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COEXISTENCES / MAY 2018



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Dear All,

No, this spring 2018 the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has not ended: you only have to look at the news to see that. More than ever it is essential to foster dialogue on the ground, and our discreet and patient action contributes to that.

Once again this year, we are organising visits to Switzerland for three groups. Jewish and Arab teachers from the Tali project which we have supported for several years now, will come and dialogue in our mountains. The Breaking the Ice project will give the opportunity to students from Haifa University to hike and dialogue in the Alps. Finally, we will have the pleasure of welcoming for the first time a group of young adults from Roots, a movement bringing together Palestinians from the region of Bethlehem-Hebron and Israelis from the settlements of Gush Etzion. Here is something that will, in many ways, open up new perspectives.

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Enjoy the read!

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SPOTLIGHT ON ROOTS 20 - 30 AUGUST

“Don’t just be pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian, be pro-solution!”

Don’t think that this slogan from Roots is simplistic. This grassroots initiative was born in one of the most tense regions in the occupied Palestinian territories, between Hebron and the Gush Etzion settlements. Roots is presently alone in all of the West Bank to engage dialogue in a non-violent spirit between Palestinians and Israeli settlers.

Roots was born in January 2014 during a meeting between Israelis and Palestinians at Gush Etzion. It is based on several axes: meetings between families, a women’s group, non-violence workshops, youth activities, conferences. Its members have chosen to position themselves as actors of their lives rather than victims, to focus on the future instead of being weighed down by the past, transformation rather than inaction and confidence instead of fear.

Roots owes a great deal to two remarkable and astonishing personalities: Ali Abu Awwad, a Palestinian activist converted to non-violence and the deceased Rabbi Menachem Froman. Both of these men, despite their assumed Palestinian and Jewish identities discovered how to open up to each other. For more information go to: www.friendsofroots.net.

From 20 to 30 August 2018 we will receive a group of approximately twenty young adults from Roots, as presented in our newsletter 31. By welcoming this group, Coexistences in no way or indirectly cautions the settlements or the occupation. However, it brings their support to a very rare and precious initiative for dialogue between the parties involved in the conflict in the Palestinian territories, the very people who most need to meet and recognize the existence and humanity of the other.

Similarly for the other projects, we are looking for host families: if you are interested, please contact Halina Sandri, halina_sandri@bluewin.ch.

On Wednesday 29 August a farewell dinner will take place beginning at 19h at the Frat (place Arlaud 2, Lausanne), to which the host families and members of Coexistences who wish can participate.

We are looking forward to this first collaboration with Roots as well as B8 of Hope (www.b8ofhope.org), which raises funds for the different Roots projects and for Ali Abu Awwad, and which will finance the group’s voyage.



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TALI 2 TO 8 JULY

“Dialogue and Identity” is an twinning programme between classes from the fifth to the seventh primary school years.

It offers the opportunity for Israeli Jewish and Arab pupils to meet, present themselves and get to know the culture and religion of the other. Since the school system in Israel is divided up into several currents (teaching in Hebrew or in Arabic according to the parents' choice), encounters between Jewish and Arab children are not common or “natural” until University. Thus, the main objective of these twinings is to work on the pupils' self-identity and also getting to know the other, in order to allow them to discover the depth and complexity of their own culture and at the same time becoming acquainted with that of others, in a mutual enrichment.

After the experiences in 2011, 2013 and 2016, we will receive from 2 to 8 July a new group of 16 Jewish, Christian and Muslim women teachers. They will stay 2 days in Lausanne in host families, then 4 days at Château-d'Oex. Since the teachers are taken up by the imperatives of the moment during the school year, this will offer them an opportunity to address painful, indeed conflictual, subjects during this stay. Together they will organise their daily life, whilst discovering certain aspects of Swiss culture.

The host families and the members of Coexistences are cordially invited to join the group on Friday 6 July as from 18h. for an evening in Château-d'Oex. It is possible to spend the night in the chalet. On the programme: A Shabbat meal and workshop dialogue games hosted by the teachers. Further information will follow.

We are still looking for a few host families. If you are interested in hosting two teachers for two nights, from Monday 2/7 to Wednesday 4.7, please contact Halina Sandri halina_sandri@bluewin.ch, in charge of the “Familles” group: , or Michel Lob: michellob@bluewin.ch or Catherine Starkier: cath.starkier@gmail.com



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BREAKING THE ICE **24 AUGUST TO 6 SEPTEMBER**

Once again this summer, for the 9th time, a group of 12 Jewish and Arab students from Haifa University will come to hike in the Alps, with the aim of pursuing in a neutral environment a dialogue initiated at home. Arrival scheduled at Geneva airport on 24 August, hike – whatever the weather! – in the region of La Fouly from 26 August to 3 September, return flight 6 September. The crossover of these dates with the visit of the Roots group (20 to 30 August) is unfortunate but was inevitable in regard of Muslim and Jewish holidays.

As in previous years, the supervision will be ensured by our partners from the Judeo-Arab cultural centre Beit HaGefen, Ulfat Haider and Asaf Ron, by our guide Nadja Schmid and François Feihl, who will accompany the hike as a representative from Coexistences.

Members de Coexistences will, if they wish, have two opportunities to meet these students during a raclette/fondue in La Fouly (date to be confirmed, 25 August or 3 September), and 5 September early evening.



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COEXISTENCES' TENTH ANNIVERSARY RETROSPECT

IN BETWEEN CHALLENGE

The viral film project, initiated on the occasion of our tenth anniversary, is near completion. Remember, a competition was launched in 2016 for the production of a short film symbolising dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Last summer, a jury made up of Palestinian, Israeli and Swiss film-maker professionals or dialogue professionals, awarded prizes to the films of Boaz Holander (1st prize for Elevator), Mor Polanuer and Ofir Sivan (2nd prize for Noa) and Gev Elmaleh (3rd prize for Do not decide).

Last February, on the occasion of a small ceremony organised in Haifa by Beit HaGefen, Fiuna Seylan Ongen, our President, handed the prizes to the winners in person. Thus, she had the opportunity to meet them, to talk about Coexistences and to personally thank our partners on the ground.

The project was followed up in Israel by Shira Lapidot, mediator of dialogue groups and teacher in cultural management at Sapir College in Sderot. She was seconded by Noa ben Ishay for the organisation of the competition. The campaign on the social networks was successfully carried out by a student, Aviya Attias, supervised by Maayan Tzadok, responsible for public relations at Sapir College. We would like to express our warm thanks to all of them for their enthusiasm and energy!

In the space of three weeks, the first film was watched by more than 8,000 people, the second by 900 and the third by 400. These films will continue their life on the social networks. Follow on: <https://www.facebook.com/inbetweenchallenge/>

We would also like to thank Sapir College for their support, the “We make it” campaign donators for their financial help, the members of the jury, Caroline Zeau, professor of the history and aesthetics of cinema, Liat Cohen and Tali Shamir Warzberger, professors at Sapir College, Barak Heyman, film-maker, Haneen Magadla and Liat Haider, facilitators of dialogue groups, Moriya Benavot and Uri Levi for their documentary “We can talk” and Beit HaGefen for the reception in February!

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“PETIT NOUVEL AN” GRAND BALL 12.01.18

At the risk of repeating ourselves, the eleventh ball in favour of our association was a great success. Clearly, the ball has become a new year ritual. We partied, we skied, we went back to work and... we partied once again!

As from 8 p.m. the public queued up at the door, anxious to grab a good table and sit down to taste the mezzes. There was a wide choice of dishes, besides the mezzes, cakes and pastries prepared by our amazing cooks. At the bar, youngsters juggled untiringly with the glasses, whilst taking turns to go and dance to a few numbers. The dance floor was full from the first song, Eddie Mitchell's "sermon du boogie-woogie" which had all the twisters on their feet, to the last, the wonderful slow by Lucio Dalla, "Caruso". The musicians exuded unending energy, the joy to be on stage and could be felt in all the corners of the Montbenon Casino party hall.

Pleasure galore, and for once it was filmed! Jean-Paul Waridel, supreme, weaved in and out with his camera between the micros, the singers, the wires, the musicians and the dancers, resulting in an Orchestre Jaune and Coexistences co-production which will be visible soon. haleine. C'est promis, on reviendra l'an prochain, le 11 janvier 2019!

At the end of this memorable ball, each time unique, happy and exhausted. We saw friends again, met the man/woman of our life, remade the world, and first and foremost, danced until we were breathless. For sure we'll come again next year on 11 January 2019 !



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FUNDRAISING SUPPER / SUNDAY 24 JUNE

Let it be known! A fundraising evening in favour of Coexistences will take place on **Sunday 24 June 2018 beginning at 18h15 at Chailly Community Centre (Maison de quartier)** (avenue de la Vallonnette 12, 1012 Lausanne). A delicious meal will be served, punctuated by musical interludes by Yanač, a Balkan-klezmer group made up of musicians from different horizons and who will offer us a medley of Macedonian airs, klezmer and original compositions.

Reservations before 5 June: Dominique Benmuvhar (dom@citycable.ch) and pre-payment of 80CHF to Coexistences with the mention "soiree de soutien" (iban CH29 00767 000C 5207 3545). **Come with your friends and we'll see you there!**

YANAČ EN CONCERT JUSTE POUR VOUS

