



A report:

## Young Leadership Seminar for Peace

### Humanizing the "other"...

On April 11-14 the Sulha held a four-day seminar for 32 young leaders in one of the most magnificent places in the Middle East, EcoMe – a green place near Jericho dedicated to meetings between Israelis and Palestinians. Participants were young people from all religions and nations in the region (age 18-22) who care deeply about our complex reality, where so many people fear the other, a situation which leads to hatred, racism and violence. The invitation was to come and meet the "other" and to share ideas on how to bring people to see each other as human beings...



First day – getting to know each other in the desert..

What was most exciting was to see these young people become friends so quickly and initiate sessions to brainstorm about what they can do together to make a difference. Now, a month later, working groups have already met and initiated two projects: developing an Israeli-Palestinian program for school children and creating a Sulha day which they will organize and lead.

- **Nibal and Elad, co-leaders of the seminar**

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## Testimonies:

The experience of a Sulha weekend as an American Jew was a transformative one. It was such an intellectual, and moreover, emotional challenge to grapple with and honor the urgent feelings on both sides of the interaction here at EcoMe. Now, after being a part of so many connections here that transcended language, religion, nationality and so much more, it will be even harder to leave. Something in the powerful juxtaposition of our encounters - dramatic playfulness and wrenching hurt, circles of seriousness and the informality of our laughter - stuck with us and became indelible.

**Lily Gellman, New York/Tel Aviv**



Second day – "Getting to know each other" activities

In the Sulha Leadership Seminar, I had an intensive experience of meetings, discussions, and heartfelt conversations. During the four days of the workshop, I realized that this was exactly what I was looking for. It wasn't always easy, but it was very meaningful to me that we didn't ignore the difficult issues and the real pain that the extended conflict into which I was born has implanted in me. This experience empowered me to continue hoping and to act toward change.

**Yael Elchadad, Be'er Sheva** (Translated from Hebrew)



Second day – the "Time line" activity

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Sulha Peace Project



Creative Action for Human Awakening

Sulha's project made me believe that peace comes from inside our souls, that we can love each other even though we are living in a very complicated conflict.

**Noor Assi, Kafr Bara** (translated from Arabic)



Third day – Thinking of what we really care about.

As a peace worker in the Middle East there is nothing more moving than seeing the magical process which unfolded in our four days together. Fear, anguish, resentment and suspicion made way for curiosity, laughter, tears and - most important - hope on the faces and in the hearts of young Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

I feel that bringing young people from all sides of the conflict to meet together in a safe environment for a personal encounter with each other's lives, stories and aspirations is sacred work.

**Melila Hellner-Eshed, Jerusalem**



Fourth day – a common memorial ceremony.

## To be continued...

On May 23-24 a follow-up core group of 20 met for two days in The Pluralistic Spiritual center in *Neve Shalom – Whahat el Salam* to meet each other again and to plan the next Sulha Tribble fire – inviting families, friends and guests for a one day event of sharing stories, hopes and fears.

We wish to thank everyone who helped us make this dream come true:

- Sulha Peace Project Committee
- Our facilitators and coordinators
- Our donors
- EcoMe
- The participants and their families
- The Pluralistic Spiritual center in *Neve Shalom – Whahat el Salam*
- The volunteers
- And many more !



If you wish to support Sulha peace projects  
please visit our website:

[www.sulha.com](http://www.sulha.com)



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