



International Center for Conciliation

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Pilot Projects

2004 – 2007

Yaad-Miaar

In the first two rounds of dialogue in 2004 in the area of Yaad-Miaar, residents of the Jewish settlement of Yaad, which is built on the land of the destroyed Arab village Miaar, came together with Arab descendants of that village to address the tensions between their two groups. In each round of dialogue, participants followed the Historical Conciliation methodology format to overcome their respective individual and collective memories.

In 2007, the second round of Yaad-Miaar dialogues took place with a new group of participants. Participants included Jews and Arabs, whose group was made up of Miaaris and outsiders.

A third session brought together the participants from both the first and second rounds to share their experiences with each other. This time, participants included their whole families in the process, enriching the experience. Additionally, tours of the old Miaar lands were held for Yaad families living in the new section who are unfamiliar with the land and its history.

Successes include:

- Leaders of the two communities proposed to build a protection fence around a Muslim cemetery within the jurisdiction of the Jewish community, an initiative that had remained unthinkable since the establishment of the State of Israel. The fence was successfully completed in August of 2009.
- Regular group meetings to ensure that new tensions do not arise
- Formation of joint committees to oversee and implement four projects:
 - Joint cultural, culinary, and sports activities, family-to-family meetings, the creation of Jewish - Arab recreational centers;
 - Planning a fully integrated Israeli-Jewish and Israeli Arab community of houses on 350 dunam (\cong 4 dunam/acre) between Yaad and Miar;
 - The creation of an archive to preserve the history of the two communities;
 - Training the participants to join the group of facilitators/mediators who are trying to promote a model for other disputes.

Hadar

In 2006, a conciliation program was initiated in Hadar, an urban center of Haifa where ethnic tensions run high. ICfC worked towards alleviating inter-communal tensions between the Jewish

and Arab residents. Since the first round of dialogues, the dialogue workshop participants have initiated co-existence projects due to the positive rapport that was established in the meetings.

Successes include:

- Endurance of newly established Arab-Jewish relationships despite more than a month of heavy bombardment of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim neighborhoods during the Lebanese War of 2006. Participants expressed their worry for one another during the days of chaos and danger.
- Formation of joint sports activities, multi-ethnic choirs, and multi-ethnic cooking classes
- Municipality of Haifa invited ICfC to continue its work on inter-communal tensions between Jewish and Arab residents, and agreed to fund half of the second phase of the work in Hadar

Pekiin

In May 2008, the first workshops began in Pekiin, an area with a population composed of both Israeli Jews and Druze. Since 2000, tensions have been building and have oftentimes exploded into riots and violent conflict. The roots of the conflict stem from misconceptions of the Druze status as Arab or non-Arab and their treatment as second class citizens.

ICfC initiated an action-oriented dialogue process, which enabled participants from both sides to learn, understand and share the other side's frustration, fears, angers, needs and hopes, and create joint projects to change their reality. The first dialogue session focused on clearly expressing the tensions, fears and stereotypes that existed, as well as sharing personal narratives to tell the real stories from the differing groups. By the end of the session, participants began to understand the complexities of the region and asymmetry of the identities that exist there.

Successes include:

- Additional dialogues occurring til August '09.
- Jews and Arabs of this community now lead their own meetings
- The group is initiating an Arab language study course
- The group is bringing together regional Jewish and Arab heads of councils and municipalities to produce a joint festival

Other Past Work in Israel:

In addition to these pilot projects, in May 2004, ICfC partnered with the Israel Center for Negotiation and Mediation in bringing together 22 Israeli Jews, Palestinians, Druze, and Bedouins for advanced training in mediating historic narratives, preparing them to facilitate the process of reconciling the Jewish-Palestinian conflict.