



NEVE SHALOM/WAHAT AL-SALAM

THE “OASIS OF PEACE”

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam (“Oasis of Peace” in Hebrew and Arabic) is the only community in Israel where Jews and Arabs have chosen to live and educate their children together. The village was founded in 1972 by Father Bruno Hussar, a Jew by birth and a Catholic by conversion, who envisioned a manifestation of the Old Testament prophecy that “My people shall dwell in an oasis of peace.” (Isaiah 32:18). Over 30 years later, this “Oasis of Peace” consists of 55 families, half Jewish-Israeli and half Palestinian-Israeli, who have created an environment of trust, understanding, and respect in a community located midway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Welcoming people of all faiths, this community is governed by a democratically elected mayor and council. By fostering tools of bilingualism and binationalism, the residents of the village exert a positive influence on the conflict that surrounds them. Through the village’s three main educational institutions and other programs the community’s influence extends beyond its own borders, setting an example that Palestinians and Jews can live together equally with mutual respect for each other.

SCHOOL FOR PEACE

The School for Peace, a dynamic center of inter-group experience and research, has brought together over 45,000 youth and adults with diverse and often diametrically opposed ideological backgrounds. More than 300 adults have received training in conflict management skills, many of whom are now active in other organizations for social change. Participants are encouraged by trained facilitators to examine each other’s opinions and emotions and to listen to those from the other side, thereby developing tools to manage conflict. While these facilitations are not expected to solve differences, they provide rare opportunities for both sides to hear each other, interactions with a constructive impact on the society at large. The School for Peace strives to respond to requests to coordinate conflict management programs given its limited resources.

Youth Encounters: Each year, groups of 60 Jewish and Arab high school seniors participate in workshops in binational (Arabs and Jews together) and uni-national (Jews or Arabs only) settings.

University Workshops & Courses: The School for Peace collaborates with four Israeli universities, Ben Gurion, Haifa, Hebrew and Tel Aviv. Activities range from weekend encounters to semester courses. Women’s courses at Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion Universities invite Arab and Jewish women to address common issues while developing leadership skills.

Targeted Professionals Training: Programs specifically target Israelis and Palestinians working in targeted areas (i.e. law, mental health, or civil planning). Participants are engaged in a binational dialogue and training program that provides participants with significant opportunities to address the root causes of the conflict together and to build a foundation for reconciliation.

Other Encounters & Training: Israel-Palestine workshops reach those under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority; participation depends on the political situation, some encounters are held in a neutral setting such as Cyprus. The School for Peace also provides training and facilitates dialogues for educators in elementary, secondary, and higher education.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Primary School (K-6) offers classes to both Palestinian and Jewish children, all of whom are Israeli citizens living in NSWAS and about 30 nearby communities; the school draws 90% of its students from communities surrounding the village. The intensive bilingual environment requires smaller class sizes (usually 24, half Arab and half Jewish) and two teachers per class (one Jewish and one Arab). The Primary School contributes unique and progressive features to bilingual/bicultural education:

Golder-Goodwin Language Center: Central to the Primary School’s mission is bilingual education. All students are taught to read, write, and speak in both Arabic and Hebrew. The language center is a state-of-the-art lab where children are taught to manage all aspects of living in both languages through real life and hands-on applications, such as buying groceries and going to the doctor.

Special Programs: The Primary School is home to a Zoo Lab where children discover and care for little animals.

Children also participate in an “environmental school” learning environment friendly principles, and in the agricultural unit where they grow crops. Finally, students take care of the Byzantine mosaic uncovered a few years ago through the archaeology program.

Teacher Training & Curriculum: Primary School teachers, with years of bilingual education experience, train outside principals and teachers in curriculum development. There are others schools in the Galilee and Jerusalem and one kindergarten in Jaffa that have drawn significantly on the Primary School’s methodology for teaching bilingually in bicultural classrooms.

DOUMIA/SAKINA ~ THE PLURALISTIC SPIRITUAL CENTER

A framework for encounter activities, study and reflection, based on the values of equality, justice and reconciliation. The Center’s activities draw inspiration from the resources and spiritual traditions of the Middle East and the world at large. Programs focus on open inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and the advancement of peace.

HUMANITARIAN AID

WAS-NS operates a program to provide humanitarian relief (usually but not exclusively medical) for Palestinian villagers affected by the ongoing conflict. The project is conducted by WAS-NS residents on a voluntary basis and is supported by donations of money and materials from Israel and abroad.

YOUTH CLUB — NADI

The Youth Club provides a framework for a variety of extracurricular activities for the young people of the community. The objectives of the Youth Club are to foster and sustain interpersonal connections; to encourage voluntary community involvement; to increase awareness on issues of Palestinian-Jewish relations and social justice; to promote values of mutual acceptance and respect; and to generate individual and social responsibility towards peers, the immediate community, other Palestinian and Jewish communities, and the larger society.

GUEST HOUSE

The Guest House’s 41 suites provide accommodations for groups and individuals visiting the village for encounter workshops, meetings, and tours. The Guest House provides the initial welcome to visitors and coordinates activities with other departments to offer opportunities to participate in lectures, workshops, and concerts.

AWARDS

Awards: The village has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize and awarded several prestigious peace prizes from organizations in Japan, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, Israel, and the United States.

**American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam
Mission Statement**

The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam encourages, supports and publicizes the projects of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the “Oasis of Peace.” For more than thirty years, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has been dedicated to dialogue, cooperation and a genuine and durable peace between Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis.

Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel have chosen to live and work together as equals in this community to promote trust, understanding and mutual respect well beyond its own borders. At Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the bilingual, binational, multicultural Primary School, the School for Peace, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center, and other projects, serve the village and beyond reaching thousands of Jewish and Palestinian youth and adults.

The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status under Internal Revenue Code.

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