A Danish perspective on peace in the Middle East

When I arrived, I had a taste of that time when I was working with the Palestinian youth leaders in Bethlehem. At that time, I saw first-hand just how the political situation, which affects every single person, impacts these kids. While they were being trained to become agents of change and work to become leaders, they were also being trained to believe that they can make a difference. That is a positive attitude to find tolerance with Israelis, they must also be able to live with themselves and that they are able to stand up for their rights. They are not afraid to be themselves and that they are without ownership of society.

Despite these feelings and though I worked for two years with the Palestinian youth leaders in Bethlehem, I felt that I was not the one to tell them what to do. I felt that they needed to tell me what they wanted to do, and that they were the ones to decide how to use their voice. I think that this is important, not only for them, but also for all of us who are working in the field of peace and reconciliation.

I think that as the world becomes more connected, it is important to understand that there are still many people who are not aware of the situation in the Middle East. People need to be educated about the reality of the conflict, and about the people who are affected by it. I believe that education is the key to understanding, and that understanding is the key to peace. I hope that by sharing my experience, I can help bring about change in people's attitudes and perceptions.
Youth Galilee Encounter, 2009

Musalaha youth set out on a new and exciting adventure, trekking up north to the Galilee so that they could start the process of becoming agents of reconciliation in their own communities.

Being the Panamanian and South Korean in a group of 23 Israeli and Palestinian teenagers hailing north to visit us as our Youth Galilee Encounter. Shifting from our typical Youth Denouement, we sought programs that fit with the context, yet provided an interesting environment.

With our staff leading for the first time, the Musalaha team, a group of diverse people who modelled themselves valuable and set an amazing example for everyone who joined us.

We, as leaders, as well as the teams were filled with anticipation of what we had ahead. We were faced with the question of what it means for us to lead this trip, culturally, socially, or politically, we needed to put ourselves in the shoes of the other.

The teens were “just themselves” as in to be vulnerable towards each other. We were forced to open up with one another, with a new staff, leading for the first time a neutral, yet picturesque environment.

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