

# « Open Letter - Organizational Changes at Mahapach »

5 décembre 2006

## Open Letter

### Organizational Changes in Mahapach-Taghir

Mahapach-Taghir is a joint Jewish- '48 Palestinian grassroots organization working to develop leadership and social justice in disadvantaged communities throughout Israel.

Founded in 1997, Mahapach-Taghir, which means 'turning the tables' in Hebrew and Arabic, has a clear understanding that the only way to achieve an end to ethnic discrimination in Israel and to achieve a just peace in the region, is through building solidarity between diverse Palestinian and Jewish groups, and working to unite around a common struggle based on a mutual interest for justice and understanding the essential role of building peace. We are the only organisation with such a progressive message, working to build Jewish-Palestinian partnership within Israel.

Towards this end, Mahapach-Taghir is jointly run by a Jewish and Palestinian female co-directorship and works with both Jewish and Palestinian student activists in seven communities throughout Israel. These communities, some of the poorest in Israel, include Mizrachi (Jews from North Africa, Arab countries, Iran and India), religiously observant Jews, immigrants from the former Soviet countries, and Ethiopian communities as well as Palestinian citizens of Israel ('48 Palestinians : internal refugees, Bedouin, Muslim and Christian).

Despite the fact that poverty and a lack of rights can be causes of conflict and racist discourse between disempowered communities as they compete for resources and government recognition, Mahapach believes that it is possible to work with these communities to promote the values of solidarity and partnership.

Mahapach-Taghir works for developing community leadership today (predominantly parents, women and students) and for tomorrow (children and youth). We answer families' needs for an after-school educational framework with our "Learning Community" model. Student mentors work with the children and youth to build literacy and convey the tools needed to question social assumptions. For example, "Return to Reading" is an ongoing project in all communities in which the children choose a favourite book and develop their reading and writing skills, whilst critically analysing the book's social assumptions (e.g. Militarism, sexism, racism).

Through seminars and study-days, Mahapach-Taghir trains student mentors in critical pedagogy and community and solidarity work, in order to develop their ability to look critically at society and promote

student activism. Through their educational work, the students also establish lasting relationships with the children's parents and neighborhood. In each community, Mahapach-Taghir works with a Resident Steering Committee, which both manages the Learning Community and leads campaigns for social rights, thus supporting committee members to be leaders and change agents in their communities.

In 2006, Mahapach-Taghir established "Civic Centres" in each community, to promote resident civic action and community leadership. These centres work to deepen and broaden resident leadership through educational programmes with adults, such as literacy courses and action groups on issues such as education, employment, civil rights and the environment. In parallel, the organisation is building partnerships between the constituent Palestinian and Jewish communities by connecting local struggles to inter-community campaigns. This work is aimed at strengthening Palestinian-Jewish solidarity and deepening a critical perspective, with the goal of changing awareness of the social reality in Israel.

Mahapach-Taghir activists have earned the respect and trust of these communities through a long process of recognising each community's daily struggle to simply survive and establishing the understanding that each person deserves to live with basic rights and in a democratic society and through campaigning alongside the residents and helping to strengthen their identities as Jewish and non-Jewish cultural minorities, and as Palestinians, not merely 'Israeli-Arabs'. Through this work, Mahapach-Taghir has established a unique position within these communities and within Israeli society, as an organization that can justly claim to be a bridge between the diverse minority groups in Israel.

In the coming year Mahapach-Taghir is partnering with Zochrot and the Alternative Information Center (AIC) with the aim of challenging the mainstream Israeli discourse on Palestine and the Palestinian people. This work is being expressly asked for by the communities in which we work.

The work with Zochrot aims to work with the Jewish communities to recognize the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, and with the Palestinian communities to deepen inter-generational connections through self-exploration and documentation of the Palestinian community's local history. The work with the AIC aims to highlight the brutal reality and injustice of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, as well as the ideological and economic interests that prolong and benefit from the Occupation. The project aims to build connections between poor communities in Israel and in Palestine based on mutual understandings.

From our understanding and experience of the situation, we believe that the vision outlined above offers a vital and important way forward. As Mahapach-Taghir moves towards greater Palestinian-Jewish partnership, we are now seeking like-minded partners ; those also committed to the long-term process of building solidarity and partnership between communities in order to jointly campaign for social justice and peace in Israel and in the region.

- Emplacement : [Vous êtes ici : Accueil > ARCHIVES >](#)

- Adresse de cet article :

<https://plateforme-palestine.org/Open-Letter-Organizational-Changes-at-Mahapach>