

NEWS 47 /

COEXISTENCES / OCTOBER 2025

coexistences

SUPPORTING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE

NEWS

47 /

Only two of the three visits planned took place. The war once again disrupted our plans and prevented the Rossing Center group from travelling at the beginning of July. The terrible situation prevailing for nearly two years now led us to debate our position at the General Assembly on 17 June and exchange our resentment, indignation and feeling of hopelessness.

However, the welcome we have proposed since 2008 remains unchanged and the number of requests for a stay in Switzerland from Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups is still increasing. That is a sign that our action is more than ever necessary and that our support for dialogue remains useful in times of crisis and will continue to be so in a perspective of peace building.

Thanks to all those who make this welcome possible by their action, opening their home, organising the stays, or offering some hours of their time for the thousand and one things necessary for Coexistences to exist. Their competences and their generosity are very welcome.

And we all cross our fingers for the long awaited ceasefire to endure and be transformed into a true peace process!

ROSSING CENTER STAY	3
TOMORROW'S WOMEN STAY	4
BEIT HAGEFEN STAY	8
NEWS FROM THERE	11
NEWS FROM HERE	18

ADDRESS

COEXISTENCES
CH-1000 LAUSANNE
INFO@COEXISTENCES.CH

ROSSING CENTER / EDUCATION TOWARDS CHANGE

This project to receive school Principals from the region of Haifa was to take place from 2 to 8 July 2025. Everything was ready for their stay: the chalet was reserved, meetings organised, the organisation group had accomplished remarkable work, when the Israel-Iran war was suddenly launched.

On 18 June, we received an e-mail from Vivian Rabia announcing the cancellation of the trip. All the participants were devastated. None of them could imagine leaving their family at such a time. In addition, the Principals had to be in their schools to organise the courses and the end of the school year by zoom. At that date there were no outgoing flights from Israel. Utter confusion prevailed. To date, we have good reason to believe that the project will take place in 2026.

To give you an idea of the state of mind prevalent at this moment, you can read this letter Daniela Hersch received:

“ You can’t really return to routine all at once. The economy demands us to recover our full capacity and produce money, but our body, mind and soul cannot, just like a car cannot go from 180 km/h to 0 km/h without a certain breaking distance, and if you step down too hard on the breaks, you could undergo an internal shock which can be very painful.

That is what you could feel in the weeks to come: an internal shock. You will feel tired. You will feel sad. Your body will hurt in different places. You will suddenly fall ill. You will function, but less well, you will work, but with less drive. You will sleep and still be tired, or you won’t be able to get to sleep without understanding why. You will have difficulty to let go. You will cry without reason. You will be irritated disproportionately. You will drink a little too much. Above all, you will have the impression that reality escapes you and that nobody else understands you.

That is normal.

And you’re not alone. We are all there.

The good thing to do is to adopt an attitude of self-compassion, abandon all expectations, say that you will do what you can, and love yourself at each turning point, at each downturn, at each fall, at each success on the way.

The return to normal takes time and necessitates a healing process.

Give yourself the necessary time and space to heal from all we have been through. Above all in such a difficult situation. And I hope that the hostages will rapidly be liberated and the war will end, so that the real healing can start.”

Thanks to Daniela Hersch, David Hersch, Véronique Rochat, Nicolette Manson, Camelia and Sébastien Gibert, Maco Golaz Roland, Halina Rabczynska Sandri, Fiuna Seylan Ongen for their preparation work.

NEWS 47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / TOMORROW'S WOMEN PROJECT

TOMORROW'S WOMEN PROJECT, 11 TO 24 JULY 2025

Fourteen young Palestinians and Israelis stayed in the Diablerets, a partnership with Tomorrow's Women.

In spite of the devastating situation in Gaza, and very alarming in the West Bank and a new armed conflict between Israel and Iran in the middle of June 2025, which has complicated the border crossings and rendered the journey long and difficult, the participants of the Tomorrow's Women group arrived as planned in Switzerland on Friday 11 July. During their stay in the Diablerets from 11 to 24 July, 14 young women from the occupied West Bank and Israel, from 15 to 18 years old, were able to strengthen their bonds and prepare the future challenges of leadership.

On the first day at noon, the Palestinians took advantage of the wonderful orchard of Elisabeth and Jean-Pierre Clement in Cuarnens, around a table set under the cherry trees in the midst of fields of wheat, before discovering the chalet in the Diablerets. In the evening, they were joined by the group arriving from Tel-Aviv.

The following day, they discovered the traditional fabrication of Étivaz cheese in the Mosses, and saw a herd of cows happily grazing in the pastures. They returned to the chalet through a pedestrian path. The girls and their escorts were all enchanted by the surrounding beauty and serenity. This first day allowed them to find their footing, to come back from their surprise when they saw that the doors of the rooms and toilets had no keys or locks – before starting the internal work process.

WHO IS TOMORROW'S WOMEN?

Since 21 years, **Tomorrow's Women** strives for the empowerment of young women and teaches them the essential competences to resolve conflicts and transform their societies. Traditionally, ever since the Teen Leadership Program took place in Santa Fe in the United States but in face of the unconditional support of the Trump administration towards the present Israeli politics, **Tomorrow's Women** has privileged Switzerland because of a historical context marked by neutrality and diplomacy. Before their arrival in Switzerland, the participants, from the occupied West Bank and Israel, aged 15 to 18, had worked on the essential themes: identity, gender, personal narratives, as well as the social and political challenges they are confronted with.

PICTURES: FÉLIX SANDRI



NEWS 47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / TOMORROW'S WOMEN PROJECT

ACTIVITIES DURING THE STAY

For two weeks, the 14 young women immersed themselves in the intensive programme, accompanied by Lama and Sarah (facilitators), by Ameera and Noa (in charge of the camp) and by Roni (art-therapist). Guided by compassion, listening, respect of the others and their own limits, they learnt how to observe what touches or provokes them. Through storytelling, they shared between their personal experiences of the conflict — the delicate moment of the stay.

The daily art-therapy sessions made it possible to intensify this work by favouring the personal and collective expression, but also a connection to themselves and the healing process. These experiences paved the way to solid bonds between them and prepared the ground for their future leadership challenges.

However, the stay was enhanced by other activities and by the visit of Lamia Faruki and Holly Morris. Lamia Faruki is the first woman president of the board of directors and Holly Morris is the director of **Tomorrow's Women**, who wanted to assist at this this first collaboration with Coexistences. Thus, the organisation offered the participants and our members a fondue-raclette in a local restaurant. The young participants also took the opportunity to demonstrate their mental limits by tree branching in the enchanted forest of the Adventure Park in Aigle. This resulted in the fall of Ameera's cell phone from a height of 10 meters. The phone having undergone a shock and Ameera too, we had to ask a specialist to take it in hand and he massaged it back to life!

AN ATTENTIVE JOURNALIST

Less adventuresome, the walk on the following Sunday, walk along the river to the foot of the Diablerets, with this time a mishap for the President of Coexistences whose sole uncannily left his walking shoe. The solution came from the art therapist who had string in her haversack, because she had planned a session of art-therapy outdoors in a prairie dotted with large rocks, under a bright sun. A sort of lethargy for everyone and a feeling of appeasement. Five Swiss members climbed the Diablerets to accompany the group and also a journalist from the programme **Hautes Frequences**, Jessica Da Silva. You can listen to the podcast by clicking [> this link](#) or on the press page on our site.



NEWS

47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / TOMORROW'S WOMEN PROJECT

The next morning, Carine Carvalho, who directs the Office for Equality at Lausanne University but who is also deputy at the Grand Council of the Canton of Vaud, came to present the Swiss political system and address questions of gender equality. Her presentation was interactive with a group reflection workshop on the invention of new politics in their countries. The young women participated actively demonstrating an impressive degree of maturity.

The day before last took place in Lausanne by bus with a guided visit in of the Art Brut museum offered by the institution, followed by a shopping spree in the town centre, dense but fun.

FAREWELL EVENING

Since the participants did not stay in host families, a farewell meal of tacos was organised on Wednesday 23 July, eve of the departure of the group. This evening was a roller coaster of emotions: laughing, tears, gravity. The staff, Ameera, Lama, Sarah, Noa and Roni, five brave women, had beautiful words for the participants. The young participants manifested great confidence towards the members present by showing them what they had created during the art-therapy sessions, explaining what their drawings represented, often very sombre. They ended the evening by reading texts of an amazing maturity and by singing a song for which they invented the words: "It's a party in the chalet".

A BELL CURVE

But they well know that this free and carefree life is but a respite, in a few days real life will resume, and if they continue to build up their strength, to take care of each other, talk, laugh and cry together, the fear of the return weighs heavier and heavier, more distressing: tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow...

This bell curve, we also experienced it on the last day in Geneva with four Palestinian friends: the fatigue of a sleepless night, the touching farewells to the rest of the group at the airport. Then the marvelling in front of the lake and the Brunswick Museum, the selfies in front of this incredible place, the breakfast Garden of the Alps, the promenade on the lake and the Fountain close up! They laughed enjoying these moments: they were tourists on holiday!

But the hours ticking away and distress took hold of them: a pancake, a few last photos, quickly we have to get to the airport. In the bus they are silent and think: tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow...



NEWS 47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / TOMORROW'S WOMEN PROJECT

However, does a Bell Curve not resemble a bridge? A bridge built to connect two distant points, two groups of sisters that we could have taken for enemies and who discovered how good it is to sit together, to talk and listen to each other, to like each other come what may!

Finally, does a Bell Curve not resemble an arc? An arc which enables the creation of openings, gateways or to support the weight of an entire structure! That is our wish for all these young women, that what they experienced and discovered during the days of their stay gives them the strength to stand firm tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow.

In conclusion, tomorrow, is also the solidarity thread which was woven among all the women present during the stay. This thread is a ball of pink wool initially reserved for the art-therapy sessions. One the supervisors started knitting for pleasure or to occupy her hands and, as the days went by, the facilitators, the supervisors, the women from Coexistences knitted, one stitch after another, every day a few rows, to make a scarf for Ameera's little girl who already knows Switzerland, a lovely symbol of these two weeks.

Our warm thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of this stay: Camélia, Sébastien, Céline, Marianne, Cyrille, Valérie, Véronique, Massimo, Fiuna, Carine Carvalho and the Sandoz Foundation for their unwavering generosity.

Marianne Francillon, Véronique Rochat and Fiuna Seylan Ongen



NEWS

47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / BEIT HAGEFEN PROJECT

BEIT HAGEFEN PROJECT, 18 TO 25 AUGUST

This summer, eleven Jewish and Arab teachers, active in the region de Haifa, stayed in the mountains in a chalet in the Diablerets.

Their goal was twofold:

- to support each other and create bonds of a strong mutual friendship and a lasting team spirit capable of promoting the values of living together, among their family and friends, especially their pupils, in spite of the terrible tension which prevails in Israel.
- to learn how to use nature walks as a catalyser for dialogue.

The group was formed by the Beit HaGefen Institution, our long term partner, whose mission is to work towards tolerance and mutual acquaintance within the multicultural society of the town of Haifa. The supervision was ensured by two women facilitators from Beit HaGefen, Sarki (Jewish) and Amira (Palestinian), accompanied by Asaf, Head of the Institution.

HOW WE RENOUNCED THE STAY IN HOST FAMILIES

The trip was planned from 17 to 25 August, the first 6 days in a chalet and the last two in host families in Lausanne. Due to flight cancellations, the arrival was deferred to the evening of Monday 18 August. As it was essential that the project should not curtail the time spent in the mountains, it was decided to renounce the stay in host families and the whole period took place in the Diablerets.

Four days were devoted to excursions of a few hours, the region of the Diablerets teeming with attractive and easy circuits, appropriate for this group who, in their majority, were not sportive. The highlight of the walks, on Saturday 23, was opposite the majestic waterfall above the Dar where, sitting in the sun, the participants exchanged lengthily on questions of identity. A concrete contact with the culture of our country was made in the form of the visit to an alpine cheese dairy.

PICTURES: FRANÇOIS FEIHL



NEWS

47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / BEIT HAGEFEN PROJECT

INTRODUCTION TO THE SWISS POLITICAL SYSTEM

One evening in the chalet (Thursday 21) was devoted to a presentation of the Swiss political system, a subject of much interest for all the guests of Coexistences. The presentation was ensured by Luc Recordon, ex States Councillor.

Our guests spent Friday 22 in the region of Lausanne. In the morning, they were given a warm reception at the Municipality of Renens, with rich and dynamic exchanges around the policies of social integration, a theme common to the towns of Renens and Haifa, both confronted with questions of the multiculturalism of their populations. The interest was manifest from both sides. The meeting ended with a convivial moment in the form of a generous buffet, offered by the Municipality. The afternoon of Friday 22 was devoted to a guided visit of the Cantonal Parliament and its political system. The participants also had some free time to visit Lausanne and do some shopping.

MEETING WITH SOME MEMBERS OF COEXISTENCE

On Sunday 24, the day before the last day of the stay, the members of Coexistences were invited, not only to meet the group, but also to participate in activities prepared for them by the facilitators, in collaboration with Inbal Porat, member of the project organisation group and who is also qualified in cultural activities. The different activities developed during this day made it possible to experience the methods used in Beit HaGefen to promote listening and curiosity of the other. About fifteen members of Coexistences were present. A great success, a joyful and warm atmosphere, so much so that it was impossible to complete the programme due to a prolongation of the lunch break as people started dancing to the sound of Israeli and Palestinian music...

Back in Israel, the group will be followed by Beit HaGefen. Six half-day meetings are scheduled until April 2026, in the aim of maintaining and reinforcing the bonds established during the stay in Switzerland, to exchange from a professional perspective, and develop initiatives to promote intercultural relations. For the prolongation of the initiatives, Beit HaGefen will ensure the logistical and financial support.



NEWS

47 /

SUMMER 2025 STAYS / BEIT HAGEFEN PROJECT

OUR WARM THANKS GO TO:

- the drivers from Coexistences (André, Eric, Hristina, Laurent, Nicolette) who drove our guests between Geneva airport and the Diablerets,
- the work group (André, Halina, Hristina, Inbal, Marion, Massimo Sandri, Massimo Tinghi), for the long hours spent ensuring the programming and logistics of the project,
- our two French/Hebrew translators (Marion and Inbal),
- Luc Recordon, who took the time to go to the Diablerets in spite of his busy agenda, to explain the Swiss political system,
- Karine Clerc, Joëlle Tharin, Omar Niang and Jean-François Clément, from the Renens Municipality for their perfect organisation and warm welcome,
- Igor Santucci, from the Parliamentary Secretariat, for the guided visit of the Cantonal Parliament,
- Blaise Chablaix, farmer in the Lioson alpine pastures for the visit of his cheese dairy,
- Christian Chenaux, director of Securitas-Direct, for his financial support of this project.

François Feihl, coordinator of the work group



NEWS

47 /

NEWS FROM THERE

MAY 2025

A SHORT JOURNEY BY MASSIMO SANDRI AND ANDRÉ KATZ TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

TEL-AVIV

The first two days took place in Tel-Aviv. We were the guests of our friend Oren Zemach who we met during the BTI voyage in 2022. He teaches at the Kibbutzim College and lives in the neighbourhood of Ramat Aviva, north of Tel Aviv, beyond the Yarkon river. His wife Shiri is a paediatrician, chief physician at the paediatric clinic in Ramat Aviva, their oldest daughter is at college in Beer Sheva, and with the two younger ones we learn how to play skyjo, a card game

YARCA AND HAIFA

Then we went north where we stayed for several days in Haifa. What marked us was the visit to the Druze town of Yarka, where we were received by Noor and Adham. They participated a few years ago in the trekking programmes in the Alps with BTI. We spent two beautiful days. The Druze of Israel are not many, about 120,000, and they mainly live concentrated in this region. The sensation is strong and reassuring on entering into a sort of enclave, open to the outside and with a marked community spirit. Everywhere on the streets you can see their banners, a star of five colours, red, yellow, blue, white and green. But also in the mountains which Noor and Adham showed. Ulfat joined us as well as other friends from de BTI.

Back in Haifa, we met Asaf the director of Beit HaGefen, who showed us the magnificent building dedicated to the cultural encounter between the Jews and Arabs of the town. He explained in detail the activities which take place there. A great success. We discuss Beit HaGefen's next visit to Switzerland in August in the Diablerets. (N.B: described on p.8)

JERUSALEM

We arrive on "Jerusalem Day", the Israeli festival celebrating the capture of East Jerusalem by Israel in 1967 and its reunification. It is the opportunity for the « messianic » Jews to march through the streets of the Old Town and provoke the Arab shopkeepers. A lot of people, the men "fired up", in front, the women following. Through many reports, we know what happens at the same time every year so we are careful to just observe the never-ending procession parading to the central station Yitzhak Navon to the Jaffa Gate. A mixture of merry insouciance and aggressiveness. In the parade, we cannot see any banners calling for the liberation of the hostages. On the other hand, there were some banners for the construction of the Third Temple.

PLAYING SKYJO WITH OREN'S CHILDREN



THE DRUZE FLAG IN THE MOUNTAIN



JERUSALEM DAY, THE WOMEN'S PARADE



NEWS

47 / NEWS FROM THERE

WEST BANK / BEIT UMAR

We go to visit Jamal and his family in Beit Umar. We travelled through checkpoint 300, the one which gives access to Bethlehem. We got over it without any difficulty, happy to find Jamal who was waiting for us on the other side with his car. We took route 60, the thoroughfare which crosses all the West Bank. The exit to Beit Umar is closed by a military roadblock just like the one I saw the year before. So we continue in direction of Hebron where there is a second exit: Closed!

Jamal remarks: "That's the occupation, you leave home without knowing if you will be able to come back, the roadblocks are put up arbitrarily and nobody knows when they will be activated, why and for how long". So we have to manage as best we can. Jamal goes on driving and close to Hebron he takes a dusty rural track. We cross a few vehicles going the other way, we wave to each other, the road is full of holes, I am nearly always car sick, but luckily I'm in front. More than two hours for eighteen kilometers. Finally we arrive at Jamal's home!

At the entrance of the house, the plaque "House of Peace" is still there. The friends of Coexistences who went to visit Jamal will remember it. A constancy in his commitment. Only a part of the family is there, Saddye his wife, their daughter Yara who is preparing her last exam at the Medical School, and young Amir who is finishing his mandatory schooling (not on the picture).

It is not yet time to eat so Jamal drives us to his orchard. He has been able to rent it thanks to the donations that Coexistences collected for him last autumn. If Jamal needed this money, it is because he lost his work in Israel after the closing of the borders and the revocation of his work permit (like 150,000 Palestinians in The West Bank). The orchard is a few kilometres from his home, in a beautiful plateau surrounded by farmlands. There are quite a lot of activities: tractors, trucks and people farming. A land which at first glance seems arid to our Swiss eyes. In actual fact it is a very rich land where everything is cultivated.

Jamal's plot of land measures around 3,500 square metres, about fifteen rows of olive trees and vines. A tractor tills the earth between the rows since the project is to also sow the seeds of tomatoes, peppers and all sorts of other vegetables. Jamal does not yet have his own machine and has to resort to pay a farmer to help him. In the afternoon, we return with Saddye and Jamal to the plot. André sows the first seeds of a row of peppers.

BEIT UMMAR, AT JAMAL MEOBIL'S



NEWS

47 /

NEWS FROM THERE

Jamal and Saddye spend a great deal of time on their plot of land. Jamal has built a shed for the tools, where he has put a table, a couch, a few chairs and a kitchenette. Sitting outside, we drink coffee. They have brought a multitude of toys for the grandchildren. They are a little more serene; they have an activity and little by little they see this land give them and their community food to eat.

We take leave of Saddye at the end of the afternoon. The return journey is more complicated than the outgoing one. All the checkpoints are closed for those wanting to cross on foot. We are blocked in The West Bank so we hire a private taxi, travel a very long distance, beautiful as it was, and here we are in Ramallah which is finally not bad as the following day we are meeting Tomorrow's Women – more than three hours travel and a night in a lovely large hotel, of which alas we are the only tourism-economy clients.

RAMALLAH

The following day, a short visit of the town on foot then the meeting with Ameera Said, the Palestinian director of Tomorrow's Women and with Holly Morris, the American executive director who was in Ramallah for a few days. We talk a while about the next journey of Tomorrow's Women in the Diablerets and above all we eat heartily in the bistro Khames which was, according to Ameera, the best in town

Our paths cross each other, Holly leaves for Beit Jala to meet a delegation of Combatants for Peace. This is the same delegation with whom we have an appointment in Jerusalem the following day, André and I The world of peace activists and non-violence is (too?) small.

JERUSALEM

The return to Israel and Jerusalem went through the Qalandia Gate and we are the only ones crossing the checkpoint. There we meet Nimala Kharoufeh and Eszter Koranyi with whom we talk about the possibility of a stay for *Combatants for Peace* in 2026 in the Swiss Alps. More information to follow.

JAMAL, ANDRÉ, YARA AND SADDIYÉ



MEAL WITH HOLLY MORRIS AND AMEERA SAÏD



NEWS

47 / NEWS FROM THERE

TEL AVIV

We spent the last days in Tel Aviv, a few more meetings and then our return. Oren takes me on his motorbike to the square newly named “Hostages square” where there are a lot of people. Faces are grave and not celebratory which makes a change from Jerusalem Day. That sets me wondering: not a single kippah and yet there are thousands of people and it is no longer Shabbat. A secular/religious divide?

CONTINUE!

On the way back I see a billboard calling for support for the Saudi-Arabia peace. I don't know why I feel a sort of tenderness for the old man who holds it up on his stool. He is not afraid of expressing his opinions. That reassures me.

The following day we were invited by Oren to a Shavuot family meal (equivalent in a way to the Christian festival of Whitsun). It took place at Shiri's father's house. He is not just anybody since he was the main negotiator in the peace treaty and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Jordan in 1994, under the government of Yitzhak Rabin. He is very disillusioned by the present situation, very worried about the dominating extremism, it is disheartening for this intellectual and militant to see a life's work which seems to be evaporating. He is very interested by the action of Coexistences, very warm and when we leave he encourages us emphatically to: “Continue!”

Massimo Sandri

HOSTAGES SQUARE, TEL-AVIV



THE OLD MAN ON HIS STOOL



OREN AND HIS FAMILY



NEWS

47 /

NEWS FROM THERE

NEWS FROM THE ALUMNI OF TOMORROWS' WOMEN IN GAZA

In the spring of 2024, we launched a call for support for the alumni of Tomorrow's Women blocked in Gaza and trying to flee the enclave. You replied generously. At the request of the committee in August, Fiuna Seylan Ongen tried to have news of them. She was able to talk to Ameera this summer, facilitator of the TW group, who had brought to our attention this fund raising.

Concerning Walaa Abd Alwari, on 4 October 2025 only 58% of the funds which were traced by Jonathan Shapiro (who comes from the TW network in the USA) were found. Ameera confirmed a report dated 19 August 2025 on Go Fund Me: Walaa had not been able to leave Gaza (the borders having been closed by the Israelis a short time after our involvement). The funds collected are used little by little to feed herself and her family in the present situation and inflation. Walaa is still alive, for the moment. > [To help Walaa](#)

Concerning Amal Awani, his page Go Fund Me indicated on 4 October 2025 that only 55% of the funds traced (for a much lower total than that of Walaa) were collected. No news has been sent by its initiator, Joe Illingworth, since 8 July 2024, but the kitty is still open for donations and some were made a few days ago (in mid-August).

Ameera said that Amal had been able to leave Gaza just before the closure of the borders to take refuge in Egypt, in Cairo, but alone, without her family who remained in Gaza. The separation is very distressing and riddled with guilt, and in addition the extremely precarious situation for the Palestinians of Gaza in Egypt. She survives as best she can and tries to be useful. Ameera does not know the initiator of the kitty, Joe Illingworth > [To help Amal](#)

LEFT IMAGE: WALAA, RIGHT IMAGE: AMAL



SHEEP FOR JAMAL... AND CROPS

In the spring of 2024, a call for funds was launched to allow Jamal Meqbil (who we met during the stay of Wounded Crossing Borders in 2008) to buy some sheep so that he could support his family and develop a small local economy. Because the conflict had prevented him from going to work in Israel, he no longer had a regular income. You replied generously to this call, thank you!

Jamal thought that the investment in sheep farming would offer a durable solution. At the end of 2024, he intended to buy 17 additional sheep with the money we had been able to send him. But the situation has not developed as he thought it would. He told us that the buying price of sheep had increased so much that he preferred to wait.

In the spring of 2025, Jamal told us about the evolution of his project. The maintenance of the sheep had become more and more expensive. He has 10 to this day, but under the present circumstances they are no longer profitable. Due to the limitations of the Israeli army, it is no longer possible to take the sheep to graze on the land and in the outside zones. This constraint forces Jamal to buy fodder for the sheep at constantly increasing prices. Jamal indicated that the road controls and their closures, due to the political conditions caused important limits relative to the feasibility of their project. He examined the possibility to sell his sheep and replace this project by an agricultural project. Several ideas and options were being investigated and evaluated.

In the summer of 2025, Jamal told us about the evolution of his project. He had the idea to rent a plot of land from a Jordanian at a very reasonable price. This rental is planned for a period of five years. The land was already planted with a few sparse trees. Jamal called on some agronomists and, on the basis of their instructions and advice, with the money we transferred to him he was able to purchase 250 additional trees which he planted (olive, apple, peach). To realise the maximum yield of the land, he sowed different varieties of vegetables between the trees. He has installed a network of modern agricultural irrigation and bought a certain amount of requisite agricultural equipment (axes, pulverisers, etc.). Currently he rents the other machines he needs and is now trying to purchase them to limit the costs. Farming these fields has given work to several people in his village. A first harvest took place this summer as well as the making of vegetables and fruit conserves.

Sandra Modiano, who is in regular contact with Jamal and his family, is currently preparing for the donors a list detailing this reconversion and more specifically the financial requisites which Jamal has indicated he needs to equip himself. The money received by Jamal has been invested for the benefit of his community.

NEWS

47 / NEWS FROM THERE

WOUNDED CROSSING BORDERS

DISAPPEARANCES OF ABU HARUN AND NISSIM

We received a group of representatives of WXB in 2009, and many of us remember Abu Harun and Nissim, in Crêt-Berard. Gadi Kenny wrote a text about their demise which we share with you.

Wounded Crossing Borders, 2008-2011, was a unique, courageous and creative project bringing together wounded or imprisoned Palestinians and Israelis in the great conflict.

Abu Harun and Nissim, now deceased, a Palestinian Muslim and an Israeli Jew, were among its founders in 2008. Together we organised meetings, travelled, studied and broke bread in our troubled commune and abroad - in Bosnia, in Switzerland and in Jordan.

We weep for the demise of Nissim two years ago, and that of Abu Harun, two months ago. Both of them bore deep scars from the conflict and were combatants who had decided to meet the other to strengthen their bonds and understanding, thus aspiring for a better route to follow for all.

The project and their lives are not complete as long as we do not live in peace and dignity here. It is a complex situation with one solution which is simple but painful.

As Abu Harun told Massimo and all of us when we met Massimo for the first time close to Bethlehem: "to understand and agree what a human being signifies could be the basis of a true understanding necessary for the establishment of peace". Inshallah, Be'ezrat Hashem, should we and many others address this question and answer it in depth. It is high time.

We will miss your smiles, your sense of humour, your wisdom, your friendship, your shining eyes - brown and blue -, your mastery of Hebrew and Arabic, your dignity and charism.

Should your fighting spirit for peace in dignity spread and strengthen. Should you rest in peace in an ocean of acceptance and total abandonment. Should happiness accompany you.

Gadi Kenny

ON THE LEFT, ABU HARUN. ON THE RIGHT, NISSIM, BOTH IN CRÊT-BÉRARD IN 2009



CAFÉ COEXISTENCES / 26 APRIL 2025

CONCORDANCE OF PLACES, COEXISTENCE OF THE TIMES

Tentative to cast a geopolitical light on this crazy, crazy world

Alain Simon, who has just joined Coexistences, is an international speaker. For many years he has endeavoured to decrypt current events via geopolitics. He proposes to share with us his reflection on the state of the world and its upheavals.

A captivating conference with surprising slides, gave us food for thought and cast an innovative light. Thank you Alain and please come again!

PROJECTION OF THE JOINT MEMORIAL CEREMONY / 29 APRIL 2025

Fiuna Seylan Ongen invited our members to vision this projection in her home. Strong emotions and an open discussion followed this screening. The Joint Memorial Ceremony is an annual event organised by *Combatants for Peace* and *The Parents Circle Families Forum* since 2006. It brings together Israelis and Palestinians for a mutual homage to the victims of the Israel-Palestinian conflict with a following of 15,000 people on the ground and more than 300,000 people in the world. The Joint Memorial Ceremony is a symbol of hope and resistance against the forces who seek division. It proves that, even faced by unimaginable losses, men and women choose hope rather than hate and despair by collaborating together.

PROJECTION “RÉSISTER POUR LA PAIX” / 5 OCTOBER 2025

Coexistences associated with Cenac (centre for non-violent action) and Licra Vaud to organise the projection of the documentary “Résister pour la paix” (Resist for Peace) directed by Sonia Terrab and Hanna Assouline in Israel-Palestine.

The two women went to Israel and Palestine on 4 October 2023 to walk with Israeli and Palestinian women demonstrating for peace. The film tells of their return to there after 7 October, in the spring of 2024, with these questions: what has become of these activists and what remains of their activism?

Hanna Assouline, Jewish, is a journalist and a Franco-Moroccan film director. She founded and co-presided *Les guerrières de la paix*. Sonia Terrab, Muslim, is a Moroccan film director and novelist, especially active in the defence of Moroccan women. *Les guerrières de la paix* is a feminist movement created in France in 2022. It fights against all forms of hate across the society, in particular racism, antisemitism and islamophobia. Its mission is to promote the role of women in the peace process in order reveal these other voices and other futures, based on peace, justice and equality. It initiated the Women’s World Forum Women for Peace in Essaouira, Morocco in 2023. *Les guerrières de la paix* was nominated alongside the Palestinian NGO *Women of the Sun*, and the Israeli NGO *Women Wage Peace*, for the Nobel Peace prize 2025.

NEWS

47 /

NEWS FROM HERE / EVENTS

A FULL HOUSE

More than 200 people responded to our call and followed the debate moderated by Lydia Gabor. The film stirred up many emotions and gave us the opportunity to find old friends, Ahmed Alou and Ali Abou-Awad in particular, who certain of us met, either in Switzerland or in The West Bank.

The pertinence of the documentary which was very well balanced, then, after the projection, the intervention of Sonia Terrab and Hanna Assouline, true activists who expressed themselves so eloquently to questions from the public, insisted on the absolute necessity for non-violent actions and dialogue within the civil society to reach a peace process. The courage of different peace activists who undergo mourning and loss and who, nonetheless, continue to advocate speaking out is impressive. For those who only know the situation on the ground via traditional and social medias, it was an eye-opener to learn of the existence of 180 NGOs on the ground working for dialogue, and the size of demonstrations in Israel demanding an end to the war, who attend meetings between Israelis and Palestinians who share the same hope: to live together in peace.

The film was shown in Sierre on 4 October, in Geneva on 6 October, in the same conditions.

We thank the Towns of Lausanne, Prilly and Renens, the BCI (the Cantonal Bureau for the integration of Foreigners and Prevention of Racism), the EERV (the Vaudois Evangelical Reform Church) and Affichage Vert (Green Display) for their support.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE G.A. ON 17 JUNE 2025

HOW TO CONTINUE?

As you know since we talked about it at the GA on 17 June last, four groups were constituted following the brainstorming sessions of the « How to continue? » group.

The **liaison group** is responsible for evaluating the proposals of our partners in Israel-Palestine. This means determining which groups have a sufficiently complete project to allow them to be received in Switzerland and then submitting their choice to the committee who will take the final decision. This group includes François Feihl, Jean Lazega, Nicolette Manson, Marion Mendelzweig, Halina Sandri and Fiuna Seylan Ongen.

To answer one of the challenges identified last year to increase the implication of our members, **group of competences** drew up a questionnaire which was distributed to our members. Out of the 120 questionnaires sent, 34 were returned and filled in. Sandra Modiano and Celine Rozenblat went through the replies and saw that all the enumerated competences had found takers, whether in terms host families, possibility to act as drivers, help at the Grand Ball of the Petit Nouvel An or a fundraising meal. Several of us have competences in accounting, interpretation, in conflict mediation. Some replies offer particularities such as a visit to a farm or a musical accompaniment on the accordion. 15 people volunteered for presentations on Swiss institutions. 15 people are interested in following a formation on one of the following themes: non-violent communication and conflict management, how to receive the guests, exchanges with active NGOs in the domains peace and dialogue, philosophical perspectives in the 3 monotheist religions.

The **support group** in the committee was created but only intervenes if the committee needs it and demands it in a crisis situation. The people who constitute it are all old members of the committee and therefore have a precious experience of the functioning of the association. They are Elie Elkaim, Sandra Modiano, Roland de Muralt, Fiuna Seylan Ongen. A representative panel of the different sensitivities of our association.

Finally the **transversal group** is in charge of the coordination between the committee and the different work groups and creates collaborations and synergies. This group includes Celine Rozenblat, Halina Sandri, Fiuna Seylan Ongen.

LES BRÈVES DU COMITÉ (COMMITTEE SHORT NEWS)

All the members present commended this initiative of a brief newsletter, informative, making it possible to be informed rapidly of the committee's actions and give news of the association to others.

NEWS

47 /

NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION

THE POSITION OF COEXISTENCES IN THE PRESENT CONFLICT

DEBATE

The General Assembly was followed by a large debate around a burning question: the position of Coexistences in the present war.

This question gave rise to strong and legitimate emotions and a genuine need for a place of dialogue within the association. Demands were made for a position to which it was answered by the necessity to maintain the other path(s) even if fragile of dialogue and listening to everyone. The same path taken since the beginnings of the association, a difficult ridge line, a political position too.

The committee has met several times since to write a text clarifying the position of our association in the light of this rich debate and you will be informed of it soon.

SAVE THE DATES!

SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER / 7 P.M / FUNDRAISING EVENING

The dinner concocted by Marion Cloarec will be delicious and take place at the Maison St-Jean de Cour, in Lausanne. It will be preceded by a concert with Einat Betzalel and Hakim Boukhit.

The fundraising evening is an opportunity to spend a convivial moment together whilst supporting our action. Spread the word around you, your friends are welcome!

You can reserve with > info@coexistences.ch before 10 November and at the same time settle the registration amount (100.- per person) which will serve as confirmation..

IBAN CH29 00767 000C 5207 3545

TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER / 6.30 P.M / ESPACE DICKENS

General Assembly

On the agenda:

Presentation of the projects 2026 and approval of the budget. Preparation of 20 years of Coexistences.

We look forward to seeing you on the occasion of these two dates!

The communication group and the committee

