). The programme aims at an education which aspires to a tolerant identity cultural thanks to the competences of self-reflection and dialogue acquired by meeting the other. It takes the postulate that cultural and religious values, although sources of conflict, also hold the key to an education involving a more open identity and that this concept should be applied, starting with primary schools.

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More specifically, it is a programme for twinning classes, allowing pupils from Jewish and Arab primary schools to meet each other, to introduce themselves and get to know the culture and religion of others in their daily lives in their respective families and communities. The main idea of these meetings is to work simultaneously on the identity of these pupils aged from 10 to 12, and on their openness to others there where the depth and complexity of the one reflects and enriches that of the other.

CLASS TWINNING

The classes come from ten Arab Catholic and Greek Orthodox classes in which 50% of the pupils are Muslim and from ten Jewish secular public schools where the teaching of Judaism is preponderant. In September 2012 this programme, established since 2006 in the Galilee, has spread to the centre of the country. At present, pupils from the towns of Ramle, Lod and Petach Tikva participate in it. These new twinings make it possible to reach a large Arab and urban population. The teachers from these 20 schools are formed to facilitate a series of five interreligious meetings designed for their pupils (each school receives the partner class twice and a final meeting is organised at the end of the school year for all the schools who participate in the programme).

The programme directly involves 500 to 550 pupils and 45 teachers. The 20 head teachers meet several times over the year to discuss the impact of this programme in their respective schools and exchange ideas in order to develop and understand these meetings in depth. This year especially, they met at the beginning of the school year to reaffirm their commitment to the dialogue in spite of the tensions on the streets, and their intention see this delicate operation through, both with the parents and the pupils.

Each meeting includes preparatory courses (unicultural, in the respective classes), the bicultural session and a follow-up in class (unicultural). Hebrew-Arabic bilingual didactic material, including the teacher's manual and the pupil's exercise book, has been created. Contacts with the headmasters and headmistresses and the supervision of the teachers are ensured by two Jewish coaches from Keren Tali, as well as an Arab-Christian coach from JCJCR. The parents are involved in the programme because they help their children to prepare their presentations, sometimes come to the meetings and even animate certain sequences.

DIRECT AND ONGOING COLLABORATION

"Dialogue and Identity" is a unique educational cadre because it instructs the teachers on how to animate the programme. It does not rely on outside facilitators, based on the principle that the teachers present their pupils with a good model of cooperation, a more authentic example of direct collaboration between Arabs and Jews, since they plan and lead the meetings together. Likewise, the headmasters and headmistresses who have to collaborate to set up the programme in their schools, present this model to the teachers. Because it connects two school networks rather than individual initiatives, the programme benefits from a stability ensuring its continued existence.

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The members of Coexistences who got to know the two groups of teachers in 2011 and 2013 remember the public conference given by the coach, Hossan Elias on the situation of Christian Arabs in Israel, the presentation on the significations of Shabbat and Sundays by the Dafi Deshé and Amal Dow teachers, as well as the magnificent Shabbat welcome organised by the whole group in favour of the host families. This year, Vivian Rabia from Ramle is joining the old team of coaches comprising Eva Halahmi, Ruth Drori Binder and Hossam Elias.

ORGANISATION OF THE VOYAGE IN SWITZERLAND

The Association's work group has already started organising this voyage. Concerning the accommodation, for example concerning the adults, several headmasters and headmistresses would like to dispose of their own room during their stay in Lausanne, from Sunday 10 to Wednesday 13 July.

N.B. to the families interested in receiving one or more participants: if you dispose of one or two rooms during this period, kindly contact Catherine Starkier or Halina Sandri (halina.sandri@coexistences.ch).

Thus, everybody, here and there, are working flat out to make this trip a rich and precious moment.



Ruth Drori Binder, one of the Jewish instructors and Vivian Rabia, the Arab instructor.
Ruth and Vivian at the first teacher training session of this programme, right at the beginning of the year (when there was quite a lot of tension on the streets).



COEXISTENCES IS TEN YEARS OLD! - FROM 23 TO 29 OCTOBER 2016

About forty people, members and friends, have shown their interest for the trip to Israel-Palestine that we have planned for the 10th anniversary of our association. From 24 to 27 October, four groups of about ten travellers will be received in four different places: Galilee, Jerusalem, Haifa and the territories. The voyage will terminate from 28 to 29 October with a big gathering in the desert where we hope to find a lot of those we met and received over the years.

A delegation of Coexistences went to Jerusalem from 5 to 8 May to put the finishing touches to the organisation of this trip with our correspondents there. We will thus give you more information in the next newsletter.

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Jan de Haas, a member of the Committee since 2009, died suddenly on Thursday 28 January. Jan was a pillar of our Committee, even if he was seldom present at the reception of the groups or at our dinners. Driven by a principle of equality and equity, with a deep love of life and fellow humans, able to recognise, behind the different faces, individual qualities and the common human condition, independent, creative, pragmatic, with a great knowledge and practice of the authorities and institutions, and endowed with a heartfelt intelligence, he was a model and a force we could always count upon.

Of Dutch origin, born into a large family, Jan was also, so it seems, the most mischievous one. Certain anecdotes from his childhood give a presentiment of his intelligence and a rebellious irreverence. Jan came to Switzerland to pursue his theological studies and stayed after having met his wife Geneviève.

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A man of his times, marked by the events of 1968, in his youth he lived in a community and throughout his life he combined the principles of frugality, accessibility, openness and a certain defiance in the face of self-righteousness.

Appointed pastor in West Lausanne in 1978, then street pastor in 1990, Jan was a pioneer of help to drug addicts during the rise of Aids in the 80s and 90s. With the Reverend Mother Sofia, he helped drug addicts unwaveringly, in particular by distributing, clandestinely, clean syringes for the most part offered by chemist's, at a time when that was still illegal.

These were trying years, years of mainly night work, and marked by the too many burials of people who were still young. In his practical way which entirely expressed his feeling that this was a great waste, he counted 220 for an average age of 33.

He became pastor in Moudon in 2004 and until his retirement in 2015 and he also contributed to the creation of a grocery shop of the heart for the underprivileged and launched with Geneviève an interreligious dialogue group.

In March 2014, on the occasion of the visit of "Women in Movement", an interreligious group from the Galilee, Geneviève, Jan and the dialogue group received us for a day of meetings. Guiding us on a visit of the St-Etienne church, Jan very factually described the architectural features: he clearly stated that for him a church is but a pile of bricks if it is not a space for life. For the pastor he was, service to people took precedence over the ecclesial institution.

A man of values and convictions, for 10 years Jan was president of the ACAT-Switzerland, Christian Action for the abolition of torture. He campaigned, among others, in favour of the Kurds, the Armenians and against apartheid in South Africa. And in our association to which he was extremely attached.

As he came from a family who directed a shipyard, he had inherited an entrepreneurial spirit and his pragmatism. Thanks to the years he spent as a street pastor, he knew where to find resources for the projects and causes close to his heart. He was himself a precious resource in our fundraising and never failed to surprise us with ideas of symbolic gifts for our street collections. Thus, we owe to Jan the idea of selling "meters of the Mont Blanc" in order to finance, in the summer of 2010, the ascension of the Mont Blanc by young Israeli and Palestinian students from the University of Haifa.

Jan is greatly missed and leaves a void in the Committee.

Fiuna Seylan-Ongen

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SUPPORT EVENING AND DINNER

Like every year, come and bring your friends to join us on Sunday 19 June 2016 at the Refuge des 4 Vents in Pully!

You will receive more information soon, but in the meantime please reserve this gourmet evening in favour of Coexistences and tell your friends. As usual, we are rustling up an exceptional evening for you.

We look forward to all the opportunities to come together in 2016 and wish you all, members, friends and sympathisers, a luminous spring.

With our very warm wishes,

The communication and work groups of Coexistences

REVIEW
CAFE COEXISTENCES
MARCH 13
MAISON DE LA FEMME, LAUSANNE

DIALOGUES IN ISRAEL

Michal Levin, supervisor of facilitators in many dialogue groups at the Jerusalem YMCA and other institutions, came specially to Switzerland to present the approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and the presuppositions underpinning them.

We thought it would be interesting to be presented with a big picture of the approaches to dialogue, in order to have an enriched perspective on the work done by the groups that Coexistences hosts year after year.

We warmly thank Yaël Ehrenfreund for her simultaneous translation from Hebrew.

Michal Levin kicked off her conference by outlining her personal motivations for engaging in the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. For her, this is rooted in the notion of “reparation of the world” (“tikun olam” in Hebrew), the concern for social justice. Michal said that both her involvement and her professional commitment stem therefore from this key concept of Jewish ethics.

After so many years of practice of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, she believes there is cause for hope: her experience and observations give her reason to believe that the time will come when a group of leaders will emerge to build a future of justice.

WHAT ARE HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CURRENT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE SITUATION ?

- The challenges are accumulating: walls are becoming ever more impenetrable between the two communities, the Jewish Israeli and Arab-Palestinian populations.
- The current trends in society put ever more obstacles against dialogue work and the atmosphere is more and more discouraging.
- Words are charged.

A typical example can be seen in the fact that among the Jewish Israelis, the term “Arabs” is preferred to “Palestinians”. To use the word “Palestinian” is more politically charged: it singles out the user as more critical in the face of the prevailing perceptions.

Especially in the educational environment, people are becoming aware of the positions they promote. There is a heightened awareness of these words. And this places many challenges on dialogue work, leading to further isolation between the communities and a growing ignorance of the reality of the other on the ground. This adds to the twisting and masking of reality.

- The dialogue groups are opportunities and spaces of exchange and mutual acknowledgment. As such, there is a growing air of subversiveness in the existence of long term dialogue work.

WHAT ARE THE PALESTINIAN POPULATIONS AND WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS OF YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE TO THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE ?

- The term Arab-Israelis is used for all the Arabs that became citizens of the Israeli state after its creation in 1948, referred to as “1948 Palestinians”. They are Israeli citizens and hold the Israeli passport. Estimated at slightly less than 20% of the population, they are a national ethnic and cultural minority. They are caught between their citizenship and their national Palestinian identity.
- The Palestinians who are under military rule since 1967 in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, are referred to as “1967 Palestinians”. They live in the territories occupied after the 1967 war, a situation which is considered illegal by the international institutions.
 - In the West Bank, the everyday life of the 1967 Palestinians is controlled by the military occupation in their freedom of movement, work, basic needs such as electricity, etc. and the ever growing number of settlements. Some Israel-Palestinian dialogues exist.
 - Gaza: as in the West Bank, the everyday life of the Gazans is strongly impacted by the military pressure exerted on the territory. There are hardly any contacts and therefore no dialogue groups.
 - Golan heights (annexed by Israel): there exist many interesting initiatives.
 - Jerusalem: the situation there (as in Hebron) is particularly tense, due to continuous frictions. The Palestinians from Jerusalem are residents of the municipality. They can vote and be elected but only to the municipality of Jerusalem. They are subject to important limitations, humiliations and racism on a daily basis and do not get the same municipality services as the Jewish Israeli inhabitants of the city.

The education system is in shambles (some classes have 50 pupils and are run in shifts – morning and afternoon classes - to educate all the children). The Palestinian teachers from Jerusalem are isolated and the Jerusalem municipality exerts tremendous pressure on them to “israelise” their education programs.

Many Israeli Jew's hold a stereotyped view of the Palestinians. To them, the various statuses of the different Palestinian identities are not perceived. The Palestinians form a single block population, and no difference is made, wherever they come from/live.

In spite of all that, dialogue does take place.

WHAT MOTIVATES THE “ 1948 PALESTINIAN ” YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE TO DIALOGUE ?

- To talk about the discrimination they feel as Palestinian citizens in a Jewish state, their perception of being second class citizens in Israel.
- To talk about the lack of equality with the hope that, once the Jewish Israelis become aware of it, they will be more sensitive, understanding and do their part to change this situation. The Palestinians therefore have an a priori assumption that Jewish Israelis share common values of equality and justice for all Israeli citizens.
- To talk about the occupation. Although they are not living in the territories, as Palestinians they identify themselves with their people living under the military occupation.
- To show the other side that their feelings of injustice are legitimate.
- To be representative of their national group and make the Palestinian voice ring out loud and clear.
- To participate in activities that are less available / common in their own communities.
- To meet youth of the same age from the other side.

WHAT MOTIVATES THE “1967 PALESTINIAN” YOUTH (EAST JERUSALEM AS AN EXAMPLE) TO PARTICIPATE IN DIALOGUE ?

- To show the suffering, to express their anger, to expose the situation of living under occupation.
- To convince the others that their feeling of injustice due to oppression, discrimination, racism, lack of any civil rights is legitimate.
- To make the voice of the Palestinians heard by Israeli Jews.
- To participate in encounters on an equal footing / at “eye level”, outside of the situation of power.
- To take part in activities that are almost inaccessible in their own communities.
- To meet youth of the same age from the other side.
- To testify, with the hope that once the Jewish Israelis are aware of what is inflicted on them (Palestinians), they will understand and identify with their plight.
- To reduce the stereotype that “all Palestinians are terrorists”.

WHAT MOTIVATES THE ISRAELI JEWISH YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN DIALOGUE ?

- To get to know (they ignore) the reality of the Palestinians. To get to know face to face those they only see in the media.
- To show the Palestinians that there are also “not bad” Jewish Israelis (“as the others”)
- To express feelings of identification with the plight of the Palestinians and feelings of guilt.
- For others, to confirm their prejudices. As such, right wing Israeli Jews, and not only those from the left, attend dialogue groups

WHAT KIND OF ENCOUNTERS EXIST?

• **“Meet the Other”**

This type of encounters regroups all the initiatives of interpersonal encounters, based on the contact theory and introspective work.

The distinctive feature of these encounters is that the conflict is not at the center of the dialogue process. The status-quo of the dissymmetry of the relations is therefore not talked about as part and parcel of the planned topics to be addressed.

These groups are often initiated by Israeli Jews.

Encounter groups around common interests such as “Cooking for Peace”, “Running for Peace”, “Painting for Peace”, etc... bring together people around common interests but the conflict is not central to the dialogue process.

There are other types of encounters, tackling aspects of the conflict in the form of conferences (cycles of conference on the Palestinian economy, on the impact of the occupation on the Palestinian economy, ect.) or activist groups. In both these types of encounters, the conflict is somewhere strongly in the background yet not part of the discussions.

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- **“Any process built on a common interest and including a process of dialogue about the conflict”.**

These dialogue groups are formed around specific common interest topics of the participants, in which discussing the conflict is an integral part of the dialogue process and is accepted & known by all the parties. The common interest topics can be either an excuse or a way leading to discussion of the conflict, or the Israeli-Palestinian relations are at the heart of the dialogue process.

For example, the groups “Breaking the Ice” hosted by Coexistences (trekking and the mountain as a common point), training programs on minorities’ rights in secondary schools, dialogue groups within the activities of the Adam Institute, and encounter programs by MOZAIKA (interreligious dialogue at different levels of the hierarchies between orthodox nationalists and Muslim religious leaders) are some of the best examples illustrating this type of encounter programs.

The groups TALI, SULHA and Women in Movement/Zahava Neuberger are closer to the “Meet the Other” model. Indeed, these groups allow members of the various populations to meet, but the conflict is not part of the dialogue process.

These types of meetings have their relevance in so far as they allow people to meet, and therefore humanize the other. They can also be considered as a stepping stone on the way to a full discussion of the conflict as part and parcel of the dialogue process.

- **“Dialogue and the conflict as an integral part of the encounter process and the dialogue”**
These groups do not use any sort of common interest excuse to meet. Dialogue per se is the objective and the end goal of these groups.

The various groups from the YMCA, teenagers and mothers, as well as the currently running YMCA Choir, which alongside the choir work, runs a long term and exhaustive dialogue program, best illustrate this approach. The conflict is part and parcel of a comprehensive discussion around values of equality, civic rights, etc.

Other groups only tackle the conflict, The Neve Shalom School of Peace best illustrates this approach.

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A good understanding of the objectives of future groups, as well as the means to reach these objectives, are therefore key to making informed choices in the final selection of the groups.

The illustration below presents the various approaches detailed above, and locates the various groups we have so far hosted since 2006 on this global map of approaches.

Michal Levin completed her MA thesis in social psychology on the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, and has specialized in it over the past 14 years.

She studied Psychology and Philosophy amongst others at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, then at the Lesley University, USA.

She is currently a consultant in various organizations, among which the Jerusalem YMCA and the Adam Institute (dedicated to education to democracy) and also works at MOZAIKA (inter-religious encounters at various institutional levels).

ISRAELO-PALESTINIAN IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS		THE CONFLICT IS NOT AT THE CENTER OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS	
dialogue process is central (incl. the conflict)		dialogue on any common interest topic discussing the conflict is part of the process	
dialogue process is at the heart		independent of the il-pal issue	related to the il-pal issue
conflict is one of the many topics covered in the process	conflict is the only topic discussed	breaking the ice	mozaika wounded xssing borders
ymca jeunes ymca mères ymca chorale	neve shalom school of peace		tali women in mouvement
			sulha common interest slim for Peace cooking for Peace running for Peace... il-pal relations exposure to infos about il-pal issues (conferences about the economical impact of the occupation,...) activism combatants for peace