Hope Outreach of Canada

Musalaha Summer Camp 2022 - Final Report

Project Title: Musalaha Children's Summer Camp
Name of Organization: Musalaha

Project Evaluation

1. Project Design

The primary beneficiaries for this project are the around 85 campers that came from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim backgrounds. This included children who are Israeli-Jews, Palestinians from Israel, Palestinians from the West Bank, and Palestinians from Gaza.
In 2022, Musalaha was the only organization that executed a 5-day camp for children in Israel/Palestine. Additionally, we had some Ukrainian refugee children that were at the site for a different project join the activities. The secondary beneficiaries are our camp leaders, counsellors, helpers, and volunteers who run the camp. These are Israeli and Palestinian youth and young adults (age 19-30) who are Musalaha's alumni and who themselves used to participate as children in Musalaha's activities. The camp was a success, as the children and counselors left with a greater understanding of each other's humanity.

The wider community in the camp area, the parents at home, and other stakeholders were impressed from the activities. The children return to their homes after learning new names of other children from the other side, but most importantly, the children and counselors left with a greater understanding of each other's humanity.

On the human level, the volunteerism and initiative were crucial for the project. The leaders, old campers, and new volunteers managed the camp. Many of the volunteers proved to have leadership potential and will be trained further through other projects.
Financially, we utilized the money by getting a camp location, hiring teachers from the Ministry of Education as required, a security guard and first aid person, reserved a pool, transportation, etc. We had some unforeseen circumstances with the transportation in private vehicles (4 rounds) for all Palestinians between Bethlehem and Jerusalem and some facilities that were not prepared accordingly.
On a material level, Musalaha has developed and used the Youth Curriculum as a foundation for the bible studies, we brought many supplies for all the various competitions, sports and crafts, water games, night games, and more.

2. Collaboration and Approval

According to government regulations, all summer camps are required to be on a premise approved by the Ministry of Education. There were basic health and safety requirements that passed inspection prior and during the camp taking place. The Ministry certified the camp counsellors to be teachers, which took special courses to lead Summer Camps.

In coordination with the Ministry of Health in I/P, we received the approved document to conduct the summer camp and conducted all matters according to its guidelines.
We collaborated with churches and youth groups, we brought a circus NGO for a juggling session, and we worked with the hosts (Givat Haviva).

In coordination with the Ministry of Health in Israel and Palestine, we have to create an approved document that permits us to conduct the activities when following the respective guidelines in the document. The guidelines in the document may include prohibiting participation of children with a fever, prohibiting the participation of children who have a family member in quarantine, sanitizing hands and temperature checks, and more.

3. Goals and Outcomes

1. Goal: To expose children to the "other" in language, culture and team sports and at the same time to infuse reconciliation teachings and principles in the activities.
2. Goal: To give the children a positive emotional response that they will remember when they grow up.

Outcome for Goal 1:
By the end of the camp, all the children have learned how to write their name in the other's language and improved their cross-cultural communication skills. All the children were exposed to a different language and culture as all activities were in Arabic and Hebrew equally. Some of the children left the camp having learned new phrases and songs in Hebrew and Arabic. All of the children shared cabins with children from the 'other' side, and some became good friends. We shares our reconciliation teachings explicitly during bible study times in the morning. **The theme of the camp was the story of David and Goliath**. The overall objective was to reflect upon the story and how the children can rise up from fear and weakness (specifically bullying) with the help of God.

Outcome for Goal 2:
According to the questionnaires, 92% of the participants expressed that they had a positive experience in the camp. The favorite time for most of the children was the pool time and night games. In addition, we received several phone calls from the parents that expressed their positive experiences, and their satisfaction with their kids' stories and new relationships with other kids. This is a promising indicator that the children's emotional response to the 'other' group and will reflect positively when thinking about the camp. This will increase the probability of the children accepting people different from them in the future, as well as enhancing existing relationships based on biblical principles of equality and humanity.

Addressing the Conflict for Children
The Summer Camp addresses the root cause of several injustices. First, the reality of having broken relationships and being separated by the conflict. Also, the camps address the involvement of reconciliation teaching in children's lives. This offers children the platform to continue to foster their relationship with Musalaha, one another, and their understanding of reconciliation. Second, many children who participate in Musalaha's activities at a young age and receive reconciliation education prove to be better bridgebuilders in their adolescence life. Moreover, as mentioned with

the leaders of the camp, most of our camp leaders, counselors, and volunteers who run the activities are youth and young adults who used to participate as children in Musalaha's camps.

The project overcomes prejudices and hate already at a young age, and to foster attitudes of love, peace and tolerance by teaching the most vulnerable in Palestine/Israel the biblical principles of reconciliation. These children represent the future of this land, and if we do not invest in them now, and help them understand their humanity as individuals made in the image of God, we will have missed a wonderful opportunity to impact their perceptions and decision-making processes early on.

4. Implementation Opportunities and Challenges

Generally, the most unexpected opportunities were sharing Musalaha's vision and mission with many people who came across the camp. Unexpectedly, we had a group of Ukrainian refugee children join our curriculum and be exposed to the children and youth and their reconciliation efforts.