

Schools Across Borders

Israeli Student Visit 2011

Final Evaluation

1. Do you feel that the pre-visit sessions helped you to prepare for the visit to Ireland? (State what you did)

- Yes, they did help. Before the sessions we didn't actually know anything about the program, about Ireland. During those meetings we've gotten to know each other and bond as a group. We also brought up some difficult questions that the Irish students might ask us and talked about it. It really got me more confident about myself and surer about my participation in this project.
- Yes, it did. We got to know each other and it helped me to learn a bit more about the conflict, the discussions with Erez were great because he taught me a lot and helped preparing.
- We had meetings with history teachers, with students that took part of this project last year, with a drama teacher and a parents meeting. It helped me because they helped me to prepare myself, and I learned important history facts that helped me in the discussions.
- The pre-visit sessions were very helpful from learning historical facts which were vital to our discussion in Ireland plus watching the movie 'In the name of the father' gave us a general idea of the conflict in Ireland and I felt that all the sessions were helpful except for the one with Mr. Agas.
- Yes it helped me with my knowledge and social interaction between the members of the group (civics, history, culture, social interaction situation).
- I feel that the pre-visit session was essential and helpful since I was used the information and knowledge the teachers shared with us. The preparation was very handy when we were asked hard questions or historical questions.
- We talked to students who went to Ireland last year. We learned about the conflict in the last few years and about the Irish conflict.

2. What were your main expectations for the visit to Ireland?

- My main expectations for the visit to Ireland were to understand and see for myself, if the Northern Irish conflict really is similar to the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict, gain confidence and express myself, and meeting new people and a new culture, and to obviously have fun.
- My expectations were to learn how to be confident talking and explaining my views. And to see what other people think and know about Israel and the conflict. I also wanted to learn about their conflict and their solution to it. And to have fun and see Ireland.

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- I wanted to learn about the conflict in Ireland, to learn from the Irish students about it, to learn what they think about our conflict. I wanted to teach them about Israel and to explain about it. I wanted to share my views, and to meet many people with different opinions.
- My expectations were to leave Ireland feeling like I did something, change something and said everything I wanted to say, and learn new things from the Irish students and of course to have fun!
- To have interesting discussions with the Irish students. To learn more about the Irish conflict and how it was solved.
- To be honest I tried not to expect anything so I could stay more open minded, fit myself to the existing situations. I did expect the discussions to be challenging, and they were and that's good because I wanted to see how I am going to deal with those challenges.
- To explain and clarify my views.

3. Do you feel now that they were achievable?

- Yes! The trip was perfect for me. I feel like it couldn't have gone more well than it went. I learned a lot, I achieved all my expectations and I had a lot of fun.
- I now know that the aims were all achievable and I've even found out things about myself that I didn't know before. I think I've gained confidence, got to know the Irish conflict and found out that it is very similar to my country's conflict.
- I've learned a lot about the two conflicts, about Israel and about myself. I met so many great people, and it was amazing to talk to them, and to answer so many questions.
- Yes they were and achieved too.
- Yes
- The discussions were challenging, I was asked some difficult questions that I wasn't quite sure how to reply to. But I did manage to answer in the most honest and also clear way that I could - the most important thing for me! I wanted the Irish students to see that I am making an effort to be honest, that I care and am not just bluffing.
- Most of the discussions were quite good, but I didn't learn much more about the Irish conflict.

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4. What did you expect to be the main challenges/fears?

- Well for me it was the English. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to say all the things I wanted to say in the best way I can, and also that my view about the issue is different than the other people in the group.
- I expected hard questions that I would not be able to answer, students who will not be willing to listen to my opinion.
- My biggest fear was to deal with hard questions, and more than that – not being able to answer them because it would be too difficult for me, emotionally.
- Being unconfident and afraid to talk. Travelling alone without my family. People not understanding me and my views, a lack of knowledge.
- Being asked emotional and difficult questions, lack of knowledge from the Irish students.
- I was afraid that the students will ask me really hard questions, and that I will be not able to answer it. I was afraid that they would not be interested in the subject, and I was afraid to come and talk to strangers about subjects that I don't know so much about. I also thought that my English is not good enough for this.
- That when I will have a discussion with another Israeli friend, I will not let him speak and that I will argue with my Israeli partner.

5. Did any of them arise? If so, how did you deal with them?

- No, after the first meeting I understand that my English is not going to be a problem, I said exactly what I wanted, I listened to other's views and said my view and the Irish students listened to both sides.
- The Irish students are very polite and most of them were interested, and after the first meeting I had confidence to continue to talk in the other meetings. They didn't have hard questions, I could deal with all the questions that they asked me. And, I discovered that my English is not so bad.
- On the first day I was not confident, but after a while talking, I became confident. I felt great travelling alone. I had no lack of knowledge because they had lack of knowledge.
- There were some hard questions, but I usually tried to answer them, and sometimes I would just explain it is a hard question for me, and that I have never thought if it before. I also felt that sometimes the students got bored but then I would just change the subject.
- The Irish students didn't know much about the conflict in Israel, therefore their questions were about basic things like historical facts. I was asked some difficult questions, and even though I wasn't sure how to answer them, I just tried to explain what I feel about these matters, to be honest about what I think. It was hard but I decided that I have to prove myself that I'm capable of telling people my thoughts and feelings.

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- The Irish students knew very little, so we spent a lot of time explaining the history and the basic facts of the conflict.
- I was annoyed by many of my partner's answers so I just swallowed the anger and disagreed quietly, a thing I don't usually do. At most of the discussions, I was alone.

6. Did you feel that there were enough briefing and evaluation sessions for your group in Ireland?

- Yes, and they were very helpful, they helped me to know how I was getting along. It also helped the group share their feelings.
- Yes, there were many evaluation sessions that really helped me to prepare myself.
- Yes, I do believe that the best briefing is done when you actually start talking and getting to know the kids.
- I feel that there were just enough evaluation sessions for the group, and I found them helpful.
- Yes, at many discussions I felt like I was thrown into deep water with no early warning but later I thought that was good because I managed to speak more honestly that way.
- Yes
- I do think there were enough evaluations and briefing sessions. The first session it was about technical stuff and information about the project, and I felt that it was a bit too long. But the other sessions were great because they were more meaningful and emotional because we've talked about the discussions and we were more sure about ourselves and more involved.

7. What is/are your general opinion/s of the Irish school groups?

- The Irish kids were very nice and polite. I enjoyed talking with them. They listened very well and I'm sure that I will keep in touch with some of them.
- The students were very interested (in general most of them). They had a lot of interest in our lives and how we feel and that made the discussions more interesting and personal. They were very nice.
- They were very friendly and nice. Some were more interested some less but as a student I could understand.
- They were all very polite and friendly. More preparation is necessary.

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- Basically most of the groups were interested and willing to listen. Some of the groups were shy but most of them were curious.
- Most of the Irish students didn't know much, but they were very interested in the subject, and they asked good questions. They are very polite and they were so nice to me and to all of us so it was great to discuss with them. I wish I had more time with each group.
- Some groups were quite knowledgeable and some groups were not at all! Because of the different preparation and different learning skills, some schools were better than the others.

8. How did you find the format of working within small groups?

- I think that the format of working within a small group was the best because it can be more personal. There is more chance that the kids will listen, you can more easily find subjects that will interest them, and you have more opportunities to speak.
- Really good. It made the discussions personal, quiet and it also gave all of the students opportunities to ask questions and speak their mind and also for us to explain ourselves better.
- I liked this format. This way we have the chance to talk more and the Irish students can ask more questions. It's much easier for me to talk in a small group and we have the chance to get to know each other better this way.
- I found the small group format very comfortable and nicer than working in big groups. In the small groups the students had asked a lot more questions than in the bigger ones and could really express their own thoughts.
- Very good. It gave time for everyone to talk and ask their questions.
- I found the format as a great way of having the discussions. I think the Israeli students need to be in pairs.
- Well it depends. Some students preferred small groups and some preferred larger groups but I think you learn best in small groups.

9. Did you feel that you were able to express your opinions in the group discussions?

- Yes every time!
- Yes, absolutely. Mostly because there were a lot of personal questions. And also because the Irish students showed a lot of interest which encouraged me to answer the best way that I can and make the effort to explain my views.
- Yes

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- Yes, in the smaller groups I could express my opinions in a better way, but also in the bigger groups it was ok.
- Yes, even though the lack of knowledge left very little time and room for opinions.
- Yes, some groups did not have enough information for me to feel comfortable saying my opinions but at 90% of the time I gave my opinion
- I did feel that I could express my own point of view in the group discussions, although I didn't always do that.

10. Did you find any questions difficult to answer? *If Yes, please state which questions*

- No there were good questions but I felt that I could answer them all.
- No
- Not really. The Irish students didn't have enough knowledge to ask me very difficult questions.
- Most of the questions weren't so difficult to answer, but there were some hard questions, such as 'What is the solution to this conflict? '.
- I did get a few hard questions, but I only remember one of them – 'Do you think the conflict will ever end? How and what would be the solution? '.
- I remember only one difficult question which was 'Is there a majority in Israel who are willing to take a risk for peace? '.
- There is one question that was very difficult for me to answer which was, 'Lets say that you are a combat soldier in the army and there is a war and you are being ordered strictly to shoot someone and kill him, would you do it? '. I was asked this question after explaining that disobeying an order in the army can cause you being out in jail.

11. Do you think your answers helped the Irish students to have a better understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

- Yes, I think that I answered their questions in the best way I can, and that they learned a lot from me about the conflict.
- I think the Irish students did understand a bit more about the complicated conflict, and I feel that I brightened up some things for them.
- Yes
- Yes, I hope. I feel that I gave everything I have to give, and I'm sure they know more about the conflict now.

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- Yes, but they need more factual knowledge.
- I think they did, I hope so. But I did make it clear to them that there are a lot of point of views regarding the conflict and that I'm not able to explain all of them.
- Yes I did, they did not know a lot so I gave them the basic information

12. Which group discussions did you appreciate the most and why?

- I appreciated the Caritas College school discussion the most since the girls were just fascinated about everything we were talking about and asked personal questions also. That showed they understood that I am more than a girl in a conflict.
- The best discussions were in Sancta Maria and St. Dominics. They were so nice and interested and they had good questions. They had so much to say and ask.
- Sancta Maria, because the girls remind me of myself. They were listening and asking good questions and they seemed to really care and to understand the issue.
- The best discussions were the most challenging ones. Those ones were at Caritas College, Sancta Maria, St. Dominics and St. Kevins.
- Oatlands College, St. Dominics and King's Hospital School because they knew a lot about what we talked about.
- The discussions in Hazelwood College were very inspiring and Marian College was a real flowing discussion. Caritas College were really friendly students and it was really fun.
- Any group that had good, hard questions already made. Any group that was interested for real and not just someone that had to be there.

13. Do you think the reflections and feedback sections were useful and effective?

- Yes, it helped us and the Irish students to summarize everything, and it was important to do it. It was also important to hear from the students what they learned from us during the discussion.
- Yes, I think it went great. It helped organize everything and hear what the Irish students learned and what every group talked about. I liked it that Darren trusted us and let us do the feedback ourselves. I think it went really good.
- I think the reflections and feedbacks were useful since we could see if the students understood us completely and didn't get the wrong message.
- I think they were necessary especially for us to be able to hear how we did in the discussions and if we were successful in explaining ourselves.

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- Yes, but they should include more time for us to talk about what we did and how we felt about it.
- Yes, I think you should add Political view to the feedback.
- I think the reflections were good and effective but I feel the feedback sometimes was unnecessary.

14. Do you have any other comments on the group discussions?

- No, it went great.
- I felt that I understood many things about my views from going over them again and again in the group discussions.
- The amount of kids should be equal in each group, and mixed girls and boys.
- In most of the schools, we didn't have enough time. In some schools the discussions were good, and in others it wasn't so great. But it wasn't bad in any of them.
- They should be allowed to ask any question they want.
- I think that we didn't have enough time in the schools. It felt like we were starting to get to know the other students during the discussions, and then just jumping out after 20 minutes. I also felt that the introduction to the two schools in Belfast were way too long, it didn't leave us time for the small group discussions.
- N/A

15. What were the benefits to you of the tour in Belfast?

- The town in Belfast made me realise how similar both conflicts are. It also gave me hope that there can be a solution for this type of conflict. Seeing the mixed school was also inspiring and moving, seeing both sides of the conflict studying together.
- I learned a lot from the students in Belfast, and it was different from the other discussions. It was important to visit there, because you can see the murals and to really understand this conflict and to learn about their life.
- In Belfast we learned a lot about the conflict in Ireland and Northern Ireland and I think it was an important day, and we understand more the reasons we came to Ireland.
- It gave me a lot of hope and I understand much more about the Irish conflict because of that tour.
- Seeing the murals was shocking! Full of emotion, pain and also hope. Combining this with meeting the Protestant and Catholic students in their schools was incredible. I didn't

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feel it at the beginning but then I realized how bad the conflict was there, and how normal and calm (almost calm) everything is now.

- Seeing the murals and comparing them to the graffiti. It is like watching the healing process.
- It was great to see the wall and all of the murals in Belfast.

16. How did you find the group discussion with the Belfast students?

- Very hopeful and inspiring and fun.
- I think it went okay and like Dublin there were nice and less nice students. But it was important to meet the Belfast students.
- I found the group discussions in Belfast interesting, but it felt like the students weren't interested in us as much as we were interested in them. So we asked them more questions than they asked us.
- In Hazelwood the discussion went well, but it was so short. I didn't say all the things that I wanted to say. In Our Lady of Mercy, the girls weren't so interested or they were just too shy, so it wasn't so great. They didn't ask any questions.
- Very short, the students there weren't really into the discussion.
- Not very good. The students were nice but very shy and not cooperative. I didn't learn a lot from the students in Belfast but it was great to see Protestants and Catholics together.
- The discussions were very short. Therefore I didn't feel like I'm getting anything meaningful out of it. I was pretty disappointed actually.

17. What was the highlight of the trip to Belfast?

- Observing the murals. I could actually feel the mixed feelings that were reflected from it.
- I feel that the highlight of the trip to Belfast was actually the train trip in which we really bonded with the host and Dundalk students.
- I liked the wall murals especially the graffiti.
- Seeing the murals was good, and also the train trip.
- Seeing the last mural.
- Standing in the cold rain and looking at the murals on the walls, and also the wall with Israel, Berlin and so on.

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- My discussion at Hazelwood with William and Kashlih.

18. Did you feel comfortable with your host family? *(Give your reasons)*

- Yes, I felt like a part of the family and I felt very comfortable with them .
- Very much, from the first day they made me feel like a part of the family.
- Yes very much, they were so kind and loving, treated me like I were their own daughter. And they celebrated my birthday.
- Yes I did. They were nice and they made me feel at home. Me and my host kid became good friends and we will keep in touch.
- I felt very comfortable with my host family since we always had flowing chats and discussions. They were really nice and friendly and cooked great food.
- Yes, they were so nice to me. They gave me a good feeling and a great room. It was nice to come back there everyday.
- Yes very much. They were very nice and made me feel welcome and at home.

19. Did you feel comfortable with the Irish host student? *If Yes, why?*

- Yes, they were all so nice and welcoming. It is so sad to leave them, and I really hope we'll meet again.
- Yes, Solenn was incredible, we are really good friends now. She was interested to know about me and my life. We've shared a lot of information about each others lives.
- I did, he was very nice and fun
- Yes because he was interesting, talkative and funny.
- I felt great with Matthew since we had common interests and I loved his dog Mojo and we got along really nicely.
- Yes he was very free with me and gave me a comforting feeling.
- Yes.

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20. What other experiences did you enjoy during the visit?

- Everything!!! Quasar and bowling, Irish dancing, Steven's Green Park, the host student, fish and chips, shopping, the canal, meeting new people, Howth!!
- Hanging out with the host kids and all of the group. The day trip to Howth was beautiful and fun, and just getting to know the city centre.
- We had a trip to Howth and it was beautiful, I enjoyed it because I wanted also to see the real Ireland, outside of the city. We went to the zoo, to the city centre and to the Irish dancing. It was all great.
- I really enjoyed the train to Belfast and every time the whole group hanged together.
- We went to Irish dancing one evening, and Darren took us to bowling. I also visited my brother's house and went to the centre of Dublin.
- Going to the Irish dancing, Grafton St. and the Temple Bar.
- I enjoyed the outings at night and Howth beach.

21. What aspects of the visit did you find difficult?

(What aspects would you have changed to make the visit better for you?)

- I don't have anything to say, seriously it was perfect!
- I would make the trip to Belfast a bit longer, maybe two days.
- It could be better if we had more time with each group, and also more free time in the city centre.
- The lack of time in the schools, especially in Belfast.
- It was really difficult for me that we were always in a hurry and that the discussions were too short.
- Leaving the schools just when you get comfortable and getting to know the students. Transportation and Logistics. Going to three schools in one day is physically hard and mentally draining.
- Most of the Israeli students in the delegation aren't very interested in the conflict/news/politics and so everything was less meaningful. Students who care about these subjects would make the whole experience much better.

22. What is your general feeling of the visit to Ireland?

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- Perfect!
- Unforgettable!
- I had so much fun and I learned so much. It is so different from Jerusalem and I'm so glad to take a part in this project. It's unforgettable for me.
- Very fun and very beneficial for me and for the students I talked to. I learned a lot about myself and a lot about Irish culture. I would definitely do it again.
- Great. I'm really glad I came. I'm much more sure about a lot of things now.
- It was interesting.
- Satisfaction mixed with disappointment mainly because I felt that most of the Israeli students in the delegation aren't very interested in the conflict/news/politics and so everything was less meaningful.

23. What are the benefits to you personally?

- More confident, clarified my views and I learned a lot about myself, history and conflicts. I made new friends and I understand myself better.
- It was great a great confidence booster for me.
- I improved my English, learned to listen to other views and to say mine.
- My English got better and I learned that I know a lot and that I really can explain difficult things. I became more self-confident after all the discussions.
- I think that I have a whole new prospective and that I understand my views better.
- Participating in the project forced me into dealing with subjects that I usually push aside and now I'm not scared to think about them anymore.
- I now know how my country is viewed in the world.

24. What do you think the group can do now as a follow-up action with the Palestinian students in the project?

- Find a way to contact each other and share our points of view about the different issues of the conflict and our lives.
- Trying to get in touch with the Palestinian students would be great.
- Write personal letters and Skype each other and maybe meet if we can somewhere. Teach our families and friends about the project.

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- I think that we should meet from time to time, to watch the DVD together and to have a discussion about it. If they will write us a letter it would be great.
- Have a Skype discussion with the Palestinians.
- Meet them during the summer, maybe Skype them.
- To connect on Facebook with them.

25. What can you do to report or present the visit to your school upon your return?

- I can explain about this project in my school to show the other students what we did, where we visited and what I learned. Maybe a little presentation will do the job.
- Show them the photographs, tell them about my experience and hear their opinions about the issue.
- Slide show, talking and discussions in small groups and just talk about our visit and the project in general.
- I'd like to have a discussion with them like in Ireland, explain what I feel and what I've learned.
- Presentation of pictures with an accompanying explanation.
- Tell other students in our grade what we did.
- I can have a group of discussions at my school.