



Palestine but on experiences of racism, colonialism, apartheid and the pressures on young people across the world.

The project brought young people from the UK, France and Palestine to share experiences, look at what is going on in their countries and raise their voices against discrimination and for human rights for everybody.

The young people involved were mainly from minority ethnic/ Muslim communities in the UK and France, or from Palestine.

Ma'an-Together 2017-2018

A short report.

'We are human too'

The CADFA Ma'an-Together project (2017-18) – funded by Erasmus+ and the fundraising efforts of CADFA's members and supporters – ran between

January 2017 and December 2018. The themes were anti-discrimination, human rights and getting our voice outwards.

The Ma'an-Together project was an important one for our organisations. Work on equality and anti-discrimination that we have always thought was central to our human rights work became more powerfully articulated through this project. The project focused attention not just on

**70 years of Human Rights?
WE ARE HUMAN TOO**
Conference on anti-discrimination and human rights | Palestine– Europe
Sunday 9th December 10.30-4
Café Palestina NW5 1AD



They put the anti-racist message of the project into these four words: "We are human too."

The message has never been more important. These two years saw an inflammation of the tensions in all of our countries. Our people young

and old are being pushed into camps and invited to dislike each other. It is very important to resist the divisions that are more and more public right across the world and felt very strongly in all of our countries. The pressures to divide and to radicalise apply to people as individuals and to the governments of whole countries. In these past two years, these issues seem to have become increasingly raw.

The Ma'an-Together project is part of the work of CADFA and our partners, trying to resist this division, to bring people together, to accept each other, to open their understanding of each other and encourage them to work together for human rights in a belief that all of us are equal human beings.

Twinning for human rights and young people's resilience

CADFA's work began fifteen years ago as a response to caring about the human rights situation in Palestine and wanting to reach new people through making human-to-human links, raising people's awareness and encouraging them to be active to promote human rights.

We began to organise exchanges between the UK and Palestine and increasingly for young people, which were clearly effective in carrying out CADFA's work. We also found from feedback from the young people who were involved that these exchanges, their subject-matter and their methods were a very strong and special experience for them. Our area of work was really important to young people trying to work out what is going on in the world, and in particular (though not only) to young people who are themselves subject to racism and islamophobia: the horrible pressures there are on young people in this current society relate to our area of work.

We found that linking with young Palestinians, learning about their lives, protesting against human rights violations and finding ways to be active is also good for young Europeans themselves, builds their skills, their hope and their resilience.

The Ma'an-Together project bore this out: once again, the responses of the young people from the UK and from France were very strong (as were the responses from Palestine). Once again, young people who were newly involved were surprised, involved and motivated through this work, and young people who were able to take part in more than one of the exchanges have gone on to lead others and build new projects in this area of work.

The Ma'an-Together project

Ma'an Together project sought to build on what CADFA had learned from over 12 years of exchange projects. At the end of our previous big Erasmus+ project Twinning in Action (2014-16), we did a review, listed the areas where we felt we had something to contribute¹ and planned that our next project, Ma'an-Together, would build on these areas, strengthen the experience of our own project leaders and extend this way of working to new partners.

¹ : • Human rights, anti-discrimination particularly in relation to Palestine • Campaigning; ways to be active on a local level • Exchanges with Palestine Involving young people - Building hope of change • Building skills to lead and skills to be active • UK-Palestine links between women, youth, university students • Materials on Palestine, human rights and cross-cultural themes • Reaching out to local organisations • Effective partnerships with twinning groups and others.

What was particularly new for us in Ma'an-Together was a three-way international partnership, sharing the project not only with Palestine as we had done for many years, but with France.

The aims of this project were • to train youth workers to strengthen young people against pressures to radicalise, • to create a safe space for young people to discuss complex issues and work peacefully for human rights and against discrimination. • to enable them to develop their skills in media and in speaking out about their experiences and ideas • to take the message and the methods of this project out more widely.

The project included six exchanges: three of them youth workers' training exchanges and three of them – one in each partner country - for young people from Palestine, France and the UK. These are described below.

Ma'an-Together leaders' training in the UK: July 2017

The project began with a leaders' training in the UK to bring together the people from each partner organisation who would lead the following youth exchanges. The first purpose of this Activity was to exchange understandings of youth work, current pressures on young people in the three countries, activities for young people in particular to focus on finding ways to work against discrimination and for human rights. The second was to allow the leadership team from all three countries to prepare all aspects of the following youth

exchanges. We organised a residential on the Shropshire/ Welsh border for the first few days and then moved to London for the final days.

The plan was to have four leaders from each country but unfortunately one of the Palestinian leaders did not get her visa in time, reducing their number by one. The French group was also under-number as one participant did not travel.

The exchange was both varied and focused. It included workshops, explorations and meetings with local youth workers in Wales, Worcester and London, a street activity and several public events.

The initial presentations by youth workers from each country were extremely interesting and the exchange began in an optimistic way. The public meetings that we held to explain the project to local people were very stimulating and the meetings with other youth workers were interesting. Workshops led by others (eg on media) went very well. We have some wonderful memories of parts of the project and so do organisations in Knighton, Llanidloes, Worcester and London that took part in our events.

There was a real sadness in this exchange, however, as relations with our new French partner from Bordeaux became difficult. In fact the new partner organisation was represented only by one person –the other two members of the French 'team' had, it turned out, no link to that organisation – and we found it hard to work together. Although we moved through the programme towards the stated objectives, too much of the time was taken with reconciling differences. Our strong working

relation with the long-standing Palestinian partner continued but we had real differences of expectations with the French partner. One area was in behaviour for leaders (on this exchange) and more importantly for young participants in youth exchanges. In the end, we finished this Activity with an agreement that we had all found it difficult but planned to go on working together.

A change of partners

Following the July visit, work continued and we put in for visas to France for the Palestinians in preparation for our October visit and bought the air tickets. It was an enormous shock when with days to go before the first youth exchange (and having transferred some thousands of pounds to our French partner to run that exchange), the French partner suddenly pulled out.

The legacies of our first partner were shock, the need to learn from difficulty, the hard work of implementing sudden change with a project involving over 30 people and also financial difficulties as they did not (despite clear requests) return the thousands of pounds that we had given them to host the project as it had originally been planned. For a small organisation, this was difficult to deal with.

The disappointment on the part of the participants was huge. We considered a delay but first set out to see whether from our French contacts we could find an organisation that was interested to step into the project. We're hugely grateful to a

big network of people who did their very best in many ways.

It didn't seem likely that we could find a new partner – but suddenly we were put in contact with an appropriate organisation in the suburbs of Paris. We were able to discuss with them the outline of the project and found them interested in what we were trying to do: they had also got a partner in Palestine (in Beit Jala) and were open to working three-ways on the theme that we proposed. Although they were also astonished by the haste, they agreed to join us. We remain extremely grateful to them for their care and flexibility. The rest of this report is the story of a joint project with De L'Autre Cote, Aubervilliers as well as our old friends at Dar Assadaqa.

Ma'an-Together youth exchange in France: October 2017: Anti-Discrimination

Having a new partner and a new venue for the exchange at such short notice affected the plans for this exchange in several ways. The leaders from the UK and Palestine who had been part of Activity 1 led the project using our ideas and materials, and the new leaders involved were helpful and interested. We worked with the new partner during the activity itself to establish common ways of working. Neither they nor their participants had been expecting this to happen and all of us had to fit the project together as best we all could. We very much appreciate their positive approach.

The new partner was based in the Paris suburb, not in Bordeaux, and all arrangements had to be newly made. Given the time pressure, it was impossible to put in place the plans and checks for a residential outside Paris, so the exchange took place in Aubervilliers, where the Palestinian and UK groups stayed in a hotel that was fortunately close to the new partner's centre which was the base for cooking, workshops and activities.

Our new partner invited their users in to meet the UK and French participants, but there was no time to organise meetings with other organisations or have a big public event as we had originally planned.

Games, sports and picnics developed solidarity between the groups and though communication was difficult, clear progress was made.

This time in France made us all confront the language issue. Each country group included some who spoke the other languages but on the whole the Palestinians were better at English than the UK or French were at each other's languages, though a number of the French participants spoke Arabic and one of the Palestinian leaders spoke French. There was some dependence on the individuals who were able to translate for others. However there was clear interest among all the participants in communicating with each other and therefore trying to learn each other's languages.

It was possible to put in place some of the planned activities though others had to be adapted. There were icebreakers, presentations on the three countries, workshops for cultural exchange, outings

related to the project, for example a very useful outing to a museum that had an exhibition on discrimination and which prompted a lot of discussion. Spending time in the vicinity of Aubervilliers and making excursions to other parts of Paris underlined the importance of the anti-discrimination theme.

A particularly successful activity was to make questionnaires for local people about their understandings of local society and discrimination. We worked with the participants to write the questionnaires and over two days they put them to use, both in Aubervilliers and in other areas of Paris. They found the results and the dramatic differences of views particularly thought-provoking.

Another was a workshop about the places in the world that the participants and their parents and families had come from. Both European groups included people from refugee and migrant communities and between them, the group had connections to many countries. Finding out what people knew about them and looking for common themes led to discussion of both history of imperialism and current issues including refugee issues, inclusion, anti-discrimination and Europe.

As a result of finding a new partner, we managed to keep the project fully on track. The French exchange opened new learning and raised new questions, and was extremely positive and productive for the individuals and organisations concerned.

Ma'an-Together leaders' training in the UK: January 2018

As we had new partners, we decided that leaders of all organisations should meet in London in January 2018 in order to go over the material together from the Activity 1, and for the preparation of the rest of the project that we wished we had done with this group in July 2017.

We brought the Palestinian leader and two French leaders together with several of us from the UK at our office in Camden in January 2018.

This was an extremely useful and valuable exchange; we looked at the basis of the project that had been planned, our experiences in October 2017, the ways we intended to work together as a partner in the coming exchanges. And we decided once again what a pleasure it was to be working with such a positive and interesting group of people.

During this exchange, we took part together in a number of public events to explain the Ma'an-Together project and involve others in the work. One of them was the opening of CADFA's new headquarters at Café Palestina, which allowed us to introduce our new partner to many sides of our work.

Ma'an-Together youth exchange in Palestine: April 2018: 'Human rights'

The second youth exchange took UK and French groups to Palestine to join with

young people in Palestine for a project with a theme of human rights. This exchange worked as planned, using our planned three-part model

- Listening and Comparing,
- Building a picture: focusing on human rights and anti-discrimination
- Making a Change.

For the first part, the group spent three days on residential in Jericho. This time, all groups had had plenty of time to prepare. An induction day introduced the project to the participants. People who had taken part in the previous exchange told the others about it through pictures and videos. Each country group introduced the others to their country, their lives and challenges. This included talking about discrimination and anti-discrimination in their own countries. Young people from each country took a lead on cooking food from their own country on one of the evenings. During this stage there were also local outings and meetings with local young people.

The group moved to Abu Dis for parts two and three. In the second part, the four 'colour' groups each carried out an investigation into the human rights situation, visiting refugee camps, villages, cities, interviewing people in youth and human rights organisations, looking at the situation in Abu Dis, Hebron, Ramallah, Jerusalem and a local Bedouin village.

There were a great variety of activities – visits, cooking, artwork, media work, sports activities and many games. Just as in France, the opportunity to see somewhere new with their own eyes led to a huge amount of learning and to some shock particularly when they learned of the experiences of their new friends at the hands of the military.

During the third part, the groups discussed what they had learned and what they could do to make a change. They took part in media workshops at Shorouq Centre to prepare to present their experiences to the other groups using photos, reports, drama and videos.

On the final weekend, they shared these presentations with the others at a conference at Al Quds University to which other young people were also invited.

These presentations went very well and showed how much the young people had noticed, had learned, had enjoyed the exchange with each other and felt informed and motivated to work for human rights. The participants and leaders agreed that it was a particularly rich experience to work together in this way.

Ma'an-Together youth exchange in UK: September 2018: 'Taking Our Voice Outwards'

The aim of the youth exchange in the UK - following the work the group had done on anti-discrimination in France and on human rights in Palestine - was to find ways for young people raise their voices and campaign for human rights and against discrimination. This started from early in the exchange. The group considered different ways of getting their voice across including speaking at public meetings, writing to politicians, art work, media, street activities, leafleting, petitioning and had the opportunity to practice them all.

Once again, we used the three-part model, starting with a residential on the

Shropshire/ Welsh border. Here the group remembered what they had learned from the previous parts of the project, again presented their own experience to each other, and planned the project work for part two.

The countryside residential included outings, cooking for each other and sports. Between these were workshops that allowed participants to consider ways of planning public events, running effective visual street activities, ways of reaching policy makers through letters, petitions and lobbies.

The second part of the exchange took different 'colour groups' was to visit different areas and practise these skills so they could report back to each other when they met in London. One group went to Malvern and Worcester, one went to Kettering and Northampton and one group to Nottingham and Hull. There they were guests of local twinning groups and had a number of activities. They were asked to find out about the different places they went to (they had a questionnaire to use with local people), to put on a street activity together with the local group, and to help with a public event, including speaking at it. They were then asked to bring back photos, videos and ideas to London for editing in part three.

The third part of the exchange took place in London. Here we worked with our partners in Soapbox Islington, where the young people worked in their groups on media projects (radio, video, music and presentations) that drew together what

they had been doing and prepared for a final public presentation.

Unfortunately, in the end the timing of this exchange proved difficult for many of the French group and only four of them were able to attend. However, their contribution to the project was very strong, as was their enjoyment and assessment of their learning, and the project was still useful as a three-way exchange.

Places in the UK which had activities involving others (street activities, meetings, public meetings) run by the Ma'an-Together project:

- Camden
- Hackney
- Hull
- Islington
- Kettering
- Knighton
- Llanidloes
- Malvern
- Northampton
- Nottingham
- Worcester

Ma'an-Together leaders' evaluation exchange in UK: December 2018

We were very glad that we included a final leaders' exchange with a focus on evaluation and dissemination, because this truly drew together learning from this project, helped us to disseminate and allowed us to consider next steps. The December exchange began with training in evaluation and then a stage-by-stage review of the exchanges from the point of view both of outcomes and processes.

We went on to look at dissemination and talked about the project with local people and with groups from three universities. We wanted to take the project and its conclusions to policy makers (a job that had not been finished in the previous youth exchange). Our MP was wrapped in work to do with Brexit but we were able to see one of our MEPs, to visit the House of Lords and the Foreign Office, taking the findings of the project.

This exchange took place in December 2018 and CADFA held a conference to celebrate 70 years of human rights. The project participants were central contributors to the conference. Young people who had taken part in the youth exchanges showed a film about their experiences in the Maan project and the project leaders talked about the outcomes of the project.

This was also the fifteenth anniversary of Camden-Abu Dis linking work, and the project participants joined a party to celebrate and hope for many more years' work, hoping that this would include our new French partner.

Outcomes of the project

Overall, Ma'an-Together has been a very strong experience for the people and organisations involved in it. It was a great step forward for CADFA, Dar Assadaqa, De L'Autre Cote and our work together. Although CADFA had been involved in progressively bigger projects over the years, we found the jump to having a third major partner a big one, and the disappointment and shock when our first French partner withdrew was real.

However, we overcome a huge obstacle to run a very good project because we

remained focused on our aims, had strong and consistent plans and because we have so many friends and contacts (among them, partners and participants from previous Erasmus+ projects) who wanted to keep it on track. It is true to say that hundreds of people worked hard to support this project during its two years.

We were delighted by the fantastic achievements of many of our participants, the learning of the leaders and the organisations and we were extremely happy to find a good new partner who also restored our confidence in our judgement and in the model of work that the project represented.

Overall, as that partner emphasised, this was a RICH project where one exchange built fruitfully on the next. The first leader exchange set us, the UK and Palestinian partners up for a good project; the second one built on it and brought our French partners in to the middle of the project.

The first youth exchange in France was full of experiences that were new for everyone, and we are proud to have managed in the way we did at two or three days' notice. The second youth exchange in Palestine showed the strength of our model, our local partnerships and our experience, and through it we made an extraordinary exchange safe and normal for the young Europeans. The final youth exchange in the UK showed how much the young people involved had grown through the project and again the usefulness of the activities and the strength of our local friendships. The final leaders' exchange allowed a mature discussion of where we had all got to and underlined the importance of this work and the optimism within it.

Overall, this project that began with adversity proved and strengthened our

resilience as an organisation and we are proud to have helped build resilience and hope in others.

Outcomes for young people

Over a hundred people joined the project as direct participants and hundreds of others across the UK, France and Palestine took part in the project or joined its events over the two years. There was a huge amount of learning through the project and very positive reports from the participants. Some of their comments have gone on to the project blog

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This was an exceptional opportunity for young people, particularly those who had had few opportunities to travel. It brought young people from the three countries together so they could learn about each other's lives and consider ways to raise their voices effectively and to work against discrimination and for human rights. For participants (leaders and young people), it raised awareness, developed skills and gave hope.

For young people who took part in more than one or even all three of the youth exchanges, growth in confidence and in leadership skills was particularly marked. We have been proud to see them speaking out in many contexts, running local groups, making videos expressing their experiences and views. They finished the project with new ideas and confidence. These young people are staying in touch with young people in the other countries, supporting twinning clubs, planning new activities and energetically pushing to build projects which will take this work to other people.

Outcomes for the leaders

CADFA's previous project, Twinning in Action, had been a strong step in developing our capacity to run twinning exchanges to promote human rights in Palestine. This project Ma'an-Together took this further with its leader trainings that also involved new partners. The project was an opportunity for the youth workers and leaders from all the organisations to improve their knowledge and skills in many ways. They learned a lot from this way of working and took this back to their organisations. The formal discussions on the training visits were very useful as were the practice and discussion on the youth exchanges themselves.

Outcomes for the organisations

This was a very strong experience for the organisations involved. It showed us once again that small organisations can do big things with focus, determination and good planning.

The project forced CADFA and Dar Assadaqa (particularly through the change of partner) to learn from difficulty as well as success. Despite difficulties that could have finished the project early, we made a success of it and very many people are proud of their association with the project. We are heartened by the fact that we kept to plan despite the difficulties.

This was the first Erasmus+ project for De L'Autre Cote. They found it a rich

experience and are encouraged and hoping to do new Erasmus+ projects.

We have undoubtedly learned from this project: from the subject matter, from the new knowledge and the events on the project, from our new partner – and even from our old one, despite the shock. Perhaps we are older and wiser at the end of the project; certainly more cautious in some respects.

On-going dissemination

The learning that the young people and leaders had through this project is moving wider through their stories to their friends and family and communities. CADFA hear of this as new people come to ask if they can join in future projects – for example – and we are continuing to tell people about it through this report, through disseminating the blog, showing the short videos, presenting the project at our conferences and public events and working with the participants to develop the projects that they have become interested in as a result of Ma-an-Together.

Working in partnership

This project built on our previous work and the biggest change for us was working with two new international partners. We learned a lot more about formal partnership in Erasmus+ projects, both good and bad. Our experience with the first partner (it has to be said, with just one person from that organisation) was more than disappointing; it was a challenge to our trust in future partnerships. We are trying to learn whether there are general

lessons to be learned from this and asking Erasmus+ to help us to recover the money we had given them.

Our experience with the second partner however was very positive; it was respectful, focused and purposeful and we have finished the project planning to work together again and having together put in two joint project bids. We believe that we were too quick in accepting the assurances of a partner that we did not know, in the first case, and very lucky that this worked out in the second. Our aim is to develop long-term partnerships to work together on issues of common concern – like with do with Dar Assadaqa.

Erasmus, EU and Brexit

We were very grateful to have had to opportunity to work on these great Erasmus+ projects (and before them Youth in Action), since 2008. We have developed enormously as an organisation and are in touch with many of our hundreds of project participants, and know that for many of them, these projects have changed lives.

Opportunities from the European Union are currently under threat with the prospect of Brexit – We very much hope that they will continue. As organisations will do our very best to continue this work together for the young people and the people around them.

Thank you

We want to say a big thank you to Erasmus + for funds without which this project would not have been possible, and for pushing us to have a partner in Europe in a new way; this was important. Thank you very much to the British Council in Jerusalem for your help and support.

We would like to thank all of our partners organisations helped to support the project and make it possible. Note that in France, owing to the sudden change of partner, our thanks are due to our partner De L'Autre Cote but we did not have time to build a programme involving other youth organisations etc. In the UK and Palestine, we would like to thank the organisations listed below in particular (*).

A very big thank you to the many individuals who helped, hosted, cooked, accompanied, ran activities, drove, organised events and generally supported and encouraged the participants. We are happy to know so many good people.

(*) Organisations in the UK

- Knighton Azzoun twinning group
- Llanidloes Assawiya twinning group
- Worcester Palestine Friendship Group
- Horizon Centre youth group, Worcester
- Northampton Al Bireh Palestine Friendship Association
- Dragonhall Youth Centre & Soapbox Islington
- Access to Sports Islington
- Calthorpe Project
- Café Palestina
- Stand Up to Racism, Nottingham
- Nottingham PSC
- Hull University Palestine Society

- Anybody's Barn, Malvern
- Palestine societies and other interested academics and students at LSE, Westminster University, Bedford University, Northampton University, Greenwich University, SOAS Centre for Palestine Studies
- Lajee Centre, Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem
- Addameer Association
- Palestinian Centre for Popular Arts, Ramallah
- Eylia Media Association, Jerusalem
- Jabal al-Baba Media Centre

(*) Organisations in Palestine.

- Higher Council for Youth and Sports
- Aqbat Jaber Refugee Camp Services Centre
- Al Hilal Youth Club, Jericho
- Saraya Centre, Jerusalem
- Al Quds University Centre for Community Service, Jerusalem
- Al Quds University Students' Affairs Department, Abu Dis
- Shorouq Centre, Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem

This report was written by CADFA on the basis of discussion with all three partners in December 2018

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For more pictures and comments on all of these exchanges, see the project blog:
