

Citizenship and Diversity: Christian-Moslem Living Together in Palestine

**A Documentation of Methods and Methodological
Approaches**



**Arab Educational Institute
Bethlehem
2020**

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Government schools / Bethlehem area

Al Halabi Basic School for Girls
Beit Sahour Secondary School for Boys
Wadee's Da'mas School for Boys
Beit Jala Secondary School for Girls
Al Khader Secondary School for Girls
Al Mahed Basic School for Boys
The Friendship Palestinian Russian School for Boys
Al Awda Secondary School for Girls
Al Fardoos Secondary School for Girls
Beit Sahour Secondary School for Girls
Nazareth School for Girls
Al Ta'khi School for Boys
Al Khas and No'man School for Girls

Private schools / Bethlehem area

Dar Al Kalima
The Good Shepherd Swedish School
The Greek Catholic School
Talitha Qumi
The Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour
AEI's Youth group

Government schools / Ramallah area

Al Majida Wasila School
Hamdi Al Barghouthi Secondary School'
Ein "Areek Secondary Mixed School

Private schools / Ramallah area

St. Joseph School
Evangelical Episcopal School
St. George Orthodox School
Greek Catholic School of Our Lady of Annunciation
Al Ahliya College
Latin Patriarchate School in Birzeit.

Introduction

In front of you is a documentation of educational methods, or methodological approaches, applied in the project “Citizenship and Diversity: Christian-Moslem Living Together” led by the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, Palestine. This project has run for over 20 years at both private and government schools in the occupied West Bank.

At present, 30 schools in the Bethlehem and Ramallah districts participate with one and sometimes more class(es) along with their 60 Moslem and Christian religious education teachers. The project aims to encourage the learning of civic and religious values in Palestine, especially respect for religious diversity and Christian-Moslem living together.

Methodologically, the project focuses on student-centered ways of active learning for Palestinian youths in the age range of 14-17 years. The documentation reflects the many methods which teachers have applied in and out of school over the many years of the project.

In compiling the methods and approaches, we made use of all kinds of documents including model lessons in the project, previous project manuals issued by AEI, narrative reports, and minutes and notes kept from teacher workshops and meetings,

The large majority of methods described here have been well applied in the project but some others less so. This pertains especially to those which have been applied at schools in other AEI projects which also have a ‘living together’ and ‘sumud’ dimension, the insights and methods of which have been shared with the schools in the Citizenship and Diversity project during for instance summer workshops.

In one case, that of the Early Warning and Response, the method has not yet been shared with the teachers, but we believe that it is important to learn about it as it builds upon AEI’s campaign and advocacy activities.

Purpose

The main purpose of the manual is to give a handy ‘skeleton’ to our teachers and educators to quickly go through the different methods and approaches when making lesson plans. However, since almost all methods have a relevance beyond the borders of the project, we hope that this documentation is a handy resource for education also in other curricular subjects and activities, especially in the broader fields of civics and religious studies.

This documentation may further help those interested in or supporting the project to get an overview of its activities. For this purpose an English version of the e-manual has been made.

Naturally the application of the methods will not stand still. As this documentation is presented in the form of an e-book we will be able to add more approaches in the course of time; change descriptions, and add relevant materials that will be developed by the teachers themselves, such as model lessons.

The project supervisory committee will keep overseeing the materials to be included. All materials will be accessible on a new upcoming website of the project to be developed in the course of 2021.

Meanwhile this documentation of methods obliges us as educators and teachers to think well about the logic of the project objectives and activities. It is actually AEI's plan to invite university departments and seminaries to give their comments on the methods and see whether they have a wider applicability beyond the project schools in for instance teacher education.

Classification

The documented methods follow the following classification:

- Reflection, discussion and communication about living together, including AEI's home-grown approach, Read, Reflect, Communicate and Act (RRCA)
- Collecting information in/about the community and environment
- Community building
- Advocacy within the community and toward international audiences
- Evaluation.

Each of the more than 30 chapters provides basic information about method or approach. All chapters contain sections about objectives and guidelines along with more optional categories such as lessons learnt, examples, and references. Several chapters give a summary of teacher manuals previously issued by AEI, as indicated in those chapters' reference section.

In general, the methods connect values and norms with real life experiences in Palestine. Many of the methods and approaches employ narrative as a means that is in-between an abstract normative approach and the lived reality of students.

This focus on connecting norms and values to real life is reflected in the *detailed overview of educational objectives in the frame below*. This overview shows the coherence and logic of the objectives as a whole. It has been harmonized with the stated objectives of each documented individual method or approach.

The first section in this overview, about values, is related to promoting a positive living together between adherents of the different religions in Palestinian society. The project emphasizes both respect for religious and in general cultural diversity and the awareness of commonalities across the religions.

For this last purpose we make use of the Palestinian-Arab concept of sumud or steadfastness. Sumud is a way of being strongly connected with the self, the other, and the surrounding environment as a necessary condition to become 'rooted' in one's country (even while it is occupied). Sumud as a concept is highly relevant to religious values in Islam and Christianity. In a separate syllabus to be developed in 2021 AEI will document educational experiences with regard to the content of the values such as sumud.

Besides community values, the project gives also emphasis on the values of personal development, such as fostering a good relation with the self and others.

Next to values, the objectives include learning about religions in Palestine and their contexts and practices. From the very start, the project has focused more on knowing and respecting religious practices rather than discussing the fundamental tenets of the religions so as to avoid unproductive discussions about dogmas – though respect for each other's dogmas as such is critically important in the project.

Broader learning objectives include the students' general learning skills, skills of cross-curricular learning (like applying arts or doing advocacy in the community) and what is often not regarded as an educational process but which is actually highly supportive to a productive learning climate: the very joy of community building.

This syllabus reflects much work done over the years. Aid agencies are essential to that. The following development organizations and their representatives are making these years the project possible: CAFOD, Kindermissionswerk, Misereor, Missio Aachen, Solidariteitsfonds, and Friends of Young Bethlehem. We deeply appreciate their friendship and support.

AEI's team involved in the project documentation includes: Mr Fuad Giacaman (co-president), Mr Elias Abu Akleh (co-president), Mrs Rania Murra (director), Dr Toine van Teeffelen (adviser), and Mr Roger Salameh (project coordinator).

It has been supervised by the following committees:

- Bethlehem committee: Mrs. Nisreen 'Amru (District Ministry of Education Director), Mr. Walid Radwan, Mr Sheikh 'Umar Ghnaim, Mr. Fayez J'ara, along with Mr. Fuad Giacaman and Mrs. Rania Murra.
- Ramallah committee: Mr Bassim 'Irikat (District Ministry of Education Director), Mrs. Hania Nazzal, Mr Fayez Radi, Mr. Ismail Issa, along with Mr. Fuad Giacaman.

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Project Objectives: The Learning Areas

Values: Community orientation

Sumud

- Understanding the concept of sumud
- Strengthening connection to the land
- Strengthening connection to the community
- Enacting positive citizenship/religious values in dealing with conflicts and crises
- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Looking at one's environment – people, objects, and scenes - in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Developing personal relationships with holy places

Diversity

- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Showing appreciation and respect of holy sites associated with different religions

Voluntarism

- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism

Values: Personal or personality development

Relationship with others

- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Taking care of others, the neighbor
- Being open to contacts with youths from different schools and regions
- Nurturing hope in a better common future

Relationship with the self: Self-knowledge and awareness

- Understanding life values
- Developing and reflecting upon a personal mission (a “voice” or “vocation”) in life
- Being able to communicate and find ways of applying one's mission
- Applying expressions of wisdom to one's attitudes and actions

Knowledge

Religion and culture

- Understanding meanings of religion in daily life
- Knowing about religious and cultural sources of inspiration

- Knowing about one's own and the other's religious sites
- Knowing about mutual Moslem and Christian feasts and customs
- Knowing about popular and religious choir music

Palestinian society

- Learning about the moral and practical choices faced by Palestinians on ongoing base
- Understanding different types of community-related conflicts and crises
- Coming to a deeper understanding of diversity in Palestinian society

Learning and methodological skills

- Critical and creative thinking

Focusing

- Warming up
- Reaching deep concentration
- Balancing feelings, reflection and communication

Methodology: doing research

- Learning about steps of doing a research
- Become aware of and defining community needs
- Developing intellectual curiosity
- Making a research plan
- Developing Internet search skills
- Doing interviews, developing a questionnaire

Methodology: Action into the society

- Learning about principles and steps of advocacy
- Developing innovative, 'fresh' approaches to advocating for solutions to societal problems.

Evaluation

- Assessing one's sumud level
- Comparing sumud levels (between different participants or over time among the same participants)

Communicative and action-oriented skills

Textual understanding

- Understanding brief texts (quote or brief story)
- Understanding a topic/theme and its various aspects
- Understanding stories

Writing skills

- Choosing a topic for writing
- Making a summary
- Writing a story

Interpersonal communication

- Listening
- Inquisitive questioning without judgment, interviewing
- Discussing moral and practical dilemmas

Communication Palestinian identity and culture (to locals, internationals)

- Speaking or writing about the culture of Moslem-Christian living together in/on the land
- Speaking or writing about daily life of Moslem and Christian Palestinians
- Making an exhibit about valuable objects, or photos of those objects, in the environment or in people's homes

Cooperation

- Working in a team
- Reaching consensus in a group
- Cooperating in a choir

Setting up advocacy action

- Planning an advocacy action
- Learning about relevant stakeholders; informing them and encouraging them to become supporters of the advocacy
- Effectively addressing decision-makers
- Practicing local advocacy for sumud and inter-religious peace within and beyond local communities.
- Presenting oneself in media and social media
- Summarizing a mission in a campaign or advocacy activity
- Making a point of advocacy that is interesting and attractive for a wider audience

Artistic and photography skills

- Learning drama skills in a real life context
- Developing drama skills for expressing moral dilemmas
- Developing skills of photography and making photo exhibits.

Joy and community-building

- Enjoying an outdoor activity in a relaxed setting
- Helping to enhance the community atmosphere at school
- Creating a sense of pride and joy about the cultural and religious identity and environment.

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A. Reflection, discussion and communication: RRCA

RRCA: Read, Reflect, Communicate and Act

The steps in brief:

1. *Read*: Input (prompt) of a brief wisdom story/quote, with or without visuals such as photo(s) or brief video; participants reading and understanding the input.
2. *Reflect*: reflecting in silence on quote or story.
3. *Communicate*: Participants telling each other their own stories inspired by the input quote/story.
4. *Acting* out insights acquired in the previous stages.

Objectives

- Balancing feelings, reflection and communication
- Understanding brief texts (quote or brief story)
- Knowing about religious and cultural sources of inspiration
- Applying expressions of wisdom to one's attitudes and actions
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Critical and creative thinking
- Listening
- Reaching consensus in a group
- Working together
- Planning an action
- Enhancing the community atmosphere at school
- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism

Guidelines

1. *Setting and materials/equipment*: Help prepare and arrange the setting, including tables and chairs, equipment and materials. Try to enhance the atmosphere with some nourishers: a cosy room, not too large or small; friendly elements (flowers, tapistry, a candle).
2. *Prepare for the subject*: explain the quote/story in different ways; keep additional quotes or supportive visuals as different input in hand.
3. *During the exchange: make space for all*: Create an atmosphere of respect, give sufficient time for speaking, encourage listening, keep standards of fairness – do

not favor some over others. Instructors should not talk a lot but keep focus on the group needs and give space to all.

4. *During the exchange: develop good energy among the participants:* Find common ground but allow for a diversity of stories.
5. *Build up a group memory:* make a library of quotes and actions; keep brief notes of previous meetings and evaluations; celebrate achievements.

The following chapters specify the four RRCA steps but can also be applied individually.

Reference

RRCA is a home-grown method or approach at AEI. A teacher manual is available.



Reading or watching a prompt

The session starts with a brief reading or visual prompt or “input” - a quote, series of quotes, brief story, possibly visuals like a photo, slide show or brief video.

A main reason why RRCA is helpful for the Citizenship and Diversity: Moslem-Christian Living Together project is that holy texts – or interpretations of holy texts – often include phrases of wisdom about how people should relate to each other.

Objectives

- Understanding brief texts (quote or brief story)
- Knowing about religious and cultural sources of inspiration
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Applying expressions of wisdom to one’s attitudes and actions
- Critical thinking

Guidelines

The prompt or “input” should be brief. It should not be difficult to understand. Preferably, it should carry a focused message about how people should deal with each other in a human way, and with those who are different.

The quote or story should be well-presented, perhaps in a poetic style, with the use of strong imagery in the text or visuals. A simple - also humorous - story from daily life can be powerful.

An important decision is whether the input should be discussed by or sent in advance to the group members. This last option allows for more preparatory thinking. Yet the input can also be kept away from the group until the moment of the session itself. In the last case, the “surprise” effect will be stronger.

The facilitator’s tasks include:

1. *In advance, optional*
 - Choosing the input in cooperation with the group, or members in the group; for instance at the end of a previous session
 - Sending the input in advance, through social media for instance
 - Keeping additional quotes/stories in reserve
 - Creating supportive visuals/sounds
2. *During the sessions*

- If needed: Explaining the different or deeper meanings of a quote or story or visual
- If needed: Translating a text
- Explaining how the input can relate to stories of life or difficult situations faced by the participants.

3. *Afterwards*

- Keeping a library of quotes or other input.

Examples

The quotes can cover many themes of living together and treating each other well. Wisdom quotes often share an element of “giving”. The struggle of daily life is to some extent governed by competitions, jealousies, clinging to status, power and possession. Many wisdom insights start from the opposite angle. Sharing one’s possessions, time, food, space, energy, friendship and understanding gives priority to the giving principle rather than the taking or keeping practices. A practice of giving helps to develop civic values and respect for each other.

Possible quotes/stories about how people should deal with each other:

- wisdom quote
- literary quote
- brief life narrative of famous or ordinary persons
- religious story, parable
- proverb
- a (news) piece of surprising information
- photos with stories/comments/subtitles
- video fragment or slides

Variation

The forms in which the input is presented may vary. A text can be presented in a visually attractive way by changing colors, fonts, sizes and background or frame.

Although we use the word “reading” for this stage, it is also possible, as mentioned, to work with visuals. An Instagram or Facebook photo – or a series of photos about a common theme - can be poetic, revealing, and changing routine thinking. In its turn, a photo can be supported by a quote or story.

Lessons learnt

It is best to use positive phrases. In general, our experience tells that in the Palestinian context expressions which bring out the best of people’s *sumud* or

steadfastness/resilience are most appealing, inspiring or challenging. The quotes should encourage people to take up responsibility and direction in their lives.

Reflection

The next step of the RRCA approach is reflection. By itself reflection of course happens all the time, also during the other steps, but this particular step requires a moment of deep silence.

Objectives

- Balancing feelings, reflection and communication
- Gaining deep knowledge of religious and cultural sources of inspiration

Silent reflection closes off the previous stage of understanding the input and probes deeper into the quote's meaning in relation to one's life as a whole or the situations faced in daily life.

Guidelines

With a view on these objectives, the facilitator may take the following guidelines into account:

1. Before the moment of reflection, offer a relevant question: Are you inspired by the quote? Do you feel it is applicable to your life?
2. Take care to keep away disruptive noises.
3. Call for a silence of minimally 1 minute. To stay silent is a learning process. Try to guide the participants over various sessions to reach a deeper, more reflective silence.
4. Do not show irritation when there is no silence. Any disciplining should be gentle.
5. Close the silence by saying something in a soft voice. Do not disrupt the silence violently.

Variation

Silent reflection can also be practised during the communication stage. There it can serve the tasks of calming emotions, getting the participants focused again, or developing new thoughts.

Lesson learnt

Previous participants said that the silent moment helped them to become emotionally quiet, gain a sense of inner peace and freedom, and become less impulsive.



Communication: the group dialogue

The reflection stage is a silent ritual which introduces the communication stage in the group.

The communication exchange is a *dialogue* in which speakers should receive space to communicate their stories. All are required to listen attentively, with empathy and respect.

Objectives

- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Critical and creative thinking
- Listening
- Enhancing the community atmosphere at school

Guidelines

The facilitator or the group can decide to focus on certain situations in daily life in the community, at home or in school.

The facilitator can further explain:

- The overall rules: not disrupting the communication by walking in and out of the room except when really needed, putting mobiles off.
- The general principles of communication: attentive listening and speaking; no interruption except by the facilitator when there is need; no judging or commenting upon others' stories but trying to understand them and asking for clarification if needed.

It is the facilitator's task to ensure that each participant has sufficient time to tell and explain their stories, and create an engaging atmosphere to react upon each other's stories. The facilitator may decide for a "time out" when communication does not function well, such as when somebody is mocked.

It can be difficult to tell one's story, especially when it is really personal and when one shows vulnerability. It will then be appreciated when participants or the facilitator say "thank you" when a personal story is told.

After all stories have been told, the group may look for parallels between stories.

Variation

In order to keep the process of storytelling flowing, the facilitator can decide to insert a new quote/input story.

See the Socratic dialogue for another example of focused group communication.



Action

The facilitator should look whether the group is motivated to find any follow-up to the discussion, such as in the family, school or community.

Objectives

- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Reaching consensus in a group
- Working together
- Planning an action
- Enhancing the community atmosphere at school
- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism

Guidelines

In general, it is important that the group members agree about a certain action.

If a joint action is chosen, it should be decided who will be involved and which tasks are done.

The following types of actions have previously been applied in RRCA exercises:

1. Participants apply a certain action in their own individual (or family) life. The action is not defined in any specific way. For instance, when the theme of the session is about “giving”, the giving can relate to many types of behaviour – such as giving a listening ear to somebody.
2. The group can together decide to organize a civic action within the community. An idea comes up, participants get inspired, and want go for it.
3. Participants express the quotes, stories, or pieces of wisdom in a joint activity like drama or still image.

Examples

Both Islam and Christianity value giving, sharing and community building. Here are examples of civic actions:

- Visiting the needy or elderly; the group decides to visit a house for the elderly and bring gifts.
- Inviting somebody from another religion to share in a religious celebration.

- Making a gift for a different cultural or religious group at a special religious feast day or occasion
- Visiting members of a special cultural or religious group (like the Samaritans)
- Organizing a public activity against corruption
- Participation in a clean-up day
- Doing voluntary work during the holiday period
- Starting a campaign against violence at school
- Organizing a lecture against sexual harassment of women and girls
- A joint moment of silence commemorating certain people.

A seemingly small act such as a prayer may be considered an action too.

The advocacy section contains further examples of joint action in the community.

Important is that those members who individually or together participate in an action, tell in the next session what they did. This will foster a sense of agency and achievement. It is also helpful in the long run to keep a 'library' of actions done, small or larger.

Reference

AEI has developed a manual about RRCA, available for use.

B. Reflection, discussion and communication: other methods

Story writing

Stories involve a communicative act between a story teller (writer, filmer etc.) and a listener or reader (viewer, listener). Stories communicate events and usually relate also the evaluations and feelings of the storyteller or the characters in a story when undergoing the events. The skill of communicating a story well is important to any relation in life. It is also important in the communication of (inter-)religious values since such values are often told through stories, both in the holy books and in daily life.

Objectives

- Understanding a topic/theme and its various aspects
- Understanding stories
- Choosing a topic for writing
- Making a summary
- Writing a story
- Story writing about the culture of Moslem-Christian living together in/on the land
- Story writing about daily life of Moslem and Christian Palestinians

Guidelines

Here are a number of steps for story writing about values. They are certainly not set in stone; you may pick out the ones most relevant for the purpose at hand.

1. To start brainstorming about a possible value-related story, it is helpful for the students' orientation to first choose a general value-related theme, for instance: 'real generosity' or 'neighbors which help each other'. Such themes can be formulated during a brainstorming discussion.
2. Youths may then write about concrete and memorable issues/events/things/persons related to the theme.
3. The story may 'look' at an event through someone's eyes, to create a new perspective.
4. A good way to write a story about common values is to focus on daily life, of oneself, family, friends or others in the community.
5. Many good stories contain suspense, tension and conflict.
6. Students can write brief notes about the story, or key words. This helps to overcome "staring at a blank page." They may write words/notes about the

time/place of the story, those involved in the story, the value at stake, whether there is a solution, does the story have a point or message? In a next step, notes can be made to summarize a paragraph.

7. Then the full story can be written down.

Details are important

When writing, it is helpful for readers to learn about details, even when they at first sight look not important to the topic. It is often the details of a story that stick in the readers' mind. Without details, a story is without blood. It will miss uniqueness and interest. A well-chosen detail helps to create atmosphere and suspense. The more details, the easier it is for readers to close their eyes and to imagine the situation. Details give a story "truthfulness."

Also, details can unexpectedly bring out the larger picture. Details can say a lot about an event or person who is central in the story.

What kind of details can you give? They can relate to:

- persons (face, attitude, gestures, behaviour)
- events (what is happening exactly)
- places (colours, characteristics of the natural environment, buildings)
- senses (smells, sounds, sights, taste)
- feelings (different types of feelings and images which express feelings). Writing about feelings can create empathy (or repulsion). Examples of feelings:
 - *Fear* and *despair* in the case of vulnerability, helplessness, lack of power, abandonment, lack of choice, lack of knowledge what to do
 - *Resignation* when things cannot be changed or when they are seen as a result of unchangeable fate, nature, or culture
 - *Admiration*, such as when the story is about a hero.
 - *Consolation* when for instance one's religion provides comfort and possible hope for change or a redress of wrongs
 - *Anger* or *inner strength* when trying to have the perpetrator punished or to change the situation, alone or with others.

Lessons learnt

Some stories may be about taboo themes, or may create issues between persons, and even lead to scandals. A good dialogue and leadership by teacher or facilitator is then essential.

Stories about one's life

This is about a particular *kind* of story. A story about one's life can be about a particular day, like in a diary, or about one's life as a whole, or about a particular value-related theme which comes up in a life (in one's religion, education, family etc.)

Objectives

- Understanding a topic/theme and its various aspects
- Understanding stories
- Choosing a topic for writing
- Making a summary
- Writing a story
- Understanding life values
- Developing and reflecting upon a personal mission (a "voice" or "vocation") in life

Guidelines

What made you into the person you are

- Students writing something about the history of their family, especially insofar as that history made one into the person one is. From which area/background does the family come, did they migrate to their present home, and if so, why? Were they economically weak or better-off, and how did that influence the youth?
- Do students find a theme (or themes, or a central value) in their lives, even a kind of passion or mission - something they absolutely want to do in the rest of your life? Is it part of their personality, or have they been influenced by parents, family, and friends, or because of special encounters?
- Students may describe, in some detail, a momentous occasion in life, which much influenced them.

Present life

The story can tell about the life of a person viewed within different social circles:

- Family life
- School
- Friendship
- Neighbors
- Community
- Nation
- Global/the world

The future

- How do students look at the future? What does it have in store for them? (Work, study, relationships, technologies, traveling and migration...)

How to get ideas for a story about one's life

- Look at life as if it is a traveling journey, with a destination, a main road, by-pass roads, checkpoints and obstacles. Or one may use a different image which students think is appropriate (your life as if you are a bird...)
- Keep a journal. Journals are about daily life. However, that does not mean that a journal should be about everything that happens each day. Students may have a journal about one particular subject as is the case in a
 - Travel journal
 - Dream journal
 - Crisis journal (about the coronavirus crisis, for instance)
 - Occupation journal
 - Nature journal
 - Family journal

Variation

Not all stories need to be fully rounded off. Due to limited time available, it is often advisable to have students writing a brief narrative which does not necessarily have a clear plot or a beginning, middle and end. Such narratives, which also bring out feelings and values, can be prompted in various ways. Here are examples of prompts for stories about one's own life:

- Describe a very important (sad, happy) event.
- Continue a story which starts like this: "I had never been so shocked as at the moment when...."
- Imagine that the writer comes from Mars and lands on Earth. What would the Martian say about Palestine? Enter one's home place as if you don't know anything about it.
- Write a narrative about the place one likes most and the place you dislike most.
- Imagine that one is a hero/heroine straight from a fairy tale or a traditional story: Little Red Riding Hood, Pinocchio, Juha and his donkey...
- Close one's eyes and writing about one's biggest dream or biggest nightmare in the future.
- Choose to become an animal for one day. Tell a story about oneself as an animal.
- Think and write about symbols of freedom: balloon, kite, a bird flying away, flag, sea, the view on top of a hill, walking, running, dreaming....

It is also possible to use stories about oneself for *follow-up activities*.

- Photos: a photo album to illustrate a diary or life story

- Websites where one can upload a blog
- Public reading from blogs or diaries, during an occasion for instance
- A drama based on diaries, for instance diaries from a whole class
- Video diary (vlog)

Examples

Here are examples of value-related topics collected from earlier diaries made by Palestinian students:

- Impact of occupation, siege and curfews
- Moments of fear
- Coping with loss
- Special days
- Studying
- Living together (boys-girls, parents-children, Moslem-Christian, dealing with the poor, with neighbours)
- Escape from pressure: Customs, music, holiday traveling, funny hobby.

The following topics are especially relevant for a religious education lesson:

Purpose and faith, how to go on

Hope and despair. Wishes, dreams and prayers, thoughts about a future job, staying or leaving the country. What are your choices in life and how are you guided by searching for values? Do you feel confident? How does God intervene to help in moments of despair? How can you change routines to feel better so as to keep going on? Looking back and looking in the future.

Thinking about the other and the self

Reflections about hate and forgiveness. How to keep dignity and morality. Dreaming about peace.

Reference

Some examples in this section are taken from a diary writing project during the second Intifada at St Joseph School for Girls in Bethlehem.

The Wall Cannot Stop Our Stories: A Palestinian Diary Project, by Susan Atallah, with separate teacher manual developed by Toine van Teeffelen with Susan Atallah.

Moral dilemma

The Citizenship and Diversity project has much experience with the moral dilemma method. The method relates to investigating and discussing the moral aspects of a fundamental choice in a situation or even in a life.

Objectives

- Critical thinking
- Learning about the moral and practical choices faced by Palestinians on ongoing base
- Understanding different types of community-related conflicts and crises
- Understanding life values
- Discussing moral and practical dilemmas
- Developing drama skills for expressing moral dilemmas

Guidelines

Here are the main steps and some possible variations of the method:

1. Reading a story of present-day Palestinian life, or of history and heritage in which a value dilemma is described. Students can collect stories or write a real story from their own life in which they confront the difficult moment of a moral choice. For instance, is it possible to be generous in a particular situation?
2. Encouraging discussion about the value dilemma the story exposes. There are various techniques to encourage discussion. It is possible to read a certain story until the moment of the difficult choice, then to ask the students to give their opinion about what the character should do.
3. The most difficult question: What are exactly the values at stake? Can the values be reconciled? Are there only two options (a dilemma) or are there more?

Drama variations

- One student can sit in the *hot seat* in front of the class and be interrogated by the other students. The advantages of such form of drama is that students gain a much deeper and livelier awareness of the dilemma than when they deal with it in a purely cognitive method of learning.

- Students can write down, in a *monologue interieur*, the contradictory thoughts that pass the person's mind just before the moment of decision.
- *Tunnel of thoughts*: Students can form two lines of persons around the person/student who faces the dilemma. One line shouts out one type of argument, the other line an opposing argument.
- By playing the *devil's advocate* the teacher (or a student) can take the role of provoking the class by taking an unpopular or unexpected viewpoint. By prompting questions the teacher (or students) keep(s) on questioning and probing others so as to deepen their answers.

Examples

A present-day moral dilemma: Knock on the door.

A moral dilemma in today's life can be designed around a visitor (or a group of visitors, a family) who knock on the door in order to ask for accommodation, a meal, support in repairing a car, and so on. It is important to formulate the dilemma in such a way that it is not easy to choose between one alternative or another. The visitors may look dirty, it may be difficult to judge whether they are possibly thieves, how long they are expected to stay, and so on.

Another example of a moral dilemma about mutual support: You can ask students: What would you do when you win the lotto, and you are pressured to support beneficial activities for the community to the point that you would have only little money left for yourself? Would you give or not?

Imagine that a student in your class asks you and your family to give some money. The person needs it in order to be able to wear good clothes at the upcoming *tawjihi* celebration. It would be shameful not to wear suitable clothes at such an important occasion.

Reference

AEI developed a manual about moral dilemmas which is available for use.

The Socratic method

Socrates was a famous Greek philosopher known for his perceptive dialogues with pupils.

Objectives

- Critical thinking
- Listening without judgment
- Open and inquisitive questioning
- Deeper understanding of topic
- Discussing moral and practical dilemmas
- Reaching consensus in a group

Guidelines

Props needed:

- A large paper for writing down shared ideas
- Small post-it notes for writing down individual ideas
- Pencils.

It helps when the group members are sitting in a circle, to be physically aware of the connections and equality between them.

The method starts with a main question. Examples:

- What does living together mean to you?
- What does Moslem-Christian living together mean to you?
- What does citizenship and respect for diversity mean to you?

The Socratic method follows four steps. The conversation leader should make sure they are separated carefully.

1. Write down all ideas of the participants when reflecting upon the question proposed.
2. Read some of these ideas aloud and encourage the participants to ask each other questions about the ideas in an open way, without judgment.

Good questions:

- What does that mean for you?
- Can you give an example?
- Can you describe it more in detail?
- Could you describe a situation for me?

The leader of the conversation writes down all further information presented in this second step.

3. Discussion. Reaction on the information presented in step 2.
4. Reach consensus about the definitions of key terms. On what definitions do we all agree? Only when all agree, the leader of the conversation will write the definitions on a consensus flipover paper.

Lessons learnt

A stern moderator is needed to make the method successful.

Once an AEI group of teachers worked on the question: What does occupation mean to you? Although the teachers were eager to learn, it seemed that especially the second step was hard for some. The question released so many frustrations, ideas and stories, that it seemed hard to stick to only asking in step 2, and suspend opinions. It was therefore concluded in the evaluation that the main question needed more focus.

Reference

AEI's interest into the Socratic dialogue model was raised by a Dutch religious education teacher, Annelieke Dortant, who volunteered some weeks at AEI during spring 2015.

Drama in education

When hearing about 'drama' in education we may think about full-fledged theatre whereby students learn a script by heart, with precise instructions as to movement and arrangements on the stage, and so on. However, especially since drama is not part of traditional Arab culture and therefore not so familiar to students like for instance story-telling, there need to be ways in which drama is introduced in a simple manner, not time-consuming and not requiring students to be real acting talents.

Indeed, this is quite possible. The work forms here listed below often relate only to a fragment or aspect of the story, not to the whole of it. Especially the dramatic climax of a story, when a crisis or a problem most clearly comes out in the open, is a useful moment for doing a drama exercise.

Objectives

- Critical and creative thinking
- Deeper understanding of topic
- Discussing moral and practical dilemmas
- Learning basic drama skills in a real life context.

Guidelines

Preparation

Mime. As a way of preparing students for drama exercises you may ask them to mime a character. The high-handedness of a king can be mimed by his gestures and walk.

Metamorphosis. This applies to the quick change from one movement into another, or the change from one role into another. For instance, when the story involves animals, you may ask the children to mime a cat, and after giving a stop sign, to mime a mouse. This helps students to come in the mood of doing drama.

Guessing game. This is a game whereby an animal, a profession or an action is played or mimed, and whereby others have to guess what is expressed. For instance, everybody draws a paper on which a profession is written (or an animal, or an action). The professions are simultaneously played. This again helps students to come in the mood of doing drama.

Getting into the story

Slow motion. You may ask students to express a particular moment of the story in slow motion movements. This is a mime in which the movements are acted out in a slow pace. Slow motion is useful to concentrate attention to the execution of a particular movement. The technique is sometimes used to show movements which normally are very fast such as during a quarrel.

Still image. Some students use their bodies to express a key moment or a special idea of the story. A still image is like a photo composed of human bodies. Students imagine that they are molding a sculpture. Note that the students have to collaborate closely in deciding about the general idea and the details of the image. Usually a still image marks the key point of tension in a story. A still image of a scene full of movement can be spectacular. Is the intention behind the still image clear enough? Is the still image interesting to look at?

Teacher-in-role. The teacher adopts one of the roles in the story in order to build up tension, to develop ideas, to show viewpoints. The teacher-in-role can ask questions to the children.

Discussing the story

Tunnel of thoughts. At the climax of the story, when the main character is confronted by a difficult dilemma, you may ask students to form two parallel rows. A student, or the teacher-in-role, walks through the 'tunnel', and when passing the students, they tell him or her ideas, thoughts, advice.

Character in the hot seat. In this work form a student takes on the role of a character in the story and is asked to sit in the chair in front of the class. The other children are going to ask him questions.

Cloak of the expert. One of the best techniques for involving children in a story is to ask them for advice in helping to solve a problem which the story poses. There are many ways to give a class of children the cloak of the expert or adviser. You may ask them to imagine themselves as a group of ministers, a parliament, a representative body of citizens, a group of professional workers, the board of a company and so on.

Variation

Students can play drama outdoors – see the next chapter - even in front of the separation wall.

Reference

This section benefited from a draft drama manual for the project developed by a German volunteer, David Clement, in 2010: "Drama in interreligious education as a method of learning: Theoretical background and practical activities."

Various examples in this section are adapted from: 1999/2010 *The Feast of Telling Stories: Teacher Manual for the use of storytelling in the Palestinian class*. Toine van Teeffelen, Theatre Day Productions, Jerusalem. 2 editions.



Outdoor drama

An underused method in Palestinian education is outdoor art. The Palestinian heritage features several forms of outdoor events or performances that are in themselves quite dramatic in nature.

Many places are associated with religious and historical events. Stories about such places can be performed or told at the site, with the help of simple props.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Learning basic drama skills in a real life context
- Showing the culture of Moslem-Christian living together in/on the land
- Knowing about one's own and the other's religious sites
- Knowing about religious and cultural sources of inspiration
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Showing appreciation and respect of holy sites associated with different religions
- Looking at one's environment – people, objects, and scenes - in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Enjoying an outdoor activity in a relaxed setting

Guidelines

1. Have students interviewing elder community members, the local sheikh or priest, to gain information about religious and daily life practices relevant to the drama.
2. Choose with the students between storytelling and drama.
3. Choose the setting. Best is to have a setting which connects to the topic of the drama or story. It can be an archeological place but also a courtyard, or under the trees. Note that a natural environment, like trees or a cave, allows the subtle use of light and sound as dramatic elements during the morning or late afternoon. In some places, such as Hisham's Palace and Mount Gerizim/Samaritan Museum, there are stages which students can use.
4. Choose props, including clothes. Palestinian girls may wear traditional dresses with Palestinian embroidery.
5. The drama can be short and simple, as long as it is meaningful. The drama can for instance highlight a certain cultural custom from the past. It can be moving (march or procession) or set in one place.

6. Prepare and implement the drama together with the students, in front of an audience (which may include passers by or locals).
7. See the chapter about the inter-religious fieldtrip for practicalities.

Examples

Palestine used to have and still has processions during which persons implore God or local saints for help. A saint's or holy person's feastday is a day often chosen for a procession or other ritual.

Many elderly people still know religious stories related to wells, or they know stories which used to be told among women when fetching water from the local well.

The Syriac Hosh in the heart of Bethlehem near Matbaseh Street, has a wondrous architecture and design. The old buildings, arches and staircases, despite some negligence and delapidation, appear to have great potential as setting for a drama during the day or in the early evening hours. Other cities have similar courtyards.

Also notice the potential educational value of caves. Many caves in the Bethlehem area have a special religious meaning, including the Nativity Grotto, the Milk Grotto, and the Grotto in the Shepherd's Fields. It is possible to use a grotto as a setting for some simple form of drama. Some schools in the Bethlehem area have already used a grotto at the Shepherds Fields as setting for a Nativity play.

There are several traditional sites associated with story-telling or the performance of poems and songs. Storytelling used to occur near other places where women and men traditionally gathered, such as the well, the bread oven (taboun), or the olive press. In the village guesthouse stories were told in the diwan. When women worked in preparing food or doing some traditional handicraft, they sat in front of their houses in the courtyard (hosh) and told each other the events of the days as well as the stories they heard. A story-telling session may gain in atmosphere and dramatic quality when performed at such places.

In the old times, after the harvest of grapes in the field, family members flocked together in front of the castle (qasr), enjoying dinner and telling stories around the campfire.

As part of the setting, women may whistle, clap, gesture, and ululate, as is customary during Palestinian weddings and other happy feasts. They can communicate Palestinian culture through poetry and songs—national, religious, didactic, and folkloric.

Vow-making

Choose a holy place, Islamic or Christian, in your environment and study the traditional practice of making a vow. You may think about religious places like the Church of Nativity and Milk Grotto in Bethlehem, Ibrahimi Mosque and Nabi Yakeen (near Bani Naim) in the Hebron area, shrines of Al-Khader or St Elias, or local shrines of welis in the village. Think of the following questions:

- To whom are (were) prayers directed?
- What kind of prayers are (were) pronounced?
- What kind of offerings (gifts) are traditionally extended to the holy person?
- At which place in the shrine exactly are (were) the offerings made, and why?
- What are (were) the blessings people ask(ed) for?
- Are (Were) there special types of wishes which the holy person is known to fulfill?
- Are (Were) there any other special customs practiced?

Retreat

A retreat or *retraite* (French) is a spiritual withdrawal individually or as a group with the aim to reflect from a (inter-)religious perspective upon life's past, present and future.

Objectives

- Reaching deep concentration
- Balancing feelings, reflection and communication
- Understanding life values
- Developing and reflecting upon a personal mission (a "voice" or "vocation") in life
- Discussing moral and practical dilemmas
- Listening
- Inquisitive questioning without judgment

Guidelines

Retreats can be conducted in many forms. It would not be right to give it a particular content or form in advance. Much depends on the group involved, its history and practices. Here are some options:

Reflection on life

- Participants telling something about the history of their families, especially insofar as that history to some extent made one into the person one is. From which area/background do family members come, did they migrate to one's present home, and if so, why? Were they economically weak or better-off, how were they affected by disaster, wars and revolutions, and how did that influence the person?
- Participants may describe, in some detail, momentous occasions in their lives. It doesn't need to be a formal occasion but can also be an encounter with a person important for somebody.
- They may look at life as if it is a traveling journey, with a destination, a main road, by-pass roads, checkpoints and obstacles. Or participants may use another image or metaphor thought to be appropriate; life as if one is a bird, for instance.

A dream of the future

The participants are asked to imagine a future. Such a vision can be related to oneself, to one's community, or to the world. The dream can be good, bad or a mixture. The dream may help to deepen the meaning of the life story.

Making a wish

After the dream, do a wish, alone or in groups. The wish may be for yourself, your family, school, community, or the world. Make the wish short and to the point. You may

also express the wish in the form of a poem, a quotation or a drawing (with a title or subscript).

Singing

Singing is an excellent way to experience what women at AEI have called “refreshing the soul,” “bringing joy to the heart,” or “expressing love poetry,” all of which come from deep inside the body and soul.

Variation

Together with local and international partners, including Pax Christi, AEI held over many years wishmaking campaigns. Each year around Christmas many hundreds of wishes and prayers used to be digitally sent from all over the world to Bethlehem. The wishes and prayers were printed out and shared among Christians and Moslems, raising the hope for a future different from the present imprisonment of town and country.

C. Collecting information in/about the community and environment

Fieldtrip

Not many Palestinian schools offer fieldtrips due to safety concerns, curriculum constraints and funding issues. If an excursion goes to a religious site, the focus is usually on one religion. It is AEI's experience that few students and teachers who come for the first time in the project have ever joined an inter-religious fieldtrip before.

Inter-religious fieldtrips have in our approach two characteristics: (a) both Moslem and Christian students join, possibly from different schools; (b) the fieldtrip goes to Christian and Moslem places (or to sites for the Samaritan community near Nablous), either during one fieldtrip or over the course of several fieldtrips.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Knowing about one's own and the other's religious sites
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Showing appreciation and respect of holy sites associated with different religions
- Looking at one's environment – people, objects, and scenes - in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Enjoying an outdoor activity in a relaxed setting
- Being open to contacts with youths from different schools and regions

Guidelines

Here are a number of key issues to be taken care of in advance.

Choice of route

Fieldtrips can lead to a single major site or a series of sites close to each other.

Think of:

- choice of sites: why are they interesting/relevant, in view of the objectives
- views of sites vs access to sites
- choice of beginning, middle and final point of journey
- length of route in relation to time schedule

Educational focus and organization

- thematic educational focus of fieldtrip
- which observation/recording tasks for students
- educational or awareness raising methods or strategies (game, discovery activity etc.)
- preparation (warming-up, information about subject and sites, making students co-responsible for management of fieldtrip)

- monitoring during the fieldtrip (learning processes and monitoring behaviour of students)
- evaluation during and afterwards (in the bus for instance).

Practical issues:

- schedule (balance between activities and relaxation, programme not too tight)
- teacher-student ratio
- budget needed and budget available
- safety issues, public health, insurance
- transport arrangements
- expected weather
- foods and drinks
- types of clothes (good shoes, hat/cap against the sun)
- access to sites (phone in advance, such as the Samaritan community on Mt Gerizim)
- availability of guide
- means of recording (notetaking, video, camera, audio)
- notebooks
- first aid pack
- involvement parents.

Fieldtrips and corona

During corona times special care should be taken of social distancing in the bus (not more than 30 passengers in a bus of 50) and on the sites themselves. Availability of facemasks and hygiene/disinfectants should be organized, and monitors instructed.

Variation

Fieldtrips give an opportunity to an interreligious school choir or drama group to perform. In some places, such as Hisham's Palace and Mount Gerizim/Samaritan Museum, there are stages which students and choir can use.

Examples

Unfortunately, the major sites in Jerusalem such as the Al Aqsa Mosque-Dome of the Rock and the Church of Holy Sepulchre are presently out of reach for students from the West Bank and Gaza.

For many students, the Baptismal site in the Jordan river is interesting as a new experience as until some years ago it was closed by the Israeli army.

Also, Mt Gerizim where the Samaritan community live is a popular destination. The Samaritans in Nablous area are difficult to categorize theologically. Some say they are Jews but in fact they are not. They are interesting as a special case of monotheism.

Other practical options in the West Bank include Hebron (Ibrahimi mosque, Russian church) and Bethlehem (Church of Nativity, Mosque of 'Omar).

In dealing with the theme of "the spiritual meaning of water through the ages" you may visit at the same time a spring in he villages of Artas or Battir, the Solomon Pools, canals leading to the Pools, and the agricultural section of the Artas Monastery. Similar such journeys around the theme of water are possible to organize in other West Bank regions.

The Monastery of St George of Choziba and Nabi Musa (the tomb of the prophet Moses) are located close to the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Both feature a pristine beauty due to their location in the rough desert.

Possible workforms there include:

- Comparing a day in the life of an ancient monk at a desert monastery and a darwish at Nabi Musa
- Dramatizing the ancient Nabi Musa festival, with storytelling and dancing, and pilgrimage
- Dramatizing an ancient Christian desert meditation journey
- Storytelling about miracles by desert saints.

A cross-curricular activity: A wadi provides many learning opportunities: geology (different types of soil and stones), archeology (pre-historic people living in caves), biology (wildlife), and religious history (monasteries, hermits' lives).

References for further research

Bethlehem Community Book (in Arabic, publication AEI), Turathuna (Bethlehem University).



Research

Schools usually have detailed information about the needs of the local society. They have many opportunities to learn about approaches and solutions through the school's access to members of the school community: teachers, headmasters, students, parents and families. Research is a good way to start learning about a community's needs and possible solutions. It is especially helpful when Moslem and Christian members of the school community can join hands in looking for the needs and finding ways of improvement and action.

Objectives

- Learning about steps of doing a research
- Become aware of and defining community needs
- Developing intellectual curiosity
- Making a research plan
- Developing Internet search skills
- Doing interviews, developing a questionnaire
- Learning about the moral and practical choices faced by Palestinians on ongoing base
- Understanding different types of community-related conflicts and crises
- Coming to a deeper understanding of diversity in Palestinian society

Guidelines: Methods and techniques of doing research

In the context of their researches, the students can apply research methods in mainly three areas:

1. *Problem definition, mapping the issues and choosing a data analysis.*
Think about brainstorming, mapping the problem, defining the actors involved, dissecting the factors, seeing linkages, compare and contrast, developing hypotheses.
2. *Gathering data and opinions.*
Research can be done in teams.

The participants may apply qualitative and quantitative approaches, sometimes observational approaches, sometimes participative ones like fieldtrips, in addition to Internet research.

Researches can include *interviewing* persons such as authority bearers (mayors), specialists (religious leaders, NGO or media professionals and activists), school community members (parents).

Schools can also make use of the opportunity to set out *questionnaires* among the families of the students, assuming that parents are especially motivated to cooperate in a project of their children.

3. *Disseminating results.*

Schools have many ways and means to disseminate reports and also have access to traditional or modern media. Interesting is the so-called school morning broadcast, applied by many schools, when all students at school are brought together in the school court yard. At the beginning of the school day they are still attentive and 'fresh', and parents may be present as well. An oral reporting about the research, brief as it may be, reaches then out to many persons in the school community.

The documentation of the researches, including CDs with power points or photos, and writings and reports, should be taken care of.

Interviewing guidelines for students

1. Choose a general theme for the interview. Without a clear focus or theme, interviews can easily go astray.

2. It is advisable to do first background research. The Internet may provide a general overview of the topic.

3. It is important to think about which local residents are able to contribute firsthand knowledge on the topic: elderly people, family members, neighbors, public figures, professionals or experts. You may choose persons who have different viewpoints and perspectives.

4. Students can make an appointment for an interview. Older citizens may be invited to school. It sometimes happens that people need first to be convinced that they are able to offer something of value.

5. It is essential for an interview to let students develop a list of questions or topics based on the general theme. These questions or topics should serve as a guide rather than a fixed questionnaire. Rigid questioning will make the interviewee less relaxed and prepared for story-telling.

6. It may be helpful to practice interviewing between classmates so as to help students to become accustomed to the process, and to let them learn how to keep an interview focused.

7. You may give the interviewees a list of questions or topics in advance based on the general theme, or you may discuss the interview in a preparatory meeting.
8. During the interview, the interviewee should feel as comfortable as possible. The living room usually provides the best atmosphere. The seating arrangement in class should preferably be somewhat informal.
9. With many interviewees it is better not to ask too many questions, Just saying "mmm..." and supporting remarks are usually better to get subjects to talk at length in a relaxed way.
10. The students should use a mobile for recording or write down what is said during the interview in the form of brief notes or key words. Note that listening afterwards and typing out notes takes much time!
11. After the interviews, it is useful to provide some class time for exchanging experiences.
12. On the base of their notes or recording, the students can write down the main important elements of the interview in one or two pages.

Variation

The real life of Christians and Moslems in Palestine and various religious and cultural activities are interesting subjects for research.

For instance, weddings have been celebrated differently between Moslems and Christians due to different religious ceremonies and customs which may vary between villages, towns and regions. You may ask students to interview older members in their communities, especially grandparents, or older priests or imams, to learn about the various customs associated with a wedding:

- preparations of a wedding (use of henna for the bride, singles' party, haircutting ceremony)
- traditional customs during the wedding day itself (bride on horse, visit to the groom's parents' house, sword dance, ceremonial entrance into the new house, church celebration, feast, dancing, gifts, etc.)

When students, as individuals or in groups, tell about their experiences in front of the class, you may start a discussion about the reasons why in some places weddings used to be more elaborate than in other places, and about the meaning of special marriage customs.

Background: Overview of research methods and tools

Collecting information	Analysis	Presentation and dissemination
<p>Making action plan</p> <p>Interviewing citizens or authorities</p> <p>Documentation of interviews</p> <p>Questionnaires Prequestionnaire: Testing questions by arbiter or adviser.</p> <p>Collecting data, statistics Collecting stories Collecting quotes (“by the tongues of its citizens”)</p> <p>Internet research Reading studies, articles</p> <p>Observations, also by participation in activities Diary with observations Field visits</p>	<p>Brainstorming Formulating questions</p> <p>Mapping a (not yet well recognized) problem and associated needs Seeing differences and connections local and broader</p> <p>Hypothesis Compare/contrast</p> <p>Classifying and organizing materials Working with samples</p> <p>Interpretation: Debating, dialogue sessions, discussion</p> <p>Coming up with conclusions</p> <p>Using flipchart</p> <p>Hypothetical scenarios: What will happen after 10 years</p>	<p>School broadcast daily, sometimes with parents</p> <p>Carton posters, just brief so that people will read</p> <p>Media in school</p> <p>Thematic week</p> <p>Lecturing at schools</p> <p>Exchanging videos with other schools</p> <p>External media</p>

Lessons learnt

Schools can recruit technical advice about the subjects they choose and the methods and techniques of doing research. In Palestine as elsewhere, technical advisers and professionals will not directly ask for payment of a fee when approached by a class or group of students.

Reference

AEI published a research done by students from government schools in the Bethlehem countryside, about applying civic values in conflicts. The research is available for use.

Treasure hunt

There are many fictional treasure hunts narrated in Palestinian and Arab folklore. Think of stories about gold hidden in a cave.

What is a treasure hunt educationally speaking? Here we understand it, roughly, as the search for objects or pieces of information that are somehow precious, rare, or telling and informative about Christian-Moslem living together in Palestine.

An educational advantage of treasure hunts is that they encourage active, outdoor learning: students go out to search for information. Also, a treasure hunt brings in a game-like element which is educationally attractive. This element may be further exploited by giving prizes or points to those who succeed in finding desired items.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Understanding meanings of religion in daily life
- Knowing about religious and cultural sources of inspiration
- Knowing about one's own and the other's religious sites
- Knowing about mutual Moslem and Christian feasts and customs
- Making an exhibit about valuable objects, or photos of those objects, in the environment or in people's homes

Guidelines

How to set up a treasure hunt?

1. Choose an item which is not extremely rare or inaccessible yet which at the same time is not so obvious that the search will be easy. Students may collect old and recent pictures of objects which have a certain relation to Christian or Islamic culture, and look if they can borrow the objects for a few days from a family.
2. In case of transferable and inexpensive objects, ask the students to bring them to class for demonstration purposes. Make a joint exhibition in the classroom or at the school. Students can write down some information in order to make the objects or photos intelligible to others.
3. Ask students to compare the pictures or objects, so as to detect similarities and contrasts, especially in relation to Islamic and Christian culture.
4. Document the objects/photos for use later on.

Examples

Where are the treasures?

In the culture

- Personal documents: diaries, letters, photography related to religious persons
- Cultural items: religious poems, songs, stories, prayers
- Handicrafts

In the house

- Old objects preserved in an attic
- Books with old family photographs during religious ceremonies
- Traditional decorative objects with popular religious meanings (think about glass work, candles, Fatima's hands, icons of the Virgin Mary)
- Traditional architectural constructions in the house with a religious meaning (like a prayer niche)

In the community

- Old Moslem or Christian houses, their windows, staircases, beautiful arches, courtyards, front decorations

In nature

- Rare or beautiful plants or animals.

Think also of the many customs regarding plants and trees. In their search for a treasure, students may focus on those customs which show respect and appreciation for the beauty of nature:

- Giving the first fruits of the harvest to the mosque or the church.
- Traditional songs which celebrate the beauty of nature.
- Plants and trees with a special value in the Bible or Koran.
- Plants and trees used for religious ceremonies (such as on Palm Sunday)

Students may consult community leaders, priests or sheikhs, artisans, or persons who have a widespread knowledge of the community's folkloric traditions.

Collecting accounts about people's roots and history

Accounts about roots can include: presentations about the cultural and national heritage, the history of one's family, previous generations, home community, or cultural traditions. Such stories almost always refer to values which are important to the storytellers and the family and community.

One way to collect such accounts is through oral history: doing interviews with older persons about personal and family histories.

A senior person – a man or a woman - can be invited to come to class. Students can be encouraged to immerse themselves together with the interviewee into the history told, and imagine the scenes as if they happen before their eyes.

Objectives

- Strengthening connection to the community, including elderly persons
- Looking at people in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Understanding meanings of religion in daily life
- Knowing about mutual Moslem and Christian feasts and customs
- Coming to a deeper understanding of diversity in Palestinian society
- Learning about the moral and practical choices faced by Palestinians on ongoing base
- Understanding different types of community-related conflicts and crises
- Doing interviews, developing a questionnaire
- Inquisitive questioning without judgment, interviewing
- Listening

Guidelines

1. It is in general good to have a theme or focus for the interview. In brainstorming for ideas about a theme, one may use available resources like old pictures.
2. It is important to brainstorm about which local residents are able to contribute firsthand knowledge on the topic: elderly people, family members, neighbours, public figures, professionals, craftsmen/women or experts. When it is a broader project, one may choose persons who have different viewpoints and perspectives on similar events.
3. In case of sensitive topics it is advisable to inform students or parents in advance so that they understand the purpose of the interview. Some students will discuss their experiences at home.

4. It sometimes happens that people need to be convinced that they are able to offer something of value.
5. It may be useful to first read to/with students an interesting interview or oral history. This gives them a sense of the possibilities of an interview.
6. You may give the interviewees a list of questions or topics in advance, or you may discuss the interview in a preparatory meeting. This is important especially with elder people who do not remember things immediately. They need time to check dates and names.
7. Students may use artefacts of the past in order to facilitate memorizing or to make the interview more lively: photographs (albums), old money, medals, jewelry, clothes, kitchen ware.

Examples

Think about the following themes for an oral history interview:

- Feast days and commemorations
- War
- Rebellions and intifadas
- Poverty and hunger
- Religion
- Christian-Moslem living together
- Man-women relations
- Education
- Customs

Lessons learnt

Without a clear focus, interviews can go astray. While interviewing some elderly community members about wedding customs and the system of Palestinian education prevalent during the 1930s, it happened that both the interviewers and the guests were so fascinated by the past in all its different aspects that a focus was lost. Afterwards, we heard one of the interviewees saying that he would have preferred to speak on only one subject in-depth.

For the older generation, telling about the past can be therapeutic. When students asked older people about the uprooting in 1948, their respondents had a difficult time, people could barely keep their tears inside. They were never asked about their personal stories.

D. Visuals in/about the community and environment

Photography at holy places

Palestine is blessed with a pleasant climate and beautiful sites. With many having a mobile, photo-making has become very popular among Palestinian youth. It is motivating and does not cost much time. When visiting a sacred place, a church or mosque or a pilgrimage site, students can make photos with their mobiles or share the use of a good camera in small groups.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Looking at one's environment – people, objects, and scenes - in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Developing personal relationships with holy places
- Showing appreciation and respect of holy sites associated with different religions
- Developing skills of photography and making photo exhibits.

Guidelines

One approach is to ask youth to look at the values of a holy place. What does the place (or the objects, the people in the place) express: beauty, meditative silence, nourishment, humility? How can the student express that value through a photo?

After making a photo, students can make a caption. In this way, they can make explicit the value(s) they attach to the place. The caption can be in the form of a quote, mentioning a key value or concept, a poetic line, a dream, wish, or thought.

The students may create a photographic composition of different elements, using a basic design computer program. They may combine a building with the surrounding nature, or with an object they bring to the place (an icon or a candle, for instance). They may also make a composition of elements of Moslem and Christian places in one picture.

By making a close-up, or creating an uncommon perspective, the photo can express the particular value of the place in a personal way.

It is important to encourage the participating youth to see photography as a process of sharing. In advance, during and after the trip, the youth can discuss the photos which they plan or make, together with their peers.

A plan of steps:

1: *Orientation*

A special site is chosen for the journey. Inform yourself about this place and its buildings. Go to the Internet and look at texts as well as photos. Do you like the photos, are they interesting to you? If so, why?

2: Values of the place

Reflect alone or discuss in couples or small groups the values of the place. Think about its story. Does the story indicate one or more values? Examples of values are: beauty, harmony, nourishment, peace, justice, or sumud / steadfastness-resilience-perseverance. You can also mention a value that combines different elements, like the “beauty of peace.”

Do certain objects in the place express a value? Think about windows, sculptures. Do festivities or ceremonies that happen on the place, like an annual pilgrimage, indicate a certain value?

Choose a value which you feel is suitable to the site. Discuss this value with others. Do they feel the same about the place, or do they discover different values? How can you express your value in a photo?

Do you know an object, like a candle, which would help you to express the value in the photo? Do you know a gesture, a bodily posture or any other symbol which can be used in the composition of a photo about the place?

3. Composition of the photo

When visiting the place, choose the subject of your photo and the value which it expresses.

Is it possible to combine different elements you see, so as to better express the value of the site? Or is one element sufficient for your photos?

Examples:

- a church with surrounding nature;
- a human face in the church, silent or singing, a candle in front;
- two hands holding each other next to a sculpture of Ibrahim, or Al-Khalil (the Friend).

Choose a specific location on the site from where to take the photo, taking into account:

- Distance (close-up or distant)
- Perspective (frontal or an uncommon angle, from down up, for instance)
- Frame (what is inside the picture, what outside)
- Camera position (horizontal, or on its side, or tilted)
- Light (contrasts, shadows)

4: Shooting the photo

Is the moment of shooting important or not? Take several photos, so as to be able to choose afterwards.

5: Choosing the best photo

Look at the photos you took. Which photo does best express the value(s) you had in mind? Discuss it with other youth participating in the project.

6: Making a caption

Think about a caption which fits the photo you took and the value(s) it expresses. The caption can be: a word, a poetic line, a proverb, a thought, a dream, a quote from an author.

Add the caption to the photo, either inside the frame, or outside.

7: Making an exhibit

Identify suitable material on which to put the photos.

Determine how many photos will take part in the exhibit, and how large their size should be.

Select the photos which fit best.

Group them on the base of the holy places they picture, or the themes/values expressed. Or put them without an order, on the base of your intuition or feelings.

Take into account that there are many ways to exhibit photos. A horizontal sequence is only one way.

Look how the captions are included in the exhibit.

Reference

AEI has a manual on photography on holy places available for use.

Making a portrait: Humans of Palestine

Humans of Palestine is about making a photo of a Palestinian or Palestinians combined with a longer or shorter quote of the person. Jointly they reveal a scene of Palestinian life. Started by “Humans of New York” in 2010, the initiative was in subsequent years adopted in many other cities and countries around the world. It is relevant to the Citizenship and Diversity project because individual Moslems and Christians can be shown in the context of their daily life.

Central to the Humans of Palestine project are the casual and unrehearsed responses of normal people going about their daily lives in the West Bank. To elicit such responses, project volunteers must proceed with open-mindedness and an approachable demeanor. Needed materials include: a good camera for quality photos, notebook to record quotes & stories, and a mobile/recording device (recommended). The interviewer should know about question prompts and website information where people can follow the project.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Looking at one’s environment – people, objects, and scenes - in a different, new light, as if for the first time
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Understanding the meaning of religion in daily life
- Coming to a deeper understanding of diversity in Palestinian society
- Doing interviews
- Developing skills of photography and making photo exhibits.

Guidelines in steps

1. Decide location: Determine the best location to find participants. Students can also take the opportunity to meet and interview people at random in a diversity of places nearby.
2. When you arrive to your location, take a few moments to sit and take in the scene. First observe the environment before attempting to approach a participant.
3. Once the interviewer feels ready, approach the participant and say “Hi, I’m working on a project and wonder if you have a few moments to talk to me?” Go on to explain more.

4. Tell the participant that you are working on a photography project, which also tells the stories of Palestinian Christians and Moslems living in the West Bank.
5. If he/she has interest, ask if you can ask them a few questions and if he/she minds having their photograph taken. If they will not allow a photo, thank them for their time and let them know how they can still follow the project.
6. If the person agrees, ask a few questions from one's prompt list and record his/her answers. Please note that it is very important to record exactly what he/she says since the answers will be quoted (for this reason a recording device may be helpful). When using a recording device, be sure to ask for permission to record. Also be sure to state the person's name and what he/she is wearing to later match the quotes to the photographs.
7. Once you have a sufficient amount of quotes (only the best/most interesting will be chosen), ask him/her to stand for a photograph.
8. For the photograph, focus on the subject as if to create a portrait. Ask the participants to be candid. They do not need to smile or pose, although some may prefer to—the goal is to show people in a real way, living their lives in the West Bank.
9. Take multiple photographs from different angles etc. Person can be in front of a religious place, or at a house, doing work, etc.
10. Give website information to the person to follow the project and thank them!

Examples of question prompts

It is important to get to know the person with whom you are talking. The goal is to get him/her to expose a thought or story that is personal and interesting. To do this, have a conversation. Ask him/her about he/she is doing right now? Ask follow-up questions to your initial questions. Eventually, your interviewee will expose something thoughtful enough and capable of capturing the interest of our followers. For more diversity to your interviews, please feel free to use some of the prompts below.

For everyone

- What does your religion mean to you?
- Do you remember the happiest and saddest moments of your life? How did it effects your beliefs?
- If you could give one piece of advice to a child born today, what would it be?

For children and youths

- What do you want to be when you grow up?

- What are you really good at?
- What is the meaning of religion to you – can you give an example?

Reference

This practice was introduced to AEI staff by American volunteers visiting AEI in 2009.

E. Living together and community building

Celebrations

The celebration of feasts is a cornerstone of Palestinian community life. Sharing the culture during e.g. a wedding touch the heart, inspire, create a feeling of connectedness with identity and heritage. Many private and government schools with Muslim and Christian student populations presently organize special joint Muslim and Christian religious celebrations.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Knowing about mutual Moslem and Christian feasts and customs
- Balancing feelings, reflection and communication
- Helping to enhance the community atmosphere at school
- Creating a sense of pride and joy about the cultural and religious identity and environment.
- Nurturing hope in a better common future

Guidelines

During a feast some may prepare or cook special snacks or dishes which fit the feast or the fasting period. They may be distributed within the school community. An example is the St Barbara dish during St Barbara's feast day on December 4.

During a communication event at school, like the morning broadcast, the values of a Moslem and Christian feast can be explained and compared by students.

Students, parents and teachers may pay visits to elderly people living in poverty and offer small gifts in the spirit of the feast.

Variation

In order to allow for a comparison between Moslem and Christian experiences with feasts, you may choose to compare a particular aspect of a feast in the Moslem and Christian traditions; for instance:

- Exchanging good wishes
- Giving presents

- Visits to family and neighbors
- Hospitality shown during feasts
- Praying for deceased loved ones.

Examples

A school morning broadcast at a school in Bethlehem organized in front of hundreds of girls, teachers and some parents a series of student presentations about the meanings of the Prophet Mohammed's Birthday parallel to the meanings of Christmas, with Biblical and Qu'ranic readings on the values of love, respecting differences, and protecting rights and freedoms.

During Christmas time, many Christian and also Moslem Palestinian youth install and decorate Christmas trees and distribute gifts to Christian and Muslim students. Christian and Muslim students then participate in lighting a Christmas tree inside their schools.

One Christian government school teacher relates: "During the Muslim Isra and Miraj feasts [marking the night that God took Mohammad on his journey to heaven], sweets were distributed to all students and I, as the only Christian teacher, felt at ease and touched by such student initiatives."

Choir

Singing is a way of releasing inner tension but it's also a beautiful way to connect. Singing is an excellent way to experience what is called "refreshing the soul," "bringing joy to the heart," "expressing love poetry," all of which come from deep inside.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Nurturing hope in a better common future
- Learning about the rich diverse heritage of popular and classical choir music.
- Cooperating in a choir
- Strengthening connection to the community

Guidelines

1. Find members for the choir
 - They can be from a class, several classes, a school, or more schools.
 - Members should be motivated and committed.
 - Having good voices in the choir helps.
2. Choose a name for the choir
 - Think of a unique name related to a project or school, or the mission of the choir ("living together," for instance)
 - Choose a name which sounds attractive or inviting, also among a broader (international) audience
3. Conductor/trainer and members (often women, Moslem-Christian), frequency and regularity
 - It is essential to have a conductor who is committed and qualified.
 - The choir should have rehearsals on a regular base.
 - There should be a suitable place to do the rehearsals (space, quietness, acoustics).
4. Repertoire
 - Choosing existing songs: national, (inter-)religious, didactic, folkloric?
 - Both Arabic and English songs?
 - Singing only, or also the support of musical instruments (e.g. *tableh*)?
 - Making new songs but using existing rhythms, melodies and lyrics?

- For variation and atmosphere, in a choir with girls: option of including trills: whistle, clap, gesture, and ululate, as customary during Palestinian weddings and other happy feasts.
5. Presentation, dance and movements
 - Is the stage suitable given the group's size and movements
 - Think of props and costumes (like traditional dresses with Palestinian embroidery, as is said about these: "to bring the past alive in the present through beauty")
 - Sound system, if needed
 - Simple dance steps can enhance the songs, as can simple drama or conversation, to communicate the song's theme
 - Songs can be introduced and explained by a member of the choir (also *after* singing the song)
 6. YouTube films, for publicity and invitations
 - When making a video about a choir performance: take care to introduce the choir, for instance by having a member or leader talking about the choir's mission
 - Consider subtitles in Arabic or English (to enlarge the audience).

Examples

Presently, the project Citizenship and Diversity: Christian-Moslem Living Together involves three choir groups at government schools for girls in the Bethlehem district. They hold performances during occasions such as the Palestinian Teacher's Day, Christmas and Ramadan, Palestinian Independence Day, school festivals, and contests organized by the Ministry. During those occasions they perform in front of hundreds of parents, teachers, students and public figures of the local community. The performances support a climate of harmonious Moslem-Christian living together at the schools.

At AEI's Sumud Story House near the Separation Wall in north Bethlehem, some twenty women formed ten years ago an amateur choir, the Bethlehem Sumud Choir. Over the course of time, the women paid attention to communicating the Palestinian cultural identity, especially because many of their performances have been held at national or heritage occasions. In most of their performances, they communicate a Palestinian culture of living together in a wide diversity of songs, mainly in Arabic, some in English, some national, some religious, some folkloric.

Choir song

Refrain

Decorate the courtyard, oh Palestinians
Oh soil of our land

It is shining with dignity

Verses

Our sumud is wisdom through knowledge in grace
We are steadfast through truth and discretion

From the Lord of the world we request grace
Through sumud and continuity we will overcome the siege

We will dismantle the Wall through our determination and perseverance
Let us remain faithful to our righteous victims of violence



Greetings, wishes and prayers

Greetings, wishes and prayers for the wellbeing of persons show that one cares, that one carries somebody in one's heart. It shows concern for others and for the community in general. They can be exchanged across religious borders. Doing a wish, making a prayer is an act of hope. In a way, any good change in personal or family life or in the community starts with the making of a wish.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Developing understanding, appreciation and respect for religious and cultural diversity
- Strengthening connection to the community
- Communicating care for others
- Helping to enhance the community atmosphere at school
- Nourishing the hope for a better future.

Guidelines

1. Study the traditional practice of exchanging greetings, wishes, and prayers.
 - At what religious occasions do/did people express a wish for somebody else?
 - What kind of expressions are/were used?
 - What are the values or feelings communicated when people make a wish or pray for somebody else (or somebody's family, group): e.g. solidarity, hope, consolation.
 - To whom is the greeting, wish, or prayer directed?
 - Is the greeting, wish and prayer accompanied by a gift (such as sweets)?
2. See if some of the greetings, wishes, or prayers are new to the participants. Brainstorm and discuss whether they can be adapted to and reused in a new context, for instance, during a school celebration, or when a humanitarian disaster happens, or when somebody becomes ill. It is also possible to think of a new kind of wish, greeting, or prayer, making creative use of social media for instance.
3. Think to whom the wish, greeting or prayer is directed. The wish may be for the family, school, community, or even the world.
4. Take care to formulate the wish in a precise way. It is in itself a good thing to make the wish short and to the point. But you may also express the wish in the creative form of a poem, a quotation or even a drawing or photo with a caption.

5. Find the right moment or occasion to exchange wishes, face-to-face or via an audio or text message, or phone call.
6. See if the greeting, wish or prayer can be accompanied by a special gift.

Examples

During the Eid feast day after Ramadan Christian and Muslim students in the Citizenship and Diversity project have been used to exchange greetings.

During the pandemic, many students in the project sent heart-felt greetings, wishes and prayers to those who fell ill or were otherwise affected.

AEI together with local and international partners, including Pax Christi, started some 15 years ago a so-called wishmaking campaign. Each year around Christmas many hundreds of wishes and prayers used to be digitally sent from all over the world to Bethlehem. The wishes and prayers have been printed out and shared among Christians and Moslems, raising the hope for a better future.

Often held in the context of the World Week for Peace in Palestine convened by the World Council of Churches, it has been common during spiritual meetings near the Wall in Bethlehem to read wishes and prayers in various languages gathered from all over the world.

This practice has in part been inspired by the custom of vow-making in Palestine. It is interesting to pay attention to this traditional community-enhancing practice as it connects the different religions in Palestine and their popular practices.

It is traditionally common in Palestine that people visit a shrine and give a sacrifice to a holy person. They hope for good fortunes in their own life, their family's or their community's: protection against an enemy, fertility (getting a baby), good health, rain, prosperity or peace.

Vow making has been lived by across the different religions in Palestine. The vow-maker promises to perform a pious act or some act of labor in exchange for help from a *weli* (holy person) or saint. In Palestine, like elsewhere in the Mediterranean area, vow making practices have traditionally been richer than in the West. In visiting a common place of worship, such as the tomb of a local saint or *weli*, Moslems and Christians offered olive oil, burned incense, put on a candle, conducted an act of fasting, promised to give an amount of money for the maintenance of the shrine, or presented another material or symbolic gift.

In exchange, the holy person helped them to get a child, to overcome an illness, or to keep a family member out of prison. Many holy persons were seen as possessing special healing powers. There have been, for instance, saints for the mentally disturbed,

for the deaf, for the blind, for childless women. Alternatively, in Christianity a priest could visit the homes to collect contributions for a vow, such as when first fruits were collected during the olive, grape or fig harvests; a community practice quite familiar in Palestine before the 1950s. Holy persons to whom Palestinians are used to pray for receiving a blessing include St George-Al-Khader, and St Nicholas.



F. Advocacy in the community

Community campaign

“Citizenship and Diversity” wants students to engage with real-world, authentic issues relevant to the lives of their communities. In doing so we look for the human and religious values which connect rather than divide. This orientation implies a focus on the civic roles of students in promoting living together. A community campaign is an excellent choice for encouraging youths to adopt responsible civic roles in the society.

Objectives

- Strengthening connection to the community
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Becoming aware of and defining community needs
- Taking care of others, the neighbor
- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism
- Presenting oneself in media and social media
- Developing skills of photography
- Working in a team
- Being open to contacts with youths from different schools and regions
- Helping to enhance a community atmosphere
- Creating a sense of pride and joy about the cultural and religious identity and environment.
- Nurturing hope in a better common future

Guidelines

1. A community campaign should have a central objective, theme (slogan) and clearly defined target groups.
2. Suggested activities may be in the fields of voluntary work, popular arts events (songs, poetry, drama or dabkeh), or interviewing persons in the community (open mike). A choir group may give a performance during the campaign event.
3. Religious occasions can help to give a platform to the community campaign, like an inter-religious celebration organized at a school.
4. Officials from relevant departments, ministries and municipalities can be invited to join the campaign, during a session for instance. The same applies to parents.
5. There should be a media component either within the school (morning broadcast, school media) or outside (invitation local media to attend an event).

Example

Keeping the beautiful environment in Palestine clean was a few years ago (2016) chosen as the project's theme for a community campaign.

The locations of the campaign activities included neglected and marginalized areas in villages such as Artas, Al Khader and Al Khas–Numan in the Bethlehem countryside as well as some densely populated areas in the three towns Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jala. The participating schools in Ramallah decided to implement the campaign inside the school or school environment. Nine government schools organized journeys together with parents; on average five parents of each school visited in those journeys neglected suburbs in their towns and villages in which waste was not sufficiently collected. AEI attended neighborhood committees of Bethlehem Municipality which were informed about the campaign. The teachers, students and parents together with some representatives of local authorities joined for some time in cleaning the environment and in tree planting activities. Ten representatives from institutions and village councils attended the various school campaign activities.

The schools and groups started their preparations during their weekly discussions, meetings and classes. Teachers, students and guest speakers gave power point presentations and showed short video clips to highlight the importance of:

- Personal health as value and practice
- Importance of preserving nature and environment
- Effects of occupation on the degradation of the environment such as throwing remnants of weaponry in area C, leaking sewage of settlements there, Wall building and diversion of water resources
- What religious, cultural, and heritage sources say about respecting nature as God's creation and issues of hygiene, including relevant teachings in the Quran and Bible.

Three girl choir groups at Beit Jala, Beit Sahour and Bethlehem government schools contributed to the joy in the activities, especially inside their schools, being watched by hundreds of students, teachers and parents.

The campaign involved a range of traditional and modern media: wall papers, morning broadcast in the school court yard, drama within a festival, film presentations, sharing of photos on Facebook, letters, and presentations at school meetings like open days, environment days, school religious celebrations, and parent meetings. Hundreds in each school community were informed. Many youngsters, women and parents announced the campaign and put comments and likes on their personal social media or wrote a brief essay for their school wall 'magazines'. Others published about the activities in the annual school book.



Sumud advocacy

Sumud advocacy confronts the slow uprooting of Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, such as (for instance) in Israeli-controlled Area C. The many reasons for this process of uprooting include people's lack of control over resources as a result of the Israeli occupation and a concomitant sense of powerlessness; the pervasive violence, destruction and lack of care due in great part to occupational measures; and the fragmentation and isolation as a result of movement restrictions.

In a manner similar to the grassroots community mobilization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1980s, sumud advocacy challenges the idea that uprooting is inevitable. It promotes the awareness that efforts to keep people on the land and preserve communities are possible despite the odds, and that the local population can actually contribute significantly to those changes. In the long run, sumud advocacy is indispensable for a just peace.

Teachers in Palestine are key persons in getting youths energized and activated for peaceful community-based changes.

Objectives

- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Strengthening connection to the community
- Become aware of and defining community needs
- Taking care of others, the neighbor
- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism
- Enacting positive citizenship/religious values in dealing with conflicts and crises
- Learning about principles and steps of advocacy
- Developing innovative, 'fresh' approaches to advocating for solutions to societal problems.
- Learning about relevant stakeholders; informing them and encouraging them to become supporters of the advocacy
- Practicing local advocacy for sumud and inter-religious peace within and beyond local communities.
- Planning an advocacy action
- Effectively addressing decision-makers
- Presenting oneself in media and social media
- Working in a team
- Being open to contacts with youths from different schools and regions
- Helping to enhance a community atmosphere
- Creating a sense of pride and joy about the cultural and religious identity and environment.
- Nurturing hope in a better common future

Guidelines

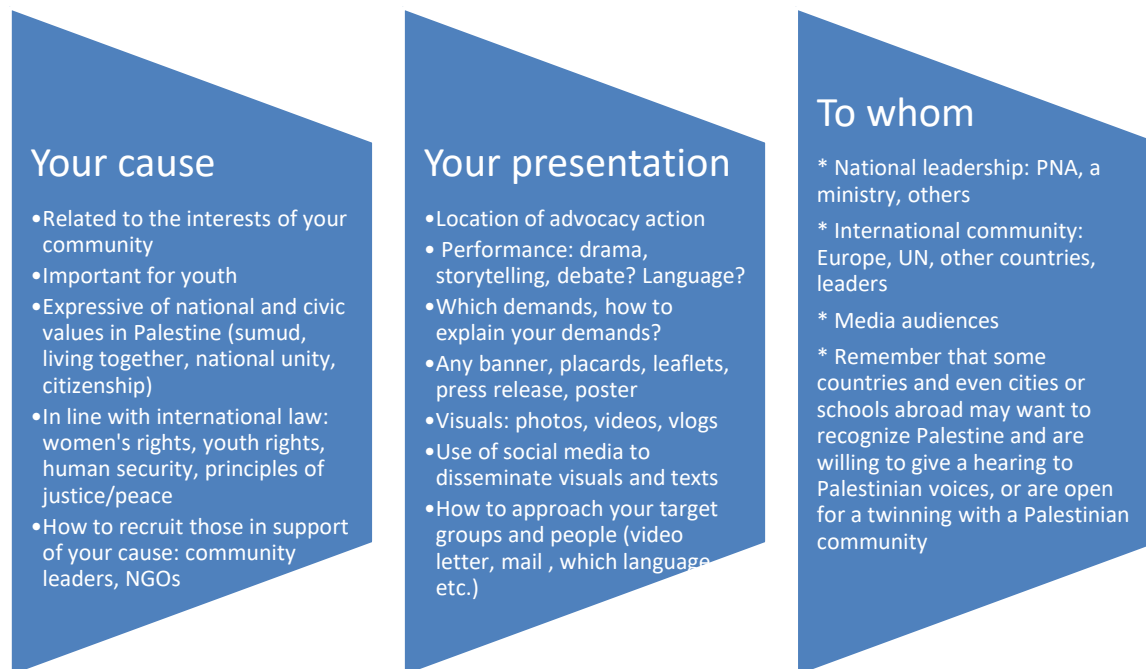
The advocacy actions can be about local issues like water shortage, waste collection, electricity issues; about political questions like the expropriation of land and the impact of the Wall, or about social issues like youth unemployment. The local, national, and international dimensions can be connected.

1. First, choose the community. This can be a community from which several students come, or to which the school has a special relationship. It can also be the school community itself. Communities in the countryside can take part, or marginalized communities in the cities like a refugee camp.
2. Think about a cause: What is the issue important for the community and for the youth living in it? Is it possible for the youth to show that they are not only victims but also 'samadin'?
3. Map the problem – understanding causes, detecting linkages, asking questions. Oftentimes local community conflicts are directly or indirectly related to the broader political situation. Doing basic research on the topic in advance is helpful and needed.
4. Which decision-makers should be addressed? Is it the local authorities, the PNA, representatives in the United Nations, the European Union, a particular country, public opinion here or abroad?
5. What are the demands to be posed to the decision-makers and how do we formulate them? A simple demand can get more meaning when youth add sumud stories from their community.
6. The allies: Are there people or organizations here or abroad who can help us in getting the demands across in the best way? For instance, ask a legal organization to help formulating the demands according to international law. An international youth organization can help to get signatures for a petition.
7. How to develop the advocacy action? Think of a special place which illustrates the cause. When the cause is related to the problems in traveling, choosing the Wall as background will be helpful in getting the message across through visual means, like videos and photos. Which persons – including decision-makers – will be invited and challenged as for their present and future actions?
8. How do we disseminate the information, demands, videos and photos? How do we work with hashtags, YouTube, Facebook, local radio or TV? What is the best way to publicize the action broadly?

9. How do we check whether any promises made by the decision-makers and stakeholders are kept afterwards? How do we continue the action in the future?

Model of doing advocacy

See here an overview of points of attention:



Example

Like the cleaning campaign mentioned previously, the sumud advocacy can focus on cleanliness in, for instance, a village. Though there are many similarities, the difference with a campaign is that an advocacy effort more consciously targets decision makers and tries to build a coalition of supporters so as to make a real change in decision-making.

In 2018-19 young women in the village of Artas took the removal of the garbage from the street as the advocacy topic. As volunteers, some went from house to house to encourage inhabitants to pay waste-collection taxes and to raise awareness about the problem of waste; others went to schools to give training sessions to students. They explained the tools of advocacy and campaigning, how to involve stakeholders and address those in authority. A school from the Citizenship and Diversity project joined.

The advocacy featured additional supportive activities such as removing garbage from the street, putting flowers in tires along the road, asking the police to take care of

parking issues, and celebrating the campaign with a photo exhibit and fixing slogan posters on walls in public areas. As a result, the participants won over students and teachers as supporters and volunteers. The mayor and village council as well as a local heritage NGO supported the actions. The women made an arrangement with the solid-waste department in the Bethlehem district. Authorities agreed to make Artas a “model waste-collecting village.”

The campaign did not proceed unhindered, though, as a participant mentions: “We faced many difficulties and challenges from cultural traditions as well as from society in general, which sometimes seemed determined to punish us for implementing the campaign. In spite of these challenges, there were some beautiful moments when people, especially the young in our society – some of whom used to be our opponents or neutral bystanders – came to help us and join the campaign as their attitudes began to change.” And: “This campaign changed the outlook of the villagers towards waste management. Above all, it changed me. I have become an ambitious young woman who seeks a better future.”

Lessons learnt

AEI’s experience: topics chosen for advocacy by school students and young women are typically related to solving practical issues of access to services and participation while improving the community’s appearance and strengthening its identity.

A most difficult part of an advocacy training is, according to one trainer, listening to the participants’ stories of grief. Telling and listening to such stories is needed to establish rapport and to channel frustration, and anger into energetic, joint work.



Sumud advocacy game

AEI developed several educational card or cardboard games to encourage and reflect upon sumud advocacy. A cardboard simulation game has a lay-out like 'Monopoly' and shows a path along which are fields of opportunities and threats as well as challenges. The fields marked as a 'challenge' (sometimes called: a 'conflict scenario') require the player to pick up a card describing a challenge. Another set of cards containing phrases of civic wisdom or 'rules of respect' helps the players to respond to the challenges. A facilitator is present when playing the game.

Objectives

- Supporting creative and critical thinking
- Learning about principles and steps of advocacy
- Learning about relevant stakeholders
- Planning an advocacy action

Guidelines

1. In advance, the facilitator explains the main terms coming up in the game, such as advocacy, networking, stakeholders, decision-makers, public action, media, sumud and peace.
2. The player has to read in front of the other players what is mentioned on the play board about the conflict scenario or challenge /task.
3. The player studies the conflict scenario or challenge card and looks whether there is among the rules of respect or wisdom cards a card which matches the way how the player prefers to respond to the conflict.
4. The player should choose and argue in front of all the other players for one of the wisdom or rules of respect cards.
5. The other players and facilitator have to decide whether the explanation is reasonable. Any reasonable explanation should pass without problem. In case of disagreement, the facilitator should decide. When a player does not have a suitable answer, he/she has to wait a turn.
6. The player or team who first reaches the 'end' destination is the winner.
7. It's great when players come up with their own ideas when challenged, or develop new ideas on the base of the suggestions on the cards.

Examples

Examples of challenge/conflict scenario cards:

- Truck drivers drive too fast on the central road in the community and accidents happen frequently.
- A checkpoint creates queuing and anxieties for students and their families when nearby schools open in the morning.
- A settlement takes over land from the village and peasants leave their land because they think it will be taken over anyway.
- Armed settlers increasingly visit springs and tourist walking paths. Local Palestinians are afraid and do not visit them anymore.
- There is a family quarrel in the community and somebody has been killed. How to restore peace?
- There are quarrels for and against a political party. The insults may soon lead to physical violence.
- Peasants dispute ownership of a border land.
- Due to the shortage of water, a neighbor taps water from your family's water tank.
- The garbage bins are not emptied because the bills are not paid, and people do not pay them because they suspect corruption.
- Because of the pressures of the occupation, many immigrants come at the same time into the city and there is a lack of basic services like solid waste collection services and roads.
- There is no safe transport to school - the road passing along a settlement - because there are not enough buses.
- Companies dump chemical garbage in area C, where there is no control.
- Some people stereotype others because they are afraid of the virus.
- Neighbors do not speak with each other because of a different religion.
- Some people have better access to certain services than others, and nobody knows why.
- During the crisis many elderly people were forced to stay home and in need of support.
- Due to the crisis many people became unemployed.
- Due to the crisis, the clinics in the neighborhood were not able to deal with all patients.
- Among some families, the frustration of having to stay inside during curfew led to violence.
- At checkpoints, people are humiliated by soldiers on a daily base.

The participants then use wisdom cards which help to guide how challenges can be faced.

Examples of wisdom cards:

- Dignity is not for sale.
- Human beings are neighbors who should help each other no matter where you are or who you are.
- I wish I was an ant. You don't see them but ants take care of each other. They have a strong will to live.
- I hope I once have the power to change the wall and the checkpoints and turn them into something else.
- What God has created, no one can destroy.
- Humor is essential to be able to stand up and stay steadfast. It's part of saying: I am here and nobody can deny my presence here.
- In my imagination I become a bird and fly and move freely without any barriers or walls standing in the way.
- *Sumud* comes from the inside, your belief in yourself, in what you represent. If you don't believe in yourself and in what you are, you will lose.
- Respect your humanity.
- We Palestinians are subjected to daily experiences that drive you crazy. But still we manage to overcome whatever we go through.
- If you face a really tough experience, it makes you stronger.
- Whoever wants to live a dignified life full of achievement should begin by improving oneself.
- Don't judge quickly, stay respectful, have a strong will, then you will succeed.
- If you are without a past, you are without a present and a future.
- Patience begins bitter and ends sweet.
- Even when you are small, you can overcome problems by a strong faith.
- The difficult life that we live must be a source of strength for our people. We must always respect that our life is not easy and simple.
- If life is bitter, keep your dreams like sugar.
- Better to be a slow runner than to be quick and to sleep just before the finish.
- When you stop worrying and struggling you become tired and lose hope.



Slogans, sayings and quotes (SSQ)

Slogans, sayings or quotes (SSQ) are often used in advocacy or campaigning. They do not take much space and summarize the main points to be made. They may simplify and beautify a possibly complicated message. Slogans, sayings or quotes are easy to communicate and memorize, and are often the first thing to be read or viewed. They are excellent material in citizenship studies.

Objectives

- Summarizing a mission in a campaign or advocacy activity
- Making a point of advocacy that is interesting and attractive for a wider audience
- Developing Internet search skills.

Guidelines: How to develop or find a saying/slogan/quote?

1. What is the purpose?
SSQs can be used for
 - title of a political campaign: on a poster, a flyer, a wall paper
 - the name of a group or project, to be announced in social media
 - a personal signature in social media (SSQ put under the name at the end of for instance an email)
2. Look for sources
 - Make one's own SSQ. using inspiring words
 - Check sayings or quotes on the Internet, in relation to a word which is central to the planned activity or key to the participating youths' motivation in life
 - Also on the Internet: check on quotes from the holy books or from famous persons (Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King), or look for sayings (proverbs) with respect to particular themes (like justice or peace).
 - Think of the lyrics of a song or a line in a poem. Use poetic imagery.
3. Think of the presentation of the slogan
 - In one language or more (Arabic-English)
 - On which material?
 - Combined with a photo or drawing?
 - Hand-written or printed
 - More slogans - a central campaign slogan combined with a personal slogan?
4. Where to show it?
 - Indoors or outdoors
 - Physical or online (social media).

Examples

As part of an advocacy event like an indoor or outdoor meeting, SSQ's can be put on walls and pillars, in a courtyard, or along the street.

In a campaign it is possible to have each day on FB or Instagram another item with another brief story, a new photo (portrait or action) and various inspiring SSQs, personal or campaign-related.

Early Warning and Response

An Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) is a new way of dealing with conflicts in local communities with the help of, first, early warners, who track down certain conflicts and crises and gather and register information, and, secondly, responders, who develop alone or in teams response strategies. Developing such a system could be an innovative way of involving young people, including school students, into possible ways of dealing with conflicts and crisis in their community.

In brief, EWRS involves:

- A choice of conflicts in the local Palestinian context, with criteria why these conflicts are chosen. For instance: conflicts among families in the community, domestic violence at home, political conflicts.
- Developing a system of collecting, uploading, and analyzing information about specific conflicts. The early warners can note down specific information about a conflict and make it available for a limited trusted group of persons.
- Drafting a code of ethics for the early warners and responders; for instance about keeping sensitive information confidential. Such a code will help to build trust in the community.
- Formulating early warnings based on an analysis of the collected information.
- Response strategies.

Objectives

- Strengthening connection to the community
- Become aware of and defining community needs
- Reclaiming civic values of voluntarism
- Enacting positive citizenship/religious values in dealing with conflicts and crises
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective
- Taking care of others, the neighbor
- Developing innovative, 'fresh' approaches to advocating for solutions to societal problems.
- Learning about principles and steps of advocacy
- Practicing local advocacy for sumud and inter-religious peace within and beyond local communities.
- Planning an advocacy action
- Learning about relevant stakeholders; informing them and encouraging them to become supporters of the advocacy
- Effectively addressing decision-makers
- Working in a team
- Nurturing hope in a better common future

Guidelines

1. *Start*

Check the basics

- Location conflict
- Type of conflict
- A specific conflict or several/many conflicts of the same type
- Main sources of info

2. *Narrative*

Writing a narrative about the conflict which includes the following elements:

- Actors/perpetrators conflict
- Victims
- Actions/levels of violence applied, possibly: weapons used
- Actions announced, including threats
- Support for each of the parties: stakeholders in the conflict
- Background or structural causes of the conflict
- Triggers of violence

3. *Escalation potential*

Then answer these questions about how deep the conflict is:

- Does the conflict repeat itself over time
- Does this conflict happen in different places in the same area
- What are the conflict-related political and economic repercussions
- In which stage is the conflict:
 - latent/hidden
 - early/emerging
 - escalation
 - crisis
 - de-escalation
- What are the broader groups, such as families and institutions, who are involved
- How strong is the potential of the conflict parties/leaders to mobilize broader groups, families and institutions for their aims
- Is there a potential for further escalation in kind and level of violence
- What is the connection to other conflicts in the same neighborhood or elsewhere

4. *Resolution (peace) potential*

Building blocks to a response:

- What are the communication lines between the parties
- Have there been previous resolution attempts? How successful were they?
- Are there special mediating persons available? Who?
- Is there knowledge and interest among the parties about resolution tools like mediation?

- Which institutions are in principle responsible for dealing with the conflict and its consequences (like police or social workers)?
- Are there any persons who have a special interest in a resolution of the conflict (stakeholders)?

5. *Films and photos. documentation*

Document the conflict in media:

- Short videos of events (but be cautious about confidential and sensitive issues)
- Media and social media links (caution).
- Indicate whether the information comes from primary or secondary sources.

6. *Early warnings*

There are two types of early warnings.

- First, an early warning can be quickly decided and executed to warn people to take care in relation to a conflict. This is usually after some important piece of information comes through which is relevant for people to know in order to prevent victimization or a direct conflict to happen.
- Second, the early warning is made after a lengthy process of collecting information about the conflict.

7. *Responses*

What are the kinds of response(s) recommended?

- Among the options::
 - Direct protection in conflict situations, accompanying children along a checkpoint, for instance
 - Civil society conflict resolution: helping a *sulha*
 - Referral to authorities/police/court
 - Challenging power-holders by interrogating them in public (media)
 - Improving communication about governance: informing people about their right to receive services
 - Advocacy: raising one's voice, conducting campaigns
 - Education and media
 - Humanitarian action, giving a good example by supporting victims of disasters
 - Healing and counseling, supporting people to overcome a trauma
 - Community building: bringing people together as a community
- Special helpers in responding (such as change-makers)
- Who opposes a constructive response (fanaticism)?

Example

AEI presently works with young women in downtown Hebron on an EWRS. There is a detailed manual available which can be used for training purposes.

Lessons learnt

AEI recommends using such a system in a simplified form at schools to deal with certain conflicts inside and outside the school. It is educationally helpful for students to learn in-depth about conflicts which are detrimental for the community and possibly for their school. They may be encouraged to collect and analyze information, and look and advocate for responses. EWRS requires a project-type approach with secondary school students spread out over a semester or a year.

Young people can be actually very effective in advocating for changes in certain conflict situations in the community, is AEI's experience. They may be seen as not politically involved and representing the families of which they are a part.

G. Advocacy international

International visitors: presenting Palestine

Tourism can go beyond beautiful or religious places and engage ordinary people in seemingly not-so-special places. Modern tourists to the Holy Land increasingly want to meet Palestinians within the contexts of their authentic lives. Religious and non-religious visitors want to learn about daily life, customs and practices. Often this information does not come across at the information or discussion meetings with tourist groups. The voices of youths are important here.

From an educational viewpoint it is helpful to prepare one's stories and arguments for such a visit. How to approach international visitors through your presentation?

Objectives

- Speaking about the culture of Moslem-Christian living together in/on the land
- Speaking about daily life of Moslem and Christian Palestinians
- Listening
- Developing an open-minded civic and religious perspective

Guidelines

1. *Be reliable and convincing in your argumentation*
 - Be honest
 - Be always factually correct, and if possible precise. Don't mention unreliable figures.
 - Exaggeration of factual claims, for instance 'houses destroyed' instead of 'houses damaged' is never advisable.
 - Use reliable sources and quotes to bolster one's points.
2. *Be focused*
 - Focus on the "ten core issues" which Palestinians need to communicate.
 - Be short and clear in your message.
 - Don't forget the basic fact that Palestinians live under occupation, a fact not known or not taken for granted by international audiences.
3. *Be cultural*
 - Show the commonalities but also the diversity/richness of Palestinian/Arab identity and culture: different religions, landscapes, histories, memories.
4. *Be passionate but not overly emotional*
 - Keep yourself "calm in the eye of the storm."
 - Be calm, strong, professional in your presentation; don't speak too quick and too emotional.

- Just lecturing to an audience without a possibility of dialogue comes across as imposing.
 - Using of general political terms may sound propagandistic. Don't be heavily rhetorical, don't use worn-out slogans.
 - Too much emphasis on victimization and blaming can backfire.
 - Always be polite.
5. *Sometimes take it easy, relativize*
- On the other hand, looking very serious also makes your communication not optimal, keep it lively with an anecdote or a joke.
 - Show self-criticism, admit a failure.
 - Show a sense of humour.
6. *Make good human stories*
- Use concrete human stories. Stories are often much better memorized by your audience.
 - When speaking about Palestinian casualties, tell not just about the figures and the facts at hand, but also about details which tell a narrative about the person in question, such as the family situation.
 - Focus not only upon politics, but also upon daily life narratives and upon social justice causes. This helps to present a broader spectrum of concerns. In this way, one can easier link up with the audiences' own concerns.
7. *Take care of your audience's interests*
- Try to know something about the background, culture and opinions of the audience. Then try to relate to them. You may make comparisons between their history and yours'. That will bring your point much better across.
 - Do not assume that your audience is familiar with names of for instance places, politicians, political issues and terminology.
 - Know and understand your audiences and take care of their opinions and background knowledge because they may not understand you or may be too distant from your opinions. After all, not all westerners think that Arab or Palestinian people are terrorists or fundamentalists.
 - It may be important to emphasize the Christian presence in Palestine because it is so little known and because it may create bridges towards Christians in the West.

Lesson learnt

The visit should not be a fast visit. Fast visits trigger the use of easy, stereotypical frames of interpretation which close off people's voices. A longer visit draws the visitor into the fullness of life which is also characteristic of informal settings like a lunch, a conversation or even a joint dance. Moments of breaking through barriers are actually small miracles in human interaction which usually do not come just like that but need an appropriate setting in which the quality of the encounter receives due care.

Wall posters

At its Sumud Story House close to the Wall in north-Bethlehem AEI has gradually expanded educational-cultural activities which encourage women and youth groups to voice their stories. Cultural and spiritual voice-making activities along the Wall have included:

- An annual Sumud Festival bringing together local youth and women groups, local visitors and international visitors
- a nightly star of Bethlehem formed by humans carrying torches
- graffiti sessions
- silence circles and meditation meetings with members of the international peace movement
- a singer accompanied by a piano down under a military watchtower
- music from balconies and roofs
- exhibits of children drawings under the Wall
- slide shows on the Wall.

In all cases, a human act of culture creates a dramatic contrast with the Wall – which is a symbol and reality of intimidation, division and, ultimately, death.

The Wall Museum at Rachel's Tomb is part of those newly emerging, defiant voices. Its wall poster stories appear as individual voices adjacent to each other but together building a community voice of sumud. While most of the stories are from people in the towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour, they also bring out experiences from the countryside and refugee camps. The stories represent Palestinians, whether they are Muslim or Christian, young or old, female or male. Most of the stories challenge the "geography of oppression" by showing stories of sumud in the face of war, expulsion, occupation and oppression from 1948 onwards.

Some stories show Muslims and Christians living together in the Bethlehem area and in the larger Palestinian society, challenging stereotypes about Muslim-Christian relationships that are sometimes part of the mental luggage carried by many visitors to Bethlehem.

There is a special series of stories documenting the dreams of the youth, speaking about their hopes and desires.

Objectives

- Appreciating national and cultural heritage
- Writing a story
- Writing about daily life of Moslem and Christian Palestinians
- Writing about the culture of Moslem-Christian living together in/on the land

Guidelines

1. Find if possible a sponsor (a weather resistant story poster of thin metal, 1 by 2 meters, costs some 70 Euro or 260 shekel)
2. Write down one or several stories. It can be either one's own story or somebody else's. Take care that the stories make a moral or value-related point. They should be understandable to those not familiar with the situation in the occupied West Bank.
3. Abbreviate the story to a few paragraphs.
4. Have the story translated into English (by a volunteer).
5. Give the story a brief and attractive title in English, evoking curiosity.
6. Decide whether a personal name should be mentioned under the story, or whether it should be just signed by "youth" or "child" from Palestine or [city/village], or a fictional first name.
7. Have the story well-designed on a poster with the help of a designer.
8. Have the poster produced with the help of a printing company.
9. Have some volunteers fixing the poster with strong glue on the Wall.

Examples

Headache

Christians and Muslims have been living together in this land for centuries. On a school day in February last year, a Muslim friend and classmate of ours, Haneen, felt dizzy. She got a headache and felt very tired. Before class was over, Haneen put her head on the table and fainted. Her classmates, both Christian and Muslim, tried to pick her up and take her to the school director, but were not able to do so. One of the girls rushed for a private taxi to take her to hospital. After two days in hospital, Haneen recovered. When she learned about all what happened, she was very grateful that her Christian and Muslim teachers and classmates had cared for her. It is a story like this that makes us proud of the compassion that flows among the people of Bethlehem despite the situation we live in.

By Hannen & Jumana,
Evangelical Lutheran School Bethlehem

Here are examples of stories as dreams:

Surfing

Today I was walking through the streets and saw a young boy. The young boy was standing on a wooden board. I walked up to him and asked him what he was doing. I'm surfing he said with a big smile. I sat next to him and asked him why are you surfing? I want to become a surfer, I dream about it every night. I want to be on the ocean. Could you tell me your dream I asked him. He looked at me very strange but he told me his dream.

Every night I dream the same dream of being by the ocean. Taking my surfboard and running into the ocean. Feel the waves, feel the water, feel the wind. Seeing nothing but ocean, being free. Peddling through the water seeing nothing but ocean. Then I wake up facing the wall.

By Adel, from Bethlehem

Dreaming

I asked a lot of people in Bethlehem: do you have dreams? For now or maybe for in the future? And they all laughed at me and said, no we don't dream.

I asked them why, isn't it normal to dream and have a dream? No they say, dreams are for kids and for the stupid. We are realistic, dreams aren't realistic.

For me it was strange to hear that, I always thought everybody has dreams and hopes and visions about the future. But then they say, yeah we dream but we don't believe it.

We have dreams when we sleep but we don't remember them.

We live in the now and live day by day.

By Raneen, from Bethlehem



H. Evaluation

Sumud batteries

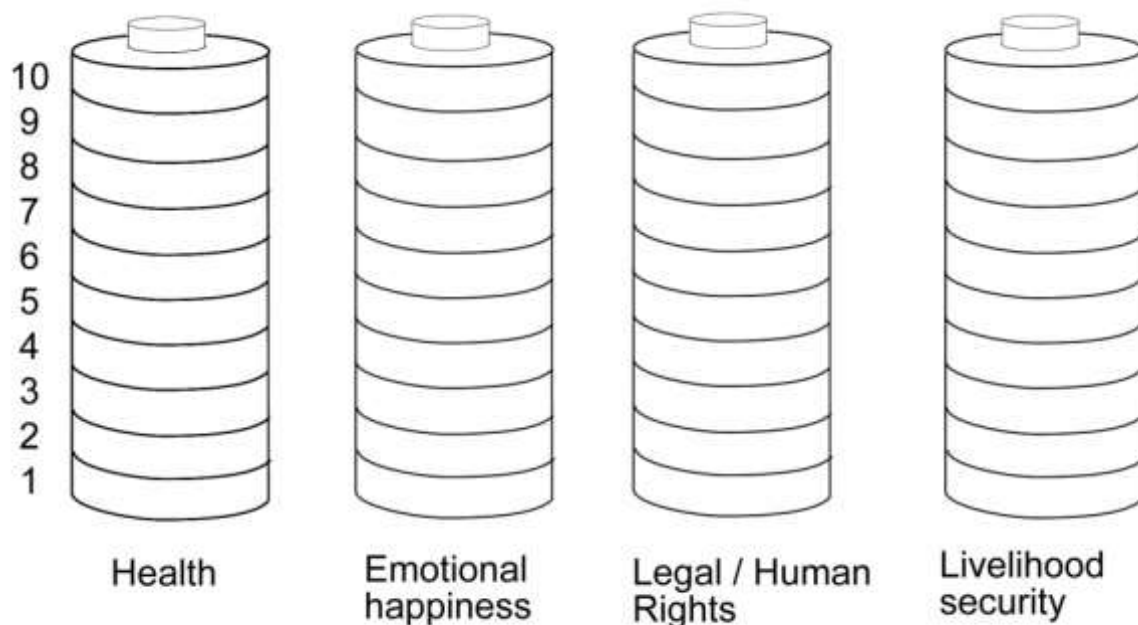
Using “sumud batteries” is a way of evaluating attitudes of participants in a project..

The concept of batteries can be explained using examples of mobile phone batteries, lamp or torch batteries, or car batteries.

Because ‘sumud’ is close to one’s ‘energy’ level, battery is a particularly apt concept for measuring the level of sumud as attributed to oneself or others.

For a detailed explanation of batteries as methodology, see the following Cafod pages:
https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/14676/116683/version/2/file/Batteries%20Methodology_A%20Participatory%20Tool%20for%20QoL%20Assessment_HIV_2011.pdf

CAFOD’s batteries look like these (the example relates to HIV carriers):



Used in various AEI projects, the sumud battery has at present the following dimensions:

- *Rootedness and connectedness - How strong do you feel connected to land and people of Palestine?*
- *Diversity in unity – How much are you interested in exploring new communities, people and religions in Palestine?*
- *Rights – How motivated are you to do nonviolent advocacy for your rights?*

- *Hope – How much hope do you have in a just peace?*
- *Perseverance and continuity – How motivated are you to really work hard for [give to] your community in Palestine, despite the setbacks?*
- *Joy - To what extent do you feel joy at moments when you give?*

Each sumud battery is divided into levels 1-10 representing low-high energy levels.

Objectives

- Understanding the concept of sumud
- Assessing one's sumud level
- Comparing sumud levels (between different participants or over time among the same participants)

Guidelines

Colouring pens can be used to fill in the batteries. The following steps are adapted from CAFOD's guidelines.

1. Participants assign a 'fullness' level to each battery to represent their *sumud* around the present point in time. NB. Not just on how they are feeling that particular day.
2. If the process is being carried out looking back, participants can assign a 'fullness' level to a second set of batteries to represent their sumud levels at a previous point in time – e.g. 6 months ago, 1 year ago, or the period of time before they joined the program.
3. Whilst assigning energy levels to their batteries, participants can consider and record reasons why their sumud is at this energy level.
4. If the batteries are completed for a second time or completed looking back participants can record reasons for any changes they are seeing in their sumud levels.
5. Divide participants into groups of up to six people, with a facilitator assigned to each group. Ask participants to share their personal reflections on the energy levels they have given for each domain or explain any differences (positive or negative) between battery sets and the reasons for this difference.
6. If the process is being carried out retrospectively, or for a second time, ask participants to explain any differences (positive or negative) between their current and previous batteries under each of the domains, and the reasons for this difference.

7. Ask participants to identify any trends (positive or negative) for the group, and to explore what they or others can do to improve their sumud levels further.

Lessons learnt

Respondents in youth groups with whom AEI worked looked at it as a new and interesting tool.

AEI discussed the batteries with some officials of the Ministry of Education and teachers in Ramallah. There was some criticism of the concepts used like 'rootedness' or 'connectedness'. The officials said that first such concepts need to be dealt with thoroughly in training before used in an evaluation. Also the issue was brought up whether evaluation questions should not relate to objective behaviour rather than subjective feelings.

In a EU/CAFOD project the idea of 'battery energy' brought the participants to look positively at their own sumud.

Not many respondents gave similar scores to all the batteries, although there were some cases. This suggests that the very large majority of respondents indeed thought well about the concepts and how to fill in the batteries.

In general the scores were quite high, except for the 'hope in a just peace' category but even there the average was above 7 of the 10. AEI staff who were present thought that there was a very positive atmosphere among the participants due to the training and the group atmosphere and this was reflected in their answers.

In general, it was felt among the AEI team that the questions relate to personal feelings, and so such questions require the ability of the respondents to know their deep inner feelings, and to separate momentary emotions from deeper attitudes.

It was noticed that during the pandemic participating groups considerably lowered assessments of their sumud.

Significant change story

The “most significant change story” is a story about how the project made an interesting or revealing change in the life of one of the participating students or teachers.

This story is a specific and memorable story (that is, with details) that reveals how a student’s/teacher’s life, thinking or behavior showed a change in accordance with the spirit of the project.

Objectives

- Critical thinking
- Understanding life values
- Assessing one’s own level of sumud, and changes in that level
- Choosing a topic for writing
- Reflecting in the story upon moral and practical dilemmas
- Writing a story

Guidelines

The following info is required to be shown in the story:

- The event or situation which brought to light a new, changing attitude or behavior in the spirit of the project
- Why it is likely that the project had an important influence on this changed attitude/behavior

The stories may help us to consider precisely what kind of impact the project has in the students’ or teachers’ lives, and on which levels.

Example

An interfaith class and lessons from real life

“My city is Bethlehem. This is the city of Peace in which the Crescent embraces the Cross. This is the city where Christians and Muslims live together in peace and safety. In its narrow roads and quarters one smells the traces of a long history of living together between Christians and Muslims. In the following history the meanings of living together become crystal clear.

Growing up in this city, I was fortunate to be a student at our school. This has had a great impact on my personality and thoughts. I accepted my schoolmates from different

social backgrounds and different villages and cities. I respected their opinions and their membership of different communities.

I learned about Christianity through the morning prayer presented by our teacher. I got knowledge about the religion of the other through the joint lessons presented by the Christian and Muslim religious education teachers.

In those interfaith lessons, joined by Moslem and Christian students together, we discussed many topics that bring us closer to one another. We found commonalities never discussed in our separate religious education lessons.

Those interfaith class periods made us feel more respectful of each other's religion. Throughout those lessons we worked hand in hand, without fanaticism or reactionary behavior - first inside our school community and subsequently in the wider Palestinian society.

I loved those lessons. After each period I found myself more capable to understand my classmates as well as to participate in their religious, social and cultural occasions. During the Christian and Muslim feasts we conducted mutual visits and exchanged gifts and sweets. We felt as if we were one family and lived with one another.

This harmony was tested and proved when my classmate Sami was injured during the sports lesson. After he fell down, it was me and the school principal who took him to the hospital. I didn't leave him alone and when he was given medical treatment I went back with him to his home.

His mother welcomed me wholeheartedly. She smiled at me, honored me and thanked me for staying nearby her son Sami. Later, Sami's mother invited me for lunch. I was very happy to receive such hospitality and admiration from Um Sami. Many of his friends phoned to ask about him and some visited him at home. Now he has recovered and is in good health.

This is a simple story among the many that show the Christian-Muslim living together in this country. My thanks go to my family, my school, my teachers, the AEI and my classmates. Each one plays a great role in shaping my personality and changing my thinking into accepting the idea of living together."

Lessons learnt

Make sure to explain that the story is NOT a general account which describes how students learned from the project. It is also NOT a story of people showing respect to the other religion. It is a story how those involved in the project changed in their mentality and behavior.

The best way to explain this method is by way of an example.

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