

Campus In Camps  
INITIATIVES



FINAL DRAFT  
18.06.2013

03

# THE BRIDGE

Challenging perception



جامعة في المخيم  
CAMPUS IN CAMPS

Campus in Camps

INITIATIVES

# THE BRIDGE

Challenging perception

CONTRIBUTORS

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DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP  
DOHA CITY

## Beyond the Camp: Into the Common

The initiatives included in these booklets are the result of a collective effort made by the Campus in Camps participants in dialogue with community members, associations and collaborators\*.

They are based on reflections and observations articulated over a year of communal learning in which knowledge emerged not as pre-constituted information but rather as critical understanding of the social and political context. A group of concepts considered fundamental for the comprehension of the contemporary condition of Palestinian refugee camps took the form of what we call the *Collective Dictionary*, the conceptual framework within which the initiatives are inscribed and find their profound and coherent meanings.

\*

The initiatives have been inspired through dialogue with Sandi Hilal, Munir Fasheh, Alessandro Petti and activated with Tamara Abu Laban, Brave New Alps, Ayman Khalifah, Matteo Guidi, Sara Pellegrini, Giuliana Racco, Diego Segatto, Dena Qaddumi.

During the second year, more emphasis has been placed on the kind of knowledge that emerges from actions. Gatherings, walks, events and urban actions are meant to engage more directly with the camp condition. What is at stake in these interventions is the possibility for the participants to realize projects in the camps without normalizing their exceptional conditions and without blending them into the surrounding cities.

After sixty-five years of exile, the camp is no longer made up of tents. The prolonged exceptional temporality of this site has paradoxically created the condition for its transformation: from a pure humanitarian space to an active political space, it has become an embodiment and an expression of the right of return. The initiatives bear the names of this urbanity of exile: *the garden, the pathways, the municipality, the suburb, the pool, the stadium, the square, the unbuilt, the bridge*. The very existence of these common places within refugee camps suggests new spatial and social formations beyond the idea of the camp as a site of marginalization, poverty and political subjugation.

Alessandro Petti,  
*program director*  
Dheisheh, June 2013

11 History of the bridge  
– Isshaq Al Barbary

## **01 | QUESTIONING THE BRIDGE**

24 A space to strengthen relations and maintain  
the identity of a refugee  
– Isshaq Al Barbary

30 Beyond the bridge  
– Aysar Al Saifi

37 The bridge as symbol?  
– Aysar Al Saifi

42 Idea and practice  
– Aysar Al Saifi

45 Questions & Answers

## **02 | RE-ACTIVATING THE BRIDGE**

60 Cleaning and reclaiming the common spaces  
– Isshaq Al Barbary

66 A future vision

# History of the bridge

Isshaq Al Barbary

Just by the main entrance to Dheisheh refugee camp, running over the main street that connects Jerusalem with Hebron, is a concrete pedestrian bridge. The idea of building a pedestrian bridge was crystallized through a series of conversations with the popular services committee (PSC), community popular organizations (CPO) and the residents of Dheisheh refugee camp to overcome complications related to movement between and through Dheisheh and Doha city.



– UNRWA

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#### SAFETY

The bridge was originally built to protect children from traffic

*“By the end of 2002, and after the death and injuries of many people due to the continuous car accidents, as well as the location of UNRWAs school and our deep concern for people’s lives, we began searching for a solution to put an end to the problem.” (Mohammad Al Laham, member of the CPO)*

“The Martyrs Pedestrian Bridge”, as it is called by the vast majority of the Dheisheh residents because of the financial contribution by the family of the martyr Amjad Faraj, is entirely self-financed and self-built by the community of Dheisheh Camp and the local community organizations as well as the popular committees. This bridge challenges the Oslo Accords, which stipulate that no bridges shall be built over roads in the West Bank. There were several threats by the Israeli Army to demolish the bridge if created, since it violates the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israeli Army and Joint Patrols Roaming Agreement. This is what the PA and other individual residents were instructed by the IOF to inform both the PSC of Dheisheh and the committee of the bridge, which consisted of Naji Odeh, Khalid Al-Saifi, Mohammad Faraj, Nasser Attiah and Mohammad Al-Laham.

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#### OSLO ACCORDS

According to the accords building bridges in the West Bank is prohibited



The bridge under construction

– archive

*“The Palestinian Authority expressed their understanding for the need to build the bridge. However, they demanded that it not be built, as it violated previous agreements with the Israelis and risked repercussions. This and the Israelis kept sending us threatening messages from individuals from the camp who had been interrogated at the Gush Etzion Settlement.” (Mohammad Al Laham)*

Faith and the need to ratify the idea overcame all challenges that faced the community. Self-reliance and limited resources led the community to use tools and materials that were available. Thus, the committee of the

bridge appointed local architect Osama Adaw with the responsibility of designing the bridge, under the supervision of A'ahed Eid, and with labor from camp residents.

During the process of construction in 2003, a decision was made by the bridge committee to close the top in order to prevent children from throwing stones at the passing cars beneath. However, interviews with the local community exposed that the public viewed the enclosed top as a favor the Israeli military. Nevertheless, given its geographical location and that the main streets of the city are designated Area C, which Israel has the full direct control over, the Palestinian Authority forced the committee to enclose the bridge.



The bridge under construction

– archive



The bridge under construction

– archive

Practically speaking, for school children and adults, crossing the street directly was easier than using the bridge. This pushed the committee to line the streets with metal and plants in a way to force school children in particular and community residents in general to use the bridge. During this period, the bridge committee in collaboration with both PSC and CPO ran workshops in UNRWA schools to spread awareness about the importance of the bridge and the necessity of using it.

*“We’ve tried very hard to enforce and encourage children and the community to use the bridge. This required us to fence the street sides, which conflicted with nearby small business owners.”*  
(A'ahed Eid)





The bridge under construction

— archive

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**2004**

The bridge used by students with the help of an appointed guard

Still, in 2004, schoolteachers and headmasters were committed to help facilitate the use of the bridge by making sure that students used it. A guard from the community was even appointed to be continuously present alongside a policeman.

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**2009**

The bridge has been closed to the public

In 2009 a decision was made by the committee of the bridge and the PSC to shut down the bridge. This was due to several reasons, which created frustrations among the families and led to conflicts. Specifically, teenagers used the bridge to hide from the public eye or write the names of students from the UNRWA female school. Such actions conflicted with the prevailing customs and culture of the camp, but more precisely, clashed with not only the

original intentions for the bridge but also its potential as a space.

Today, the bridge stands unused. However, its potential is still present. It still carries the hopes of a community to build secure connections, and it is still possible to reactivate such spaces and reconnect the bridge with its idea and practice.

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**FUTURE**

Though closed, the bridge is a potential space

Previous page: ph. Lisa Bergman



– ph. Lisa Bergman

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**01**

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# QUESTIONING THE BRIDGE

A collection of reflections



– Qussay Abu Aker

## A space to strengthen relations and maintain the identity of a refugee

Isshaq Al Barbary

During the first year of the Campus in Camps project, my interests revolved around the term *common*. Thus, my motivation was to understand the term by looking at the community's strengths. I investigated

common sites and elements of the camp, intending to build on effective and significant cases of commons in order to regenerate a way of life that valued what we share and what we have. However, before describing my initiative, I must say that I underestimated the importance of the bridge, for several reasons but particularly because it is unsightly and unused and I knew little about its history.

As documented in the *History of the bridge*, the bridge was self-financed and self-built by the community of Dheisheh in order to facilitate movement of Doha students to the

UNRWA schools located in Dheisheh refugee Camp. In my mind, this is a time when refugees are leaving camps because of limited space and the notion of 'rights to the city,' as it is called. This act shows the strong relationship between camp residents and those who left to maintain the identity of the refugees elsewhere. This connection serves to remind them of the importance of the existence of the camp in our struggle. We can see this in the claim that the children of Doha city are the children of Dheisheh Camp. Thus, it's the camp's collective responsibility to care for the safety and lives of those who live outside the camp. This diligence and faith prompted the Dheisheh residents to challenge stipulated agreements between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli occupation that prevented the establishment of bridges in the West Bank in spite of the difficulties and the implications of the situation.

At one point, the use of the bridge was limited to movement from Doha to Dheisheh. However, currently it is also vice versa, as Dheisheh children attend schools in Doha. My perception of this is that despite the political exceptionality of the camp, Doha city is a natural expansion of the refugee camps, regulated and organized by the forum of the camp (political parties, popular committees and respected figures) with the knowledge that Doha is not within the camp boundaries but rather private land under the municipality's responsibility.

In order to explain this, I would like to point out the way conflicts between families are resolved in Doha. Such a case is most likely solved by the respected families as well members of the popular committees and members of political parties under a framework of what is called "Jaha." The "Jaha" is a group of residents of Dheisheh Camp, and frankly speaking, their role in solving conflicts goes beyond Doha city to neighboring villages and other cities. The type of words used in solving such a conflict, for example, would be "we are the sons of the same camp and/or same village and same struggle."

With that in mind, in my belief, the camp has shifted from its status of political exceptionality to become the common. Thus, the establishment of the bridge prompted many people, whether refugees or non-refugees, to strengthen their relationship with the camp because of its strong political and social role in the Palestinian arena.

The importance and reality of building bridges and connecting camps with the surrounding areas, like the case of Dheisheh and Doha, led to opening new perspectives to influence and combine the existence cultures of cities and villages with those that exist in the refugee camps. Since, if we look at Doha city, we would realize that the same people who were born in the camp moved to the city and became members of the municipality, even mayors.



– ph. Tobias Wootton



— ph. Qussay Abu Aker

## Beyond the bridge

Aysar Al Saifi

The initiative in Dheisheh to build the bridge is considered the first significant initiative that reflects the level of common culture that existed at that time in 2002. The bridge was established as result of

collective culture that was born and created because of common political and social conditions. In spite of the trials that the community faced building, using, and maintaining the bridge, today, what is important is not the bridge itself, but what is beyond the bridge. Although the main reason for building the bridge was various road accidents that occurred because of the continuous movement between the camp and the city, the bridge was also built as result of the social and intellectual fabric. It serves as an example that explains the meaning of common and participation.

*"The bridge has a political dimension that connects Dheisheh camp with Doha city, which was created as result of the population growth. Because of that, I see it [the connection between the camp and Doha city] as a common case because it is an extension of the refugee issue. Second, the bridge has a human dimension that helps the community and protects the students"* (Naji Odeh, member of the CPO)

The bridge represents a social and collective case because the camp families, civil society leaders and institutions built it together. Thus, the bridge can be considered a symbol that represents the social condition of that time. In that way, the Bridge shows the power and defiance of the camp. For example, when the Israeli army decided to send a clear message to the refugee families that the bridge is a sensitive issue, they damaged the walls of the UNRWA school instead of the bridge itself.

### Political

On the one hand, the bridge is considered a political challenge. In addition to the practical needs to help students safely cross the street, the bridge is also considered a form of resistance against the decision of the Oslo Accords that forbids Palestinians to build bridges or tunnels. In response, Israel showed

its disapproval by threatening to damage it during the Israeli curfew in 2000. And, perhaps, this is what spurred the local families (*Ahali*) to strengthen their support for the bridge.

### Public culture

At first, the idea of the bridge was difficult to understand because the public was not accustomed to using pedestrian bridges. Despite all the ways that the community sought to strengthen the idea, such as the education programs in the UNRWA schools, the idea failed and the result was negative.

The public community and associates in the camp held several discussions about why the initiative failed. Could it have failed because of the social fabric and the lack of community participation? One of the community service committee members, Abu Khalil suggests:

*"There was complete belief in the idea. But the mistake was how to practice it. The problem was also the time, and to change the idea you need time. The culture of using a bridge or its public use as practice was not like what we imagined, and even that we tried to strengthen. And now I think what we need is new practice to strengthen the idea again"* (Mohammad Al Laham)

In other words, in the early days of the project, the social fabric and cultural participation had faith in the project. However, as the years passed, the practice differed.

### Intellectual

Today, what is important is not the bridge itself but what is beyond the bridge. The social dimension is evidence of a cultural connection and how people are aware of the importance of society beyond geographic, economic or political divisions. Despite the political exception of refugees, the bridge is also an intellectual bridge that shows the interconnections between Palestinian geographical areas, between camps and the surrounding cities.

*"The real meaning is what is beyond the bridge, the social and political dimension. In addition to that, the bridge bears one of our martyr's names" (Naji Odeh)*

The bridge is also an example of a social and political future vision. It came as result of a social and intellectual common fabric, not only in camps but in all areas. The relationship between the camp and the city is not new, and it is not an illegitimate relationship, so it is wrong if we consider communication as a type of political normalization.



UNRWA school on one side of the road

– ph. Qussay Abu Aker

Political exceptionality of refugees is a sensitive and taboo issue. In my opinion, the bridge was a natural intellectual extension that emphasizes the social and the importance of the social fabric in the creation of the Palestinian culture.

Further, the bridge is considered a case that shows another point of view of the camp. Despite the suffering, poverty, and economic weakness that refugees endure through their daily lives, the camp also has many strong points. I think the bridge was one of these points that show the way of thinking and social relations. And perhaps

the things that made people not use the bridge were part of a larger shift to individualism, which allowed people look at the bridge as simply a building without meaning, anything more. This also reinforces the stereotype of refugees and what symbols represents them.

### Future

Despite all the obstacles, the bridge still represents a philosophy. Though it may change, it might also be a new phase in the life of refugees.

*"To achieve any goal and idea, the people need to own the real value of it and then practice it. The initiative succeeded by force, and this is not what we want."* (Mohammad Al Laham)

The process of building, the conditions of the time, the participation, the collective mindset, the political and social challenge- all of these are evidence of the power of the idea, which only needs strong new practices suited to reality to revive the idea and reactivate the space of the bridge.

## The bridge as symbol?

Aysar Al Saifi

In order to reactivate the idea of the bridge, we should look at other objects and symbols in Palestinian refugee life to understand what gives these objects and symbols their significance. Perhaps through such comparisons, we can better participate in the future of the bridge.

Symbols usually express the relationships that exist within the social and political fabric. In this way, the importance of a symbol is not who creates it but how a community accepts it. It should be a collective result that represents a social and intellectual fabric.

The real meaning for any symbol is the collective approval for something, not the symbol itself. In general, the Palestinian symbols are connected with historical periods or events, so that it is hard to find a conflict in its acceptance, perhaps in the details.

## The Bridge and the Key of Return

Between the bridge and the keys of return, which refugees still carry, there are strong similarities that are important to highlight. In my opinion (and through research on symbols like the tent, the key, and the map of Palestine), symbols in Palestine passed through several stages until we considered them a collective symbol, as it transitions from a practical object (the symbol itself) to the idea that it references. Specifically, it is important for the symbols to share two important factors: they must have collective approval and they must represent an historical moment.

### Collective Approval

The bridge was built as a result of consensus among the people of the camp on the importance of its construction and the needs of the society. Because of that, the bridge represents a case of a collective approval from the families.

The bridge was a reflection of this collective life, a natural link that connects the camp with other Palestinian areas and creates an open space for them. Despite the bridge being closed, it still connects the camp with the city and emphasizes the relationship between them.



Main entrance of Aida refugee camp, Bethlehem

— ph. Haishu Chen

Similarly, the key of return became a symbol of resistance, a symbol of return, and an irrevocable right. This is because Palestinians accepted that the key is an idea that represents all Palestinians. For example, over the main entrance of Aida refugee camp is a structure that was built in the form of the key through the participation of all the people of the camp, and it shows how the keys of return represent the lives of the refugees in the camp.

## Representing an Historical Moment

Originally, the bridge was built as a practical response to a need for increased safety. That said, the bridge was also built as a result of a social and intellectual relation, and as a result of the deep understanding of the meaning of open spaces and people's needs. So the bridge represents one of the strong points of the camp. This relation was the power of the camp, the reason for forming the political exception of the refugee, and the Palestinian vision.

Likewise, in the beginning, the key had a practical meaning when refugees thought that they would soon return back home. But after the Naksa in 1967, the refugees realized that their very lives became a political issue. In this way, the key transitioned from the practical meaning of opening one's house door to the symbolic meaning of return. This was the beginning of the symbolic key. The key of return also came as result of important historical period. Despite the suffering and the meaning of al Nakba, the key was important in forming the Palestinian politic, resistance, future. And if we take the same example of the key of return in the Aida refugee camp, we will find that the key no longer only represents an historical period in the life of a refugee, but it also became a symbol that represents the present condition of refugees.

When placing the symbol of the key next to the bridge certain conflicts arise but also certain possibilities. The bridge, much like the symbolic key of return, is a physical object that has been witness to significant historical developments in the refugee community. This suggests that the bridge has potential to symbolically represent these developments for, at the very least, the communities of Dheisheh and Doha. Further, although the bridge may not yet have collective approval as a symbol, it was built as a result of consensus among the people and in the spirit of collective culture.

*So since the bridge and the key of return share common factors, can we view the bridge as symbol?*

# Idea and Practice

Aysar Al Saifi

PRACTICE ————— IDEA

What we are trying to explain is the relation between idea and practice. This relation is crucial to understand the meaning of common. So to practice the idea means that we implement what we believe, and to believe in an idea you need to practice it, to connect the idea with the reality.

## The bridge as idea

When the families of Dheisheh started working on the bridge, their aim was to help and protect the children from car accidents because of the location of the schools on the main road that connects Bethlehem and Hebron. But if we look to this initiative from another angle, we will see the real drive behind the bridge is collective and social culture.

Because of the common conditions, and the geographic size and population, it was hard to find open spaces in the camp. So the families worked to launch a kind of cooperation and participation to generate a gathering under a single idea and in common practice. For example, the initiative of building the bridge is evidence of the power of the idea. To build a bridge that connects and serves the camp with the city is proof of the strength of the social life, harmony, and understanding that existed. Thus, this initiative is an example of the power of the idea through trying to find open space in the camp. It is a confirmation of the social link between the camp and the city.

## The bridge as practice

It is difficult to find open spaces in the camp, but because of social relations there were always alternatives, like the street or the walls of the camp. Building the bridge, however, was one of the first steps in creating an open place. Thus, the bridge was built and garnered support from the people of the camp. As such, it is an example of a practice that seeks to alleviate the traffic accidents on the road.

The social and collective culture of the camp families was the foundation of this initiative. Because the

families envisioned and constructed this initiative, it is a practice of the idea of collective culture.

In my opinion, the bridge, in both idea and practice, shows the power of the life that existed at the time. Today, what we need is to look to this bridge as an example of the camp's strength, and together we will find new practices that will revive and bolster the idea again.

## WHAT DOES THE BRIDGE REPRESENT FOR YOU ?

*Interviews were held with members of the CPO  
and residents of Dheisheh and Doha.*

– The bridge represents an important issue. First, it is named after one of the martyrs in Dheisheh. Second, it represents a tool to keep the children safe. Third, it connects the north of Palestine with the south, the city with the camp.

– The bridge is considered a safe crossing for the school children. This bridge connects the camp with Doha city and connects the north with the south.

– The bridge had an important job. Or, it was possible to be important if used correctly. The bridge was considered a tool to facilitate and protect the children's walk to school, but because of its misuse the project didn't succeed.

– The idea of the bridge is important for students and schools. But unfortunately, even after all the effort to help, students didn't use it. Also, using the bridge takes more effort and time to cross compared to walking across the middle of the street. Because of that, most students and people prefer not to use it.

– The bridge has a political dimension that connects Dheisheh camp with Doha city, which was created as a result of the population growth. Because of that, I see it [the connection between the camp and Doha city] as a common case because it is an extension of the refugee issue. Second, the bridge has a human dimension that helps the community and protects the students.

– The bridge is a symbol that connects the camp with the city. Particularly, it was meant to help students who struggled crossing the street to school, like the accident that happened. That’s why the bridge was built, to serve and help the community. In addition to that, the bridge is named after the martyrs from the camp, so the bridge is considered a symbol of the struggle and a symbol of memory. I’m sure there were mistakes in the bridge’s planning, which made the people avoid it or not use it correctly. For two months I’ve been trying to review the original purpose of the bridge. We made some calls to the Doha Municipality to see how we can regenerate the use of the bridge again, but there were some worries about lack of follow-up, responsibility, and using the bridge correctly.

# WHAT IS THE REAL MEANING OF THE BRIDGE, OR WHAT IS BEYOND THE BRIDGE?

*Interviews were held with members of the CPO  
and residents of Dheisheh and Doha.*

– I don't think that the bridge has a meaning other than as pedestrian bridge to serve the kids. But because there are no bridges in Palestine according to Oslo Accords, which forbids Palestinians to build bridges or tunnels, the bridge is becoming more important.

– The bridge represents a political challenge to the Oslo Accords, which prohibited Palestinians from building bridges. But what I'm interested in is the issue of safety for our children in the camps.

– The real meaning is what is beyond the bridge, which is the social and political dimension. In addition to that, the bridge carries one of our martyr's names.

– The social purpose is to protect the children and keep them safe. In addition to that, the bridge is named after one of our martyrs.

– The bridge represents a common case that shows how the people were thinking and how much they were interested in society and children.

# WHAT DID THE BRIDGE REPRESENT IN THE PAST, AND WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT NOW?

*Interviews were held with members of the CPO  
and residents of Dheisheh and Doha.*

– In past, the bridge was a symbol of safety, but nowadays, the bridge has lost this meaning. Today, it has a negative reputation as result of its poor use by the society, like smoking.

– I think the people who participated in building the bridge succeeded in its construction, but they failed to spread awareness of the culture of the bridge. Lots of people thought it was a crazy idea when it was finished, and this was because of the lack of interest and follow-up. The bridge today does not have any meaning, and people pass beside it without notice.

– At first, the idea started with a group of people, and they discussed all its dimensions. There were no scientific studies to help the idea and culture of the bridge transfer between generations. There were daily discussions about the challenge of this idea, but now no one is talking about it. Now, we don't even see it, and this is because the idea is fading.

# WHAT IS THE SOLUTION TO REGENERATE THE USE OF BRIDGE?

*Interviews were held with members of the CPO  
and residents of Dheisheh and Doha.*

– It is important to open the bridge again, and raise awareness for how to use the bridge in order to avoid accidents and help the kids. With time, people will realize the importance of the bridge.

– Unfortunately the bridge is closed now. But there are two way of thinking about this. Either we open it again and strengthen the idea through following up with all details and awareness, or we demolish it instead of keeping it closed. Actually, because of the location of the bridge, maybe we can use it for something different, like painting it in a way to be a type of awareness, or maybe it can be museum of Palestinian heritage.

– I think we need to go back to the real meaning of the bridge, which is the social and political dimension. Second, we should design it in a way that will be suitable with the condition nowadays, as to attract people and build awareness that the bridge is a place to meet no just to pass.

– I think the bridge should also have an artistic side. Maybe it can be an exhibition for the history and culture of Palestine and refugees.

– The bridge will be important if there are people responsible to facilitate the work and if people are aware of its real meaning and how to use it.

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**02**

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# **RE-ACTIVATING THE BRIDGE**

# Cleaning and reclaiming the common spaces

Isshaq Al Barbary

PHOTOS BY  
Qussay Abu Aker

In the current period, the region is witnessing a revolution that reminds us all of the importance of public spaces, from Tahrir to Taksim Square. However, on a personal level, we, a group of refugees with *Campus in Camps*, have enjoyed a similar opportunity, though of a different shape, in cleaning the pedestrian bridge.

In the absence of any party to take responsibility over the public spaces, whether authoritarian or institutional, and alongside several discussions in the first year of CiC, we focused our attention to the perception of public space in the Arab region. This encouraged us to hold cleaning activities on this past April 7th and 9th, 2013.

Cleaning the bridge happened on two levels. First, we swept the bridge and collected garbage, as a







Cleaning activities brought the Bridge a new visibility

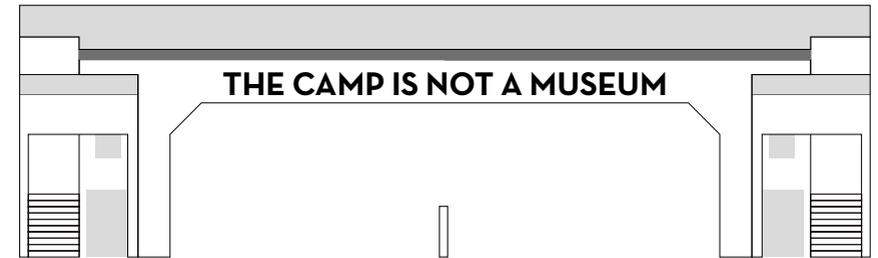
preparation for the second step, a collaboration with the fire department of Bethlehem city to wash it out. This act came as an exercise of the natural right to use that has been established and produced by the community by overcoming the fact that it is not in use. We hoped to promote interest in the site and wanted to have it regenerated and transformed into a common space for a variety of uses.

Making the bridge more visible during the cleaning activity opened a satisfying discussion with some community members who passed by. While some were pessimistic about the reactivation of the bridge, others were confused why the success of the bridge wasn't more permanent. However, our

message as young men from the camp was rooted in belief that being a member of the community is more than sufficient reason to have a sense of responsibility towards public spaces, especially ones that were established by the community and hold a strong historical identity.

## A future vision

*From our belief in the idea that the bridge represents a kind of political and social challenge, we felt compelled to reactivate the bridge through a suitable practice to strengthen the ideas that the bridge was built on. From here, we started with Campus in Camps to highlight the bridge not just as building but also as an idea through the stories that happened in the time of its construction, the experience of the first generation, its challenges, and the problems that happened from its misuse. So we decided to use the bridge to reinforce the relations between the families of the camp and Doha city through social activities that focus on reviving the social meaning of the bridge.*



**01**

## BRIDGE AS EXHIBITION

We want to think about the bridge as a potential exhibition space that show the stories of prisoners and martyrs, of the collective life of the camp, and the camp's past, present, and future.

We will divide the exhibition into different corners, each corner with a different vision. We will use the *Collective Dictionary* booklet VISION to design the exhibition.

The main aim of this exhibition is to raise questions and let the people think what future they want. So we will try to show them different futures and provoke them to look forward.

DAY 1

### HISTORY OF THE CAMP

Display the work prisoners do in jail.

Exhibit photos of the martyrs of the camp and Doha, and photos of the beginning of the camp.

Screen short films about the camp's past.

DAY 2

### THE CAMP TODAY

Exhibit photos of the camp and Doha city.

Exhibit photos of the camp and Doha that show political exceptionality.

Display the Collective Dictionary.

DAY 3

### FUTURE OF THE CAMP

Through the first two exhibitions, we will prepare them for a vision of the future and the idea behind it, that the homeland is the future not the past.

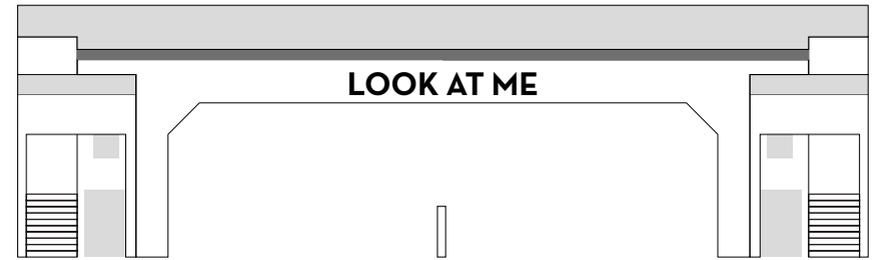


## 02 RAMADAN ACTIVITIES

The main idea of this activity is to hold Ramadan feasts to create a suitable practice for the bridge and reinforce the social meaning of the bridge. The vision of these activities is that we are still working and planning to use the Bridge as a place to organize a collective *Iftar* (the 'breaking of the fast' which is a collective meal). Through it we will revive the collective feeling that existed at the beginning of the camp, and the idea of the camp restaurant (see *Collective Dictionary* booklet COMMON). This is one of the ways we will regenerate the idea of the bridge again.

A. The bridge will be a restaurant some days of Ramadan for *Iftar*, for everyone to join as well as associations involved with the camp.

B. The bridge will be open for Ramadan activities such as children's and cultural, where we will have conversations about the camp.



### 03 REDESIGNING THE BRIDGE

There are several reasons that contributed to the reduction of the use of the bridge; one of these reasons is that it is easier for the community and school children to cross the street rather than walk-up the bridge. In addition, not enough people know and understand its history. Thus, we thought of redesigning the bridge both visually and physically in order to facilitate, regenerate and reactivate its use.

The outer color of the bridge is a milk-white color, which with time and lack of use became overly familiar to people and no longer attracts their attention. What we propose is to repaint the outer surface by using distinctive colors to draw attention to it and make it a visible part of the camp. This can be done with the help of *The pathways. Reframing narration* initiative as well as other artists from



– ph. Yuvraj Chauhan, Liesbeth Hautekiet, Sedaile Mejias

the camp and/or with collaboration with the local community organizations.

As to the enclosed top, there are several suggestions. First, we could fully remove it and keep it open. In order to implement this idea, we have to negotiate with the Popular Committee as well as the bridge committee. This idea comes from our beliefs that by removing the cover children and young people would no longer see it as a place hidden from the community, rather it could become a nice spot for observation and contemplation. However, the idea of removing the cover may not be welcomed by the community of the camp because of several concerns such as safety and its proximity to the UNRWA girls school. This brings us to the second suggestion, where we keep the cover but open it with windows. This makes the bridge healthier to use as it allows airflow. Plus, it makes it a bit more visible from inside and outside. The final idea is to remove only certain parts of the cover and maintain others. For instance, uncover the sides but maintain the mid-section, or the other way around.

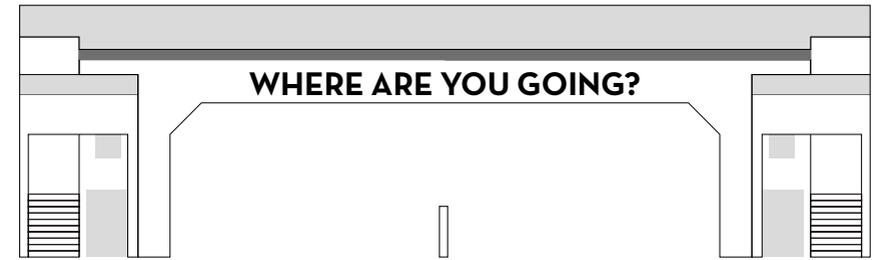
The walkway is made of concrete, which is a texture and uncomfortable for walking. We would like to redo the flooring by installing special stones to make the walk more comfortable and cleaning easier. In addition, we hope to paint the interior walls or draw graphics.

Some of the topics discussed during the first year of *Campus in Camps* concerned the absence of any signal to indicate the presence of the camp and the importance and legitimacy of its existence. Thus, we propose to write a statement such as “welcome to Doha city-Dheisheh camp” in the middle of the bridge. Another idea is to install alternating inspiring statements.

Meanwhile, we would like to map the timeline of the bridge’s development on the stairs. This may help pedestrians understand the importance and value of the bridge and may stimulate the community to use and maintain it.



– ph. Yuvraj Chauhan, Liesbeth Hautekiet, Sedaile Mejias



## 04 BRIDGE AS OPEN MARKET

We are convinced that in order to reactivate the bridge we should implement various activities and events as a prior step to involve the local residents. In this way, the space is not only limited to being a pedestrian bridge but can also be open to various uses.

With this in mind, we would like to hold open market days in the bridge. This idea would support local vendors as well to attract people from the camp, Doha, and surrounding areas to visit the bridge. Such an open market could allow residents to interact with the community in a new environment and draw attention to the bridge as a multifaceted space rather than merely a crossing. Ramadan would be an interesting time to try this idea, since stands can be set up for *Eid* sweets, *qataif*, ice cream, or other festive goods.

## How to get involved

### THE BRIDGE. CHALLENGING PERCEPTION

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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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*Campus in Camps is a program by Al Quds University (Al Quds/Bard Partnership) and hosted by the Phoenix Center in Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem. It is implemented with the support of the German Government through the GIZ Regional Social and Cultural Fund for Palestinian Refugees and Gaza Population, in cooperation with UNRWA Camp Improvement Program and in coordination with the Popular Committees of Southern West Bank Refugee Camps.*

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



جامعة القدس  
جامعات في المخيم

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The Bridge. Challenging perception

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EDITION

Printed in June 2013

COPYLEFT

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