



PARTNERSHIPS TO PEACE MCGILL MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

BEN GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV AND THE JORDAN RED CRESCENT



“On 10 Feb, 2004, an earthquake hit the Dead Sea reaching 6.2 on the Richter scale. It was felt in Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Syria. Natural disasters know no boundaries. They don't stop short of Israel or Jordan! This was Nature's early warning call to Governments and Civil Society to develop mutual plans for disaster preparedness and response - by introducing guidelines and co-operating with local communities to adopt methods to their own conditions...”

Quote from HE Dr. Mohammed Al Hadid on the occasion of his Beatty Lecture at McGill University
November 24, 2004

HE Dr. Mohammed Al Hadid, Chair of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and President of the Jordan Red Crescent (JRC) received an **honorary doctorate from BGU in May 2009**. He received this honour in part for his work that led to the acceptance of the Red Crystal emblem alongside those of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and therein allowed for the inclusion of Magen David Adom in this largest of international humanitarian organizations.

Other awards and honours:

In 2004, **Professor Jim Torczyner, Founder and Director of MMEP**, received the **Jordan Red Crescent Gold Medal** for his work to bring together civil society leaders in Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

In 2007, MMEP's Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian partners presented at the **30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**, in Geneva, which was themed 'Together for Humanity'

The October 2009 launch of the **Project for Jordan Israel Collaboration in Emergency Preparedness & Response**, a joint initiative of MMEP partners the Jordan Red Crescent (JRC) and Ben Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), is an important step forward in realizing Dr. Al Hadid's vision.

Building on years of work within MMEP, Dr. Al Hadid and Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt, Rector of BGU, have developed a new, innovative partnership, **bringing 15 Jordanians to study Emergency Medicine** in a three year program at BGU. The effort is guided by Israeli and Jordanian steering committees with a **vision to develop a regional emergency response system**.

Below are a few of the many steps on the journey to this moment, through years of relationship building and collaboration between these partners in the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building (MMEP).

In 1994 MMEP launched its first centre in the Middle East, through the work of Prof. Jim Torczyner together with students from the **Charlotte B. & Jack J. Spitzer Dept. of Social Work at Ben Gurion University**. The centre was launched in a low income area of Beer Sheva, assisting residents to access their rights.

Among the group of students that knocked on doors, did outreach and made that first 'rights store' come alive, was Hadas Barzilai, who obtained her BA and MA in Social Work at BGU and directs Community Advocacy Beer Sheva to this day.

The **Jordan Red Crescent** has been an MMEP partner since 1997 and moved from an advisory role to launching its own centre in 2007, in Ashrafiyeh — Amman. This centre was launched at the same time as our centre in Lod, a mixed Jewish Arab city in central Israel. The two centres' staffs work closely together, identifying common issues and meeting the challenges that come with being new to their communities.



Hadas Barzilai, in front of Community Advocacy (CA) Beer Sheva, the first MMEP centre in the Middle East. Israel just announced that the state would provide dental care for all children, starting in 2010, responding to pressure from a CA led coalition.



Dalia Zatar and Subhi Ejeh, two of the 16 MMEP fellows from Jordan, were instrumental in the launch of the Ashrafiyeh centre, through their work with the JRC. The centre reached more than 6000 people in its first year.

**MMEP's
International
Executive
Committee**



Gretta Chambers,
C.C., O.Q., Chancellor Emerita,
McGill University (Co-Chair)

The Honourable Herbert Marx,
Superior Court Justice (retired),
former Quebec Justice Minister
(Co-Chair)

H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al Hadid,
Chairman, Standing Commission
of the International Red Cross and
Red Crescent Movement

Professor Khaled Al-Karakl,
President, University of Jordan

Dr Suleiman Al Khalil, Dean of the
Faculty of Science, An Najah
National University

Mrs Barbara Epstein, Executive
Director, Community Advocacy

Dr Merav Moshe Grodofsky, MMEP
Regional Coordinator

Professor Rami Hamdallah,
President, An Najah National
University

Mr Sami Kilani, Founding Director,
An Najah Community Service
Centre, McGill PhD candidate

Mr David Leduc, MMEP Program
Manager

Mrs Rachel Liel, Executive
Director, The New Israel Fund in
Israel

Mrs Eman Nimri, Deputy Director,
Jordanian Hashemite Fund for
Human Development

Mr Talal Qdah, Director, Amman
Community Development Centre

Mr Bilal Salameh, Director, An
Najah Community Service Centre

Dr Varsen Aghabekian-Shaheen,
Project Manager, Capacity and
Institution Building, Office of the
President of the Palestinian
Authority

Mrs Najwa Silwadi, Director, Al
Quds Community Action Centre

Professor Jim Torczyner, Professor
of Social Work, Director, MMEP

Professor Jimmy Weinblatt, Rector,
Ben Gurion University of the Negev

MCGILL MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND PEACE BUILDING

Since 1997 the MMEP has been bringing together partners from across Israel, Palestine and Jordan to work toward a brighter future in the Middle East, giving people at the margins of society the tools to be active participants in shaping their future.

MMEP is driven by the belief that the reduction of inequality and the promotion of civil society and social justice are intricately related to peace building, both within countries and between countries. Over the last ten years, MMEP has advanced these beliefs on the ground with local academic and nongovernmental partners through the establishment of **nine rights-based community practice (RBCP) centres** in low-income neighbourhoods of East and West Jerusalem, Beersheva, Lod, Nablus and Amman. These centres already assist more than 120,000 people each year, and have pioneered scores of innovative programs that empower disadvantaged residents. **Six more centres** are in various stages of development.

What is RBCP?

In the RBCP model, developed by Prof. Jim Torczyner at McGill University in Montreal, in the 1970s, the means are as important as the ends: the right of **low income people to participate in processes and decisions that affect their lives, as individuals and communities**, is as important as gaining access to the rights themselves. The process is participatory, and by promoting relationships among people of diversity, especially the disadvantaged, both within and between societies, people are ultimately empowered to **find common ground and create social change**. At right is but one example, in the field of housing.

MMEP builds the capacity of the grassroots

Professionally managed, academically linked and volunteer driven, MMEP centres bring together the best of university expertise and local residents to empower the disadvantaged. They show, by example, that it is possible to move beyond old religious and political differences and work together to forge common purpose. The **MMEP International Master in Social Work Fellowship Program** develops the professional capacity of the centres. MMEP has trained more than fifty graduate students in its two-year MSW at McGill University. **19 Israelis, 16 Jordanians and 18 Palestinians** are MMEP Fellowship Alumni. These Fellows are at the forefront of social change in their respective societies. They established and run the centres, lead government bodies and large-scale NGOs and are at the cutting edge in the teaching of social work at universities across the region.

Peace building starts at home

Access to safe and secure housing, with dignity, is where peaceful living begins. Our centres, in all three societies, are at the cutting edge of securing housing rights among the poor. In Israel, major public housing laws were passed, allowing 30,000 low income families to purchase their public housing apartments. In Nablus, more than 600 dilapidated homes have been revitalized through volunteer labour in the past two years alone. And in Jordan, the centres have made hundreds of homes liveable and led Habitat for Humanity to include urban homes in their global strategy.

MMEP IN BRIEF

- Nine institutional partners in the Middle East
- 50 Graduate Fellows trained at McGill University
- Nine rights-based community practice (RBCP) centres, with six more in development
- Thousands of empowered volunteers across the region
- More than \$23 million invested over the past decade
- Dozens of innovative programs, gleaned from the North American experience, implemented in the Middle East
- More than \$65 Million gained in entitlements alone, through MMEP partners' intervention
- Incubator for partnership initiatives in the region, such as the Jordan Israel Collaboration in Emergency Preparedness & Response Project.
- 120,000 low-income people reached each year

MMEP partners: McGill University; An Najah National University; University of Jordan, Ben Gurion University of the Negev; Shatil: the New Israel Fund's Empowerment and Training Centre for Social Change Organizations; Community Advocacy—Israel; Jerusalem Community Advocacy Network; Sapir Academic College; Jordan Red Crescent; Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development

MCGILL MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND PEACE BUILDING

www.mcgill.ca/mmep

REACHING deep into poor communities EMPOWERING people to build better lives
CONNECTING communities across borders BUILDING peace from the bottom up