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Dear All,

Now autumn is here we can look back on an eventful summer. Whether familiar projects such as Tali and Breaking the Ice or the new experience of Roots, all went well.

The key to success? The generosity and support of the entire association, and the substantial work of the members who participated actively. And let us not forget the invaluable help of the Vaudois Civil Protection (PC) and the precious donations from the institutions who support us. On reading the accounts below you will discover the concrete results on the ground of our commitment, and which encourage us in the pursuit of our action. We are happy to share them with you.

At the time of releasing this newsletter, we were very sad to learn the passing of Elsa Skorecki, the faithful secretary of Coexistences since 2009. Warm and lively, her limpid opinions helped us advance intelligently. We pay homage to her commitment at our side, to the values she defended and we share the grief of her loved ones.

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2-8.07 TALI-ROSSING

For the fourth time since 2011, Coexistences welcomed a group of teachers from Catholic Arab schools (comporting 50% of Muslim pupils) and Jewish schools involved in the “Dialogue and Identity” programme: this year seventeen female teachers and their two facilitators Ruth Drori Binder and Vivian Rabia, who have a wide experience in this exercise.

After their arrival on Monday morning in Geneva, the traditional visit of the city and the picnic, en route for Lausanne to meet the families who hosted our teachers for two days and who we would like to thank here for their hospitality. In a merry brouhaha, the three Civil Protection (PC) buses (a warm thank you to the drivers too) disembark the luggage and the weary but enchanted passengers. Right away emerges, as with all the groups Coexistences receives, this middle-eastern Israeli and Palestinian warmth, this way of entering into contact so simple and direct, and energetic. At 6 p.m. takes place the presentation between the host family and “their” two women, a lovely moment of discoveries, laughter and emotions, and departure for the first supper with their families.



This year, the group expressed the wish to privilege the stay in the chalet and conclude it there, in order to tighten the links and experience the living together the vivre ensemble. Indeed, the teachers are spread out in different schools from the Galilee, to Ramleh, and the opportunities of meeting each other outside the programme are inexistent due to the lack of time.

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IN TOWN

On Tuesday, the only day in Lausanne, was packed tight since, at the desire expressed by the group, we organised two dialogue workshops on the theme of minorities: in the morning a visit to the synagogue, preceded by an presentation of the Rabbi Di Martino around the minority status question of Jews in Switzerland, and followed by a meal at the Lausanne Jewish Community. In the afternoon, a meeting concerning the integration of Muslims in Switzerland, led by Pascal Gemperli, ex-president and present General Secretary of the UVAM (Union of Muslim Associations in Vaud).

The end of the afternoon, the members of the group were free to roam around the town or do some shopping, before joining their respective host families for a second and last evening. It is frustrating to have so little time together in view of the briefness of the stay in Switzerland, because the time spent with the family is rich in discussions and confidences, so each instant was precious and treasured up until the departure.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

On Wednesday, the group left Lausanne for Château-d'Oex. They were received at the "Musée du Vieux Pays-d'Enhaut" (museum of cut-outs) for a visit under the expert direction of Marianne Dubuis, herself a cutter, and who the following day proposed that they create their own creation. In the meantime, the PC deposited the group's luggage at the "Vieux Chalet", where we were to stay and where we go by foot through the village.

Each day devoted to dialogue sessions reunite the participants. The respective religions and cultures are at the centre of the exchanges. To allow the pupils to open themselves to the culture of the other, to accept the differences, to get to know and recognise one another and is at the core of the "Dialogue and Identity" programme. During the sessions these aspects are approached by the teachers in a more personal and in-depth way.

On Thursday the group met the Abbey Stanislas for an exchange around the religion. The Christian teachers were disconcerted by this meeting. The fact that the Abbey Stanislas originated from Vietnam and arrived in Switzerland with the boat people was indeed surprising. In his country, he was a monk and his arrival in Switzerland upturned his identity. His pragmatic and open attitude astonished them.

The afternoon was devoted to cut-outs on the theme of dialogue. The group chose the tree of life, which, in its verticality, from its roots to its top, represent dialogue with oneself and in its horizontality seeks, through its branches and leaves, dialogue with the other. This resulted in magnificent cut-outs which were exhibited in the dining room. Their creativity and dexterity in an unknown art were amazing.

On Friday, after a session and an excursion led by David Hersch, it is time to make challot for Shabbat, to prepare delicious salads to accompany the magnificent meal realised by Dominique Benmuvhar, and other preparations for the evening to which all the members of Coexistences are invited, among whom many came along for the evening or even slept in the chalet; an occasion for privileged meetings with the teachers, moved by this support and interest in their project.

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The Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony (reception of Shabbat) is always a great moment among the TALI groups, always different according to what emerges from the group and its particular sensitivity. This Kabbalat Shabbat was very simple, interiorised, suffused by gentleness and serenity, of this spirituality – in the wide sense of the term – that one and all can experience. Everyone was invited to light a candle... this central light of the beginning of Shabbat. Then the superb challot were shared, and a song was sang before the very convivial meal. Intense and merry moments. Thank you so much.

The evening ended with a dialogue session organised by the teachers, proposing a concrete reflexion of their work with the children. Seated in a vast circle, the Coexistences and TALI groups ask each other questions which are written on rectangular pieces of paper, which, once the answer is given, are placed on the floor on such a way as to gradually form two flights of stairs which come together at their summit, the last paper becoming a bridge. A visual symbol easy to grasp by a child, while the questions aim at reaching out to the other. Those of our teachers, authentic and in search of humanity, reveal the quality of their work with their classes. Doris Albina who leads this workshop resumes the quintessence in simple terms: "If you want to know something about the other, ask them directly and don't have a preconceived idea."

On Saturday, Edgar Bloch gives a conference on the political organisation of Switzerland which always meets with a great success. The evening is devoted to an assessment of the stay and the announcement of the departure from the "Dialogue and Identity" of Vivian, entrusted by the Rossing Centre with new responsibilities. On Sunday, their last day, the group goes to the pilgrimage of Notre Dame des Marches in Broc. There is a spontaneous exchange of knowledge about the meaning of the Stations of the Cross and the ex-votos inside the chapel. Then the PC takes the participants for a last visit in the village of Gruyères before driving them to Zurich airport.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STAY

The teachers are full of gratitude and we leave enriched by this group which appeared to us to be united, energetic, and which includes many young teachers. All through their stay, they all express their enthusiasm and commitment to the children as well as their deep conviction to the dialogue programme, an active ferment of hope.

At the time of writing this newsletter, the teachers have gone back to work and are preparing the first interclass meeting of the year. This year, the teachers who participated in the stay alone will touch 250 Jewish, Christian and Muslim pupils, while in all 600 pupils led by the teachers who benefitted from a stay in Switzerland over the last years, will participate in the five meetings planned by this class-twinning programme.

We would like to thank here Georges and Jenny Bloch Foundation, as well as the Town of Lausanne for their support.

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20-30.08 ROOTS

For the first time, Coexistences received a group from the West Bank including religious children from the Gush Etzion settlements and young Palestinians from the urban centres of Bethlehem, Beit Ummar and Hebron. The group stayed in Switzerland from 20 to 30 August between Lausanne and Arolla and, against all expectations, reached the fundamental feeling “of being brothers and sisters, of being family for one another”.

The group of young adults from “Roots” aims at reducing fear and reinforcing a partnership and friendship through learning one another’s language, studying their respective cultures and beliefs, visits to important places in order to better understand the complexities deriving from a double heritage and also joint activities. Thus, a critical reflection on the identity and relation to the other emerges, and these young people become ambassadors of dialogue during 8 months of bi-monthly meetings, of non-violence and coexistence within their respective communities where people are accepted as they are.



This group is one of the initiatives of the non-governmental organisation “Roots” founded by Ali Abu Awwad, a Palestinian activist converted to non-violence after long years of activism in the resistance to the occupation and imprisonment, and Rabbi Menachem Froman, a unique figure in the settlements since he considered he belonged to the biblical land rather than the latter belonging exclusively to the Jewish people. Simple citizens and religious leaders, women, men and children find in “Roots” a space for transformation and coexistence through non-violence.

EVOLUTION OF THE STAY

10 boys and 6 girls, 10 Israelis and 6 Palestinians led by 4 adults finally took part in the trip, 2 Israelis desisting and 6 other Palestinians who were refused the visa by the Swiss authorities for want of guarantees.

After being received by the host families for two days, the group spent 4 days in Arolla before going back down to the plain.

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There, the stay alternated between leisure time (first impressions of Switzerland on the beach at St-Prex; a long walk around the town of Lausanne from the tower of Sauvabelin to the Place de la Palud in front of the speaking clock; picnicking and swimming with the host families at Lutry beach; a visit to the Charlie Chaplin Museum; in Geneva, picnic in the Park of the Bastions and a visit of the old city between the Treille and the Bains des Pâquis and themed activities which included time to discuss and assimilate the subjects covered (an intercultural communication workshop; the prayer for the Feast of Sacrifice in the Chavannes Albanian cultural and religious centre in Lausanne and at the synagogue; a conference on the Swiss political system and citizenship; a visit and presentation of the United Nations). Almost every day, the group disposed of 2 to 3 hours to pursue their own dialogue programme which was piloted by the youngsters themselves.

During the 4 days in a chalet in the magnificent region of Arolla, and, in their own terms recapitulating their stay, “after having realised and accepted that they were to spend long days sleeping and eating together (and without a WiFi!), the youngsters and their monitors discovered their capacity to live in comradeship as a large family”. Boys and girls alike spontaneously chose to have mixed nationality dormitories; the girls talked late into the night about “girl issues”, the boys played games of football and frisbee, and gathered together around the fire to eat nocturnal fondues. The youngsters took turns in cooking “and above all could be themselves”, that is to say adolescents aged 15 to 20, away from the stress of the conflict.

The two excursions to Pra Gra and the Blue Lake, organised by two keen mountaineers, Beni Gassenbauer, Sylvie Berkowitsch’s husband, and Christian Sinobas, our treasurer, were “difficult and rallying”.

As the days passed, the most reserved of the group revealed themselves, while the natural leaders rarely monopolised the conversation or the action. Pairs and sub-groups (mostly binational) reconstituted themselves constantly, some learning the words of songs, some learning words and sentences. Their Arabic, Hebrew and English made great progress. What was most amazing was the respect and attention they showed one another and their unity.

The possibility for all the group to participate and attend the most important festival of the year for Muslims, the prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice (or Bayrami), to share the prayer at the synagogue, and the discussions the group had with the Albanian Imam and the Rabbi were particularly enlightening for this group attached to their respective religions, because of the message of support and commitment of these personalities in interreligious and intercultural collaboration.

While the group retained the intercultural communication workshop, the importance of non-verbal communication and discovered the hidden part of the values of the latter, the conference on the Swiss system and citizenship gave rise to a lively debate around the concept of the construction of a national consensus by compromise and the notion of support of the minority (instead of imposition of the law of the majority).

The visit to the Palace of Nations, target of strong criticism from both the Palestinians and the Israelis, allowed the group to also understand the importance of multilateral negotiations made possible by the United Nations. The visit was led by a guide who, having lived for ten years in Jerusalem and studied at the Hebrew University as well as at Al Quds, had a particular affinity and attachment to our group.

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The group repeatedly showed its cohesion and solidarity: the first time when they decided unanimously to exclude one of the participants because of his extremely polarised positions; and during the visit to the Palace of Nations, when one of the Palestinians wanted to wear his keffiyeh inside the building, the entire group refused to enter as long as he was not allowed to do it.

We also had the honour and great satisfaction to see the founder of “Roots”, Ali Abu Awwad, attend the conference on the political system and citizenship and at the farewell evening during which he made a speech acclaimed by the audience and, above all, by the young Israelis who heard it for the first time!

The journalist Yves Zahno from the radio RTS 1 made a beautiful on-the-ground coverage, accessible by [clicking here](#).



The stay in Switzerland allowed the group to deepen their inter-understanding and transform their friendship “into a potential strong family link”, thanks to the space of confidence the participants created. This was not easy but “they managed to talk about the conflict while remaining friends; they had the courage to ask difficult questions, debating with affection and attachment rather than hate or reproaches. They now know how to be proud without denying the other side their rights, to believe in coexistence and human rights for all”. The group emerged as allies joined together by the experience of having openly and with frankness confronted difficult questions that the stay far from the conflict unquestionably facilitated. In all evidence, coexistence became a concrete and live reality. A week after their return, the participants spontaneously organised a reunion at “Roots”.

WHAT KIND OF FOLLOW-UP BACK AT HOME?

During the stay in Switzerland, the group also worked on the vision and goals of a programme of activities destined to the older people, with the ambition of ‘influencing the reality and creating a change. They are now going to develop a programme of activities and, within this context, they plan to talk about their experience with other groups of young people, to learn the different languages and, above all, to maintain the contact with each other among themselves.

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LES TROIS VOYAGES DE L'ÉTÉ 2018

In many respects, the transforming impact of the “Roots” programme in these young people has become apparent. Thus, one of the Israelis has changed the perception of his parents and Ali Abu Awaad, co-director of “Roots” was invited to his home for a presentation of the action to several families from the Allon Shvut settlement in Gush Etzion. He also brought along several his friends at “Roots”.

AND FOR US HERE?

The host families and Coexistences graciously met the challenge to respect the kashrut. This stay also constituted a transforming experience, on the one hand because we were confronted by a group whose identity was strongly linked to religion while most of us are agnostic or even atheist, and on the other because receiving inhabitants from the settlements was not obvious. But we met good people and were moved by the path they had taken to go towards the other and consequently what they have created between themselves. The group is unbelievably endearing, mature, strong and capable of self-regulation.

OUR WARM THANKS GO TO:

- the Foundation Juchum for their generous donation and B8 of Hope, in particular Mehra and David Rimer, for their collaboration all through the preparation, complex, long and full of new turns, of this project and the funding of most of the air tickets (except for a contribution from the participants themselves);
- the host families, new and old, who devoted themselves in this adventure and were wonderful: authentic Swiss mothers and fathers for their youngsters;
- the communities of the Albanian cultural centre and the synagogue in Lausanne for having given us such a warm welcome, namely the Imam Fehim Abazi and Rabbi Di Martino;
- the contributors Veronique Schoeffel for the intercultural workshop, Alpha Drame and François Chervaz for the conference on the Swiss political system and citizenship and Julian Abegglen for the visit to the Palace of Nations, for their dedicated, just and enlightened contributions;
- the interpreters Yael Ehrenfreund, Daniela Hersch and Ammar Saad who were indispensable;
- the PC Vaud and their drivers who were, as always, crucial. The interactions between all the members du group and the drivers were especially warm and intense and we were pleased to see that several of them participated in the farewell evening;
- the journalist Yves Zahno who on the waves of RTS 1 twice this year highlighted the work of Coexistences' groups;
- the members of the work group and the host families, André Katz, Christian Sinobas, Christine Martin, Danielle Bloch, Halina Sandri, Ingrid de Muralt, Laurent Enser, Nathalie Katz as well as Sylvie Berkowitsch and Benny Gassenbauer who participated in planning the programme of the stay, in taking decisions at key moments, in assuming the responsibility of purchasing provisions and other mentoring tasks and helped limit the costs by cooking kosher dishes for the last buffet.

An African proverb says: “If you want to go quickly, walk alone, but if you want to go far, walk together”.

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24.08-6.09 BREAKING THE ICE

As every year since 2010, a group of students from Haifa University came this summer for a hike in our Alps. They arrived in Switzerland on 24 August and left on 6 September.

Twelve young men and women, half of them Arab and half Jewish landed in Cointrin-Geneva airport on 24 August, accompanied by their two facilitators, Ulfat Haider and Asaf Ron. Their trip had been carefully prepared since the month of March by evening meetings as well as three week-ends spent together in the magnificent landscape of northern Israel. Not long before their departure, Ulfat and Asaf, as usual, organised a meeting with the families of all the participants. Prior to their arrival in Switzerland, the project had therefore produced a rapprochement.

Transported in the Vaudois Civil Protection (PC) bus, the group reaches Le Fouly to prepare their trek for two days, accommodated in Danielle and Pierre Kohler's chalet. They stop in Lausanne at the Catholic School of the Valentin, to collect the camping material stocked there, and where the Principal, Ahmad Abu Nijmeh, puts on an apron to serve in person a lunch in his dining hall to the participants!

There is an unfortunate setback since one of the participants, Tamar, arrived with a fever. Her condition stops her from joining the trek and she will be lodged for the following days in Lausanne by two members of Coexistences (Philippe Nahon, then Anaïs Bloch). A consultation at the CHUV (University Hospital) is necessary, but, luckily, the complaint was not serious.



THE TREK

On 26 August, transported by the PC bus to the Brunet cabin (alt. 2000m, Val de Bagnes), starting point of the trek led by Nadja Schmid, a low-range mountain guide. It is the fifth year that the project benefits from her services. English speaking, she gets on wonderfully with Ulfat and Asaf, with a perfect understanding of the principles and goals of the project, she has prepared an itinerary accordingly, with stages which are not too long or too arduous (4 to 6 hours hiking per day, daily differences in altitude of not more than 1000m), in order to leave time for the dialogue activities. The camping sites were identified, shelters in the case of bad weather located, and the possible owners of the mountain pastures or chalets alerted. We would add that Nadja offered part of her fees to Coexistences.

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At the beginning of the trek there are fifteen of us (the group less Tamar, Ulfat, Asaf, Najda and myself). Unlike other years the weather is clement, hot and sunny nearly all the time, with just a little rain and fog the last two nights. The itinerary led us through Panossière, the Col des Otanes, the Mauvoisin dam (where three members de Coexistences, Christian Sinobas, Philippe Nahon and Eric Raddatz bring us supplies), then Chanrion. From there, we arrive in Italy via the Col de Crête Seche. The passage forms an unguarded and hardly marked frontier offering a very exciting moment for the participants; anybody having travelled between Israel and the surrounding countries can easily understand why. After a day without trekking, entirely devoted to dialogue activities at the Valpelline camp (in the valley of the same name), we climb back to the Grand-St-Bernard pass (new frontier passage) and visit the Hospice there. Valérie Jennings, a new member of Coexistences, joins us to accompany the group for the last two days. We then head towards the Pointe de Drône (a rather technical path, dotted with rope ladders and security cables, highly appreciated by the participants who are by now inured) to climb down to the Lacs de Fenêtre where we spend the last night before going back to Le Fouly on the ninth day of the trek, on 3 September.

The evening of our return to Le Fouly, the municipality receives us with a moving welcome speech and an aperitif at the Hôtel des Glaciers. The end of the trek is then celebrated by an introduction to Swiss gastronomy in the form of a raclette. The following day is spent restoring the material (drying the tents, etc.) and to debriefing sessions between Ulfat, Asaf and the participants. On the morning of 5 September, drive back to Lausanne, ensured for once, not by the PC but by drivers from Coexistences (Eric Raddatz, James Jennings, Danielle Kohler and François Feihl). Return of the material to the Valentin Catholic School, another lunch in the dining hall of the school, then the participants are free to visit Lausanne. At the end of the afternoon, Danielle Kohler receives us at the Point d'Eau, where she worked for a long time. Some participants are studying healthcare or social work, and the group are very interested by the functioning of this institution which offers care and support free of charge to the destitute in and around Lausanne.



Follows the farewell evening, also at the Point d'Eau. Even though a similar evening took place just a few days before for the "Roots" group, several members of Coexistences come along to meet the group in a very warm atmosphere. And the next day, 6 September, early in the morning, departure in the PC bus for the airport.

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THE DIALOGUE PROCEDURE

“Having accompanied the whole trip, with a reasonable command of Hebrew (communication language since, in the main, Jews do not speak Arabic), having had the privilege to attend nearly all the dialogue activities, I was able to apprehend from the inside, albeit partially, the process covered by the group during the trek” attests François Feihl.

Informal discussions between the participants are obviously ongoing, during the trek, the breaks, the picnics, the mounting and dismounting of the tents, cooking and evening meals. An interesting detail: the easy paths on the flat are put to good use for the Jewish participants to learn a little Arabic from their Palestinian comrades.



The structured activities of group dialogue take place during long pauses in the day, and the evening after the meal, nobody retiring before 22h. Each participant has the responsibility to prepare and lead an activity on a specific theme. The themes are addressed in an order carefully conceived by the two facilitators, starting with the easiest (getting to know each other, describing their tastes, character, culture), and then approaching conflictual subjects firstly theoretically (what is a State, what is a people), and only then in a “hot” form allowing the expression of emotions. At every step, the facilitators invite the participants to adopt a listening attitude, to delay their instinctive, gut reactions, to make a mental effort to first put themselves in the place of the other in order to understand (but not necessarily accept) her/his point of view.

For example, on the fourth day of the trek, in the open air, the comparison between Nakba and Shoah was addressed, the former experienced by the Palestinians as equivalent to the latter in terms of inflicted suffering, a position a priori intolerable for the Jews. Just imagine the extremely emotional character of such a discussion! The tension gradually subsided when, thanks to the intervention of the facilitators, each “camp” and with a great effort, arrived at the distinction between the personal experience expressed by the other (the Nakba was a major trauma for Palestinian families, the Shoah marks forever Jewish identity), and the historical truth (no common measure between the two events). Interestingly, this discussion marked a turning point in the group’s dynamics, with a sudden increase in the listening capacity of each one, giving way to a calmer approach to other painful subjects such as the feelings of discrimination experienced by the Israeli Arabs.

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PROVISIONAL ASSESSMENT

Here are some remarks from the participants during the closing discussions:

- Ola (Palestinian): "I have learned how to express my negative thoughts concerning the Israeli army".
- Rabia (Palestinian): "I discovered the existence of a community of views between our two peoples".
- Yaniv (Jewish): "It wasn't easy. But I have operated a significant change, I have a better understanding of the other camp".
- Ben (Jewish): "I understood that I should not want to change the agenda of my interlocutor, but try to understand their point of view".



Right at the end of the stay, the group discussed how it would be possible to transmit the experience they had acquire during this trip to others. To remain realistic, in view of everyone's busy agendas (studies, exams, work...), they took the commitment to organise two events in the two to three months following their return back home. The exact form remains to be defined (outdoor walking week-end, communal meal, concert...) but the aim is for each one to bring along three or four friends or members of their family, in order to touch an appreciable number of people.

AND NEXT YEAR...

Already, "Breaking the Ice" will take place in 2019. Since the project will then be in its tenth year, we plan to organising on this occasion an additional event to celebrate this anniversary by creating a reunion of all our ex-participants. The actual form remains to be defined. The details will be presented at the briefing session on the new projects, at the beginning of next year.

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THANKS:

- to all the members of Coexistences who worked for the success of the project: Ahmad Abu Nijmeh, Anaïs Bloch, Tatiana Honegger, Valérie and James Jennings, Danielle Kohler, Alexis Mozer, Philippe Nahon, Eric Raddatz, Christian Sinobas;
- to the Vaudoise Civil Protection (PC);
- to the Municipality of Orsieres;
- to the donors of the project: : Securitas Direct SA, Georges and Jenny Bloch Foundation, Nadja Schmid.

Without all these contributions, this project would not have been possible.



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YMCA CHOIR

Fiuna Seylan Ongen had the opportunity to meet up with several members of the choir when she was in Jerusalem last February. The warmth of their welcome was an eloquent testimony of what their visit represented for them both individually and as a group. They repeatedly said how this had been a huge success for the choir (despite the problems between the facilitators due to YMCA's financial and managerial difficulties). As you probably know, one of choir members resumed the visit: "We came as a group, we leave as a family".

Ever since the group returned to Jerusalem, at the institutional level things have continued to go badly and have even got worse, always because of the same managerial problems. A new co-choirmaster was appointed in autumn alongside Micah, who was going to concentrate on his role as promotor of the choir and fundraiser in the USA where he wants to return.

It was hoped was that this new co-director, a well-known musician, by opening up new musical perspectives, would give a new impulsion while maintaining the dialogue work. Moreover, the choir grew with new members in the first year and 2 new visually-impaired youngsters who joined. Unfortunately, the implication of a new co-director in the choir and its dialogue work were not confirmed and his indifference to the dialogue and an excessively busy agenda combined with problems in the Department of Youth of which the choir is tributary have had an adverse effect on the atmosphere.

The youngsters felt misunderstood and their needs neglected. They reacted by resigning collectively in the month of June by a letter to which they all contributed, addressed to the direction of the YMCA, the Department of Youth and to the new co-choirmaster!

This letter of resignation is an act of responsibility / of taking into hand their own destiny and the concrete and clear illustration of the fruit of the vision and work of education towards peace pursued by Micah, Michal (supervisor of the facilitators) and the facilitators since the creation of the choir, regarding the principles of equality, law and dignity. The resigning choir members signified through this act that they esteemed "We deserve better than that".

And the future? It is possible for Micah to rebuild with these young people a new choir outside the YMCA, in which the young people would largely be the administrators and deciders and which they would therefore manage in a democratic and participatory manner, surrounded by facilitators. Thus, this would be the test of an ideal of participatory democracy and that is the most beautiful thing in this adventure.

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BREAKING THE ICE

François Feihl has stayed in contact with Shiri, an Israeli participant in the ascension of the Mont Blanc in 2010. She has just informed him that she will participate in a meeting of Israeli women and Palestinian women from the territories, under the aegis of the “Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF)”. The PCFF (see [here](#)) is this organisation which initiated meetings between Israeli and Palestinian bereaved families, subject of the film **Encounter Point**, made in 2006 by Ronit Avni and Julia Bacha, which we viewed at the time in a Cafe Coexistences.

The fact that Shiri is involved seems to us an example worthy of mention of the long term impact of Coexistences’ actions.

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FUND RAISING EVENING, 24 JUNE 2018

For the first time at the Community Centre in Chailly, this 8th fund-raising evening in favour of Coexistences reunited 60 people. The participants were patrons of the association taking advantage of spending a convivial evening and pleased to find their friends as well as the new members and friends of the association who we are always pleased to meet and welcome.

Aperitif then an oriental buffet with indescribable flavours but the souvenir of which makes the participants' mouths water. Bravo and thank you to Dominique Benmuvhar for her talent!

The musical accompaniment was commensurate to the buffet, eclectic and oriental. It was ensured by Yanač, jazz-balkan-klezmer group uniting five musicians from different horizons and who interpreted for us a mix of Macedonian and klezmer airs and original compositions, all arranged by them.

We thank the musicians for having enlivened the hall with their wonderful airs, the members and friends of Coexistences for their presence and faithful and constant support, Michael and Sasha for their precious help in the kitchen and in the dining hall, and, finally, a huge thank you to Christian Sinobas for his help during the evening and also for the accounts which reached a record this year.

Come and join us next spring for the next fundraising evening!



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CAFÉ COEXISTENCES

Two dates on, the agenda this autumn for the members and supporters of our association: Thursday 11 October and Sunday 11 November for meetings around the Muslim world, led by Abdelhak Elghezouani, member of Coexistences.

In the form of presentations and exchanges, these reunions are devoted to the discovery of religious, social and historical elements concerning Islam:

- religious, moral and legal foundations
- cultural history and social history
- societies, communities and individuals
- modern history

The aim of these two meetings is to promote and enhance the communication and interrelationship between communities, groups or individuals originating from the religious, cultural and social universe commonly called Muslim.

From the elements presented, questionings and questions can arise and give way to answers from the presenter and the other participants.

The presenter is neither a theologian nor an Islamic scholar. Muslim, it is through encounters with other Muslims, Jews and Catholic and Protestant Christians that he became interested in the spiritual, cultural and social foundations of Islam and above all their institutionalisations and their spiritual, cultural and social manifestations.

The social and political events, both past and recent, will serve as a basis insofar as they constitute, so to speak, an expression of the tectonic movements experienced by these societies from a religious, social and geopolitical point of view. Such a perspective makes ever more urgent, indeed vital, the interrelationship these meetings will endeavour to promote.

We look forward to seeing you once again!

Tuesday 11 October / 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Sunday 11 November / 4:00-7:00 pm

**at the école catholique du Valentin,
7 rue du Valentin, Lausanne.**

Our heartfelt thanks to Ahmad Abu Nijmeh who made a room available for us in his school.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

And to conclude, don't miss our General Assembly, which will take place on 8 November at 19 h. at the école catholique du Valentin, à Lausanne.

We wish you a luminous autumn,

The communication group