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COEXISTENCES / JANUARY 2020



# NEWS

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As we announced in our last newsletter, below are the four projects for 2020 as they were presented at our last meeting on 29 October last. Each year is both the same and different: certain groups come back, others are invited for the first time, in a balanced mix between between core values (because known) and new discoveries.

We are commemorating 10 years of Breaking the Ice: in March we will invite all the former participants, then a new group in autumn. In August we will welcome a group from Roots, an ambitious dialogue organisation born in the heart of the conflict. In September it will be the turn of the dialogue group from David Yellin College, a teachers' college, a first. So 2020 looks good.

And to start with, the Grand Ball of the “Petit Nouvel An”! Because the Youth Olympic Games was occupying the Casino, we had to change it to 31 January. All the better! We will have time to get over the end-of-year stress and recover our strength to dance through the night (or drink with with old friends!). Financing the projects while enjoying ourselves? Come and join us on Friday 31 January 2020 starting 20h at the Casino de Montbenon in Lausanne!

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### 10 YEARS OF BREAKING THE ICE

16 - 22.03.20

Next spring we will commemorate ten years of the existence of *Breaking the Ice* by inviting back all the former participants numbering more than one hundred, for a short stay in Switzerland. Preliminary contacts indicate that around thirty of them will come. The trip will take place from 16 to 22 March 2020, 3 days of which spent at the Grand-Saint-Bernard Hospice, reached by a snowshoe hike.

All of the programme is open to the members of Coexistences. The season and the place were chosen in order to:

- Give a festive atmosphere festive to the event: a playful aspect to walking in the snow (a new experience for the majority of the participants)
- Provide a highly symbolic value framework with: the majesty of the Hospice, its situation on an open border, the traditional hospitality of the canons, the spiritual atmosphere of the place

These elements are intended to raise the participants' motivation, the depth of exchanges, and thus the value of the final evaluation.

The visit will be divided into three parts:

16 - 18 March: accommodation at Bourg-Saint-Pierre (VS), in a large hostel (the Maison Saint-Pierre) property of the Saint-Bernard canons, and made available by them. 18 - 20 March: accommodation at the Grand-Saint-Bernard Hospice

20 - 22 March: accommodation in Lausanne, on the premises of the Valentin Catholic School.

In the mountains, the participants will share their time between short snowshoe hikes and discussions evidently aimed at making an evaluation of the 10 years of *Breaking the Ice*.



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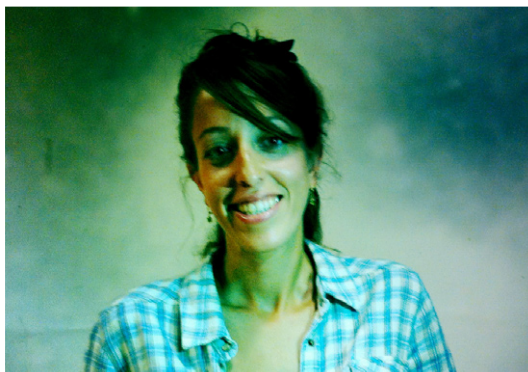
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During the stay the following events, open to the members of Coexistences, will take place:

**Roundtable, 17 March, at the Maison Saint-Pierre in Bourg-Saint-Pierre, 17h**

Speeches by the Reverend Canon Bernard Gabioud, former Prior of the Saint- Bernard Hospice and mountain guide, by Sheikh Khaled Bentounes, renowned leader in the Sufi movement of Islam, and by Murielle Katz, member de Coexistences and active in the movement of liberal Judaism. These speeches will have a theme central for Coexistences, i.e. the welcome.

The Reverend Canon Gabioud will talk about the reception at the Grand-Saint-Bernard Hospice, with his experience over the 25 years when he was prior of this institution. He will talk about the historical aspects (the Hospice has existed for nearly a thousand years and has often been a refuge for people fleeing a war) and will explain that the criteria determining the reception of people only take into consideration their human nature, without distinction of religion, race or any other identity characteristic (moreover, today no identity documents are requested); to help them on their way, without imposing any route. Sheikh Bentounes will talk of the tradition of hospitality in Sufi brotherhoods. In the Maghreb region, Sufi centres (zaouia) have hostels which welcome people according to principles surprisingly similar to those applied in the Grand-Saint-Bernard. Thus, during the war in Algeria, both French soldiers and FLN combatants found refuge in them. Murielle Katz will talk of the symbolism of the succah in the Jewish tradition. Succah huts are also, symbolically speaking, places of refuge open to everyone, that's to say Jews of all obediences and to non-Jews.



**Conference, 19 March, at the Saint-Bernard Hospice, late afternoon**

We have obtained the exceptional participation of Erri de Luca, the well-known Italian writer, poet, committed and a fervent mountaineer. The subject of his talk is still to be defined. Pierre Starobinski, top-level alpinist and close to the Coexistences association, will give an exposé on snow and avalanches. Other contributions are still under discussion, with the guides who accompanied the ascension of the Mont Blanc by Breaking the Ice in 2010.

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### **Concert, on 20 March, in the great hall of Orsières (VS), at 16h30:**

Given by Anne Volluz, pianist and Florian Alter, violonist, both professors at cantonal Conservatoire of music in Sion and at the School of Music (HMU) in Lausanne, this concert has been made possible thanks to the support of Orsières municipality.

### **Owls in the service of Peace**

Conference, on 21 March, in the main hall of the Swiss Alpine Clube, rue Beau-Séjour 24 in Lausanne, at 18h.

Professor Roulin, specialist in the biology of owls and full professor at the Department of Ecology and Evolution in Lausanne University, will explain how a programme targeting the implantation of this species at the confines of Palestine, Israel and Jordan in the aim of fighting against harmful rodents has also made it possible to create relationships between the farmers in these countries a priori antagonistic.

All the conferences will be given in French and translated into Hebrew.



### **TO REGISTER**

If you want to take part in all or part of this stay with our former participants in Breaking the Ice, accommodation is possible either in the Bourg-Saint-Pierre (at the Maison Saint-Pierre) or at the Grand-Saint-Bernard Hospice, for 67 CHF per night in a dormitory with full board. About 20 places are available for each day. Reservation by email with François Feihl (ffeihl@gmail.com) before 1 February 2020.

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## 36 / 2020 PROJECTS

### ROOTS

11-20.08.2010

We have the pleasure for the second time of welcoming a dialogue group from the grassroots organisation *Roots / Shorashim / Judur*. The meetings between religious Jewish adolescents from the Gush Etzion settlements and Palestinian adolescents from Hebron and Bethlehem aim at humanising the other at the heart of the conflict, in the Palestinian territories. 20 youngsters aged between 16 and 19, girls and boys, and 4 supervisors, will stay in a chalet near Lausanne after having spent 3 day with host families. On several occasions, these activities will include these families. The choice this year of a prolonged stay in a chalet results from the difficulty for the Swiss families to respect the imperatives of strict kashrut for a prolonged period.

*Roots / Shorashim / Judurw* founded in 2014 by Ali Abu Awwad is a unique collaboration between settlers and Palestinians in the region of Gush Etzion, Hebron and Bethlehem with the aim of building a model of coexistence by non-violence. *Roots*’ programmes bring together women, men and children, leaders of the civil society and religious people from both sides, reinforcing the existing moderate voices and creating new ones. They contribute to the improvement of lives, build confidence and reduce tensions on the ground.



The group of young adults in *ROOTS* is entering into its fourth year. According to the aspiration of its organisers, this is a youth movement aimed at reducing fear and reinforcing a partnership based on the study of their respective national cultures, beliefs and identities. It strives to create reciprocal understanding and confidence allowing the development of empathy towards the other in the face of the sufferance resulting from the conflict. Throughout the year the group realises activities of public interest carried out together. They explore the geographical space of the communities established on this shared territory. They learn their history and can conduct a critical reflection on identity and the relation to the other. In this way can emerge future leaders and ambassadors of dialogue and non-violence. Experience has shown that these meetings have brought the participants to learn Arabic and Hebrew.

In the opinion of the people in charge of *Roots*, the first stay in Switzerland showed that for the participants to travel together far from their homes allowed them to further intensify their dialogue work. In 2019-20, the co-director of *Roots* Khaled Abu Awwad will act as facilitator together with the person in charge of the programme Raz Kones, as well as a mixed pair of facilitators who work during the year and who will come to Switzerland.

The work group is underway. If you are interested in participating in the preparation of this stay please contact Fiuna Ongen ([f.seylan-ongen@coexistences.ch](mailto:f.seylan-ongen@coexistences.ch)).

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### **BREAKING THE ICE 2020** DATE NOT YET DEFINED

Details of the arrival of the next group will be specified in March 2020. We will let you know as soon as possible.

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### **DAVID YELLIN COLLEGE** 03-11.09.2020

The David Yellin College is an academic teachers' training college in Jerusalem, the only one in the town to include Palestinian students from East Jerusalem (approximately 30%). The teaching staff is also mixed. So this is an institution representative of Israeli society: secular and religious Jews, Christian and Muslim Palestinian Arabs, and new immigrants. The college trains primary school teachers and special needs teachers for handicapped children, from public and private schools.

The group which will come has been pursuing its dialogue programme since November 2018 at the rhythm of 2 meetings a month, thereby completing 2 years of dialogue.

In the vision of its initiators, the aim of this dialogue programme is to find at the level of the college a solution to the tensions in the society, by promoting change on the basis of sharing, more egalitarianism in the organisation, teaching and social life of the college. It is institutionalised and firmly supported by the President of the college. We are expecting 14 participants, accompanied by their facilitators Michal Levin and Saber Rabi, who will stay 8 days between the mountains and Lausanne.

The work group is underway. If you are interested in participating in the preparation of this stay please contact Daniela and David Hersch, danielahersch@gmail.com.

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### **TAKE OUT YOUR AGENDAS**

We will no doubt have the opportunity to meet each other in 2020, beginning with these two key dates:

**«PETIT NOUVEL AN» GRAND BALL**  
FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2020

Casino de Montbenon, Lausanne

**STATUTARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 18H45

Espace Dickens, avenue Charles Dickens 4, 1006 Lausanne

Warmest wishes,

The communication group and the work groups of the association