



'Jerusalem – Open City for Learning World Peace'

Project description

The Situation

Jerusalem, the city which is called "The Holy City" by Jews, Christians and Muslims, is in the crosslines of the political conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis. Because of its significance for the three Abrahamic religions, its place among the cities of the world is unique. Part of its "uniqueness" is the fact that in it, the unresolved patterns of humanity are focused. These are, among others, related to the issue of gender and to the coexistence of different ethnic groups. However, Jerusalem is not only part of the problem, but also part of the solution. Therefore, we are convinced that Jerusalem has to be in the forefront of peace negotiations between Israeli, Palestinians and the international Community.

Role of Lassalle Institute

Lassalle-Institute (LI) is addressing leaders in business, politics and other sectors of society. Its focus lies on the raising of holistic awareness. By means of lectures, seminars, research, coaching and corporate consulting, it promotes a culture of values carried by ethics. "Jerusalem – Open City for Learning World Peace" (in short: "Jerusalem-Project") is its most important project, in its essence spiritual-political, and conducted co-operatively by Niklaus Brantschen and Pia Gyger.

The spiritual aspect of the project is based on field-building, taking the fact into account that whatever we think, speak and act has an impact on the world, not only the present, but also the future one. This fact is witnessed by modern physics as well as mystical experience and is taken into account in different rituals for Jerusalem as the World Peace City.

The political aspect of the project includes intense networking in order to communicate the vision of Jerusalem as Open City both locally and in the international community. For this purpose, Lassalle Institute is conducting conferences in Switzerland and visiting representatives of the United Nations in New York and Geneva as well as representatives of the European Union, of different states and of NGO's. Favorable for the political work of Lassalle Institute is its status as accredited member in the Department of Public Information and of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The Cooperation Partners of Lassalle Institute

Lassalle Institute is aware that projects in the city of Jerusalem can only be realized with local partners. It is about projects that shall introduce structural change in social, economic and political realms and directly improve the living conditions of the population.

After numerous contacts with both Israeli and Palestinian non-state actors, Lassalle Institute got to know the Palestinian International Peace and Cooperation Center (IPCC), directed by Dr. Rami Nasrallah and the Israeli Futura Intitute (FI), directed by Prof. Shlomo Hasson. As much as the cooperation partners are different from each other, as much they complete each other in their scientific, spiritual and political competency. It is the vision of Jerusalem as World Peace City that is unifying them.



The Vision

The vision in the shared project is based on the significance of Jerusalem as an Open City and as World Peace City: as a city which will be politically divided yet physically and functionally open. This includes the two-state-solution and transcends it at the same time.

The questions connected to the vision are:

What if Jerusalem one day would be a city of which the eastern part would be the capital of the Palestinians and the Western part the capital of the Israeli (two-state-solution)?

What if, furthermore, people from all over the world, especially from the conflict regions, would travel to Jerusalem in order to learn to practice peace, in cultural centers, theaters, schools and universities (World Peace City)?

The vision is not least nurtured by the prophetic heritage (Micha and Isaiah), which is holy to the three Abrahamic religions and meanwhile belongs to the treasures of humanity. These texts contain guidelines for Jerusalem and for humanity.

- "they will beat swords into ploughshares" – disarmament and transformation of arms
- "neither will they train for war any more" – training and building of a culture of peace
- "people walk, each in the name of his God" – inter-religious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual appreciation

The Projects

During the past years, our local cooperation partners developed common project ideas which have the potential to prevent further escalation of the conflict (see: Successful Jerusalem. Vision, Scenarios and Strategies, 2007; programmatic script by IPCC and FI with kind support by Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation.) Taking the present situation into account, IPCC, FI and LI chose, in July 2009, three projects out of project ideas to start with. They shall soon be implemented.

Jerusalem-Project («Open Jerusalem – World City Vision» / «Jerusalem – Open City for Learning World Peace») <i>Projects and Responsibilities</i>			
«Action Plan» Implementation	Affordable Housing in Jerusalem		
LI + IPCC +FI	IPCC + FI	IPCC	FI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Conference 'Jerusalem: The Global Challenge' ▪ City of Knowledge ▪ Sensitivity Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint Planning including 2 pilots East Jerusalem (municipality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban Community Development East Jerusalem UCDEJ including IZMEL ▪ Feasibility Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 Pilots West Jerusalem (municipality)



With the project *«City of Knowledge»*, the cooperation partners intend to build an international network, which will support the vision of Jerusalem as a World Peace City. For this purpose a master-plan will be developed, covering at least a time-frame of three years. One aspect will be to sensitize experts and academics for the city by means of guided Jerusalem tours. Also the conduction of an 'International Jerusalem Seminar' is being discussed, supported by the United Nations University. This seminar will as well have experts and academics as target group, who work out conflict solution strategies for Jerusalem.

In the project *«Sensitivity Map»*, mixed teams of Israeli and Palestinian students will work together. Along the borderline between East- and West-Jerusalem they shall identify the conflict prone places, and develop ideas and strategies how to transform them into places of cooperation and encounter. The 'International Jerusalem Seminar' could also take place in context of this project. Responsible for the projects are FI, IPCC and LI.

The living conditions, especially those of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem are dramatic. Continuously, Israeli authorities order the demolition of Palestinian houses. By means of the project *«Affordable housing»*, for which IPCC and FI are responsible, new living space shall be created for Palestinians, and as well for Israelis. This is important, because the Palestinian and the Israeli Middle Class is more and more turning their back to Jerusalem. Thanks to very good contacts in the municipality of Jerusalem, our partners have become authorized to elaborate and present a zoning plan for two zones in the East part of the city. It will then be implemented by a team consisting of co-workers of the Israeli municipality and of IPCC. Additionally, IPCC is elaborating a Feasibility Study in the context of the "Urban Community Development East Jerusalem", which will present the totality of all housing projects and its financing. Both in Jerusalem and in Switzerland, organizations shall be founded, called "IZMEL Jerusalem" and "IZMEL international" (the word IZMEL means chisel in Arabic and Hebrew). In cooperation with the urban authorities, FI will present a zone planning for three areas in West Jerusalem. Also the West of the city has a lack of affordable housing.

The Jerusalem Project Now

The project has come to a point where the vision is calling for manifestation. This is especially what the International Conference 'Open Successful Jerusalem' aims for. The preparations for this conference, which will take place from October 14 to October 17, 2010, are in full activity. Having the international community engaged in this conference is highly important for our coalition partners, since it provides them within the Israeli, resp. Palestinian society with the legitimation that can only come from the outside. In this context LI succeeded in gaining the active cooperation of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The goal of the conference is to make the vision known in Jerusalem and to form a network of engaged Israeli, Palestinians and representatives of the international community who will promote the vision and the named projects.

Bad Schönbrunn, January 15, 2010,

Niklaus Brantschen and Pia Gyger (directors of the Jerusalem Project)