

Bridging the Gap 2018

Reflections and Challenges

As we arrive at the end of the Youth Wing's activity year, we would like to thank the German friends for enabling this important project to become a long lasting meeting place for Jewish and Arabic children. The steadfast friendship has created a program the children and their families can count on to supplement the enrichment they receive, and teach them values and ideas they would not otherwise be exposed to. The fact that this important program overcomes the challenges and the regional tensions should not be taken for granted. Each and every year, we are faced with new obstacles and find creative ways to overcome them. During the 2017-2018 academic year, 68 students from 5th and 6th grade, participated in *Bridging the Gap*. This year's theme was inspired by the exhibition *Jerusalem in Details*, which was chosen because it offered a subject both Arab and Jewish children could relate to, and connected to their identity as Jerusalemites. The exhibition showcased architectural elements which comprise the urban landscape and give the city its unique glory. Ceramic tiles are one of these elements and inspired by what they saw, they were invited to create alongside their peers in a joint effort, a large tile of 120X120 cm as their final project.

Among this year's challenges we found difficulty in recruiting the students and ensuring their participation until the end of the year's activity. We feel that the Jewish children are less committed and less engaged, and therefore require more time and creativity

invested as well as tending more to the children needs to encourage their perseverance.

One of the methods we have implemented to deal with these issues are incorporating additional arts such as dance and theater games in the classes's curriculum as part of the interactive pedagogy which assist in bringing the kids closer together and to the project's main objectives.

We have already begun preparing for next year understanding that the subject of shared life and the dialog between groups of Jews and Arabs has become even more complicated and complex, but needed and necessary more than ever before.