

# BUILDING THE FUTURE



## LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME



FOR PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS

November 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

As Palestinians prepare for statehood, British-Arab Exchanges (BAX) responded to the need to build the capacity of emerging civil society leaders.

Nine young people from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, spent two weeks (13-28 November 2011) participating in BAX's *Building the Future* Leadership Training Programme in England and Northern Ireland.

They were identified by leaders of Palestinian NGOs as showing leadership potential, and were selected on the basis of their track-record of taking initiatives to contribute to the construction of their country, and their openness to exchange with other cultures and communities. Consideration was also given to achieving a balance of region, community and gender.

## PARTICIPANTS



**Daoud Abu-Libdeh**, East Jerusalem – Project Manager at Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND); Editor of Middle East Post



**Amra Amra**, Ramallah – External Relations Officer for the Palestinian Medical Relief Society; organiser of non-violent resistance



**Mohammed Al-Majdalawi**, Jabaliya camp, Gaza – Documentary filmmaker and social worker



**Nihad Karam**, Gaza City – Managing Director of Ajyal Association for Creativity and Development, providing programmes for women and youth



**Maysam Abu-Morr**, Rafah, Gaza – graduate in English Literature and President of Youth Advocacy at House of Wisdom



**Mamdouh Ferwana**, Gaza City – Deputy Director, Library of Islamic University of Gaza; Youth trainer with Sonaa Al-Hayat (youth development organisation)



**Hassan Saad**, Bethlehem – Director of Human Relations and civil defence trainer, Bethlehem Governorate Fire Brigade



**Ahlam Ja'fari**, Dheisheh Refugee Camp – MA in International Politics and Security Studies; formerly project coordinator of Images for Life program, organizing film festivals



**Mohammed Owaineh**, Bethlehem – Awareness Officer, Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation

# PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The *Building the Future* Leadership Training Programme is a development of a series of exchange programmes for young people from Britain and the Arab countries which started in 1973. It aims to equip participants from Arab countries with skills and values for effective leadership by providing:

- Daily training sessions in leadership, communication skills, personal and professional strategies for implementation at home
- A privileged insight into aspects of society in the UK through meetings with civic, community and national leaders to understand the issues they are grappling with, and give the visitors opportunities to share their experiences of life in Palestine and their vision for its future
- Interaction with a diverse range of people in the UK, in offices, private homes, universities and community centres in an atmosphere of reciprocal learning
- Opportunities for building enduring relationships with British counterparts.

## THE PROGRAMME

The two-week programme was in two parts: the first week was spent in Northern Ireland and the second, based in London. Volunteer hosts accompanied them on most of their activities. The programme included daily training in leadership, team-work, inter-personal and communication skills.

# IN NORTHERN IRELAND

They were welcomed to the Parliament Buildings in Belfast by William Hay MLA, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and had meetings with:

- Junior Minister Martina Anderson MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) (Sinn Féin) and Junior Minister Jonathon Bell MLA (Democratic Unionist Party)
- David Ford MLA (Alliance Party), Minister for Justice
- John McCallister MLA (Ulster Unionist Party), Paul Maskey MP MLA (SF), Conall McDevitt MLA, (Social and Democratic Labour Party) and Jo-Anne Dobson MLA (UUP)
- Rt Hon Jeffery Donaldson MP (DUP) and Pat Sheehan MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) (SF)
- Jim Wells MLA (DUP), Basil McCrea MLA (UUP), Duncan McCausland, former Assistant Chief Constable, Dr Jim Livingstone, Director of Safety, Quality and Standards at Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, Revd Norman Hamilton, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Bertha McDougall, Commissioner for Victims & Survivors
- Revd Harold Good, former Independent Decommissioning Witness
- Dr Roddy Evans who set the scene with a historical perspective on the relationship between England and Ireland
- Fr Gerry Reynolds at the Clonard Monastery which played a significant role in the peace process.



With Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly

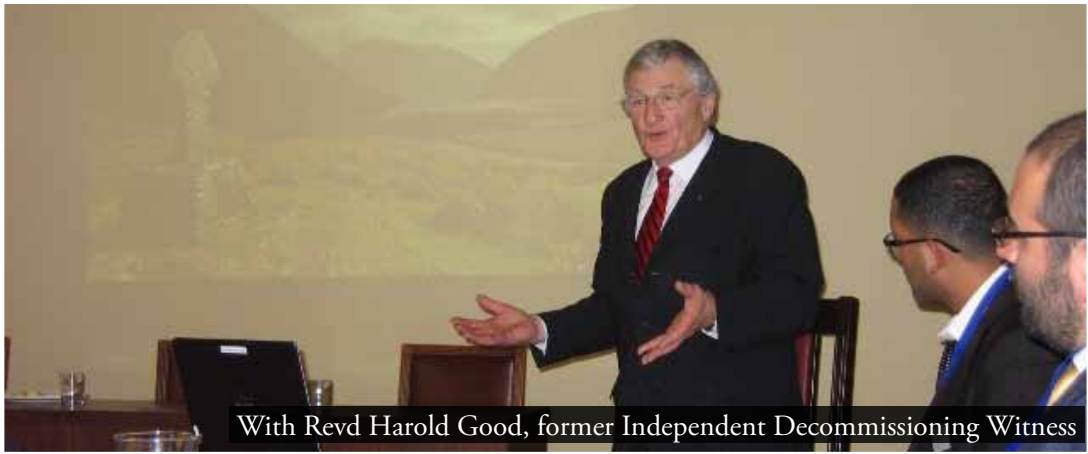


With Junior Minister Martina Anderson (centre)



With MLAs John McCallister, Paul Maskey and Conall McDevitt





With Revd Harold Good, former Independent Decommissioning Witness



With David Ford MLA, Minister of Justice



With Jeffery Donaldson MP and Pat Sheehan MLA

They were taken...

- to the 'Titanic Quarter', an area of reclaimed dockland where the Titanic ship was built, and which will become a business park and visitor attraction
- to see one of the Peace Walls which still divide communities in Belfast.

They spent a day in Derry-Londonderry which included meetings with...

- the organisers of events in 2013 when Derry-Londonderry will be the first 'UK City of Culture'
- Provost Prof. Deirdre Heenan and students of the International Conflict Research Institute at the University of Ulster's Magee Campus
- Aideen McGinley, CEO of Ilex Urban Regeneration Company on plans to develop the city which is one of the poorest in the UK.



With Dr Roddy Evans



Prof Deidre Heenan (far left) and Ulster University students



With Aileen McGinley, CEO, ILEX Urban Regeneration Company

# IN LONDON

They had meetings with...

- The Duke of Montrose, Baroness Morris of Bolton, Lord King of Bridgwater and Lord Cope of Berkeley, preceded by a tour of the Lords and observing the Lords' Question Time
- Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for International Development
- Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, LibDem spokesman on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities
- Ajmal Masroor, imam and broadcaster after Friday prayers at the Goodge Street Mosque
- Faris Couri, Editor, BBC Arabic Service and Denis Nowlan, Network Manager at BBC Radio 4.



With the Duke of Montrose (4th from left)



With Alan Duncan MP (centre) Minister for International Development



With Denis Nowlan, Network Manager, BBC Radio 4



Young People's Forum workshop

They...

- shadowed a professional in each one's respective field of work
- discussed 'democratic processes' with Emily Harding, political campaigner and trainer
- made a day visit to Oxford for a tour of Oxford University colleges and an informal reception
- were guests of honour at a one-day Young People's Forum on the theme 'Our role in building a healthy civil society', an opportunity to exchange views and experiences with their British counterparts
- presented themselves, a glimpse of their experiences in Palestine, and their personal vision for the future, at a farewell reception
- viewed the Al-Qattan Foundation photo exhibition 'From Palestine to Israel 1947-50'
- visited Tottenham where Councillor Lorna Reith gave them an understanding of what caused the August riots.



Speaking at farewell reception

# PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

I learnt...

that change is possible, but not easy, it can take time...

that change starts in oneself...

that unity with people is possible in spite of holding different views...

that leadership is a skill which can be learned...

that there is hope...

how to be a leader of change, active in my community...

how to interact better with people...

the importance of being open...

interpersonal skills that will help build communities and our country...

time-keeping, discipline, how to prioritise...

from Northern Ireland, that the impossible is possible...

that we have to speak with one voice...

that I am not only a Palestinian citizen, but a universal citizen...

that there are others suffering severely who need our help...

that there is always a way forward...



# THEIR VISION FOR PALESTINE

**‘A well-developed country where civil rights are preserved and political stability ensured.’**

## Features of that vision...

An independent, free, strong state... with a democratic government representing all Palestinians... with free trade with the rest of the world... with its own identity, dignity, civil rights... where everyone does his/her best to help everyone else, and puts other people first... with transparency in government... living in peace with its neighbours... where there is free movement between Gaza and the West Bank...





## What we will see...

Lots of books available...

low drop-out rates from school...

low unemployment...

children playing peaceful games  
and sport...

work/home-life balance possible for  
women...

maybe a woman President...

political parties working together...

a free, comprehensive public  
health-care system...

economic growth...

a Palestine Airport in Jericho...

children reading history books on  
their way to school...

taxi drivers and teenagers interested  
in the news...

young people involved in society,  
and free from old ways of  
thinking...

Palestinian industry developed...



good environmental practices  
adopted, including recycling...

Gaza Peace Academies...

international postgraduates  
studying in Palestine...

freedom to travel anywhere in the  
world...

free-thinking, non-judgemental  
people...

a positive role for the indigenous  
refugees...

weekends in other parts of  
Palestine without the need for  
permits.

# THE BAX TEAM THANK...

- All those mentioned in this report who gave of their thought and experience to the Palestinian guests
- Sheila McClelland, Louise Close, Pamela Carson and Bill Kinnear of the Northern Ireland Assembly External Liaison Office for arranging the programme in Northern Ireland
- Initiatives of Change team in Northern Ireland for their guidance and support
- The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development for their help in facilitating visas
- Initiatives of Change-UK for providing accommodation and meeting space at their London centre
- Judi Conner, who gave her professional services as a Training Consultant, devising and delivering the Leadership Training throughout the visit
- Those professionals who agreed to be 'shadowed' for a day: Wayne Bellamy, Manager, RNLI Chiswick Lifeboat Station; Faris Couri, Editor, BBC Arabic Service; Ronnie Graham, Birnberg Pierce & Partners; Ruth Hunt, Director of Public Affairs, Stonewall; Kirsty McNeill, political adviser and speechwriter; Chris Rose, Director, Amos Trust; Dr Mariam Rosser-Owen, Victoria & Albert Museum; Don de Silva, Head of Programmes, Initiatives of Change; David Taylor, political lobbyist
- Volunteer hosts - Sabina Ali, Rachel Apsden, Alison Baily, Nazish Bhaiwala, Richard Craig, Stuart Gardner, Howard Grace, Ronnie Graham, Emily Harding, Michael Maddox, Alec McRitchie, Gaby McRitchie, Daniel McRitchie, Diana Mills, Charlotte Sawyer – who gave unstinting care and time to preparing the programme and hosting the guests
- Trusts and individuals who generously contributed funds and wished to remain anonymous.

# ABOUT BAX

BAX is a non-governmental, educational charity registered in the UK. Founded in 1973, it has 38 years of experience of organising educational and exchange programmes for young people of the UK and the Arab and Muslim countries (to date, with Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq).

BAX aims to overcome divisions, create a network of bridge-builders, train future opinion-leaders and provide space for dialogue. Central to this work is a focus on shared moral and spiritual values, collaborative learning, and recognition of the importance of personal attitudes and relationships in situations of crisis and change.

# FINANCIAL BASIS

As a charity, BAX is dependent on donations from individuals, trusts and corporations, as well as the voluntary contribution of time and expertise by the host team. The participants, except in cases of hardship, paid for their own travel to the UK. The total direct cost of the programme was £16,000. Donations totalling £14,000 have been received to date.

Contributions towards the shortfall may be made online via The Big Give or by cheque to British-Arab Exchanges sent to the charity's address below.

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Project Coordinators: Dr Imad Karam and Peter Riddell

Photos by hosts and members of the delegation

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