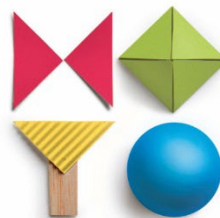


The Ruth
Youth Wing
for Art Education
The Israel Museum
Jerusalem

جناح الشبيبة
والتربية الفنية
على اسم روت
متحف إسرائيل
القدس

אגף הנוער
והחינוך לאמנות
ע"ש רות
מוזיאון ישראל
ירושלים



"BRIDGING THE GAP"

MID-YEAR REPORT TO THE GERMAN FRIENDS OF THE ISRAEL MUSEUM



APRIL 2023

INTRODUCTION

The “Bridging the Gap” program is held every year in the Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education of the Israel Museum.

The program opens in November (at the start of the school year), and ends in June of the same year.

We started to connect with several school directors during the month of August 2022 and opened the program, as planned, in November 2022.

We are happy to report that as of April 2023, 67 elementary school students from four schools are participating in the program.

The program team includes: a program manager; 5 teachers; 1 psychologist; and 2 escort school teachers.

MAJOR GOALS OF THE PROJECT

- Facilitating meetings that foster open dialogue and an opportunity for children to create shared experiences and get to know each other’s backgrounds, personalities, and interests;
- Enabling self-expression through the creation of art, while acquiring proficiency in artistic methods and mediums;
- Enriching and expanding the artistic and cultural knowledge of the participants;
- Encouraging the development of an ability to accept, understand, and adopt tolerance and open-mindedness.

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

The months of October, November, and December 2022 were very tense from a political point of view, in Israel in general and especially in Jerusalem. The months following the elections (which took place in November 2022) brought a wave of terrorist attacks and it was extremely difficult to operate the program within this political climate.

The Beit Hanina school cancelled their participation for the whole year and the Ala Ola school announced that they would not join the program at the beginning of 2023. However, they did join after examining the situation later on in the year.

In the meantime, there was no enrollment in the program from the Jewish schools (Pola Ben Gurion, and Keshet). We therefore had to switch half of the schools participating the program only one month prior to the opening. At this juncture, we also invited children from the Argentina Experimental School to join the program.



We decided to start the program despite this state of affairs in the belief that we would be able to bring in the Arab students at a later stage. This situation continued for two months (until January 2023) and there was a real threat to the continuation and existence of the project. During these months, we were able to integrate another elementary school into the program, with the Ein Rafa School taking the place of the school from Beit Hanina.

On January 25 and 26, we hosted the parents of the Arab and Jewish children attending the program. It was very moving to see how the project was continuing against all the odds.

The following meetings were held regularly apart from two sessions that were cancelled due to the large rallies and protests held in the area of the Knesset, which made it impossible to access the Museum.

FACTS & FIGURES

The program is held on Wednesdays and Thursdays. **Total: 67 students.**

On Wednesday, there is a total of **40 elementary school students:**
18 students from Yefe Nof, and 22 students from Ein Rafa.

On Thursdays, there is a total of **27 elementary school students:**
12 from Argentina school and 15 from Ala Ola School.

All the participants receive transportation to and from the Museum. Upon arriving at the Museum, they receive light refreshments.

From February 1, 2023, we held 10 sessions for both groups.

THE CURRICULUM:

In the first part of the project, during the months of November, December, and half of January, only Jewish students participated in the project. During this period, the children visited exhibitions in the Museum, mainly African Art, and the Art Garden. They experimented with painting and sculpture inspired by African masks and sculptures. Towards the end of the first session, they created sculpted monsters and painted their environment.

With the joining of the Arab participants, we held an opening meeting with the parents from both sides. During the meeting, we showed a presentation of last year's program and the planned one for this year. Later, we went to the exhibition *Sigalit Landau: The Burning Sea*, where they received a guided tour and were instructed to draw inspired by the works on display.

The next three lessons were dedicated to encouraging a better acquaintance between the participants, and the activity chosen to facilitate this objective was a joint effort of painting and decorating their own Bridging the Gap T-shirts. The next three sessions were devoted to learning analogue photography with the aid of a pinhole camera and developing photographs in the darkroom.

This year's main theme is 'Animal,' and following the photography sessions the students began to focus on this theme. In the final lesson before leaving for the spring break, the students met with the well-known German artist Mischa Kuball and his wife Michelle who came to visit the Museum. The meeting was very exciting



and successful and complemented the artist's support for the project he has implemented within the Association of German Friends of the Israel Museum. Many thanks to Mischa!

A visit by the German artist Mischa Kuball and his wife Michelle in the program.

The meetings that will take place during the month of May and until the end of the project, will be dedicated to the final project.

SUMMARY

1. Despite the political, security, and personal difficulties and challenges that characterized this period, the project opened on time and is active and functioning according to plan.
2. The meetings of the students and their parents which took place on January 25 and 26 were very successful. The reactions of the parents who participated reflected a strong desire to renew and strengthen personal relations between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem. According to lessons we took from last year's program, for the following parents' meeting we planned to hold a joint meeting during the Ramadan and the Passover festivals. Due to the current security situation, we were unfortunately not able to held this meeting. The parents will meet at the closing event.
3. We are happy to report that the art activity that took place both in the classroom and in the Museum galleries was extremely successful and met the intention of empowering the participants and strengthening them in the fields of art and culture.
4. At this stage, we have completed the first two phases of the program and will complete the third phase after the Spring vacation.
5. The provision of the accompanying psychological consultation for the team has once again proved itself. The consultation helped to deal with the challenges of the situation, and issues that arose from the work with the children were discussed in the counseling sessions.

Eldad Shaaltiel

Senior Curator of Art Classes

Israel Museum Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education