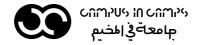
# Campus in Camps Collective Dictionary

# **WELL-BEING**

العافية





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#### CAMPUS IN CAMPS

Campus in Camps is a two-year experimental educational and project oriented program, engaging the participants from the West Bank's refugee camps in an attempt to explore and produce new forms of representation of camps and refugees beyond the static and traditional symbols of victimization, passivity and poverty. The program aims at transgressing, without eliminating, the distinction between camp and city, refugee and citizen, center and periphery, theory and practice, teacher and student.

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The content of this publication does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the institutions mentioned above.

The Collective Dictionary is a series of publications containing definitions of concepts.

The terms proposed are those considered fundamental for the understanding of the contemporary condition of Palestinian refugee camps. These words have emerged as a result of actions and active dialogs with the camp community. Written reflections on personal experiences, interviews, excursions and photographic investigations constitute the starting point for the formulation of more structured thoughts.

The Collective Dictionary is both the reference and conceptual framework for all Campus in Camps projects and interventions.

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# Al-Tirhal, travelling or hiking and Al-Mojawarah, neighbouring

Isshaq Al-Barbary

It is useful to start with the idea that overall well-being involves both psychological and body health. Thus, I personally see that it's highly important to distinguish between Health and Well-being. Simply because it is rare to find doctors and hospitals work and cares for people's well-being, but instead their work grounded on the idea of treatments, which is linked to health only. As for well-being, it is grounded on the person's lifestyle and on compatibility that includes various aspects of his life: physical, mental, social, cognitive, and spiritual and his relationship with nature and civilization.

Since the feeling of happiness is in fact part of the psychological well-being, there is a deeper kind of well-being. This of course to live in a way that is good for you and good for others around you and nature. In fact, there are many factors that affect our well-being. Thus, the actions we take and the way we think are the biggest two impacts. But what helps to achieve well-being is to think of how to reach it rather than the existence of it. So the more you seek

it the more likely you are to attain it.

#### Wadi Oeilt

The rich experience of *Al-Tirhal* (a hiking field trip) with *Campus in Camps* group to Wadi Qeilt that I was part of created and embodied a real meaning for both Knowledge and Well-being to me. Wadi Qeilt is located on the Jericho-Jerusalem road in the heart of the valley. In our hiking trip, we started walking from the main street towards the depth of the valley, heading specifically to Deir Qeilt (Greek Monastery), a distance of nearly two hours walk. I did not know my colleagues in *Campus in Camps* well enough at that time, nor did they know me or each other for that matter. So we were walking in groups of pairs and sometimes more, chatting between ourselves as way of getting to know each other better.

Once we reached the monastery, we had a tour inside then gathered all under a tree in the shade, shared our meals and spoke on different topics. After a while we continued our walk on a bumpy road toward the city of Jericho, heading exactly to Aqabat Jabir refugee camp. Walking in a bumpy road between ancient towering rocks, enjoying the breathtaking views, hearing the running water down the valley, contemplating and observing birds and animals,

singing loudly, we shared smiles and took pictures. The prevailing collective feeling of happiness at that moment is something that hardly can be described.

I can say that the experience of Al-Tirhal helped me reach well-being in several ways. Through communication with others, the experience gave me the opportunity to approach my colleagues and get to know them better. It allowed me to spend interesting and stimulating time with them and develop the relationship that brings us together. Maintaining the health of the body and keeping it active through the walk and making it part of my life. Roaming in Wadi Qeilt encouraged me to learn about the power of the nature in Palestine in a real way of learning through practice and experience. To experience the reality and the sense of it was the essence of the roaming. The reality of Al-Tirhal put all participants in a position of responsibility and strengthened the spirit of the group. It made us more aware of the present moment, including our feelings and thoughts and bodies and that surround us.

#### **Battir**

What I would also like to share in this paper is another personal experience that brought me well-being: our field trip to Battir village to see its picturesque



Wadi Qeilt and the city of Jericho — ph. Diego Segatto

nature and the beauty and generosity of its people and to practice *Al-Mojawarah* (neighbouring) with my colleagues in *Campus in Camps*.

The essence of well-being of the earth is found in the existence of the earthworm and not the chemicals. Yet our well-being is found by recognizing and perceiving the quality of the food we eat, in our intimacy and giving to others, to feel and sense the reality, and live with ourselves and others around us.

The experience of *Campus in Camps* in the visit to Battir village, spending the night there, was a remarkable experience: the beauty of its nature, the generosity and hospitality of its people, and the way they manage and organize their life; neighbouring my colleagues in *Campus in Camps*; and sharing my knowledge and spending a full day and night with them was a remarkable experience indeed.

Battir is distinct from the rest of the world, so much so that the number of days in the week there is eight. Simply, this is because of the existence of eight different families in the village, who are all working in the agricultural field and depend on the main water source in the village to irrigate their crops. Thus, the families made the week consist of eight days and each one carries a family name, because of the water distribution.

My neighbouring and living with my colleagues in Battir has had a clear impact to strengthen the relationship that binds us. Sharing knowledge with each other, while walking in stunning nature, laughing and teasing each other, all led to create a beautiful collective atmosphere. The beauty of the neighbouring in Battir was seen in our ability to share with each other healthy and organic food and avoid canned food. The experience of neighbouring in Battir is for me the true meaning of learning, self-development and access to well-being.

The true meaning of *well-being* does is not found in being rich or self-content. However, it is important to include and bear in mind a few of things: communicating with others, maintaining activity, the pursuit of real learning, intimacy and giving to others and experiencing a true sense reality.

### Greeting

Aysar Al-Saifi

I was walking with a friend from overseas in the street of the camp, giving him a brief history of the camp and the life of the refugees between these walls. Despite the suffering people live every day, the camp was able to record its name as a main topic in our history and memory. The camp was able to create new life from nothing, to complete the process of searching for the perfect life. My friend stopped me and asked:

"Are you well-known here?"

"Why?" I asked him.

"Because everyone that we pass greets you, and you greet them back."

I answer him laughing: "I remember the first time I asked my father the same question about greetings. Did he know all the people he said "hello" to? I will give you the same answer that he told me:

"Greeting is a social work and duty. It's simple, but it holds the community together and strengthens

the relations between people and the concept of the collective over the individual. Importantly, it creates common social conditions".

And after more than 15 years, I realized the real meaning of his words. The real value of the human exists in his social fabric and how much he works and connects with others. This is part of the soul of the community and *well-being*.

#### Condolence

Aysar Al-Saifi

It is not strange to think of the image of the western community or developed world when we hear modern civil society terms like development, peace, security, etc. These terms did not exist in our Palestinian social fabric. But even though they are modern terms, they were able to quickly impose themselves in our educational, social and cultural institutions.

Today we can see the autonomy that was created as a result of the existence of social and intellectual fabric, which consists naturally as a result of common conditions. The example we will discuss here is a form that explains the meaning of community well-being and the social fabric that civil society could not destroy and still exists until now.

Condolence is a social and cultural phenomenon. It is collective and individual responsibility that shows solidarity and respect for these community traditions. These social habits emerged hundreds of years ago, which communities and families pass down and keep as an important need to protect the community and keep it strong. Condolence is a universal act but takes on local characteristics.

In additional to that, this social habit was a way to build new social networks by visiting the family of the deceased and support them even if they did not know them before. Despite the civilizing development that has occurred on Eastern societies, nothing has changed these habits. On the contrary, this practice has been developed to include socially interdependent coverage for all the family of the deceased, which is represented in supporting the family of deceased, helping them in prepare food, and the three days of condolence.

This is good evidence that real social habits do not take their structural roots from academic systems or books, but instead they are a result of social life that might be considered as a larger cycle of the academic life and not its opposite. So the roots of any person's values come from his social fabric, and this is the meaning of social participation and well-being.

## The Youth Program Center

Aysar Al-Saifi Isshaq Al-Barbary

 Reflection upon the meeting with Abu Khalil and Abu Issam, held in Campus in Camps on December 2012

The importance of the Youth Center comes from the rule that played as a social and political fabric at the beginning of the camp. The Youth Center is considered an example of the social atmosphere that exists. Common life, the real historical knowledge systems, the joint-wedding, and cooperation (Al-Ma'onah) were the power that gave the youth center work to continue.

The Youth Center was established on idea of collective social work. It was built by volunteer work and youths' hands. Then people started practicing the idea through cultural and sport activities, in addition to hidden political actions. Maybe that's what gave the Center's membership value and importance, like the value of the political parties at that time. Despite the contradiction between the center's memberships and the idea of community participation, it was nec-



The new Youth Program center under construction

- ph. Matteo Guidi

essary to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the work of the center rather than idea of elite selection. Yet, the youth center was closed by military rule in 1982.

Nowadays, we can recognize the real change that youth center accomplished. For instance, the football team (A'D) related to youth center was created based on community participation and social fabric. This participation eliminated the idea of individualism by collecting the three camps of Bethlehem in one team.

After the center was closed by military rule, the activities of the center moved to houses and the

streets of the camp. This showed that the center was not simply a stone building but beyond this; it was the collective mind and community participation that united the people.

Today the youth center is different. There are a lot of social associations created as natural extension for youth center. And this is what makes the center lose prominence and its previous work. Even so, the youth center is still considered as a link between past and future. It is still considered a common place in idea and practice. And here is the role of the Youth Center that it created a relationship between idea and practice it.

## Collective team, the Deheisheh Ibdaa Team

Aysar Al-Saifi Isshaq Al-Barbary

 Reflection upon the meeting with Khaled Al-Saifi, director of Ibdaa Cultural Center

Basketball game was significantly associated with aristocrat class more than others, perhaps due to the fact that it needs and requires potentials and culture tools that are different from Football. Thus, there have been never any experiences in the basket ball field in any refugee camps in Palestine.

The idea behind the creation of the team came from a group of volunteers in the camp. Who believed and belonged to the dream and its accomplishment. Today and after five years from the dreaming, and despite the harsh dark reality of living in refugee camps. They still remember the moment in which they planned together to raise the voice of the refugees community.

Deheisheh team managed to create a state or a position that combined and unite the refugees in the

west bank despite their colour factions, and prove the strength and the ability of the refugees on the Palestinian arena. Thus, it enhances the notion of collectivity and strengthens the social fabric rather the enclosure of individualism. However, and despite the poor limited economical situation of the team, it gained basketball champion league since 2005 till the present time. This has lead positively affect the stereotype of the refugees, and added a new form of the power of the refugees on the Palestinian arena.

Deheisheh's team considers basketball sport an instrument but not a purpose. Therefore, it works to pass many of the concepts that concern the social work through its participation in the field of basketball. "No to the siege, yes to continue" and "Basma (smile) cancer" and other tournaments took the title of social and political issues and topics. The team collected Dheisheh successor audience and re-connects the social fabric between the camps and other camps and cities that have touched political and social issues advocated by this team, and thus, this team became not just a sport team but much more than that.

Deheisheh Team is a state of belonging to an idea rather than materials play in a way to bring happiness and strength and to overcome the harsh situation of the refugees. It is an attempt to change the reality that prevailed in trading social ideas for

the benefit of economical ideas, as the Palestinian culture, sport and heritage became related to business trade. This what the team worked to cancel, and become the only team that adopt the concept of collective duty and responsibility and belonging to the political and social ideas and concerns.

For example: the community of Deheisheh team could not attend a match for many reasons including the distance of the place. However, other people from other refugee camps who were living close to the match place were founded seated supporting the team with its challenges. Thus, the team successfully managed to re-generate and strengthen the social fabric of the refugees' community in particular under the notion of one idea one feeling. As a matter of fact it went beyond that to become a place that embraces many players from different camps and even cities and villages.

#### WELL-BEING Collective Dictionary

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