

Conflict sensitive refugee assistance

Documentation of project activities
“Nonviolent Education in Jordan 2016”
Dagmar Nolden and Cassandra Schützko

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Nonviolent Education in Jordan

Info

- ≡ 3 partner organisations in Germany and Jordan
- ≡ 106 participants in 5 workshops of qualification and encounter in Jordan
- ≡ Series of expert discussions in Germany

The project “Civic and Nonviolent Education in Jordan”, which first started in 2013, aims at strengthening the values of tolerance, participation and nonviolence within the Jordanian education system. Hence, the project focuses on conducting qualification courses, bringing together educational experts from Jordan and Germany to discuss and develop curricula and learning materials for schools and universities, as well as networking with and between relevant Jordanian stakeholders and educational institutions. In 2016 the field of activities has been expanded beyond the two established components of schools and higher education by the component of refugee assistance. Given the growing challenges of integrating Syrian refugees, the training of professionals in refugee assistance comprising both, members of the host society and the refugee population, is increasingly gaining relevance as a part of the project.

First experiences in this field existed since 2015 based on the close cooperation with the participants of the earlier qualification courses on nonviolent education who are engaged in education in emergencies. With their support, Berghof Foundation has established contacts and cooperations with experienced international NGOs operating in the field in Jordan, such as Relief International, and conducted first workshops in the two refugee camps, Azraq and Zaatari.

This year’s project activities comprised the development and implementation of model workshops on conflict sensitive refugee assistance for different target groups inside and outside the camp settings, as well as a series of expert meetings in Germany with experienced Jordanian and German refugee workers. In light of the challenges that might arise from the refugee crisis in Jordan and in Germany in the short, mid, and long term, formats that promote the encounter and exchange of experiences among refugee workers gain importance as refugee assistance in both countries could benefit from them. Staff members of the Berghof Foundation’s programme “Peace Education and Global Learning”, therefore, conceptualised and tested a format for qualification workshops as well as a format promoting encounter and exchange.

Conflict Sensitive Refugee Assistance

Today, conflict sensitivity is a renowned and established concept in the fields of education, development cooperation, and journalism. The concept is based on the assumption that every human action, well-intended or not, is a form of intervention in a certain context and, thus, interacts with it. In consequence, no action can be understood as neutral as they contain both, the potential to cause or intensify conflicts, but also the potential to promote and strengthen peace. Up to now, the concept has been mainly applied in professional contexts in former and current regions of crisis and conflict. The Berghof Foundation, however, perceives it as extremely valuable to apply it specifically to the field of professional and voluntary refugee assistance, where well-intended actions are often followed by misperceptions and frustrations that may culminate in the use of violence, instead of the envisioned outcome. The Berghof Foundation’s good experiences with a workshop format on conflict sensitive refugee assistance for volunteers engaged in the field

in Germany and the affirmative feedback received by workshop participants, fed into the development of the two different formats of the model workshops on conflict sensitive refugee assistance in Jordan.

Workshop of Encounter (model workshop format I)

This workshop format aims at creating a space for encounter and exchange through learning with each other. Thereby, the concept works on two levels. The first level centres on the participants' joint learning experience on conflict sensitivity and constructive conflict transformation in the field of forced migration. Both topics are of utmost importance to all participants engaged in social work with refugees and migrants, irrespective of their regional backgrounds. The second level, encompasses the facilitation of the exchange of experiences. The joint learning experience acts hence, as a necessary prerequisite to learning from and about each other, as it allows the participants to build the trust needed for an enriching dialogue.

Snapshots of encounters:
During a workshop break Syrian educators and life skills facilitators and students of international social work jointly capture their experience of encounter and exchange.



Qualification Workshop (model workshop format II)

The departure point of this workshop format is based on the idea that a person's capacities to constructively deal with conflicts in their living and working environment is closely linked to their ability to deal with inner conflicts. The latter, in turn, is contingent on a person's resilience and thus, their so called inner peace. In the context of forced migration where many, particularly refugees, might have made traumatic

experiences first hand, while others might suffer from stress, burn out, or secondary traumatisation, overall resilience is typically rather low. Therefore, the workshop aims at both, strengthening the participants' resilience as a basic condition for enhancing their capacities for nonviolent conflict transformation, as well as actually fostering their theoretical and practical knowledge and skills on constructive conflict transformation.



Conveying content: The interactive and dialogue oriented workshops are held in English and Arabic with facilitators and interpreter working closely together.

Workshop of Encounter

Model workshop format I

Activities in Germany

Forced Migration is a global phenomenon. Concepts and approaches addressing forced migration however, are often developed and implemented on the level of states, organisations and society. An exchange of insights, experiences and knowledge gained in different contexts and regions such as Germany and Jordan could be beneficial for those assisting refugees.

In the same line of thought, the Berghof Foundation conducted in July 2016 a series of expert discussions and the Berghof International Summer School for Young Peace Builders on “Refugee Work as Peace Work”.



Between generations: Former peace activists discuss with the group of young refugee workers the summer school's topic “refugee work as peace work”.

Expert Discussion

Over five days three experienced, young refugee workers discussed the challenges and possibilities of refugee assistance in Germany and Jordan, in several meetings with professionals, volunteers and students of social work active in the field.

Together with representatives of Refugio, a nonprofit association in Stuttgart that deals with the treatment and consultation of refugees and victims of torture, they talked about approaches of psychosocial support and mental health in both countries. Furthermore, they shared insights and views on the situation in Jordan with the regional bishop and representatives of the Institute for Foreign Affairs (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen – ifa) in preparation of potential future projects in that field. All attendees perceived the meeting as very enriching.

Summer School

Following the series of expert meetings, the three young Jordanians attended the third Berghof Summer School for Young Peacebuilders at the Georg Zundel House of the Berghof Foundation in Tübingen. Under the topic of “Refugee Work as Peace Work” they discussed together with 15 other refugee workers from all around the world, for one week, different aspects of and the conditions for a longterm and value oriented engagement.

Workshops at Zaatari Refugee Camp

Info

- ≡ Two 2-day workshops with 42 participants
- ≡ **Location:** Relief International Education Centre, Zaatari Refugee Camp
- ≡ **Partner organisation:** Relief International
- ≡ **Target group:** Syrian volunteers engaged in social work, educational and life skills activities of Relief International and students of the Masters programme “International social work with refugees and migrants”, University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt, Germany.



Digestive walks: To let the new impressions and content sink in, two participants go for a walk across the compound of Relief International's educational centre at Zaatari camp.

Zaatari, the biggest refugee camp in Jordan, was the location for two workshops of encounter, conducted by Berghof Foundation in September and October 2016. For the first time the workshop brought together refugee workers from Jordan and Syria and students of the MA programme “International social work with refugees and migrants” from the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (FHWS), within the camp setting.

Zaatari Refugee Camp

The Zaatari refugee camp was first opened in July 28, 2012 and has grown exponentially ever since. As of November 2016 the camp provided shelter for 79.901 people, 57% of who are youth, according to UNHCR. Since its opening in 2012, nearly half a million refugees have passed through the camp on their search for a safe space to live. The majority of the exclusively Syrian camp population originates from Daraa governorate, southern Syria. The camp is under the joint administration of the Jordanian government and UNHCR. Today the camp, which is located in Mafraq governorate, about 15 km away from the Syrian-Jordanian border, is often considered Jordan's third biggest city. Besides its sheer size, this is also due to the entrepreneurial activities within the camp that become, for instance, visible in the establishing of the so called “Champs Elysée”, Zaatari's biggest informal market.

Our partners

The two-day workshops were implemented in cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (FHWS) and Relief International (RI). In 2016 the FHWS had launched its Masters programme “International social work with refugees and migrants”. The programme addressed students from all around the world and provides professional, social and profession related competences for the field of social work with refugees and migrants in the national and international context. Thereby, it endeavors to connect regions of origin, transit and destination, e. g. through a Summer School and study abroad programme in cooperation with the German Jordanian University (GJU) in Madaba, Jordan.



Building bridges: While learning on how to constructively deal with conflicts, the participants get to know each other and jointly overcome language barriers.



Culture of conflict: “Do the possibilities for intervening in conflicts in the field of refugee assistance in Germany and Jordan vary,” the participants ask each other.

It was within the framework of this summer school that the students participated in the workshop offered by Berghof Foundation. With Relief International the Berghof Foundation first cooperated in 20XX. Since 2012 Relief International offers assistance to Syrian refugees and their Jordanian host communities. Through education centers Relief International provides education programmes as well as supervised recreational activities. While all of Relief International’s teachers, case managers and community mobilisers are Syrians, who live in the camps, local Jordanians work as support staff. Representatives of both groups attended the workshops that took place in the RI education center at Zaatari refugee camp.

Recreational activities: Children playing on the compound of Relief International’s educational centre at Zaatari camp.



Qualification Workshop

Model workshop format II

Info

- ≡ One-day workshop with 14 participants
- ≡ **Location:** youth centre, Irbid
- ≡ **Target group:** Jordanian staff and Syrian refugees active in different community based organisations (national and international) assisting refugees, particularly in the area of protection and life skills

Mix of message:
Plenary sessions and interactive partner and group exercises alternate during the qualification workshop.



Workshop at a Youth Centre in Irbid

“I think we as refugees need these kind of workshops” reflects one of the participants after the one-day workshop that took place at a youth center in Irbid. It was the first of three model workshops on qualification implemented by Berghof Foundation in December 2016. The workshop aimed at promoting the participants capacities to constructively deal with conflicts in their working environments and daily life. Interactive Methods and practical exercises focused on strengthening the participant’s resilience. All participants highlighted the relevance to offer such an opportunity for further training outside of the Jordanian capital, Amman, as well as outside the training scheme of international organisations. “As far as I know, this was the first training of its kind offered in Irbid and I am grateful that I could participate in it”, one Jordanian participant who had cofounded an NGO assisting refugees in Jordan, concluded.

Comments of Participants

“The workshop allowed me to change my perspective on conflicts. I feel I can understand them better now. I also have the impression that the practical exercises that we learned will help to deal with my inner confusion, especially in those moments when I remember what happened in Syria. When I often get into fights, or let’s say conflicts, with my husband.”

Syrian woman, Irbid

Workshop at the Emirati Jordanian Camp

Info

- ≡ 2-day workshop with 31 participants
- ≡ **Location:** Terre des Hommes compound at the Emirati Jordanian Camp
- ≡ **Partner organisation:** Terre des Hommes
- ≡ **Target group:** Jordanian staff and Syrian volunteers active in education, protection and child protection, life skills activities offered by Relief International, Unicef and others

The workshop offered by Berghof Foundation in the Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC) and implemented in cooperation with Terre des Hommes (TdH) was the first of its kind and a kick off for future staff development activities at the camp.

For two days Syrian volunteers and Jordanian staff members of Terre des Hommes and other organisations working at the camp, broadened their capacities of constructive conflict transformation and strengthened their resilience and capacities for inner peace. The workshop combined methods and approaches of peace education and interactive theatre with concepts and methods of mindfulness and mediation. Since the interest in the workshop was actually bigger than the available slots, the ones who attended the workshop will jointly transfer their gained knowledge in several follow-up workshops supervised by Terre des Hommes.



What does peace mean to you: At the beginning of the workshop participants and facilitators share their personal understanding of relevant terms, such as peace and conflict.



Learning with and from each other: Some of the participants of the workshop at the Emirati-Jordanian Camp will transfer what they learned to other staff members and volunteers.

Comments of Participants

“I was excited that I could release some tension and pressure through the relaxation exercises. I face a lot of pressure every day. I will use those exercises in the female life skills group in particular, but also in my general work with the community and for myself. It will help me to improve the way I conduct activities and how I interact with the community”.

Syrian life skills facilitator.

Emirati Jordanian Camp

The Emirati Jordanian Camp is located 20 km north-west of the Jordanian city Zarqa, in the midst of the plains of Mrajeeb Al Fhoud. Opened in April 2013 to cope with the crisis in neighboring Syria, the camp's population has been steadily growing ever since. As of December 19, 2016 the number of people residing in the camp amounts to 7.412 persons of concern the majority of who originate from Daraa (84%), Homs (20%) and rural Damascus (15%).

Up to now the camp is funded by the Emirati Red Crescent (ERC). In the media the camp has often been considered as a “five-star camp”, however the living conditions are often perceived as less attractive than e.g. at Zaatari, by many refugees. This is, among others, due to its remote location, the harsh weather conditions in the plains and the very limited cash for work or entrepreneurial opportunities. Compared to the two bigger camps Azraq and Zaatari, the number of national and international actors operating in the camp is also rather small.

The two-day workshop took place in one of the compounds of Terre des Hommes at the EJC. Terre des Hommes has been working in the Irbid, Mafraq and Jerash regions since 2012 and began operating in EJC in 2013. Their activities concentrate on the provision of basic items, the protection of children and their families against the effects of violence as well as on juvenile justice.



Sharing and inspiring: In the trusting atmosphere of the workshop participants share challenging moments and inspiring experiences related to their work.

“When working with the community it happens that I end up being involved in a conflict as a third party. The workshop broadened my knowledge of how conflicts escalate and how to intervene at different levels. This can be helpful in the aforementioned situations in the future.”

Jordanian staff member of Terre des Hommes.

“Interactive theatre is a valuable tool when working with refugee children and their families who experienced war. It can help them to cope with the traumatic experiences they made.”

Jordanian child protection officer at Terre des Hommes.

Workshop at Theodor Schneller School

Info

- ≡ 2-day workshop with 19 participants
- ≡ **Location:** Theodor Schneller School, Marka, Amman
- ≡ **Target group:** Syrian community leaders of urban refugee communities from different Jordanian governorates



Conflict party or mediator: In a conflict we can take on different roles. Aiming at constructive conflict transformation, each role requires a particular set of attitudes and capacities.

“This workshop changed many of my points of view and gave me more capacities to be in peace with myself and help others,” says a Syrian community leader about the last workshop conducted by Berghof Foundation in December 2016. The workshop took place at the Theodor Schneller School, Marka, Amman, a long-standing partner of the Berghof Foundation in Jordan. The participants, Syrian community leaders, had arrived from different Jordanian governorates to attend the two-day programme. Coming from diverse backgrounds, they have all been engaged on the community level and in the humanitarian field, since their arrival to Jordan. In the urban refugee context, community leaders often step in to support humanitarian actors.

During the workshop the group jointly discussed possibilities for constructive conflict transformation in their daily life and working environment. They exchanged their experiences as mediators and reflected on the relevant attitudes and behaviour. Furthermore, the participants shared what peace and inner peace means to them and strengthened their resilience through exercises of mindfulness and mediation.

The calm and relaxing atmosphere at the Theodore Schneller School was conducive to the groups learning process. Overall, the participants valued the workshop as a unique opportunity for further training, in which they felt respected and seen in their particular needs as community leaders and refugees.



Communication and emotions: In an exercise participants imagine everything someone expresses going in a basket instead of taking it personally.



Among community leaders: Coming from various professional backgrounds, such as teachers or business owners, many participants are today active on the community level.

Under Discussion with a Community Leader

Interviewer: Why did you decide to participate in the workshop?

Interviewee: The subject of peace is what made me excited to participate in the workshop, because it's a crucial subject in our time. The most important thing is to understand that peace is not only related to wars; that it is actually a lot more than that.

Interviewer: What was helpful for you? What can you implement from the things you have learned?

Interviewee: I believe that everything I learned was extremely important, as I work with children and women. But what worries me, is that there might be people who might not understand the methods when I implement them due to customs and traditions. Both play a crucial role in our society. Particularly, elderly might not understand and thus, not accept the methods in the first place as they are foreign and new to them. But I am confident that we can overcome those obstacles step by step and bring about change. I believe that the first steps towards peaceful coexistence are, in the first place, to implement what I learned at home, in the interaction with my children and my family and to bring it then from there into the society I live in.

Closing Remarks and Outlook

In its first year with funding by the German Federal Foreign Office, the project “Nonviolent Education in Jordan” successfully enlarged its field of activities by the component of refugee assistance. Building on its continuous commitment to promoting nonviolent education in Jordan, the Berghof Foundation with the great support of their partners, implement in 2016 all activities planned within this project component. Besides a series of expert meetings among Jordanian and German professionals experienced in the educational and psychosocial work with refugees, held in and around Tübingen, the Berghof Foundation conducted five workshops of encounter and qualification in different parts of Jordan, including the Emirati Jordanian Camp and Zaatari refugee camp. In the workshops participated 106 staff members and volunteers of international organisations, students of international social work with refugees and migrants, social workers, educators and community leaders, especially, from Germany, Jordan and Syria.

**Playing roles:
Interactive theatre allows
the participants
to explore possibilities
for transforming
conflict situations.**



As the participants’ feedback summarised in this report shows, both model workshop formats have proved invaluable, in that they address some of the needs of the different target groups and take them seriously. Consequently, both formats, the workshop of encounter as well as the qualification workshop will be refined in 2017, whereby two more workshops of encounter are planned within the framework of the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt’s Summer School, and the experiences gained from the testing of the qualification workshop format will feed into the development of a nine-day training of trainers.

Based on this year’s good experiences in working together with the University for Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt and the German Jordanian University, the Berghof Foundation envisions for 2017 to continue these cooperations and to formalise its cooperation with Relief International in a Memorandum of Understanding.



**Berghof Foundation
Operations GmbH**
Altensteinstrasse 48a
14195 Berlin
Germany
www.berghof-foundation.org
info@berghof-foundation.org

**Berghof Foundation
Peace Education & Global Learning**
Corrensstrasse 12
72076 Tübingen
Germany
www.berghof-foundation.org
info-tuebingen@berghof-foundation.org