

Windows for Peace (UK)

Getting the Windows message and experience into schools

For the last 18 months, Windows for Peace UK fundraising has been concentrated on supporting the schools programme.

Background

Since 1991 Windows has worked to create a shared space in which young Israelis and Palestinians could communicate and learn from each other's realities. This has involved journalism, art, music and drama. But the nature of the Windows approach has meant that relatively few young people have been involved. More recently, the emphasis has moved to hugely increase the number of teenagers involved by rolling out Windows' unique experience into schools.



The first stage is to train the teachers and this Newsletter describes the progress to date and future plans. A huge achievement has been to gain approval of the programme by the **Israeli Ministry of Education**. It has now started under the title:

“From Shared Space in the Classroom to Shared Life in the Public Sphere”

How it Works

Windows' unique approach is based on the belief that a shared life is not possible without learning and acknowledging the past, or without dealing with the wounds of the societies. Teachers are not trained to deal with those issues in their colleges, and very few of the existing programmes are interested or experienced enough to deal with sensitive issues. In today's hostile atmosphere, many teachers are afraid to address such issues and are thus unable to give their students the opportunity to deal with them in a constructive and educational way. In the new programme, Windows shares its 25 years of experience of using its conflict resolution tools to deal with the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Teacher Training Programme is in two 30-hour stages. In the first, teachers go through a process of dealing with their own feelings and attitudes toward the challenges of the society in Israel, whereas in the second they learn to develop bi-national programmes for schools that can answer the real needs of the students.

Progress to date

The pilot for the programme is currently running in two pairs of schools. The first with a high school in Kfar Saba and a high school in the nearby Arab town Tira, both north east of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Even though the last workshop was postponed owing to the corona virus, the programme was implemented essentially as planned and it is clear it has reached its goals. Lessons have been learnt and after the teachers submit their papers, the Windows team will hold an evaluation session with participants, which will feed into subsequent programmes.



Palestinian and Jewish teachers
discussions and planning

Donate to Windows for Peace - Teachers' Training Programme

During the programme, there was a gradual build-up of trust that led to more sincere sharing. The activities enabled a joint study of various aspects of life in Israel comparing the reality of Jewish and Arab society. Learning about social and institutional discrimination, although supposedly known, was surprising for the Jewish teachers. It was also surprising for them to hear about identity issues. The Arab teachers were surprised to see that the Jewish teachers really wanted to learn all these things.

There are extremely encouraging feedback comments from both Arabic and Jewish teachers:

- ...I gained a whole new perspective of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel, I have learned new things. It was sad and hard to listen to some of the stories but I am looking forward to more meetings.... Change can come from the bottom...
- ... I came with a good feeling, but I could not imagine how great it will be... I felt that there was a safe space to express things, also those that it is hard to listen to... we began to touch very sensitive issues....
- ...I spoke without barriers.... I leave today with great energy, hoping to create a change...
- ... we want more teachers from our school to do this program....
- ... very challenging weekend, yet very interesting...
-for the first time in my life I participate in a bi-national program where I feel people are really honest...
-Thank you for an invested, professional and interesting training (in spite of the never enough time to talk!). I will be happy to continue next year.

The second pilot training is taking place with Ironi A High School in Tel Aviv and College de Frere from Jaffa. There are three more sessions to do but unfortunately, they will have to be done using ZOOM. The general feeling so far is very positive.

The next stage

Following these two pilots, the plan is to move to the second stage of the programme, which involves:

1. Evaluating the pilot and updating the training programme accordingly.
2. Holding a specific 16-hour training session to prepare eight more facilitators enabling Windows to reach more schools next year.
3. To expand the project next year to include:
 - Implementation of the second stage in the two pairs of schools that this year did the first stage.
 - Implement the first stage in the same two pairs of schools we worked with this year, with different teachers, as more teachers are interested. This way the Windows team will become more involved in the schools and their communities.
 - Implement the first stage in two new pairs of schools.

Funding

Windows for Peace UK is concentrating its fund-raising to support the Teachers Training Programme. In the past year, with your support and more widely, we have raised and transferred £16,000. The budget for the next stage of the programme is £29,000 (including 20% overheads). Thank you for your generous support in the past. If you would like to donate to this programme you can do this via this link:

[**Donate to Windows for Peace - Teachers' Training Programme**](#)

If you would like to create (or amend) a Standing Order, please email the Treasurer of Windows for Peace (UK):

[**Request Standing Order form**](#)