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Sadaka-Reut Arab Jewish Youth Partnership educates and empowers Jewish and Palestinian Israeli youth and university students to pursue social and political change through bi-national partnership.

Sadaka-Reut was founded in 1983 by a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israeli university students who shared the vision of a better future for both communities. Our grassroots dialogue and leadership development programs seek to address the deep-seated injustices caused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and create a new generation of young activists promoting a shared, equal and just society.

We seek to provide our participating youth with adequate knowledge on the conflict and its history and the necessary tools and experience to engage in social and political change initiatives. We truly believe that youth and young adults have the capacity to influence and change the future of relations between Jews and Palestinians in Israel.

Through the years, Sadaka-Reut worked with thousands of youths and gained a strong reputation as an organization that has expertise both in bi-national political education and in youth activism. It is known as one of the few truly bi-national movements in Israel, and even more so as a genuine bi-national community that develops and nurtures activists with a shared political analysis and vision. We are proud to find our graduates involved in social and political change for many years of their lives, both at Sadaka-Reut and in other organizations and movements that promote similar values and goals.
On behalf of our staff, we are proud to present you with the Sadaka-Reut Arab-Jewish Youth Partnership 2015-2016 Annual Report. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff and our volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

The activity year started with a wave of violence and tension that made it difficult to recruit youth to join our activity groups, as well as to engage schools and universities as a bi-national organization. The escalation of violence and incitement makes it harder to create partnerships between Arabs and Jews, and challenges us to ask how can we best deal with these attacks, racism, fear and hatred that prevail in our society.

As a bi-national, educational organization, we view partnership as the only way forward. We have learned that the way to deal with the difficulties is to use this reality as an opportunity to discuss and question these issues as a staff and as a community. By engaging in political discussions as a part of our work, we can begin to analyze and understand the thoughts and fears of others and of ourselves. In doing so, we can translate this understanding into our work with youth, creating space to have challenging discussion in a productive and intentional manner. In order to create change outside, we must first ensure that change is happening inside the walls of our offices.

Furthering the process of our organizational learning, we held several strategic planning sessions attended by staff, facilitators, and board members. The question we focused on throughout the meetings was "how can Sadaka-Reut promote social-political change through bi-national youth partnership using uni-national and bi-national work, considering the reality of escalation of racism in society?"

During the strategic planning, we marked several major strategic directions. The first is increasing the visibility of Sadaka-Reut, through the production of educational conferences in cooperation with organizations doing similar work. The second is to strengthen and stabilize our connections with partner organizations who share our pedagogical vision. Our first and most exciting collaboration with AJEEC (Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation) is an outcome of the strategic planning process. This year, our Community in Action (CiA) project will take place in partnership with the AJEEC organization and the Israeli Scouts. We will be running courses at the Gordon College of Education in Haifa and at the David Yellin Academic College of Education in Jerusalem- both in collaboration with the Friendship Village (Reut-Sadaka). We will also be collaborating with the Levinsky Garden Library, an organization that works with the asylum seekers in South Tel Aviv. We will be opening two youth groups in South Tel Aviv and will adapt our program, in collaboration with community leaders, to fit the unique needs of children of refugees here in Israel.

As part of another direction, we will renew and strengthen our work with and for our target audiences (the communities we work with). Finally, the fourth target is expanding our network and influence with partners and educators. In the coming year we will work with educators to build a web portal for teachers and educators that provides pedagogical tools for dealing with political and social topics, such as racism, in the classroom. We are happy to present to you our annual report. We chose to write this report in first person through the perspectives and experiences over the past year of our dedicated staff members.

With love and solidarity,
Rawan and Ayelet
The Building a Culture of Peace project is a unique initiative that seeks to raise a generation of young people who are socially and politically aware and involved in their communities. Aged 14-17, most of the youth come from socially disadvantaged and politically marginalized communities. The goal of the project is to encourage youth to critically examine injustices and racism, and to initiate and participate in efforts to secure social and political change. The long-term program includes participation in local youth groups, attendance at bi-national activities that allow for constructive and respectful encounters between young Palestinians and Jews, and engagement in local activism.
Recruitment this past year was difficult, as the violent reality of October 2015 had a direct impact on our work. We arrived to schools and community centers with determination, enthusiasm and a belief in the work we do. Even so, many individuals and groups were unwilling to even hear about our programming once they heard the bilingual name of our organization. I started to worry that we would not be able to open a single Jewish youth group.

Throughout the recruitment process, students made statements like “what are you, leftists?”, and “but I’m a racist”. However, it was precisely because of this harsh reality that I understood how critical our work with young people is. We went full steam ahead and we were able to open two Jewish groups, in Azor and in Netanya.

Throughout the year, groups discussed issues of personal and social identity, belonging, familiarity with the place where they live, and social issues such as religion, gender, and equal opportunity. Facilitators provided them with tools to become social and political activists and to effect social change. One of the most significant moments of the year happened during a two-day uni-national seminar, where Jewish participants met members of the Palestinian youth groups. Both groups were participating in their own seminar, but they decided on their own to engage in discussion with each other, holding a difficult, political conversation. As the project’s coordinator, I felt that the seminar was very significant in terms of the educational process.

Their exposure to the ‘Other’ that we had been talking about was a completely new experience for many participants. This led to a better understanding of the content that we discussed and to a deeper connection to the facilitators. Over time I realized that we had many successes along the way, and that we in educational work are long-distance runners.

The short term workshops in school were equally challenging, and facilitators were often met with difficult comments. However, many participants also reported learning about subject for the first time and having a positive experience. One of the Jewish participants wrote: “I think it is very important that these issues are discussed!” He also wrote that he would like to continue dealing with the issues raised, such as the racial tensions between Ashkenazi (white) and Mizrahi (Arab) Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Another added that she has never dealt with these issues before and that “everything was interesting, important and relevant. Way to go!”

There were a number of small successes that demonstrated to me that we are on the right path. This year reminded me that while our work is not easy, it is worthwhile and of great importance for our future.
The Palestinian groups have gone through a long process of learning about their identity, their surrounding environment, and their cities or villages. We held a two-day long seminar in which all Palestinian groups participated and discussed social issues like gender and religion. During the seminar, the Palestinian groups met the Jewish groups, who were also there for their uni-national seminar about social issues within Israeli society. At the seminar the Palestinian and Jewish groups bonded and talked to each other. It was very moving and exciting to see how they managed to connect and speak openly.

What has excited me the most this year is the process that the Jaffa group went through. The group included nine girls from Jaffa. Even though Arabic is the participants’ mother tongue, they were not completely fluent in it because they have studied either in Jewish schools or in foreign private schools. Despite the value we attach to speaking Arabic, the facilitator and I decided that we would initially get in touch with them in Hebrew so that they would feel secure and included. We also decided to hold the group meetings in our office at Sadaka-Reut. These changes contributed to develop the participants’ sense of belonging to the project and the organization. Gradually, they started to use Arabic more and developed a sense of their Arab identity.

In the first few sessions of the project, the participants expressed negative feelings towards the Arab community, such as “Arabs are weak and passive”. They also expressed such opinions regarding women in Arab society. After the year-long education process, which included sessions on gender, religion, national and personal identity, the participants decided that their initiative would be related to gender issues. They aimed their activism at women’s harassments by men. They also decided that the stickers and the flyers that they were going to distribute in the streets would be written in Arabic. I was very proud to see the girls walking in the streets, handing out the stickers and explaining the purpose of their initiative. I was equally as proud to see they change they had undergone throughout the year.

Sajeda – Palestinian Co-Coordinator
School Workshops and Tours

Rawan - Palestinian Co-Director

“You don’t look Arab”, “How is it that there are Arab Christians?”, “you’re one of us”, “you’re educated and not like them”. These statements are just a taste of my daily life as a Palestinian in society during interaction with Jews. It took me a long time to understand why people say these things, and I had to ask myself what is the best way to answer? I’m not alone; there are many people who deal with much more racist and hurtful comments than this. The question I am constantly asking myself is if I want to be part of the problem or part of the solution?

These comments are the result of having a completely separate school systems based on ethnicity, a disconnect that exists also culturally and emotionally.

We are surrounded by one-sided media that only brings a singular voice to the public, and a public school system that teaches only one narrative without mentioning the complex identities that exist within this society. **We, as informal educators, bring the other voices, the critique, and the narrative not otherwise heard.**

In workshops and on the tours we gave this year, we made it a point to expose the youth to other narratives, to bring the sides of stories not usually presented to them. Considering the starting point is the disconnect mentioned above, we recognize that we are challenging these youth to think critically and to ask questions not easily answered. With every tour, we must keep in mind that we are engaging in a process that is different from that of the school system, and after our activity with them is over, they will continue the process being taught and formalized at school.

I dealt with this tension by putting on my Arab, non-Western glasses while working with the youth, and it helps me to realize that even if my time with them is short, I **have the opportunity to introduce them to an identity they have never met before.**

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**School Workshops**

- 944 students exposed to social and political contents, and intrigued to critically examine reality and engage in social change
- Partnerships were maintained or created with 17 educational partners, including high-schools, community centers, youth movements and more.
- 91 workshops were executed in the high-schools and with other educational partners
One of the most exciting aspects of the program for me was working on recognition and history as a group in a bi-national framework. One section of our educational program focuses on the Nakba. During our sessions, participants learned about the occupation of Palestine and the establishment of Israel and gained a deeper understanding about 1948 and the events surrounding it. Participants were exposed to information from various sources, including testimonies of Palestinians and Jews who lived here during 1948, history books, and documents from the Zionist archive about the occupation of Jaffa.

Sadaka-Reut’s model encourages the participants to plan and implement a social initiative after each learning unit in the way they see fit. After the tour and the exposure to documents and testimonies, the participants decided to plan and implement an alternative-information tour at different sites in Jaffa that would show the hidden history of the city. Each station included pictures and information about Jaffa before and in the years following 1948 and showed how the city went from a cultural center in the region to a neglected neighborhood next to Tel-Aviv.

The participants went through an amazing process where the Palestinian participants became proud of their history and their identity, and the Jewish participants felt the need to take recognize the harm caused in the past, as well as to work as partners with the Palestinians for a present and future where facts are exposed and dealt with. Working on this activity empowered the group and clarified to the participants the importance of partnership and activism, the two principles of the organization.

As a Palestinian activist, I was so proud of the participants, and I consider them to be real partners in shaping a just and equal reality. With such groups and participants, I believe one day our cause will triumph, and we will be able to live in a space where values of justice and peace are both appreciated and embraced.

Community in Action

Community in Action is a volunteering and leadership development program for Palestinian and Jewish high school graduates and students aged 18-22. The participants volunteer in informal educational frameworks in Jaffa, mentoring Jewish and Palestinian children and youth of marginalized communities. With a rich educational process, the project creates a cadre of young committed, bi-national activists and leaders who have the tools, knowledge and capacity to promote social political change and the vision of a just society.

Rula - Palestinian Co-Coordinator
Community in Action

Dina - Jewish Co-Coordinator

As Jewish and Palestinian participants became more aware of Jaffa's political and social reality they initiated a number of campaigns that addressed the disenfranchisement of Jaffa. In the Jabalia neighborhood, one of the most marginalized neighborhoods in Jaffa, the purposeful lack of municipal services causes the negligence of public spaces and the accumulation of garbage on the streets. Therefore, The group decided to arrange a garbage disposal event, in cooperation with the neighborhood’s committee, involving Jabalia's youth. The purpose of the act was not just to clean, but also to state that we do not accept the municipality's disregard of Jabalia's population, and to frame the cleaning an act of resistance to this oppression.

As facilitators, we also initiated a discussion in the group about how to approach this idea, because it was important to avoid coming across as condescending to the local Palestinian population. This encouraged them to first consult the neighborhood committee of Jabalia about the true needs of the residents, and to clarify that we are critical to the municipality's policy, not the people themselves.

This discussion was an example to the educational process we aimed for in Sadaka-Reut. The great deal of thought one must put into a bi-national partnership, and the sensitivity to the other’s culture and politics. Our goal was not only to create change within society, but also to constantly make sure that we meet we work with community members to address these needs, and do not make decisions independent of them.

For me, working in a bi-national organization is a cause for itself, which requires a lot of investment but also gives me a lot of hope. I believe that political and social struggle is never complete without the Palestinian voice and point of view. I think of Israeli-Palestinian partnership as the foundation to a more just and equal reality and bi-national education is the way to bring this reality a little closer.
Fatmeh - Palestinian Co-Coordinator

We began our year at the Rupin Academic College with 10 male Palestinian students and five Jewish students (three male and two female). The first meetings with the group were very positive and participants felt that there was space for them to express themselves; however, this unfortunately did not prevent four of the Jewish participants to end their participation due to the fact that they felt uncomfortable being a minority within the group. Our efforts to discuss their feelings with them and to persuade them to continue went unheard.

Their decision to leave the group led me to feel rejected as a Palestinian, a sentiment also shared by the Palestinian participants. This feeling of being part of a minority is a constant reality for me, but I have not chosen to run away from my academic studies, my workplaces, or life in general because of it. It both amused and frustrated me that these four participants, when faced with being the minority within a supervised and academic environment were unwilling to cope with the discomfort and did not hesitate to leave. However, one Jewish participant decided to stay. She sat down with the Palestinian participants and expressed regret that the other Jewish participants left, and also asked if they would be willing to continue the process with her. The Palestinian participants shared her frustration that the other Jewish participants left. Abed, one of the participants said that "I wanted us to be a bi-national group that can create and implement activities together and to be able to talk with one another honestly and without barriers. Unfortunately, the other participants decided to drop out and I feel that this was a missed opportunity". All the Palestinians appreciated Maayan’s decision to stay and accepted her into the group—an act that made me, as their facilitator, very proud.
During the seminar, the participants in the group at Rupin College met the participants of the group in Achva College, as well as our three interns from Achva College and Tel Aviv University. The two days of the seminar were very intense, and participants from Rupin felt very comfortable expressing themselves politically and honestly explained their hardships as Arab citizens in an Israeli country. They described their ordeals as well as what racism meant to them. They were able to make a connection with all the participants of the seminar, the end result of which was a boost to their personal strength.

The seminar was so successful that Irit and I decided to cancel one of the workshops we had planned. We had noticed that during one of the breaks, the students had organized themselves into bi-national groups and were honestly discussing their fears with one another. One of the participants said that this was the first time she had met and was speaking with an Arab who spoke back to her. She said that she had always been afraid of Arabs and stayed away from them, mainly due to the education which she had received which deepens and fortifies feelings of hatred and racism. They also held very complex arguments and we were positively surprised when we realized that they could make their arguments and discuss with one another in a respectful tone and without unnecessary criticisms. This experience was so powerful that they kept mentioning it during discussions throughout the rest of the year.
Our year began at Achva College with 22 participants. For most of them, sitting together in a room was already considered radical. It reminded me how rare it is to see such gatherings on campuses in Israel. The participants were eager to learn about the other group, but this curiosity was accompanied by a certain degree of fear and uncertainty. During the year, we delved into a variety of topics that all had to do with the reality of our lives in this land. We discussed the history of this land through our own personal narratives, those of our parents and grandparents, and finally, those of our peoples. The discussions during these meetings were often complicated and difficult for our participants. When one of our Palestinian participants told of the expulsion of her grandparents from their homes by Jewish authorities in 1948, Jewish participants reacted harshly, because it was different from and even negated the narrative they had been taught in school, “a land without a people for a people without a land”. Following this encounter, we decided to meet in uni-national groups to enable the participants to speak freely about their feelings, and the Jewish participants reflected on why it was so difficult for them to hear the Palestinian narrative. Their answers to their own questions were very brave and honest: “I have a wall. I’m so angry” said one participant, while another said that she thought that she did not have enough knowledge on the subject but that she also felt that she was raised to hate Palestinians. Our participants were honest enough to admit that hatred, anger, and fear were some of the feelings that had influenced them greatly throughout their childhood and adolescence.

The Palestinian group on the other hand concentrated their discussion on the difficulty to act and fight for a change of reality from their current positions. They spoke of the fear that they had of the police and Jewish citizens, and the fear of speaking in Arabic in a public spaces, especially at a time when every Palestinian is considered to be a potential knife attacker. In an effort to help them work through their feeling of helplessness, Fatmeh, the Palestinian co-facilitator, spoke to them about the different Palestinian protest movements and local struggles, bringing up the example of the Bedouin women who live close to our participants.

Towards the end of the academic year, the groups began thinking about their initiatives and eventually decided to design and distribute a flyer with quotes from the participants. The quotes stressed the importance of having bi-national groups on campus that create a space for discussion, and allow the people of the different backgrounds to get to know one another. The flyers were printed with Arabic on one side and Hebrew on the other and the participants distributed them in between classes, encouraging fellow students to join a similar group in the following year.

It was positive to see how in only 6 months, participants went from fearful of sitting together to now working together as a group on campus to try to bring about change. I am hopeful that this is only their first step on a long path, on which they will be marching both together and separately in order to influence others and change the reality of their lives and those around them.
Becca - Monitoring and Evaluation
Resource Development Coordinator

Joining the staff in the middle of the year, my first encounter with Sadaka-Reut as a staff member was during a two-day staff development training in April.

I have worked previously in bi-national offices, but bi-national partnership was often not the focus of the organizations.

**During the seminar, I recognized the commitment that Sadaka-Reut staff has to moving forward as a society based on this partnership.** While many people choose to not discuss politics or political matters in which there is likely to be disagreement, the staff specifically spoke about these issues that affect us as individuals, Arabs and Jews, and citizens of Israel. How do we see society working when it is based on partnership? How do we see the state dealing with the Right of Return (for Palestinians) and the Law of Return (for Jews)? Though there were many points on which people disagreed, the levels of empathy and respect shown to one another proved to me that Sadaka-Reut’s pledge to create a more just society is indeed genuine.

During this training, an educator in the hand in hand bi-national school system came to talk with us and his greatest point is still fresh in my mind: “We do not have to agree on or see the same future goal in order to start working together today.” In Sadaka-Reut, this is our commitment.

I also have seen through staff training how we make sure to learn from the history of others. Over the summer, six staff members and facilitators were sent to Northern Ireland to learn about their conflict and to understand how we can use similar tools to overcome our own. Since we can’t expect staff and facilitators to work with youth and deal with these issues if they themselves have not engaged deeply on these topics, **we first and foremost create a learning and training space where they can ask and sometimes answer these questions for themselves.**
Alumni Event

Karin - Administrative Coordinator

This year we held the second annual alumni event, and invited all the alumni of Sadaka-Reut programs. It was a night of re-uniting with friends and catching up with the organization’s activities. Most importantly, we offered the participants a few hours of comfort among those who hold the same ideals of equality and justice as they do. For me, this event offered an optimistic boost and a refreshed understanding of why I chose to get involved in conflict resolution and make it my life’s goal.

We heard from various Sadaka-Reut alumni that they had continued to be activists long after they left SR, and continued to contribute back to the organization whenever they can; however, the moment that stood out most for me and for many of my co-workers was the speech by Urjuan Masarwa, a young teenage girl from Tayibe. She spoke about gender inequality and her understanding of how wrong it is, and it just inspired us to the point of crying. She essentially renewed our conviction of how necessary the work we do with youth at Sadaka-Reut is, and proved that we are on the right track.

One of the main purposes of the evening was to come up with ideas for a continuation program or framework for alumni who would like to continue their activities with Sadaka-Reut. We asked them all to write down their vision for the alumni programming and for specific actions and activities, which they then stuck on a big sticky wall. After the staff had sorted through all the notes and grouped similar events and activities together, we asked the attending alumni to get together in 6 smaller circles. We offered each group a list of activities that had been written down and asked them to come up with a realistic action plan. This activity offered the alumni an active role in deciding on the future content of the alumni programming and helped us, the SR staff, to identify their needs and points of interest.

The night ended with food and dancing, and I found myself playing Frisbee (rather unsuccessfully, as I kept stopping the Frisbee with my forehead) with the latest Community in Action participants outside the venue. As the administrative coordinator, the nature of my work at Sadaka-Reut does not enable to me come in direct contact with our participants often and I am grateful for such nights where I get to meet and appreciate the youth we work with.
2015-2016 in Numbers

10 Staff members
15 Facilitators and interns
30 Educational partners
63 Participants aged 7-16 in afterschool clubs
100 Participants aged 14-26 in long-term groups
944 Participants aged 14-17 in short-term workshops

7 Public outreach campaigns and initiatives developed and implemented by participants, reaching hundreds of people in their local communities

Activities held by the academic year, from September to August, through 3 Projects
★ Building a Culture of Peace
★ Community in Action
★ Partners in Shaping Reality

Sadaka-Reut’s staff, volunteers and participants are female and male, Palestinian, Druze, Armenian, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim.

Income Streams

73,237.92 ILS
Individual Donors

48,984 ILS
Services

1,511,974.69 ILS
Trusts and Foundations
Expenditure by Project

Total: ILS 1,609,543

- ILS 29,209 Supporting Activities
- ILS 478,239 Community in Action
- ILS 634,347 Building a Culture of Peace
- ILS 95,650 Team Educational Development
- ILS 171,905 General Operation Expenses
- ILS 200,194 Partners in Shaping Reality

Expenditure by Type

- Travel: ILS 15,563.61
- Equipment: ILS 8,489
- Services: ILS 120,603
- Local Office: ILS 130,038
- Program Activities and Coordination: ILS 1,334,881

Annual Report 2015-2016
Our work will not be possible without the inspired, dedicated and generous people who work, volunteer, partner and support us individually and organizationally all over the world. We would like to thank them, and recognize our donors.

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Please post the check to New Israel Fund, 26 Enford Street, London W1H 2DD, UK.

For a US tax deduction, make out a check to the New Israel Fund, write on the memo line/attach a note that the check is for Sadaka-Reut | Arab-Jewish Youth Partnership - NIF ID 5805. The minimum donation accepted by NIF (US) is of $100.
Please post the check to New Israel Fund, P.O.Box 91588, Washington DC, 20090-1588 USA.

To join our Friends Association and contribute 30 ILS per month through your credit card, please contact us at info@reutsadaka.org or call +972 (0)3 5182336.