

# Schools Across Borders

**Palestinian Teacher Visit 2012**

**Final Evaluation**

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

- These sessions were very important as they simply prepared the participants in a good way- developed their performance and presentations skills and their data collection and research techniques.
- Actually yes. The sessions helped me to empower the students with the needed information or techniques to be able to get into ongoing and fruitful discussions with the Irish students. I did aim 1, 2, and 3 in the folder.

## **2. What were your main expectations for the students' visit to Ireland?**

- To make friendships with the Irish students, to be able to deliver the Palestinian point of view in a good way, to learn about the Irish culture, families, interests of my peers who are in the same age as myself.
- The students will be able to carry on with the discussions and the questions they will be subjected to. The students will be able to adjust to the Irish lifestyle and enjoy their visit.

## **3. Do you feel now that they were achievable?**

- Absolutely achievable, with the format of the project and the well prepared team as well as the reading manuals helped us reach successfulness of the project and achieving/fulfilling my expectations.
- Yes.

## **4. What did you expect to be the main challenges/fears for the students?**

- Language barriers (not to be able to communicate what the kids want to say in good English language) cultural shock. Not to be able to understand the cultural differences – the food! Expected to not like the Irish food.
- Students feel with boredom and stress, students won't be able to go on with the discussion and be silent without being able to get their message out.

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

- They were all there but easily solved by encouragement from the whole team and talking to the manager who was very helpful in making things easy and his support was very important.
- No, the students were full of energy and ready to share and interact with the groups. There were no pauses at all, they were able to keep on and on.

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

- All the time, verbal and written on daily basis- official and an unofficial way.
- Yes.

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

- Fantastic, well prepared and interested in the issue of the program.
- The Irish school groups had been very well prepared and interested generally. Consequently, this paved the way for the Palestinian students to get their mission done and their message to reach out.

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

- Very helpful and suited the program very well and gave the participants self confidence in what they were doing.
- I am in favour of the small group work because it gives the students feeling of being free to say what they want, and also it gives them the chance to mingle as young people sharing their own interests, aspirations and expectations.

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

- Yes indeed, participants were able to express their views in the groups in a very good way as they felt they have responsibility towards their issues and felt confident in themselves within the small groups.
- n/a

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

- Participants found difficulties in answering questions about their feelings towards the Israeli people in general as they didn't want to sound negative – they were very soft in their answers and this matter – sometimes to please the students.
- N/a

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

- To a large extent yes. There has been a lot of misleading information about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that the Irish students received from the Israeli group, most of it was inaccurate information or not in the right perspective.
- N/a

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

- In general the students enjoyed all the sessions and all were interactive and full with life and energy.
- Caritas College

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

- Indeed, they were very important to learn about weak and strong points of view and to see if the sessions and performance were in the right direction and to develop the strong points of view and reduce the weak ones.
- They are really helpful and useful as well because this gives the students a feeling of importance and what they do is really meaningful. This also, in a way, keeps the students focused.

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

- The students might need more time in the group discussions to be able to cover all the issues on the agenda.
- This year we've been to each school for the discussion, about 23. It's a lot of pressure on the students. Having 2-3 discussions a day can be stressful to most of the students and for me as well.

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

- The group learned that peace and reconciliation is possible if it happened in Northern Ireland – then it should be possible in Palestine, lots of similarities in the conflict.
- This gives me hope that the situation in my country might be changed one day.

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

- Interesting, as the groups there were more close to the conflict then those in Dublin, which made it easier to our group to speak similar language as we live similar circumstances.
- The discussions were great even with the Hazlewood students. I consider it important to give them the chance.

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

- To see the peace wall and see Palestine mentioned there and to see the high level of politicization among the people there, murals and graffiti.
- N/a

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

- None of the Palestinian students complained about their host families, all were satisfied and happy.
- N/a

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

- Same as above, the group seemed to be very comfortable with their host students, no complaints were received at all .
- N/a

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

- For almost all the students it was the first time to take a train. To see the waterfalls, the sea and to live the night and day life in Ireland, above all is the wonderful Irish hospitality.
- N/a

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

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

- Maybe give more time to leisure activities with the Irish students and families so as to know better the Irish culture and strengthen the ties and social level between the two societies.
- Taxi arrangements, it would be better if there had been a big van for all the groups to move all together.

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

- Great and excellent. I believe that each Palestinian and Israeli should know about this fantastic program and the wonderful hospitality in Ireland and the feeling that peace and reconciliation is possible.
- I am very proud of it.

## **23. What are the benefits to you personally?**

- Made many friends, developed my English language skills, self esteem and learned a lot about my capacities to discuss the conflict from a Palestinian side.
- This visit gave me a sense of success as being able to prepare the student for this visit and deal with every difficulty.

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

- I think there should be a minimum communication channel between both groups but not face to face, to keep the hope alive. That solution is possible and when time allows us to meet and develop ideas for best of our nation.
- I leave it for them to decide. They need time to think, they will be able to make up their minds.

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

- Will tell all my friends, community, peers, family about Ireland and the Irish people and the help they are giving to mediate between Israel and Palestine. I can say that Ireland is a very sincere and good friend of Palestine and Palestinians.
- To tell other teachers and principals about the benefits of this great programme.