Campus in Camps

CAMPUS IN CAMPS

A University in Exile

— June 2013 —

CAMPUS IN CAMPS
جامعة في المخيم

Campus in Camps

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Al Feniq Cultural Center, Dheisheh Refugee Camp
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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.

Campus in Camps explores and produces
new forms of representation of camps
and refugees beyond
the static and traditional symbols of victimization,
passivity and poverty.

– Sandi Hilal, UNRWA Camp Improvement Program

Campus in Camps aims at transgressing,
without eliminating, the distinction between camp
and city, refugee and citizen, center and periphery,
theory and practice, teacher and student.

– Alessandro Petti, Campus in Camps director

It is the place where everything around us
has new meanings and dimensions
which are connected
to the reality of our lives.

– Ahmad Al Lahham, participant

It is the only place where the doors
of creativity are open.

– Nedaa Hamouz, participant

A place where we meet to learn to unlearn
and become co-authors
of what we say and define.

— Isshaq Al Barbary, participant

It is a place for reclaiming the capacity
and the freedom to learn.

— Munir Fasheh, mentor

It's a new narration, a different view of the past,
and a new future. It is the place I was searching
for... where I feel the strength to represent
my opinion about camps and refugees.

— Aysar Al Saifi, participant

It is a trip into reality, where we can work
on ourselves without outside influences.
It is where I found the spirit
I had been searching for.

— Ayat Al Turshan, participant

We meet here to discuss
what refugees should do
with their potential.

— Qussay Abu Aker, participant

Campus in Camps is a collective process
that generates reflections, approaches and tools
adaptable to anyone through communal learning.

— Diego Segatto, team member

Campus in Camps is to look at the present, toward
the future both theoretically and practically,
with a sense of the ideal but grounded in the real.
It's the bridge that we build with our hands
between the past, the present and the future.

— Murad Odeh, participant

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01

PROLOGUE

ph. Tobias Wootton

The Program

The Context

The Campus in Camps program stems from the recognition that refugee camps in the West Bank are in a process of a historical political, social and spatial transformation. Despite adverse political and social conditions, Palestinian refugee camps have developed a relatively autonomous and independent social and political space: no longer a simple recipient of humanitarian intervention but rather an active political subject. The camp becomes a site of social invention and suggests new political and spatial configurations.

In recent years, the refugee camp has been transformed from a marginalized urban area to a center of social and political life. More notable is that such radical transformations have not normalized the political condition of being exiled. For decades, the effects of the political discourse around the right of return, such as the rise of a resolute imperative to stagnate living circumstances in refugee camps in order to reaffirm the temporariness of the camps, forced many refugees to live in terrible conditions.

What emerges today is a reconsideration of this imperative where refugees are re-inventing social and political practices to improve their everyday life without normalizing the politically exceptional condition of the camp.

The origin of the program

Campus in Camps originated from of a collective cumulative thought that aimed at bringing together theory and action, learning in a contextual environment and project based interventions in refugee camps. The desire for such a program maturated in an ongoing dialogue started in 2007 between the UNRWA Camp Improvement Program, directed by Sandi Hilal, and the Refugee Camp Communities of Southern West Bank. From this ongoing dialogue emerged the urgency from the communities to explore and produce new forms of representation of camps and refugees beyond the static and traditional symbols of passivity and poverty. In three years of teaching at the Al Quds Bard University, and based on my previous research and experiences with DAAR, a studio and art residency based in Beit Sahour, I became convinced that the camp is the right place for the campus: a truly engaged and committed university. In conversation with Al Quds Bard students from refugee camps, I have realized that their narrations, ideas and discourses could have flourish in a protected space such as the university but they needed to be grounded in context and connected with the community. And reciprocally, the university moving in camps could have opened its doors to other forms of knowledge, to experimental forms of communal learning able to combine critical reflections with action.

The GIZ team (Gudrun Kramer, Jonas Geith, Thomas Ernstbrunner and Rola Tamreh) has not only provided generous assistance and support but has constructively given us feedbacks and suggestions. The program could not have existed without the support of the Popular Committees of Southern West Bank refugee camps and in particular without the hospitality and vitality of Al Feniq Center in Dheisheh: a center which hosts a myriad of activities in its multifunctional capacity, a perfect place for a University in Exile. Muhammad Khalil Al Lahham, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council has been a point of reference and support for the program in these two years of experimentation.

Participants

The initiative, begun in January 2012, engages young participants in a two-year program dealing with new forms of visual and cultural representations of refugee camps after more than sixty years of displacement. The aim is to provide young motivated Palestinian refugees who are interested in engaging their community with the intellectual space and necessary infrastructure to facilitate these debates and translate them into practical community-driven projects that will incarnate representational practices and make them visible in the camps.

The group of participants in the program was created in a long process of three months of interviews, consultations with the community and public announcements in newspapers and mosques. There has not been a real selection, instead a series of meetings allowed us and the applicants to understand if we all shared a mutual interest in embarking on such an experimental project. However, one thing the participants have in common is their engagement with the community. Most of them volunteered in organizations or have been involved in community-based projects. Qussay Abu Aker, Alaa Al Homouz, Saleh Khannah, Ahmad Al Lahham, Aysar Al Saifi, Bisan Al Jaffarri, Nedaa Hamouz, Naba' Al Assi, Isshaq Al Barbary, Ayat Al Turshan, Murad Odeh are the embodiment of Campus in Camps.

The first year

The first year of Campus in Camps was mostly focused on establishing a common language and a common approach among the participants. This was achieved through education cycles, seminars, lectures and the publication of a *Collective Dictionary*. The first months of the program were dedicated to a process that we called unlearning, healing from pre-packaged alienating knowledge, knowledge that is not linked with life. In this phase, Munir Fasheh has been an amazing source of inspiration. We involved professors from AQB University and guests not from the University for lectures and seminars. Based on these first encounters, the participants together with the project team discussed the opportunity to involve the guests in a cycle, which was usually structured as biweekly meetings for a minimum of one month. The decision to involve him or her was based on the relevance of the subject in relation to the interest of the group. For this reason, the structure of Campus in Camps is constantly reshaped to accommodate the in-

terests and subjects born from the interactions between the participants and the social context at large. Sandi Hilal offered a cycle based on the Camp Improvement Projects, in which she established the base and the network for participants' initiatives in the camps. Tareq Hamman, professor at Al Quds Bard in Human Rights, held a cycle in International Law and Human Rights, which culminated with the participation of the Campus in Camps participants in official government meetings about Palestinian refugees. Wilfied Graf and Gudrun Kramer's cycle acquainted participants with the conflict transformation approach. Vivien Sansour's cycle explored the relationship between agricultural practices, food production, and political power. Ayman Khalifah, who teaches Arabic Composition at Al-Quds Bard Honors College, introduced the concepts of culture and representation. Fellows from AQB college offered a series of intensive English workshops with the aim to bolster project participants' critical inquiry in English. Daniel McKenzie in particular overviewed all the different and mutating needs of the group. Arabic tutoring was offered by Tala Abu Rahme, Samih Faraj and Ayman Khalifah. Fellows from AQB also offered during the summer of 2012 English classes for young students in the camps. For the summer of 2013, Linda Quiquivix will lead a

two month summer seminar in which students from AQB, Campus in Camps participants and interested young people from the camps will learn about the Zapatista Movement. Parallel to the cycles, Campus in Camps organized a series of public lectures and seminars open to all students from Al Quds University and universities in Bethlehem. Over the course of the first year, over a dozen seminars and/or lectures were held which gave the participants exposure to experts in a variety of fields. These areas of interest included citizenship, refugee studies, humanitarianism, gender, mapping, and research methodologies. Many of these events were open to the public and were the mechanism to connect with members of the camp community as well university students. Among our guests, Beatrice Catanzaro, Basel Abbas, Ruanne Abou-Rhame, Wilfried Graf, Tariq Dana, Felicity D. Scott, Mohammed Jabali, Moukhtar Kocache, Hanan Toukan, Shadi Chaleshtoori, Jeffrey Champlin, Manuel Herz, C.K. Raju, Fernando Rampérez, Emilio Dabed, Samer Abdelnour.

The first year culminated in a open public presentation of two days in which more that one hundred people from the local community participated. In this occasion a sort of informal academic committee has been established:

Sari Hanafi, Michael Buroway, Gudrun Kramer, Sandi Hilal, Muhammed Jabali, Munir Fasheh, Tariq Dana, Aaron Cezar, Thomas Keenan, Shuruq Harb, Umar Al-Ghubari, Khaldun Bshara, Jawad Al Mahal, Ayman Kalifah. During the event, the *Collective Dictionary* was also presented, a series of publications containing definitions of concepts considered fundamental for the understanding of the contemporary condition of Palestinian refugee camps. Written reflections on personal experiences, interviews, excursions and photographic investigations constitute the starting point for the formulation of more structured thoughts, which serve to explore each term. Multiple participants developed each publication, suggesting a new form of collective learning and knowledge production.

The second year

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* and *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.

A central role in activating Campus in Camps project has been played by the project activators: Brave New Alps, Matteo Guidi, Giuliana Racco, Sara Pellegrini, Diego Segatto. In particular our gratitude goes to Sara and Diego for contributing immensely in different moments of the program.

Great inspiration has derived from dialogue and active engagement with Michel Agier, Ilana Feldman, Tareq Hamam, Ruba Saleh, Khaldun Bshara, Thomas Keenan, Ayman Khalifa, Munir

Fasheh. A special thanks goes to the Campus in Camps team, Yasser Hemadan, Tamara Abu Laban, Ala Juma, Dena Qaddumi, without which this program could not have existed.

Campus in Camps does not follow or propose itself as a model but rather as public space in formation. *Al jame3ah* translates in English as "university" but its literal meaning is a place for assembly, a public space. I would like to think of Campus in Camps as part of a long path that had stations in the schools of Khalil Al-Sakakini, where grades and punishments for students were abolished and walks and music were considered a form of knowledge, or to the informal and clandestine learning environment established during the first Intifada in which people were learning from each other and in context.

Alessandro Petti,
program director
Dheisheh Camp, 11 June 2013

Architecture of Exile

Alessandro Petti

Refugee camps are meant to be the materialization of temporary architecture. Usually constituted of tents and shelters, they are designed for quick and easy assembly in order to respond to emergencies. A short-term form of architecture, they are not built to last. Although the establishment of refugee camps is rhetorically justified by humanitarian intent and technocratic design discourse, they remain an essentially political issue. Whether they serve temporarily or become more permanent is ultimately not decided by the humanitarian bodies tasked with managing and controlling them, but rather by political conflicts. The prolonged exceptional temporality of the refugee camps could paradoxically create the condition for its transformation: from a pure humanitarian space to an active political space, the embodiment and the expression of the right of return.

The more than ten million refugees currently registered worldwide by the UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees www.unhcr.org) and the five million Palestinian refugees registered by the UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East www.unrwa.org), in some sixty camps across the Middle East, give only a partial idea of a widespread phenomenon. The radical economical and social transformations currently being experienced throughout the world have produced a proliferation of the "camp condition" – that is, a space suspended from the surrounding legal, social and political order. There are now innumerable places in suspension in megalopolises around the world, where internally displaced people and new immigrants take refuge. Whether they are camps that precede or follow wars, encampments set up after natural catastrophe, or refugee camps, they often become places where people are born and die waiting to go home.

At the same time, the camp condition has opened a new horizon of political and social configurations, and new ways of understanding the relation of the population to space and territory. The permanent temporality of refugee camps have produced spatio-political configurations that call into question the very idea of nation-state. And despite the fact that the "camp form" in origin has been used as a tool for regulating the "excess of its political dimension", the camp as an exceptional space could also be seen as a

counter-site for emerging political practices and a new form of urbanism. In the following pages, we will move between these two interrelated aspects: between the camp as a site of discipline and control and the camp as a site of of struggle and inventive practices.

The Camp as a Site of Discipline and Control

Although states and non-governmental organizations have at length been, and still are, actively conceiving and managing camps, we are just beginning to understand how the camp form has problematized the very idea of a city as a functional political community and democratic space. If a citizen's political identity is played out in the public space of the city, what is found in the camp is its inverse: here, a citizen is stripped of his or her political rights. In this sense, the camp represents a sort of anti-city, a constitutive void of a political order. But what effect does this anti-city produce on the public and political space of the city? If the city has historically represented the place where the rights of citizens (seem to) be recognized—often by excluding one part of the population kept outside its walls—the invention of the camp is a new mechanism of exclusion. The camp system goes beyond the inclusion-exclusion dichotomy that defines relations between citizens and non-citizens mediated by the

borders of nation-states. The camp, in fact, excludes through its inclusion. It marks the degradation of conventional political organizational systems. It is a desperate attempt to preserve an outdated political order through constructing a space of suspension within which to confine all those who "do not belong." It is crucial that the space of the camp is no longer inside or outside, rather, it represents a sort of third area, a place in suspension, where an increasing number of individuals excluded from the polis are shut away. Here, spatial segregation takes on an added dimension, becoming a strict confinement under armed surveillance: once inside these spaces, the lives of the inhabitants may be at stake. The 'camp' signals the breakdown of any political relationship between territory and people, becoming the form of localization for those who do not belong. The camp is a 'space in suspension', a place in limbo, held within the "normal" spatial and social order of a territory.

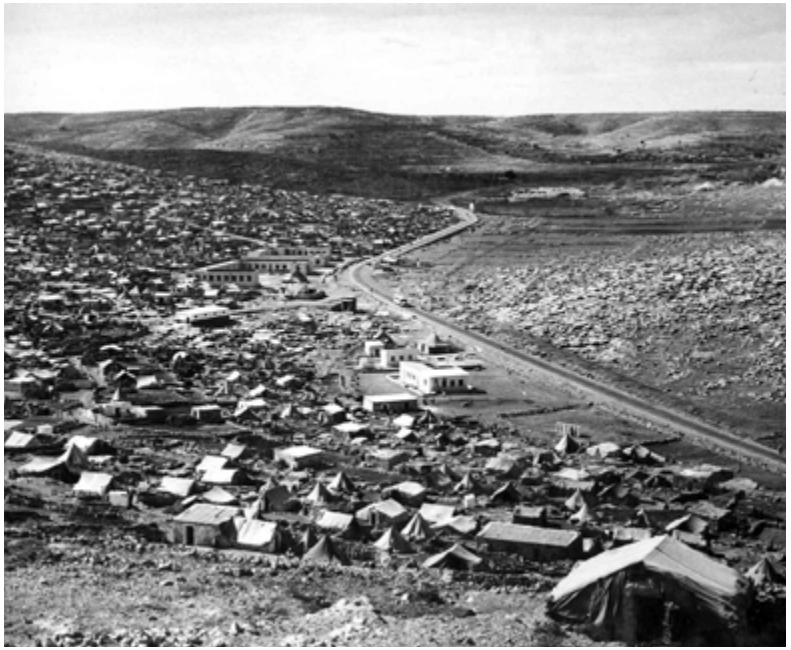
These spaces in suspension, summoned into being by security concerns, usually become powerful forms of social and spatial control. They emerge every time the relationship between the territorial space and the population enters a state of crisis. They first made their appearance in the colonial context as a temporary measure for controlling local populations, and later reemerged in Europe at a time when the imperial spatial order was collapsing. Camps are

once more becoming visible today, as the connection between territory, state, and citizenship has once again entered a crisis due to the disintegrative effects of migrations and the globalization of economies and communications. Called for as an exceptional means for preserving the established order, as a measure required to deal with temporary, short term geo-political crises (migrations, wars, terrorism), over time these spaces are often, in fact, transformed into more or less permanent expressions of political ideology and power.

The Camp as a Site of Political Invention

The Palestinian refugee camps, which first appeared after the 1948 Nakba, were conceived as an emergency assistance to the massive expulsion, operated by Jewish militias, of almost the entire Palestinian population of that time. The first pictures of these camps, in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, showed small villages made of tents, arranged according to the same regular grids used for military encampments.

As the years passed, and no political solution was found for the plight of the displaced Palestinians, tents were substituted with shelters in an attempt to respond to the growing needs of the camp population without undermining the temporary condition of the



Dheisheh refugee camp, 1952 – archive

camp, and therefore undermining the right to return. However, with a growing population, the condition in the camps worsened. The terrible situations in which Palestinian refugees where forced to live was used by the Palestinian political leadership to pressure Israel and the international community in terms of the urgency of the refugees' right to return. The precariousness and temporariness of the camp structure was not simply a technical problem, but also the material-symbolic embodiment of the principle that its inhabitants be allowed to return as soon as possible to their place of origin.

Dheisheh refugee camp, 2012 – Brave New Alps

Israel refuses the internationally recognized right of return of Palestinian refugees. For this reason, Palestinian refugee camps have become a magnetic force field in which competing and unequally matched political entities – the host states, international governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the refugees themselves – attempt to exercise influence. Every single banal act, from building a roof to opening a new street, becomes a political statement concerning the right of return. Nothing in the camp can be considered without political implications.

However, during the Nineties and within the framework of the peace process, which subsequently led to the creation of an interim Palestinian Authority, the right of return was increasingly marginalized under the pressure of successive Israeli governments who had never been willing to acknowledge Israel's responsibility in the Palestinian Nakba. At the same time, the withdrawal of the Israeli army from most Palestinian urban areas created the conditions for some West Bank camps to become relatively autonomous and independent socio-political communities.

For decades, the political discourse around the right of return, and the associated imperative to stagnate living conditions, imposed by the Palestinian political leadership to reaffirm the camp's ephemerality, forced refugees to live in terrible conditions. From 1948-49 to the present day, official political discourse has sought to prohibit any development in, or formalization of, the refugee camps. The fear was that any transformation of the camps would bring about an integration of the refugee community with the local environment and thus the political motivation for the right to return would be lost. This discourse was also based on the assumption that as long as refugees were living in appalling conditions, their suffering would pressure the international community to enact their right to return. Thus, any improvement to camp infrastructure and housing

was seen as a direct erosion of the right to return.

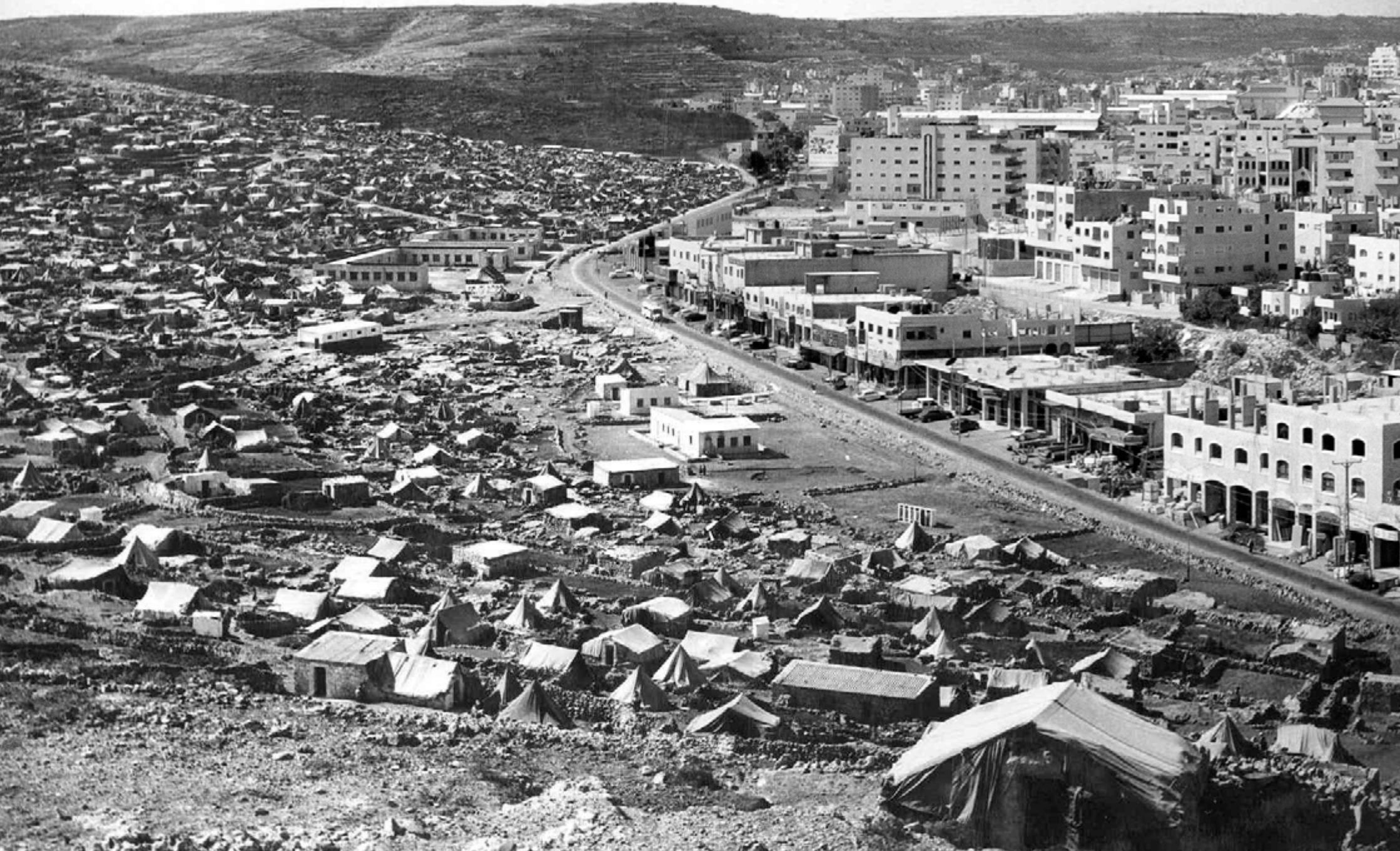
Today this imperative is being reconsidered: it is argued that improved living conditions in refugee camps do not necessarily conflict with the right to return. No longer a simple recipient of humanitarian intervention, the refugee is seen as an active political subject, through his or her participation in the development of autonomous governance for the camp.

Today, refugees are re-inventing social and political practices that improve their everyday life; the refugee camp has been transformed from a marginalized holding area to an interconnected center of social and political life. It is, however, crucial that this radical transformation has not normalized the political condition of being exiled.

What follows, among other things, are projects articulated as an architecture of exile which aims through its spatial and programmatic configuration to actively engage the camp urbanization produced by over sixty-four years of forced exile.

Perhaps fragments constituting a different idea of a city.

This image is produced by juxtaposing and overlapping a picture taken in 1952 (half left side) and a picture taken in 2012 (right left side). On the left,the Dheisheh camp made of tents in 1952, and on the right Doha city, a neighborhood outside the borders of the camp build by Palestinian refugees. (photomontage by Brave New Alps, 2012)



02

THE INITIATIVES

The initiatives 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, BraveNewAlps, Ayman Khalifah, Matteo Guidi, Sara Pellegrini, Giuliana Racco, Diego Segatto, Dena Qaddumi.

01

THE GARDEN

Making place

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Naba' Al Assi,
Aysar Al Saifi, Murad Odeh

"

The Al Feniq Cultural Center was initiated
in Dheisheh refugee camp based on
the idea of creating a common place
for the camp community.

It was an event that evokes
an epic history of destruction and re-building
that clearly resounds in its name, *The Phoenix*.

Al Feniq opened an adjacent garden
in 2004 and since then it has constantly been reshaped
and transformed in an ongoing design process.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/01-the-garden]

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

02

THE SQUARE

Learning in the common space

CONTRIBUTORS

Nedaa Hamouz, Ayat Al Turshan

“

The first time we gathered fifty women
in the square we feared people’s reactions
and perceptions. But we were shocked
to see how many people strongly supported
the idea of using the square as a common space.

It seems now, a few months since that moment,
nobody can bear being inside closed spaces any longer:
we were all longing some fresh air.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/02-the-square]

FAWWAR REFUGEE CAMP

03

THE BRIDGE

Challenging perception

CONTRIBUTORS

Aysar Al Saifi, Isshaq Al Barbary

“

Entirely self-financed and self-built
by the Dheisheh camp community,
a pedestrian bridge was constructed between
Doha and the camp in order to provide
a safe way of crossing the street.

However, it soon became apparent
that the bridge was not used for its intended purpose.
It has since been closed, remaining a potential space
that is under-utilized and an abandoned representation
of the agency of the camp.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/03-the-bridge]

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

DOHA CITY

04

THE POOL

Re-activating connections

CONTRIBUTORS

Saleh Khannah, Alaa Al Homouz

“

Since the camp itself is overcrowded,
with almost no public space,
providing an inviting common location for social gathering
will allow the inhabitants to spend more time outdoors.

Re-activating the pool by developing agriculture
provides the potential for the inhabitants
to change the way they perceive and represent
the camp beyond its circumscribed limits.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/04-the-pool]

ARROUB REFUGEE CAMP

05

THE SUBURB

Transgressing boundaries

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Ahmad Al Lahham

“

In 2012, the people of the suburb created
a local committee to manage life there.
This committee, as the body representing the residents
of the suburb, has officially requested to be directly
connected with the Popular Committee of Dheisheh.

What makes someone living in a nice villa
want to be connected to a place, the refugee camp,
which supposed to be temporary? Why would someone
choose to be represented through a place, the camp,
that is perceived as weak and poor?

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/05-the-suburb]

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

06

THE PATHWAYS

Reframing narration

CONTRIBUTORS

Aysar Al Saifi, Murad Odeh

“

One morning, I went to the kitchen to make some coffee,
and while I was letting the coffee boil,
I looked up out the window to find that my neighbor
had turned his kitchen into a bathroom.
Having forgotten to close the window,
there he sat, on the toilet, looking at me eye-to-eye.

So I said, “How are you, neighbor?!”
Still sitting on the toilet, “Praise God.”
I said, “What are you doing here?”
“What do I know?”, he said,
“Looks like I forgot to close the window.”
We were silent for a moment, then suddenly
we started laughing, trying to figure a way out
of this awkward situation.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/06-the-pathways]

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

07

THE STADIUM

Sustaining relations

CONTRIBUTORS

Bisan Al Jaffari

“

I was talking with my neighbor, and she decided
to go with me to the stadium.
I could walk fast there, which I can’t do in the camp, due to
the lack of space. In the beginning,
all people started talking about me,
because they thought it was not good practice in the camp.

But I began to convince my neighbors of the importance
and beauty of the place and their ability to make sport and
walk in it. The first few times I went to the stadium,
I would take my neighbors with me, Then I took
my girlfriend and my girlfriend brought her friend
until we became 10 women who went every day
to the stadium for walking.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/07-the-stadium]

ARROUB REFUGEE CAMP

08

THE MUNICIPALITY

Experiments in urbanity

CONTRIBUTORS

Naba' Al Assi

"

The refugees who live in Doha view the camp as the real place and as closer to their homelands and the right of return than the city.

Refugees, who came to Doha city from different camps, live in it as in a transitional space. They do not consider Doha to be anything more than a place to wait for another phase in life – when the right of return is realized.

Doha is a place where they have moved searching for privacy and better material conditions than the situation in the camp permits.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/08-the-municipality]

DOHA CITY

09

THE UNBUILT

Regenerating spaces

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Aysar Al Saifi,
Isshaq Al Barbary, Ahmad Al Lahham

“

In the middle of the 1950s, UNRWA built
new shelters for the people of the camp.
Each family received a 9 square meters shelter,
and every 15 families shared one bathroom.
Today, an area with three untouched UNRWA shelters
still exists in the middle of the camp
as a manifestation of an ”era” that the camp endured.

Beside the fact these shelters carry the history
of the camp’s life, these kinds of compounds represent
another conceptual understanding of the meaning
of the common and the communal life that people
experienced when living in these shelters.

[www.campusincamps.ps/projects/09-the-unbuilt]

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

03

THE COLLECTIVE DICTIONARY

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 terms have emerged as a result of actions and active dialogues 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.

CITIZENSHIP

المواطنة

CONTRIBUTORS

Naba' Al Assi, Murad Odeh, Shadi Ramadan

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/citizenship

“

We ask ourselves: *who are the Palestinian citizens?* Are they the 68% of Palestinians who are refugees in or outside of Palestine? Are they the inhabitants of the Palestinian villages where the Palestinian Authority can't access even to give them basic goods because they are in Area C? Are they the one and a half million Palestinians that live on the other side of the green line? Are they the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in the occupation jails? Are they the inhabitants of the Palestinian cities destroyed since the beginning of the Palestinian story until now from the Israeli occupation attacks?

– Murad Odeh

When we speak about the Palestinian Identity, it's not that green ID card which we have from the PA or any other ID for that matter. We cannot limit the Palestinian identity to a document or an ID card or a passport. Palestinian identity is the Palestinian culture, affiliation, struggle, resistance, of martyrs and prisoners. And refugee status is one of the essential parts of that. Citizenship is not determined by identity papers that fade out with time. It is not determined by participating in elections or not.

– Naba' Al Assi

COMMON [1]

المشاع

CONTRIBUTORS

Mohammed Abu Alia, Naba' Al Assi, Isshaq Al Barbary,
Brave New Alps, Nedaa Hamouz, Murad Odeh

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/common-1

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The privatization of commons, in which they become owned by corporate entities with the excuse of providing them with better maintenance and development in the long run, leaves big questions unanswered – to begin with, is this privatization a fair process or not? Why did we reach a point where the ability to perform community tasks was taken away from the community and given to private companies? Where should a community draw a line between those places that can be left to be dominated by companies in order to sustain them and those places that a community should not bargain? Let's imagine places such as the Midan Al Tahrir in Cairo, Almahd Square in Bethlehem, the Eiffel tower in Paris, are being privatized, restricted, and are transformed from a common, used and shared by everyone, into areas that are owned and run by companies that possess total control. And as we are discussing places and areas, shouldn't we try to examine the ways in which the privatization of educational and healthcare system can affect us?

– Mohammed Abu Alia

COMMON ^{2}

المشاع

CONTRIBUTORS

Aysar Al Saifi, Isshaq Al Barbary

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/common-2

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In this context, the key and the first generation of the crimes of 1948 are linked to each other and related to private property, perhaps due to nostalgia and limited connection with the new evolving culture that has been developing in refugee camps over the past 64 years. However, linking the *return* to groups of (similar people) and the village could lead to the danger that closed communities might emerge, and thus establish their privileged commons by excluding all the others, which can be seen as fragmentations of Palestine.
The surrounding nature of life in today’s refugee camps is totally different from its shape forty or fifty years ago. I was born, in a refugee camp that consists of and descends from multiple generations of refugees, a father and mother who come from two different destroyed villages, and generations originally belonging to the communities of Beit Jibrin, Beit Attab, Diraban, Beit Nattief, Haiffa, Jaffa and so on. Gathered together on a small piece of land due to an exception situation where private property is totally absent, they created and developed a new culture and established a new political discourse built on people and which helps to articulate the type of life we share in common.

– Isshaq Al Barbary

KNOWLEDGE

المعرفة

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Nedaa Hamouz, Bisan Al Jaffari,
Ahmad Al Lahham, Ayat Al Turshan

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/knowledge

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We realized that knowledge is practical as well as theoretical, and that it is an action. We used to look at knowledge as represented by a book or an academic certificate and that the person’s experience will never have a role in furnishing his personal knowledge, but now, after the new experience which we got from interviewing the women, we can definitely say that one’s experience has a great role in forming his personal knowledge. Most of the women we interviewed don’t have an academic certificate; however, they are well educated by the events they have had in their life, and they can speak about anything easily. Life itself is a school, we can all learn from what’s happening in our daily life.

– Ayat Al Turshan, Nedaa Hamouz

The most significant thing that we do in this project these days is a *Collective Dictionary*, in which we are choosing words that relate to us, and redefining it based on our experiences and stories, so that they become meaningful to us. To be honest, this is a new thing that I never thought of before. Now, several of my colleagues and I, who have been touched by this idea, only believe in the knowledge that we build and define according to our experiences and stories.

– Ahamd Al Lahham

OWNERSHIP

الملكية

CONTRIBUTORS

Alaa Al Homouz, Ayat Al Turshan, Aysar Al Saifi, Giuliana Racco, Ibrahim Jawabreh, Marwa Al Lahham, Matteo Guidi, Saleh Khannah

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/ownership

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It’s not strange to see women without headscarves in the camp, as they go to the markets or sit on their balconies or roofs. These same women wear headscarves outside of the camp. It’s not strange, it’s part of daily life. But it is strange if we think that this means that they conceive of the camp as private/intimate space and what lies beyond the camp as public space, while they act within as if it is common space.
The women feel the entire camp is home and in a sense they own it. So, in this case, ownership for them is the feeling of comfort and freedom of choice.

– Aysar Al Saifi

In my camp, I do what I want. If you want to come inside, you must follow the rules of the camp. I couldn’t stop the same man if he was speeding outside the camp. I guess I feel the camp is mine and what is outside is not. Ownership does not need proof or legal documents, it can exist through an idea, a belief or the attachment to a place.

– Alaa Al Homouz

PARTICIPATION

المشاركة

CONTRIBUTORS

Nedaa Hamouz, Bisan Al Jaffari, Ayat Al Turshan,
Sara Pellegrini, Giuliana Racco

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/participation

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When I asked my grandmother about her own definition of participation, I felt as if she had wanted anyone to ask her this question in order to talk about many things that seemed to be marginalized. She talked about how she and her neighbors were happy together; she said that they used to deal with each other according to what is called *Al-O'una.* Helping another accomplish something that could develop the whole society. For example, if a man from the camp wanted to build a house, all the neighbors and the residents of the camp, whether men or women, would help him build his home.

– Bisan Al Jaffari

Now it's the critical moment - it's the 19th of December. The morning of the day of the activity we prepared ourselves as we would have for a wedding party. We start cleaning the plaza and organizing the chairs and the tables with the help of others. At 10 am the women began gathering in the square, bringing the coffee and tea for the others, others brought the maftoul ready to be cooked, and the rest came ready to cook and give a hand. At the beginning, we saw apprehension, shyness and tension clearly on their faces for being in this place for the first time.

– Ayat Al Turshan, Nedaa Hamouz

RELATION

العلاقة

CONTRIBUTORS

Saleh Khannah, Matteo Guidi, Ibrahim Jawabreh,
Giuliana Racco, Diego Segatto

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/relation

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We found an amazing map proving that there was an aqueduct connecting the pool in Arroub with Solomon’s Pools in Irtas – both parts of an incredible system which supplied water to Jerusalem. The idea to walk along the ancient aqueduct originated from Giuliana’s first visit to Arroub. In line with the term *relation*, a group composed itself and decided to start the trek. It was a journey about exploring, learning, enjoying, feeling, discovering, analyzing and so forth. The experience of walking and searching for these ruins is something uncommon in our times and this is important for me. It is a way to build my own knowledge and learn through practice.

– Saleh Khannah

A relationship with the land. To be aware of this relationship, people have to be familiar with the land. This experience is not easy, not everyone can do it, this relationship takes the form of a struggle.
I was born in Arroub camp, I lived there for sixteen years, and this is the first time I discovered the surrounding area. The first question that came to my mind is: how can I protect a place that I don’t know? During this journey I noticed that I am a bad struggler.

– Ibrahim Jawabreh

RESPONSIBILITY

المسؤولية

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Naba' Al Assi,
Ahmad Al-Lahham, Murad Odeh

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/responsibility

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If we look at the Arab Revolutions, specifically in Tunisia, where the individuals live under difficult pressure from their government, they feel that each person has responsibility towards themselves and their people. This sense of responsibility becomes a necessity in starting to reject the authoritative and suppressive regime in that country. This revolution starts with individual efforts then others surround and support them, so the responsibility that stemmed from the individual begins to pour into the general concern, welfare, and society. This collective of responsibilities starts to harmoniously reject the regime until ousted.

– Murad Odeh

In the end, we can say that there is something like a mysterious hand that decides responsibility, which mainly is understood as limited to the family, work and religion. Responsibilities outside of this triangle are introduced in ideal and general terms, far away from experience or specific situation. This leads us to say that the limitations of responsibility in factors that develop through time can be an obstacle toward dealing with any case outside of this triangle.

– Qussay Abu Aker

SUSTAINABILITY

الاستدامة

CONTRIBUTORS

Qussay Abu Aker, Bisan Al Jaffari,
Ahmad Al Lahham, Diego Segatto

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/sustainability

In a refugee camp weddings seem to be a classical must-see for a foreigner. And it's not rare; classical reactions and narrations such events bring, classify all the stereotypes and cliché of the habits, limiting the observation on the surface and on its glittering emotional response that some would call Orientalism. Palestinians are continuously engaged in weddings through emotions and as a kind of duties.

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We decided to go deeper into the function of the wedding to highlight the aspects it is capable to show in refugee communities, as a relational living mechanism itself. Changing in time the style of the surrounding, but preserving a much more complex system of familiar relationships, friendly ties, social balancing and, last but not least, economical investments and material exchanges.
Through the lens of the term sustainability, we investigated an aspect where this community renovates an agreement among the people taking part, as a much broader scenario of the bride and the groom, with an unstopped will to preserve meanings that are, sometimes, radicalized rather than nuanced.
– Qussay Abu Aker, Ahmad Al Lahham, Bisan Al Jaffari

WELL-BEING

العافية

CONTRIBUTORS

Aysar Al Saifi, Isshaq Al Barbary

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/well-being

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Basketball was significantly associated with the aristocratic class more than other games, perhaps due to the fact that it needs and requires potentials and cultural tools that are different from football. Thus, there have been never any experiences in the basketball field in any refugee camps in Palestine.
Deheisheh team managed to create a state or a position that combined and united 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 than the enclosure of individualism. However, and despite the poor limited economic situation of the team, it gained the basketball champion league since 2005 until the present time. This has lead to positively affect the stereotype of the refugees, and added a new form of power of the refugees in the Palestinian arena. 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 economic ideas, as the Palestinian culture, sport and heritage became related to business trade.

– Aysar Al Saifi, Isshaq Al Barbary

VISION
الرؤية

CONTRIBUTORS

Marwa Al Lahham, Qussay Abu Aker, Saleh Khannah,
Shadi Ramadan, Ahmad Al-Lahham, Aysar Al Saifi, Bisan Al Jaffarri,
Nedaa Hamouz, Nabà Al Assi, Mohammed Abu Alia,
Ayat Al Turshan, Murad Odeh, Muna Al Lahham, Diego Segatto

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/vision

“

It is assumed that Palestinian refugees have one identity, that they claim one single right sought after in one single direction. This already sounds like a clear statement with all the strengths and limitations of a collective cause, certainly manifesting the vitality of a steadfast community that after sixty-five years of dispossession, exodus and continuous destruction, still preserves a common dream and recognizes its value in this common, providing the word community with a wealth of meaning that is rarely found elsewhere. Entering the cracks of an apparently coherent identity-construction has been a necessary premise to release the potential of an imagination much more colorful and effective than traditionally accepted speech would suggest.

It’s the year 2040 and you have obtained the right of return to… (*place, civil right* or *else*). In your original camp, you are guiding a group or a person. You are someone with a decisive role here. Describe the environment, the people and what is happening around you. And then describe the other camps – Dheisheh, Fawwar, Arroub and Azzah – where your friends live. Compare it with 2012.

04

VISITORS

Munir Fasheh

THE HOUSE OF WISDOM

Munir was Born in Jerusalem, Palestine in 1941. Studied and taught math and physics for many years in Palestine and USA. In 1989, he founded and directed Tamer Institute for Community Education, and in 1997 founded and directed the Arab Education Forum for 10 years at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. During that period, he visited 29 countries and worked with individuals, groups, and universities involved in innovative initiatives related to learning and knowledge.

> In the House of Wisdom, the stress is on what the participant searches for in one's life. Research refers to what may deepen and clarify one's search. Since we agree in our discussions that knowledge is action, then the backbone of their learning are the projects that participants decide to work on, built on what is abundant and on sources of strength in people and community, and in harmony with pluralism and well-being.

CYCLE — *The House of Wisdom* — FEBRUARY - JUNE 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/the-house-of-wisdom

Tarek Hamam

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Tarek Hamam is a Palestinian-Canadian lawyer serving as a legal advisor to the Palestinian leadership. He is also a lecturer at the AlQuds-Bard Honors College in Abu Dis, Jerusalem. Prior to arriving in Palestine in 2009, Tarek worked at Lawyers for Human Rights in Johannesburg, South Africa. Having lived in Lebanon and Canada, Tarek is fluent in Arabic and English. He is passionate about youth issues and volunteered as an assistant coach for a junior league basketball team in Ramallah.

The cycle tackled some of the core issues for Palestinians such as refugees, prisoners, Jerusalem, and territory. Working from publicly available government documents, the participants took part in a simulation exercise that allowed them to examine these topics from various positions. The participants were then tasked with developing their own vision on how these important questions should be addressed. While taking into account various constraints, the participants were encouraged to think outside the box and challenge conventional wisdom.

CYCLE — *International Law and Human Rights* — FEBRUARY - APRIL 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/international-law-and-human-rights

Ayman Khalifah

CULTURE AND REPRESENTATION

Dr. Khalifah teaches Arabic Composition at Al-Quds Bard Honors College and several courses at Al-Quds Bard Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program such as Identity, Culture, and the Classroom, Teaching as a Reflective Practice in Science. Dr. Khalifi's research interests include cultural studies and its relationship to international trends in education. He is particularly interested in philosophies of education and social sciences, epistemology, culture theories, science and technology, educational development, cross-cultural educational management and leadership.

The purpose of the cycle is to introduce the concepts of culture and representation. It aims to explore the relationship between culture and representation by discussing how culture constructs shared meanings, i.e. how culture constructs patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting through using language and visual images.

CYCLE — *Culture and Representation* — JULY 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/ayman-khalifah

Ilana Feldman

POLITICAL LIFE AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Ilana Feldman is Associate Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at George Washington University. She is the author of Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917-67 *(Duke University Press, 2008) and* In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care *(Duke University, 2010; co-edited with Miriam Ticktin). Her current research traces the Palestinian experience with humanitarianism in the years since 1948, exploring both how this aid apparatus has shaped Palestinian social and political life and how the Palestinian experience has influenced the broader post-war humanitarian regime.*

> Part of what I seek to understand is what happens as humanitarianism moves from crisis response to a condition of life. Humanitarian practice clearly shifts from disaster relief – provision of food, clothing, emergency shelter – to efforts that look more like social service work and development projects. How are people and communities shaped by this transformation and by living – long-term – in a humanitarian condition?

LECTURE — *Political Life and Humanitarian Assistance: Palestinian Refugee Claims and Conditions* — 04.06.2012 www.campusincamps.ps/projects/ilana-feldman

Vivien Sansour

AGRI-CULTURE AND RESISTANCE

Vivien Sansour is a life style writer and photographer. In her work she has been capturing the stories of Palestinian farmers for the wider world. Trained in the field of Anthropology, Vivien worked with farmers in Honduras, Uruguay, and Palestine on issues relating to agriculture and independence. In the last three years while living with Producer communities in the Northern West Bank villages in the Jenin, Nablus, and Salfit districts she created a series of producer and village profiles for Canaan Fair Trade.

> The cycle explores the relationship between agricultural practices, food production, and political power. A combination of readings and fieldwork will provide a framework in which participants can critically look at all the ways in which communities find independence through means of food production and food security. As we explore different readings including the work of Michael Perelman on the economic, social, and environmental costs of the current global trend in agricultural systems, we will be exploring the concept of agriculture and liberation more specifically in the Palestinian context.

CYCLE — *Agri-culture and resistance* — AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2012
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/agri-culture-and-resistance

Sandi Hilal

THE UNRWA CAMP IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Sandi Hilal is an architect based in Bethlehem. She is a consultant with the UNRWA on the Camp Improvement Program and visiting professor at Al-Quds/Bard University in Abu Dis-Jerusalem. She is a founder member of DAAR. In 2006, she obtained the title of Research Doctorate in Transborder policies for daily life *in the University of Trieste. She is a co-author of different research projects published and exhibited internationally such as* Stateless Nation *with Alessandro Petti and* Border Devices *with multiple publishers.*

Refugee communities are involved in the planning and design process to ensure that new facilities meet their needs. While UNRWA does not administer the camps, it does have a clear interest in improving the conditions of Palestine refugees living in them.

A new program was launched in 2006 that focused on a improving the camps' physical and social environment through a participatory, community-driven planning approach, rather than relief.

CYCLE — *The UNRWA Camp Improvement Program* — SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2012
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/camp-improvement-program

Hanan Toukan

RECLAIMING THE POLITICAL

Hanan has been a Teaching Fellow at SOAS, University of London since 2009. She has taught and lectured on the politics and government of the Middle East in the Politics Department as well as the mediated cultures of the Middle East at the Center for Media and Film Studies. She has also guest-lectured at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is currently a CBRL Post-doctoral Visiting Research Fellow at the Kenyon Institute in East Jerusalem. From September 2012 she will be a EUME Post-doctoral Fellow at the Forum for Transregional Studies in Berlin. She has researched and written on cultural politics, visual cultures, traveling theory, globalism/localism, and international aid. She received her PhD from SOAS University in 2011.

The seminar aims to converse with some of the conceptualizations related to the politics of aesthetics, the public performance of affect and the politics of cultural production. It aims to do so by considering the potentials held within possibly already existing radical emancipatory practices underwritten by the specific social and political realities related to visual production in Dheisheh Camp.

SEMINAR — *Reclaiming the Political: Visual Production and the Transformative Politics of Everyday* — 29.07.2012
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/hanan-toukan

Gudrun Kramer, Wilfried Graf, Oday Karsh, Thomas Ernstbrunner

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Gudrun Kramer is Program Manager for the GIZ and heads the "Regional Social and Cultural Fund for Palestinian Refugees and Gaza Population". Dr. Wilfried Graf is Executive Director of the Herbert C. Kelman Institute and senior researcher at the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education at the Alpen-Adria-University of Klagenfurt in Austria.

During the cycle, participants get acquainted with an approach to conflict transformation, which has been developed over the last decade by the trainers. The approach isbound by a theory of generalized complexity, which bridges social-psychological interactionism with realist-systemic theory and cultural hermeneutics. It goes beyond the post-modern cultural turn towards a "soft" universalism, which is informed by post-modern critiques of universalism but also goes beyond it. This practical model for conflict transformation attempts to answer the challenge by applying the epistemological and methodological approaches mentioned to the concept of basic human needs, which can serve as the frame of reference for "soft universalism".

CYCLE — *Conflict transformation* — APRIL-JUNE 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/conflict-transformation

Dan McKenzie, Tala Abu Rahmeh, Thea Piltzecker, Iman Simon

POWER AND LANGUAGE

Tala Abu Rahmeh is a young writer based in Palestine, she graduated from the American University in 2009 with an MFA in Poetry.
Daniel McKenzie is a native of Los Angeles, California, and a graduate of Languages and Literature with a focus on Middle Eastern studies from Bard College. He currently teaches at the Al-Quds Bard Partnership, where he coordinates College Writing.
Born in New York City, Thea Piltzecker is a graduate of Bard College in Literature and Human Rights. She is currently a research and teaching fellow at the Al-Quds Bard Partnership.
Iman Simon is a teacher and anthropologist. She graduated from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) with an MA in Anthropology of Development in 2010.

The five week course is an exploration of Arabic and English texts to see the impact of facing the text in two different languages. A four-week intensive English workshop that aims to bolster project participants' critical inquiry in English. Through writing, reading and speaking practice, participants should master essential rhetorical skills.

CYCLE — *Power and language* — FEBRUARY-DECEMBER 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/language-and-power

Linda Quiquivix

MAPPING MODERN PALESTINE

Linda is a post-doctoral fellow in Critical Global Humanities at Brown University. Her research traces the map's ubiquitous role in the Israel-Palestinian conflict to examine the way that conceptions of space determine politics. She received her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the Department of Geography.

> We will critically examine the Palestinian adoption of the template after the Nakba, looking first at the various ways Palestinian refugees appropriated the map as a popular logo to rally a liberation movement around, and next at how the Oslo 'peace process' sparked the Palestinian cartographic spirit to grow in force and causing the map to evolve from a popular icon toward a scientific, state-building tool. We trace how, as such cartography grows in importance, the refugee question becomes increasingly sidelined from the 'peace process.'

LECTURE — *Mapping Modern Palestine: The 'Colonial Template' in Palestinian Politics* — 09.07.2012 www.campusincamps.ps/projects/linda-quiquivix

Beatrice Catanzaro

CONTEXT AS FIELD, RELATIONS AS TOOLS

Beatrice Catanzaro produces public interventions and relational based projects with focus on social and political dynamics. She has been researching and producing works throughout Europe, the Middle East and India. She has collaborated as visiting artist/tutor with the Unidee Artists in Residency International Program at Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto for several years. Her work has been exhibited in international venues as Manifesta7 (at the MART Museum of Rovereto), Fundacao Gulbenkian in Lisbon and the Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló (EACC) in Spain. Currently she lives and work between Nablus and Jerusalem, Palestine, and teaches at the International Art Academy in Ramallah.

> Throughout the past ten years, I have been questioning the very potential of the art practice as response to specific contexts and the ultimate possibility of its unfolding in reality as an enduring shift, beyond the presence of the author. Intangible values of time, relations and mutual trust are some of the threads that, in retrospective, I can trace as light motive to my personal experience, as well as honestly recognize the inner drive that leads you to embark in a long term project.

LECTURE — *A needle in the binding and other stories. Context as field, relations as tools* — 20.07.2012 www.campusincamps.ps/projects/beatrice-catanzaro

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rhame

NAVIGATING THE DIALECTICS OF DESIRE AND DISASTER

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme work together across a range of sound, image, installation and performance practices. Their work explores issues connected with spatial politics and subjectivity, place and narrative, and spatio-temporal resonances in the relation between the actual, imagined and remembered. Often taking on the form of interdisciplinary installations and live audio-visual performances, their practice increasingly examines the immersive, experiential possibilities of sound, image and environment. They have exhibited and performed internationally and most recently founded the sound and image performance collective "Tashweesh".

> Critically 'reading' the transformation of the PLO into an 'authority' and eventually a 'security' regime and with it the birth of new political discourses and desires largely centered on consumption; seemingly 'beyond' but always brushing up against the outer limits of occupation, its increasingly dystopian wider environment. "The Zone", by evoking both the phantasmagoria of the dream-world and the dystopia of the catastrophe, reflects this state of being, full of surrealism, absurdity and a growing sense of the uncanny.

LECTURE — *Navigating the Dialectics of Desire and Disaster in the Contemporary Palestinian Landscape* — 06.08.2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/basel-abbas-and-ruanne-abou-rahme

Tariq Dana

PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY: WHAT WENT WRONG?

Tariq Dana is assistant professor of Political Science at Hebron University. He received his PhD in Politics from Santa' Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa, Italy. Among his publications include a book chapter entitled "Alternative Development or Development Alternative? Post-development Theory and Prospects of Social Movements in Palestine" (2012), which will be published in Another Approaches to Development *by Bisan Center for Research and Development, Ramallah, Palestine.*

> In this lecture we will discuss critical dimensions of Palestinian civil society's structural transformation as well as the implications and consequences of this process on the ground. The lecture sheds light on the transformative trajectory of Palestinian civil society throughout the last century. In particular, we will compare between structural differences of the contradictory versions of Palestinian civil society in both pre and post Oslo periods.

LECTURE — *Palestinian Civil Society: What Went Wrong?* — 22.09.2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/tariq-dana

Felicity D. Scott

VOLUNTARY PRIMITIVISM

Felicity D. Scott is Associate Professor of Architecture and Director of the program in Critical, Curatorial and Conceptual Practices in Architecture (CCCP) at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Preservation and Planning. Her research focuses on articulating genealogies of political and theoretical engagement with questions of technological transformation within modern and contemporary architecture, as well as within the discourses and institutions that have shaped and defined the discipline.

This lecture will address the Open Land communes which emerged in Northern California during the late 1960s, focusing in particular on the escalating "code wars" that their attempts to abandon private property rights, normative forms of life, and other trappings of modernity and capitalism elicited from the State. What, it will ask, might have motivated this portion of the American back-to-the-land movement to open their land to anyone who wished to settle?

LECTURE — *Voluntary Primitivism* — 05.11.2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/felicity-d-scott

Khaldun Bshara

THREE STORIES FROM A CAMP

Bshara is a conservation architect and anthropologist. He is currently the co-director of RIWAQ where he has been working since 1994 Interested in space and memory, in 2007 Bshara joined the graduate program of social and cultural anthropology at the University of California, Irvine, where he obtained his MA in anthropology in 2009, and his PhD in 2012. In addition, he is the author and co-author of number of books and articles, including Tashgheel-Job Creation through Restoration 2001-2011 *(2011).*

In the lecture will be narrated three stories from a refugee camp to complicate our understanding of resilience, resistance, and the gender component of exile. My claim is that there is a discontinuity and fragmentation of our understanding of the refugee camp (the life and the space); there is a subtle resistance driven by hope manifested in the everyday practices; and there is a hidden but important gender quality of the resistance, in which female refugees occupy a different subject position than male refugees.

LECTURE — *Three Stories From a Camp* — 24.11.2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/khaldun-bshara

Samer Abdelnour

CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE WORK

Samer is completing a PhD at the London School of Economics, and is a founding board member of Al-Shabaka, The Palestinian Policy Network.

How does culture and identity influence community and collective work? Is it possible for NGOs to play a supportive role in their construction?
Samer Abdelnour explored these issues using the case study of the *hadaadeen* (blacksmiths), who now reside in El-Fashir, North Darfur. The blacksmiths are amongst Darfur's most discriminated castes. Historically, their socio-cultural distinction has rendered them unable to engage as regular members of society. Yet today the blacksmiths have managed—through a long-running partnership with NGO Practical Action—to gain some degree of economic and political recognition. Rather than conceive of their poverty as economic alone, Practical Action recognized identity to be the root of their social isolation.

LECTURE — *Culture and Collective Work* — 23.03.2013
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/samer-abdelnour

Manuel Herz

PREFIGURING THE STATE

Manuel Herz is an urban researcher and architect based in Basel with built public and private projects in Europe and Asia. He has taught at Harvard University and was head of research at the ETH Studio Basel – Institute of the Contemporary City. Currently he is a visiting professor at the ETH Zürich. Manuel has published and researched extensively in the field of refugee camps. His most recent book "From Camp to City – Refugee Camps of the Western Sahara" was published with Lars Müller Publishers, Zürich, in 2012.

The Western Sahara, occupied by Morocco in 1975 is one of the world's last remaining colonies. The fleeing population – the Sahrawis – established refugee camps across the border in Algeria, and have lived there ever since. How is life organized in the refugee camps located in one of the remotest and inhospitable areas of our planet? How do the refugees live, how do they move through the camps, in what spaces do they work or learn, and how do they go about activities of leisure and recreation?

LECTURE — *Prefiguring the State – The refugee camps of the Western Sahara* — 04.04.2013 www.campusincamps.ps/projects/manuel-herz

Emilio Dabed

A CONSTITUTION FOR A NON-STATE

Emilio Dabed is a lawyer, specialized in constitutional matters. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Sciences from Institut de Sciences Politiques d'Aix en Provence, and IREMAM (Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, Aix-en-Provence, France) on the constitutional process in Palestine. Currently, he is a professor in the Human Rights Program at Al-Quds University/Bard College, Jerusalem. His latest research looks at the relation between, on the one hand, legal processes and discursive practices, and, on the other hand, political and social changes, subjectivity, and identity formation.

> During the "Palestinian constitutional process" significant political and social dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict –i.e. the nature of the actors' power relations, their conception of the Oslo process, the role that they attributed to the PA – were spelled out in legal-institutional terms and mirrored in the political structure of PA. It is in this sense that the constitutional order can be understood as a sort of "metaphoric representation" of Palestinian politics.

LECTURE — *A Constitution for a Non-state: Understanding Palestinian Politics Through Law* — 27.04.2013
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/emilio-dabed

C.K. Raju

THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

*C.K. Raju holds an honors degree in physics, a masters in mathematics, and a PhD from the Indian Statistical Institute. He helped build India's first supercomputer Param, and was an editor of the Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research. He has written books on physics (*Time: Towards a Consistent Theory*, Kluwer 1994), history and philosophy of mathematics (*Cultural Foundations of Mathematics*, Pearson 2007), and on time at the interface of science, religion and ethics (*The Eleven Pictures of Time*, Sage 2003).*

> As we have begun to problematize the origins of political, philosophical and social thought, can we also dismantle common beliefs about the origins of maths and science? How has the history of the development of maths and science been falsified by Europe? How did the interaction between African, Indian, Persian and Arab-Islamic civilizations create another approach to the maths and science?

LECTURE — *The History of Philosophy of Science: Is Science Western in Origin?* — 29.04.2013 www.campusincamps.ps/projects/c-k-raju

Mohammed Jabali

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CITY

"Autobiography of a city" is a project that operated in Jaffa since 2000, addressing the urgent need to reveal the Palestinian history of the city by enabling the Palestinian population to take an active role in the process. The project is an attempt to examine the ways in which urban-communal memory and consciousness are being shaped via the use of artistic and documentary tools and thrush the direct and wide involvement of the community members.

SEMINAR — *Autobiography of a city* — 22.03.2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/autobiography-of-a-city

Ruba Salih

IDEA OF RETURN

Ruba Salih, a social anthropologist by training, is a Reader in Gender Studies at SOAS. She has worked and published extensively on transnational migration, diaspora and multiculturalism from a gendered perspective. In the last two years she has been involved (together with Sophie Richter-Devroe, Exeter University) in a research project on the Palestinian refugees, for which she is conducting fieldwork in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan.

Debates on rights, democracy, dignity and pluralism seem to suffer from a chronic methodological nationalism, which perpetuates the idea that people seek and fight for rights exclusively in their national territory, the natural and main place for self-determination, so that those who are at the margins of nation-states or excluded from their own territorial nations come to be twice marginalised and their plague made even more invisible.

SEMINAR — *Gender, Orientalism and Nationalism — Idea of Return* — APRIL 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/ruba-saleh/

Diego Segatto

CAMPS OF KNOWLEDGE

Diego is architect and creative director at OQ#_OpenQuadra studio and coordinator of Re:Habitat collective, both based in Bologna (Italy). Multidisciplinarity is the main focus of his practice: if the applications are multiple and with different problematics, planning is the dimension between thinking and action able to mix them together, highlighting the connections and the real core of the research: the importance of the language and the holistic approach.

Camps of Knowledge aims to rise awareness on the participants starting from direct experiences inside other refugee camps looking at common and different aspects of everyday life and environmental settings, built by UNRWA Improvement Department and the inhabitants from the exodus in 1948 to nowadays, both as a source of proposals and possibilities for future cultural and urban transformations. Such framework had a significant result in Back to the Future, a seminar of imagination and freedom where the participants presented their imageries and perspective about the future in the camps, through different ideas and different forms of tale.

CYCLE — *Camps of Knowledge* — FEBRURARY - MAY 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/camps-of-knowledge

Michel Agier, Thomas Keenan

GLOBAL-SCAPE OF CAMPS AND THE POLITICS OF NEUTRALITY

Michel Agier is an ethnologist and anthropologist at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement et École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. Latest book : Le couloir des exilés. Être étranger dans un monde commun, Croquant Edition, 2011.

Thomas Keenan teaches media theory, literature, and human rights at Bard College, where he is associate professor of comparative literature and directs the Human Rights Project.

The seminar will start with Michel Agier presenting comparative studies on refugees, camps and humanitarian politics followed by Thomas Keenan critical reflection on humanitarian action as an “apolitical or neutral gesture”. The participates to the seminar will be invited then to discuss some key concepts, notions and theoris related to the production of the politics of humanitarian and refugeehood spaces.

SEMINAR — *Global-scape of camps and the politics of neutrality* — MAY 2012

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/michel-agier

Moukhtar Kocache

THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Moukhtar Kocache has expertise in philanthropy, cultural and civil society development and curatorial practice. Born in Beirut, he was raised in Paris and spent fifteen years in Washington DC and New York before moving to Cairo for eight years until February of 2012. He currently resides between New York City and Paris.

This three day seminar is designed to shed light on the various structural and institutional frameworks of charitable giving, aid and philanthropy in an interactive forum of knowledge transfer, debate and critical analysis. Through lecture, group presentations and discussions, the seminar's aim is to empower participants with fundamental knowledge about the function, the role, the opportunities as well as the politics that lie behind the various processes of resource mobilization and distribution.What are the local, regional and global trends?

SEMINAR — *Facts and Fiction / Myths and Reality: Pragmatism and Politics of Funding and Resource Mobilization* — JULY 2012
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/moukhtar-kocache

Shadi Chaleshtoori

DECONSTRUCTING CITIZENSHIP: SUBJECTS, STATUS AND STATES

Shadi Chaleshtoori (B.A., M.A, J.D.) is currently a PhD. student at York University, in Toronto, Canada. Shadi has been an active participant in NGOs, research centres, and grassroots coalitions in the areas of social justice and minority rights; and has, for the past six years worked with the Palestinian citizenry of Israel to examine the legal and socio-political concepts of citizenship, minority status, and statelessness. Here she has concentrated on their respective dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and their potential use of citizenship as a creative and subversive tool against the ruling establishment.

For the most part, nation-states use the citizenship framework as the primary organizing relation between the state and its constituents, or citizens. Traditional readings of citizenship depict it as the intersection of identity and law, where both a national belonging and a constitutionally recognized membership in a state are articulated. Citizenship is conventionally conceived of as a mechanism of civic incorporation within a state; a form of social membership used as a basis for claim-making with which comes access to rights, privileges, and freedoms allocated and protected by state institutions.

SEMINAR — *Deconstructing Citizenship: Subjects, Status and States* — 10.11.2012
www.campusincamps.ps/projects/shadi-chaleshtoori

Jeffrey Champlin

PLACING ANTIGONE

Jeffrey Champlin received his BA from Middlebury College and Ph. D. from New York University in 2011. His teaching and research focuses on connections between literature, philosophy, and political theory. Recent publications examine questions of power and aesthetics in Kleist, Goethe, Hegel, Rilke, and Arendt. After a year as a postdoctoral fellow at Bard's Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and the Humanities, he is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Literature at Bard's Honors College at Al-Quds University and Associate Fellow at the Hannah Arendt Center.

> The seminar undertakes a reading of Antigone that asks after her place. Who's side is she on – if she has a side? What kind of demand or cry for justice can come from one without a home base? How does the drama situate her? How does she define herself and her position? These questions will lead us to investigate how reading Antigone in Palestine in the 21st century changes the points of view offered by German, French, and American interpretations.

SEMINAR — *Placing Antigone* — 01.12.12

www.campusincamps.ps/projects/jeffrey-champlin

03

REFLECTIONS

The return to reality

Aysar Al Saifi
– Participant

At the beginning, I didn't wish to be part of this project, I still remember the first day there. I was waiting for scholarship to study abroad but things have changed. My only interest at that time was writing, and to embody the image of the refugees from the perspective of the youth and its role in the community.

This was the culture I learned and experienced working with NGOs and various organizations. However, I was not feeling I was culturally saturated and wasn't hoping much from Campus in Camps because the stereotype about organizations and how they represent the refugee and its administrational and work structure in the past 10 years that I volunteered have been the same. Moreover, organizations have been supportive to the superficial culture and not to the internal one. Perhaps the saying that my dad used to tell me is a great proof of that point which is: "don't give me fish, teach me how to fish".

In my opinion, the idea of Campus in Camps carries horizons and visions that are different that what's known specially about the way of thinking and work, this was an important element that urges me to think and to fell I wanted to be challenged and have this experience.

I used to think that by getting older or searching more I will reach an answer to different questions which have building up in my life as a refugee. However, by getting older and by searching more, I was getting more questions. I will not say that Campus in Camps has answered all my questions but it showed me the right path to answer these questions and left me on my own to think critically.

It was not east to write about details about my whole experience, I wish I could to deliver it to many people who are still looking for answers. The experience itself that I've lived has given made me realized and look at the same things but in a different way. It made me to look at myself before looking around me.

Knowledge/ wisdom through experience

Campus in Camps gave me the chance to recognize myself throughout group discussions. I realized many issues I didn't know before. I realized that real knowledge is the one that springs from the community itself and what suits life and reality and that the situation is significant to form the meaning. I learned

also that there is no one path for education and learning.

In this year, I felt I gained strength because each human has his/her source of knowledge because the real standard for knowledge is the experience.

This transition which made me re-views my relation to my surroundings and community was significant. I built all my thoughts and theories out of the strength I gained especially in how I present the camp and the refugee issue. This philosophy in discussing and thinking was the vision and the fertilized land to understand the reality and my link to the community.

Collective Dictionary

The idea of the *dictionary* came to support the idea of the collective education and knowledge which should suit the situations and reality for people. The collective dictionary was a new and brave experience to re-draw the Palestinian culture and look at oneself as a source of meaning through stories and experiences we live. I used to think that destruction is faster than building, but during this year I learned the opposite is true. To destroy what I have learned for more than 24 years was difficult and to build knowledge according to my experience was more beautiful despite the obstacles we face. The collective dictionary was merely reconstruction to the culture and the personal knowledge.

The education system is a capital one first which is built on the idea of classification and the knowledge that it's passed through this system is "a canned knowledge" to try to implement one road, one way of thinking and one system for this world. This system suits the strong party and fulfills its needs and on the other hand is an attempt to delete all other cultures and implement one united system. This is what we see in the world; the culture is evaluated by certificates all around the world, despite the differences of situations.

The collective dictionary came as a challenge to the known way of thinking and an attempt to revive the original culture which the people specialized in. it also re-introduced the concepts and the daily experiences according to our life. Campus in Camps tried to link all words to the action and experience because the roots of Arabic words are linked to verbs. This was a proof to the role of the experience in creating knowledge.

Neighboring

We had our first field trip to Wadi Qelt valley (which was an old city). We spent more than 4 hours hiking in the mountains. For me, this was my first hiking trip. At the beginning I didn't know the real meaning behind this trip and after 4 months we revisited the area again and I discovered the difference. It wasn't the trip itself that was significant but who participated and who helped to make it a successful one.

Campus in Camps was a trip that aimed essentially for education. It taught me that there was no wrong and right in our discussions but it was more like an attempt to understand reality through our personal experiences and situations. There were no standards or systems for our experiences but the experience itself was a process it exchange experiences and discussions to enhance the concept of social knit and this was the real meaning behind the trip.

During this year in Campus in Camps, everything became meaningful. My experience was an example of life that was formed by stories and details and those who helped me to form it with their experiences and stories and were the main spine to the idea.

Today I realized who I am and why I am here and where I am heading. These questions were the main axis to my first novel I wrote which I wrote in its first pages: "Life is one leap towards a certain direction, not more than that".

Campus and Camps was my first leap that I've waited for years and now I can say that I see my path ahead of me very clearly.

One year in Campus in Camps

Ahmad Lahham
– Participant

Writing about my experience after one year in “Campus in Camps” is doubtless to be one of the hardest tests I’ll be put to in my whole life. It’s not because I don’t have anything to say, but because of how much I’ve gained this year. The hardest part is that the changes and benefits I’ve gained in this project are very hard to measure or be defined precisely. Most of the time I can feel the change but I can’t accurately express it. But one of the things I can clearly recognize, which was actually the biggest change I’ve gone through, is the way I look at the camp now, or the way I look at things inside the camp. Before I participated in this project, I was someone who got so used to something that he can no longer recognize what was special about it. I’ve lived in the camp for 23 years, enough time to get used to every little thing in this place. So nothing would surprise me anymore. I never looked beyond the events and incidents; everything used to be “normal” to me. But after taking part in this project, after our continuous discussions over the camp, the refugees’ issue, and the political and social exemption of the camp, going into every little detail, and reflecting on this place, a new vision was created and I started to notice things that I never noticed before, to the extent that I would walk around the camp looking at everything around me. I would go looking at the buildings, the streets, the walls and everything there like a crazy man. Upon which, I realized that the camp is more of a big school that should teach you, and that everything that happened in the camp ever since its foundation, are significant incidents that I should understand deeply and learn from.

On another level, one of the things that intrigued me most and changed me in the first year is the issue of representation or our narration of our case as refugees. Like most people, the way I told the story was the traditional, well-worn way of victimizing ourselves as the weak, the poor, and the marginalized people and so on. Although part of it is true, but I also realized that the Palestinian refugee also has strengths and positive characteristics, which might be better to mention in telling our story. The transitional change that refugees went through, from being weak after the *Nakba* to being strong, which is something I fully realize now, led me to change the way I tell our story; basing it on our strengths rather than our weaknesses. That way, I started to notice, see and believe in those strengths, and that refugees are no longer weak and in need of help from “superior” people.

On a different level, the issue of knowledge and the learning way we pursued in our project are two of the greatest experiences that I've gained. Before I was part of this project, I was merely a recipient of knowledge, and I didn't know that I could be a source instead. I also didn't know that the camp was a significant and terrible school of knowledge and life.

During the past year in the project, we agreed that each one of us is a source of knowledge and a partner in making it and not just a recipient. My participation in writing the collective dictionary that we prepared during the past year made me believe that my 23 years of age are a rich source of my knowledge on which I base my concepts and my knowledge. The great effect this wonderful experience had on me in the production of knowledge is that my self-confidence has grown, and I like to look beyond now to the core of things rather than its appearance. The way we followed to learn, in sharing knowledge in a group rather than each individual alone with a curriculum, broke many traditional barriers that we were raised upon; which conclude that a person cannot learn except from a book, a curriculum and a test. Breaking these traditions did not only include the way of learning but also many other aspects of my life and my concepts.

One of the most significant things that I gained in this wonderful year, is that I feel my ability to create Ideas growing. This was not easy at all. It came as a

result of the collective learning process, of which a person is a basic and significant source, and on which we build knowledge. This way and this confidence that it gave me as a source of knowledge opened up many doors to think and reflect upon, analyze and imagine the future. All this adds up to my growing ability of creation.

Finally, being in an open space in which I am free to think, to talk and to do whatever I want, is really another wonderful experience I lived during the past year.

Stepping out of the chasm

Qussay Abu Aker
– Participant

It was January 2012 when a friend of mine told me about interviews will be held for a project that will start in Dheisheh refugee camp, he told me you will have to come up with a project to present in the interview, in that time I was thinking of starting a business for wedding planning, so I thought it will be a good idea to present as a project.

I came to the interview just like any other person who was interested in being involved in the project, regardless the lack of detailed information about the shape, structure and strategy of the project, two main things were known about the project, membership and a monthly scholarship provided as a salary to each one.

It was my turn when I entered the room and there was Sandi and Alessandro with Dan walking around the room, and it was true that one of the main questions will be a project to present, and I proposed my project idea where I felt it didn't have that impact on them, however I was struggling to be a member of the project, despite the fact that I didn't know what

is the project is about but my motivation was the refusing of falling.

When we started, first through a meeting with Alessandro, with the provocative subjects and questions he was asking, besides my refusal of making certain cases and issues which are holly for me a matter of discussion, I remember that i was hard in my answers or comments.

Then we started with house of wisdom with Mualem Munir Fasheh, after a year I remember a comment he made after he mentioned his name (fashi is a name that has no connection with anything might seem related), fashi in Arabic means fascist, and today I would think of the importance of each word and explaining its concept and not leaving it for assumptions to present our selves.

At the end of the first meeting we had with Mualem, he asked from each of us for the next week, to come up with a real story from his/her life where no NGO's or academic words in it and I came the next week with the panic of having none, as regularly we are used to perceive such requests as a homework or assignments and you would look like a failure if you don't do it, but it turned to be different when he cleared to us the possible reasons of not being able to come up with one which give me the opportunity to notice a light of a different track than the one I had.

It was the time of the unlearning process, I can call it that today, but by then it wasn't named it was just noticeable for me, the moment of being lost, lost between taking away all the un-related things, words, names and definitions to my life from my knowledge and personality, without having anything to replace with, and trying to communicate with the atmosphere out of Campus in Camps door, it was really difficult to try by then, most of the time to skip any discussion and not have a contribution.

For several weeks, the feeling of safety behind the doors of campus, and feeling threats the moment walking out the door of campus was what occupies me, and slowly we started with redefining, re-establishing and recollecting knowledge, looking into life experiences that could be named with globalized terms, and having them on one person life scale started to be rooted through personal stories, and the idea of the collective dictionary was pocket where the stories of terms according to each one of us approach to the term can flood.

In conjunction with house of wisdom, we had the international law cycle; I knew before about the resolutions that are related to the Palestinian issue, the Palestinian – Israeli conflict, not all of them but some, in this cycle we had the exchanging role experience especially in negotiations, I had the non-official document of refugees issue negotiations, had to take role in it once as a Palestinian negotiator,

once as an Israeli negotiator and third as international community (observer), and it was really tough experience especially as being a refugee and taking the role of Israeli negotiator, what a combination of contradicted point of views.

Also, meeting with Michel Agier, being frustrated of one of his sentences "refugees of the world are almost 35 million, Palestinian refugees forms 7 million of them", how you put Palestinian refugees similar to other refugees issues in the world, and my point was refugees in the world have different reasons than the Palestinian has, for example natural disasters and civil wars, but Palestinians became refugees because of external power came from outside and caused all this to them, so how you would calculate them in one number regardless the concept of creation the refugee status on them, in a meaning, how can three apples and four bananas become seven. (I love apple and banana).

Adding to that, our work with Ilana Feldman, humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees, the sentence that is stuck in my head since then "humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees turned from a temporary support into a life style" which Ilana mentions in her case study research, it is a provocative sentence, but truly coming from the reality of Palestinian refugees dependency in a away or another on humanitarian aid of UNRWA or NGO's that works in the field, which in somehow manipulated the sense of responsibility.

Moreover, our cycle with Ayman Khalifah and analyzing images that I see in media in commercials, movies, series and news, everything in the image has a meaning, how it is used in the concept, and just having the information that the image is a combination of pieces that would delude me if I don't consider every part of it, but that doesn't mean I am safe from all images, and means what to consider to have an image that tells what I want to tell, which really helped me later on with the diagrams work.

Different lectures, topics and meeting we had together to seek the concept we want to have as shared concept and language, it was a disconnection from reality, but what I mean by reality here, is what I was thinking is the reality that is based on idealism, slogans, unnoticed factors and misleading words.

We visited Batr, spent two days there, besides meeting people and knowing the village, as a group we spent two full days together, which had lots discussions, debates and fun moments and I consider it a tool we had the chance to have to work practically on the shared concept.

After a year in Campus in Camps, and thinking of the project I presented in the interview, which was wedding planning, and after contributing to the collective dictionary through working on the term of sustainability and analyzing the Palestinian wedding, I can think of the social damage my project would

have caused if I worked on it.

Also, it made me rethink of how I work in the different NGOS as fundraiser, how I represent through the proposal the problem that the project I am writing will solve without even discussing the matter with the community I am targeting, all It used to take to think how this project will look nice to the donor I am applying to without considering even if people need it this way.

Thinking of the slogans, ideal concept I have about being a refugee and right of return, nothing wrong with the right of return, but how I perceive it, and how my imagination was that it will just be accomplish, never thought of who will obtain it for me, from whom it will be obtained, and even if its obtained how it will be practiced, which meant to me that I want right of return, but I am doing nothing to return.

I have always thought showing internationals in the tours I do in the camp how miserable the life in the camp and how hard people life is the only way to talk about my camp and being a refugee discarding the strength of refugees, the concept that has been created in the past 64 years I the refugee camp, the conceptual system and social life, where refugees in Dheisheh are coming from 46 destroyed villages, all of these villages backgrounds are in one spot, and created a social fabric and common language to represent themselves, while It wouldn't be possible

before 1948 to happen this way.

For me, building a concept of understanding the ground I am standing on according to my definitions and shared language that is based on the ground and named the way it is without finding a suitable globalized category to put in it and give it a globalized term that will disconnect it from its concept and take it away to the global name where anyone can understand it the way this name means to him/her not the way it is with its concept.

I know that this is ideal, and there is a need to combine this ideal concept with the real life, and this is what I will be doing in the second year of Campus in Camps, not bringing salvation, not bringing a solution to the situation we have, I will just contribute with my opinion and practically to make practical steps to what I hope and aim out of the strength that I was able to find out in the previously hated reality.

Campus in Camps is only a step and not the whole thing, and a step should flow the step to move forward.

One year of Campus in Camps

Murad Odeh
— Participant

Through my life in the camp I passed through various things since my childhood until today, I learned a lot of things. Each part from my life has its special color, taste and lessons. The hard circumstances pushed me and my generation from the camp to deal with different stuff, being men in young age dealing with a complicated political and social situation, trying to survive from all the threats that was surrounding us from all the sides, part of our friends they still children because the Occupation killing machine decided that and killed them, other part in the prison losing their childhood and their best times in life in the prison, other part injured or transferred out side Palestine. Each one of us has a scar from the occupation and from the narrow streets inside the camp. During our childhood we had to be aware of all these things that I mentioned before to continue being alive, besides, the responsibility that it was given to us for being a refugee without our choice, so living in this community led us to a spontaneous reaction toward what is happening around us.

Each one of us creates his own experiences that he built through the years of his life. The roads that we had in our childhood are a bit longer and harder, and because of the political and social tens that we were living in it was a duty to be strong. The street is not just for playing also for demonstrating and facing the soldiers and the danger. Contributing food for the families during the curfew, bringing water from the other side of the camp and also attending most of the activities whatever was its title, so the street was considered as our political and social forum and our connection with the reality.

I worked with a lot of organizations, in different positions and with different people and ages. Through that work each day that passed added for me something new, more experience and more knowledge. Then, I heard about the project of Campus in Camps, and it attracted me for two reasons, the first, was the idea of working about what I love to do, the Second, was finding a job and keeping my life going on. In the beginning I was expecting to have the same work that anyone will find in any other organization, but I realize that all the rules were different. The first information was that the first year will be for study and research and the second year will be for applying the project, and I remember in that time I didn't understand what do that means.

We started the sessions normally with different topics. It was a little bit weird the way that we work

without time sheet and without exams. And the period that stopped me and makes me thinking about all my life is when I met Al Muallem Munir, it was such a weird discussion that we had and I was lost, but the information from Al Muallem was enough to stop me and to make me think about years of experience.

For 5 months I was lost between an ocean of new and old ideas, in that time I was searching for a definition for my work and my position in Campus in Camps and even for myself. I was waiting each day in Campus in Camps to come because I was curious for answers and new information's. The time passed and the space became wider and stronger inside me, and I felt that also in my colleges and also with the stuff that we working with. Through that time I was very comfortable from the relation between me and the other participants and the stuff. That relation creates from us a good team that stands on the same background understanding each other and completing each other despite of the differences that we have. I realized the idea of the unlearning process and the collective learning. My family keeps telling me about how much I changed in that time, and I was very close with them to tell them everything that I passed in Campus in Camps discussing with them and also with the other friends that they were not part from the campus. I was a little bit frustrated, that these new ideas that I start to believe in was strange for the others, and in the same time I didn't

have the way and the enough information to show it to them, and I felt that the discussion was not so clear to be presented so I worked hard to strengthen these ideas in my thoughts, in addition to the discussions that we had in campus all together.

Campus in Camps influenced our daily life and began to be the space in which we examine our knowledge and recreate the new way of dealing with things and naming them. It influenced me also in the way how I present myself and my case as a Palestinian refugee that lives in the camp. Campus in Camps opens for me a new way to think and more ability of analyzing what is going on around me.

I feel the power of our ideas that we built through one year when we meet people and discuss with them about our work or even about the situation in general. I feel that much of responsibility that others gave us after we discuss with them, and I feel proud to help in opening a new way of representation and in creating our own Palestinian meanings and definitions. Although we face a lot of obstacles in our way but the believes that we have in what we are doing will help us to get where we are aiming, and to spread our ideas to other people.

Back to the roots

Naba' Al Assi
– Participant

How can I start and what could I say after one year in Campus in Camps? How I can describe this experience? It's too hard for me to do that in words because it's much more than describing a project or an experience, it's more how to describe myself in Campus in Camps, how can I speak about what campus gave me in all levels of life, and how campus built a new knowledge?

The beginning of Campus in Camps, it was mysterious for me, and what we are going to do, what did I understand, is to start planning for a Projects through courses and lectures, in project management and proposal writing, as the typical way like what we always do in the NGO's. after that when we start taking the cycles with Muallem Munir and the others, it was too far from what I was thinking about, and I start asking myself what is the relation between this and what we were supposed to do. Then the thing starts to be clearer, that Campus in Camps is not like the other things that we always doing in the illusion of the NGO's.

Actually we became knowing our selves more, thinking in a different way about our refugee status and how is represents us, and is the way that we representing our selves is the only way or we should find different ways of representation, also how can we understand the international law, also we have a great opportunity to meet a lot of the professors who came to show for us there opinions and to say that they are right in analyzing the situation here is Palestine, but in a several times we didn't convinced by them, because they are too far from what is going on the ground.

After that the picture became clearer, about what we are doing here, it's to make what we need, and not trying to find a problems and try to solve it, it's more how to find the strength points in our community and work on it, and how we can improve the weaknesses point in a practical way without showing that we are the magicians and we have a solutions for everything.

The most beautiful thing in Campus in Camps is the Unlearning Process, which is came by itself through the *Mujaawarah* (neighboring), it's the way that we practice here in Campus in Camps, and also this gave us the opportunity to know each other far from the typical ways that had been used all the time, like the ice breaking, and the other ways, it was through our discussion and how we treat each other, and the other fundamental thing the trips that we had together, like when we gone to Wadi Qelt valley, Battir village, and

the other walking trips, the main objective was not the walking itself, it was the hall process walking and talking and discussions that we have through these trips, and how we deal with land the trees the nature, and how to discover Palestine through walking.

C-in-C gave me the opportunity to start building the ideas from the roots and the real life that I'm living in, and how we can I think about our situation the real situation and what is distinguishing us as a Palestinians and refugees, from the others in the world, and this way make us knowing more what can be helpful for us and what is not, and there is nothing called right and wrong, "the value of the human lies in what he does well" (Imam Ali).

Another thing that I want to speak about is the collective dictionary that all of us contributed on it, it's the concrete achievement that we worked on. It's a dictionary for a lot of terms that we were using without knowing from where does it come from, and we take it and work on it without thinking about it and what is the relation between our community and these terms, we define it from our prospective and opinions and how we can understand is according to our situation, because any definition cannot be suitable for the hall world, that came from an idea which is every situation has its specificity and Exceptionality, for example responsibility is different in Palestine that it is in USA, according to the differences between the life here and there. Our definitions is

not the only right thing, and must be circulated, it's something we understand it in our special way, and anybody can take or leave, also anybody can define it in his own way.

That what can I say about Campus in Camps, and it's not the only thing but the words is too weak to show it. Campus in Camps became as a life style a daily practice.

06

EPILOGUE

The House of Wisdom (HoW) within Campus in Camps (CiC)

Munir Fasheh

— June 8, 2013

When I went to Dheisheh Refugee Camp in February 2012 to meet with participants, the basic relevant experience I had and which I often think of, was the two years of working with teachers and mothers in Shufaat Refugee Camp. I was amazed at what mothers were able to do under unbelievable conditions. Their knowledge in dealing with life in terms of keeping hope, love, and non-stop energy in managing and doing what needs to be done, for 8 people in a very small space cannot be matched by several experts in sociology, psychology, bringing up children, cooking, management... I realized how shallow, naïve, irrelevant and blind modern words such as training and empowerment are! The mothers' rooted and diverse knowledges, their stories, and learning from life, formed the main theme in my work with them. In other words, the basic theme of learning and study in Shufaat camp was the wisdom and knowledge of mothers, usually invisible to academics, scholars, and the educated in general, simply because we academics are unable to see what cannot be expressed in words and concepts, and measured in numbers.

When I first went to Dheisheh and met participants at CiC, I looked for a core idea which could host the richness embedded in Dheisheh and other participating camps. I quickly realized that idea of *mujaawarah* (which has no synonym in English) can serve this purpose and be the core theme. It embodied many aspects of wisdom: well-being, social fabric, honesty, freedom, justice, equality, and saying what one means and meaning what one says – where there is no competition or evaluation along a vertical line. The main aspects that characterized the *mujaawarah* were: using it as the medium for learning; reclaiming *al-3afiah* (well-being) as a 'measure' and a core value governing one's thinking, expressions, relationships, and actions; stitching the social-cultural-intellectual-spiritual-economic fabric in society, in addition to the fabric with nature; and perceiving every person as a source and co-author of meaning and understanding. Throughout the past sixty-five years, the social fabric has been the backbone, a main source of inner strength and the internal immune systems in camps' communities. Co-authoring meaning has been a main theme during the past 1½years. It is crucial in healing from hegemonic terms and academic categories which tear life apart at many levels, and dominate how we think, express, relate, and act, and also crucial in living with dignity, equality, and communal freedom to learn.

Both places – Shufaat and Dheisheh – showed clearly the difference between rooted useful knowledge vs. rootless verbal knowledge; knowledge that starts with life (phenomena, threats, sources of strength in a community) vs. fragmented knowledge that starts with academic categories and professional concepts; knowledge which is holistic and interconnected (forming a 'universe') vs. knowledge that claims to be universal; knowledge as wisdom and governed by responsibility and well-being vs. knowledge governed by control and winning; knowledge as manifested in one's lifestyle vs. knowledge as manifested in words on a test paper; knowledge connected to a particular place vs. knowledge that happens in an artificial space...

The state of human emergency which is increasingly felt around the world compels us to rethink many aspects of today's world; especially in relation to knowledge and learning. The path of wisdom always involves a combination of learning and unlearning. We cannot remain blind to the dominant ideology which contributed a lot to current crises and threats. At the same time, demands for education are increasing and resources diminishing. The belief in a single undifferentiated universal path for learning and progress – which characterized centralized formal education for at least 3 centuries, and which ignored wisdom and killed diversity and rootedness – has been a central factor in creating these threats

and crises. *Mujaawarah* is crucial in protecting life from the onslaught of this belief. Protection rather than development is what is most needed in today's world. The invisible ignorance of modern human beings in relation to what is important is tremendous – in relation to the food we eat; who decides curricula; the history of dominant institutions, etc. Co-authoring meanings is crucial in this protection; it is a natural ability, right, need, and reflects a sense of responsibility. Many groups around the world are currently responding to this urgency and doing something about it. CiC is one of them.

At CiC, and within HoW in particular, we try to tackle this issue by thinking, relating, and acting in harmony with a different vision (parts of which I mentioned above). The urgency to act is tremendous. We need to take courageous steps in rethinking meanings, assumptions, and governing values in relation to education and learning – and not be allured by distracting technical expressions such as 'quality of education'.

When we embarked on CiC, we knew we were embarking on a new experiment in learning – a different vision – not only in relation to content and style but also in relation to medium, values, meanings, convictions, and perceptions which necessitated looking for radically new terms. We knew we were sailing in new seas. However, what was wonderful about that journey was the

'discovery' that we were sailing towards home, towards ourselves, our culture, and planting the seeds of our knowledge in our own soils. We did not start with ready knowledge and then try to apply it in the camps but, rather, we searched for words, meanings, and understanding that stemmed from the reality in which participants live. This led us to explore the difference and relationship between search and research. Moreover, every participant was responsible for explaining the meaning of words s/he used, through experiences, stories, events, or mental images. The collective dictionary is a manifestation of that.

Since the career of academics, professionals, and experts is usually connected to some kind of authority, then it is always healthy to doubt experts, academics, and professionals – if we really care about well-being as a core value. It is the courage, the confidence, the clarity, and love for the community that were 'sharpened' in participants' characters; they don't feel intimidated to say what they think and how they feel, regardless of the big titles and arrogance of those present.

The above was translated at the HoW (within CiC) in several ways: (1) we chose *mujaawarah* as the medium for learning; (2) we chose *tathuqquf / saql* (sharpening one's character, in thinking, expressing, relating, meaning, and understanding) as the perception of learning which we adhered to; and (3)

we chose the word *yuhsen* as the 'measure' of the worth of a person [this is taken from a statement by Imam Ali which we used as the principle with which to 'judge' the worth of a person. Instead of the dominant way of evaluating a person by comparing people along a vertical line, the worth of a person in our work is what s/he *yuhsen*, with all the meanings of *yuhsen* in Arabic: what one does well, beautiful, useful, respectful, and gives from self.

This approach compelled us often to use Arabic words (some of which do not have synonyms in English). I already used *mujaawarah*, *tathuqquf*, *saql*, *3afiah*, and *yuhsen*. Other words which we used and were important in our discussions include *jame'ah* and *ahaali*. The meaning of *jame'ah* in Arabic is closer to 'multiversity' than 'university' (and multiversity is closer to what we did in HoW). The word *ahaali* (the closest in English would be people-in-community) describes people living in refugee camps (where the social fabric is fundamental) much better than 'citizens' who are defined by arbitrary national numbers that reflect one's relation to a state and its institutions.

There is a need to elaborate – in particular – on the word *mujaawarah*. To start with, it requires physical presence and face to face conversations, which cannot be replaced by any modern means of communication; it can only happen between *mureedeen* and *muraadeen* (people who want to learn in reciprocal

ways). *Mujaawarah* is simple in the sense that it is available everywhere, and does not need hierarchical official structures, big facilities, huge budgets, make-believe degrees, professionals, and experts; all what it needs is people wanting to meet and learn about whatever they want to learn, in freedom, with no absolute right and wrong and no authority they have to please. *Mujaawarah* is a social 'organization' where people learn, think, act, and relate outside the confines of institutions/authority as well as where they manage their life affairs on their own. It embodies in a natural way equality, justice, freedom, honesty, reciprocity, sharing, and – probably most importantly – multiple-valued logic (rather than the dominant two-valued logic). As a medium for learning, *mujaawarah* is radically different from institutional learning. *Mujaawarah* cannot happen at the individual level only; it always involves communal learning. When asked about the subjects that participants study, I say "the subject of study is their lives, in the contexts in which they live, and sharpening their characters, where knowledge becomes part of the person's lifestyle". *Mujaawarah* is an integral part of life, where people reflect and converse about actions and experiences, in light of wisdoms that have been part of the community throughout history. Communal freedom to learn cannot happen with fear; it can only happen with trust, confidence, honesty, and mutual nurturance among people, who are ready to really listen, with full attentiveness, to one another.

Currently, there are almost a million students in the schools of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 218,000 students in institutions of higher education. They all follow the same path, which is considered neutral, universal, objective, scientific... no room for diversity whatsoever! They all start with ready materials to be taught, and perceive education as a commodity that one person sells to another. They all believe in evaluating students along a vertical line by using numbers or some similar symbol; they all believe that theory/ thinking is higher than practice – they look at life as application of theories. They all have hierarchies, and require institutional frame in which learning takes place. They believe in the 2-valued logic – the source and basis of modern fundamentalisms. It is the logic which is propagated mainly by school math! Thus, the problem does not lie in the bad quality of education but in the very concept of education as conceived in Nabrija's mind 500 years ago. Moreover, education in its dominant form is costly and wasteful. Budgets are drying up. *Mujaawarah* – the eternal way to learn – provides hope and solution.

First impressions on Campus in Camps

Michel Agier

– Beit Sahour, May 18, 2012

My participation at Campus in camp, was for me a great opportunity of exchanges and debates with all the participants from Dheisheh Refugee Camp and other camps of the West Bank (and partly with students of Al-Quds/Bard University in Abu Dis). I thank Sandi, Alessandro and each of the participants for the very kind welcome, the attention to seminar and lecture, the reactivity in the debate and your presentation of camps'life and perspectives.

I think the main topic of our exchange was about the foundation and transformation of the camp. Presenting to you my investigations on all kinds of camps and encampments in the world (such as refugee camps of UNHCR in Africa or informal encampments in Europe) was a moment important of our exchange. We could put together in relation the experience of Palestinian refugee camps with other situations of refuges in the world. Although the material conditions are very different, and the historical processes

also, and even if I agree with the idea of “specificity” of each case (and mainly of Palestinian camps), the comparison is a very strong intellectual tool of “objectivation”. I told you that the Palestinian is the horizon or even the future of all camps that is born each day in the world. The becoming of the camp is something between the city and the “ghetto” (or of course, the disappearance). And I appreciate your insistence in speaking about this other horizon of Palestinian camps which is the return.

In this perspective, some of you mentioned the risk of “normalization”... this was not at first very clear for me... I don’t see the transformation of the camp to a ghetto or a city at first like “normalization”. On the contrary, it can be a strong political issue which permits to “end” with the camp as absolute place of banishment (this doesn’t mean end with the location itself). Transforming the camp, creating a relation with its outside, is a very political issue in general. But then I understand that, in the very hard political context of Palestinian camps, urban transformation would mean the loss of the *Return* paradigm, refugees would become like the other city dwellers and lose the political role they have in Palestinian struggle. This is a permanent “contradiction”, and an endless paradox that, I suppose, leaves to an insupportable experience of the situation.

Some of you have enunciated clearly this duality. On

one side, the human desire or need to “improve” the place we leave, “inhabit” it, needs a form of actuation and subjectivation over the space and material conditions. On another side, the *Return* paradigm calls for a waiting space and a political mobilization against the “decree of segregation” (It remains that some sovereign force has taken over your people a “decree of segregation”, which very term is also the landmark of the foundation of the first jews ghetto, in 1516, in Venetia). This confirms, on my point of view, one point I didn’t develop in the lecture, seminar and discussion, but which is important and which I formalized in a scheme about today’s heterotopias, which shows that the figure of emprisonment is more or less present in each kind of off-places (camps, encampments, ghetto, etc.) .

The visit of the camp of Dheisheh and your explanations were important to advance in the reflexion about the relation between camp and city. I already had visited Palestinian camps in West Bank or Lebanon, but two main “improvements” impressed me. One was the architectural and urban creativity to turn the place more convenient without expanding the limits.

The other one is what is, I suggest, a response we/ you have beside you to that problematic. I mean the city of Doha. Looking for some data on the net, I found that the town has around 10.000 inhabitants

among which 75% are refugees. And your explanations, mainly, are that the city was founded by refugees from Dheisheh camp, that the major and the majority of the municipality are from Dheisheh camp. I would like then to propose you the hypothesis that Doha is the city of the camp when the camp could not extend his proper space, it created a “double” that is a city. The relation inverted or better say, the relation was created. With this urban double, the space of the camp is opening meanwhile the camp continues. Although the name of camp continues as a political symbol, the life in it is changing when relations with a welcoming outside is possible. Of course, the proper project Campus in camp is a major device of this relation: the official term “partnership” can be translated socially in an anthropological one, “relation”. This project brings a relation of the camp with the university, and with the “global” (what Bard college of New York represents).

Before the visit of the camps, one of you, Marwa proposed to give collectively the main items of the definition of REFUGEE. He noted on the board:

They lose their land

Limited movements

No safe

Bad situation

High education

No representation

Thirst for land

Adaptable to different situations

All the aspects of the condition of refugee camps are in these items. One of them seemed a bit strange: “High education”. As the author was questioned on this item which looks like a demand, he confirmed it, I understood, like a part of the definition. I would put this together with the item “Adaptable to different situations”, and then consider that this means a certain quantity and specific quality of knowledge linked to that historical “exceptional” experience of the camp.

A place of knowledge that could turn the camp in a campus? Oh, yes, it’s still a camp, of course.

Gratefully,
Michel

Uncertainty as possibility: reflections on an experimental space

Ilana Feldman
– Beit Sahour, June 15, 2013

I came to Campus in Camps in the context of research I am conducting on the experience of Palestinian refugees with humanitarian assistance and intervention since 1948 and across the areas of UNRWA operations (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, West Bank, and Gaza). Because of this research I am particularly attuned to thinking about changes over time and differences across space in the refugee experience. This comparative framework also shapes my reflections on Campus in Camps. The comparison with other places is particularly with other sorts of projects being undertaken with Palestinian refugees in Palestine and across the Middle East. The temporal comparison comes from thinking about Campus in Camps itself over time.

The specificity of Campus in Camps

For a number of years, I have been conducting research in Palestinian refugee camps across the Middle East (in addition to historical research in a number of archives). I have both been doing life history interviews with refugees of multiple generations and observing a range of programs and projects in the camps (including UNRWA projects as well as those of a number of other humanitarian actors). Within this diverse and wide-ranging landscape of interventions targeted at refugees living in camps, Campus in Camps is wholly distinctive. Unlike almost every other project I have seen, it does not seek to "help" or to "train." Rather, it aims to provide opportunities for the participants to develop new forms of critical engagement with the categories that structure their lives (categories such as refugee, camp, education, etc) and then to imagine and embark on new kinds of projects in the camps where they live – projects that do not conform to the aid paradigm.

This project is genuinely experimental, which means that its outcome is also genuinely uncertain. Uncertainty is also part of other, more traditional humanitarian and development projects, but in these other cases the uncertainty is fundamentally one of purpose. In circumstances where it is so difficult to have a positive impact, to make a significant change in the conditions of people's lives, or the horizons of possibility available to them, humanitarian actors seem to struggle a great deal with defining a purpose for their presence. The existence and persistence of need compels the organizations to come and to

remain, but the difficulty in envisioning or enacting a substantive outcome gives their presence a tinge of hopelessness. In the context of Campus in Camps uncertainty has an entirely different valence. Here uncertainty emerges not from lack of purpose, but from the genuine openness of the project to a range of possible outcomes (few of which could be measured by any standard metrics). Because the project is not framed as one of helping, training, empowerment, or uplift, it is to a considerable degree freed from the constraints that bind aid projects. Rather than hopelessness, here uncertainty expresses possibility. I have found the program and its participants a source of optimism and inspiration.

I have had the opportunity to spend some extended time with Campus in Camps on three different occasions, which mark three distinct moments in the program's trajectory. I could broadly gloss these moments as: critical engagement and the work of unlearning; the challenge of imagining critical analysis into new kinds of action; and the work of undertaking initiatives from a new conceptual space.

June 2012

When I first visited Campus in Camps in June 2012 the participants were deep into the project of critical analysis. The openness to thinking and re-thinking all of the categories and concepts with which they live

was filled with tremendous potential. And the fact that the concepts that they were already working on were so close to the ones I have been thinking about in my research made it especially exciting to me. In the course of my visit, we talked about a number of different concepts, among them: politics, helper/victim as a dyad, and refugee.

In my lecture to the group I tried to describe what I've been calling a "politics of living" with humanitarianism. This vocabulary is part of my effort to turn analytic attention not just to what is done to people through humanitarianism, but what people do with it. When we later discussed the question, 'what is politics?' Of course this is an impossible question to answer definitively or simply, but the wide-ranging conversation we had about the features of political imagination and action were, to me, both tremendously interesting on their own and gave me a bit of a sense of how the group came to approach the investigations that shaped the *Collective Dictionary* (which at that point was just being conceptualized). What seemed most significant in the approach was how thoughtfully everyone pushed back at received wisdoms and pre-defined categories.

When we talked about the pairing of helper and victim and the category of refugee itself – all concepts with immediate and specific relevance to the participants' lives – the challenges of moving beyond even the

categories that one seeks to reject was evident. Helper and victim, for instance, is perhaps the central conceptual pairing of humanitarian work. One thing that was striking from our conversation though was how thoroughly this vocabulary has entered all of our consciousness. It was a bit hard to come up with different conceptual frames to think about humanitarianism and development. Many participants felt uncomfortable being tagged as "victims" (though some of identified that label as a political claim), but were much more at ease with seeing themselves as "helpers" for other people. We did not reach a conclusion to this conversation, but remained with the question of whether there is another way of describing – and therefore of living – relationships in the humanitarian arena?

Participants approached the category refugee through a number of lenses – as an individual and collective category, and as having both subjective and objective meanings. They brought a lot of different things to the table in these definitions, and I think they centered around 3 aspects of experience: the conditions under which people leave their homes (forced out in one way or another); the conditions under which people live in displacement (some emphasis on poverty, but there was also discussion about problems in defining the term in this way); and the sorts of people that refugees come to be through their experiences (refugee society as cosmopolitan, refugees as

steadfast, strong, etc., but also negative views of refugees as criminals, etc.).

During the course of this first visit, I arranged with some of the participants to work together on a collaborative interview project, where they would interview refugees from multiple generations about their experiences over the years with humanitarian assistance and their views about UNRWA in particular. Working further on this project was a key feature of my next visit.

October 2012

By fall 2012, when I returned to Campus in Camps for an extended visit, participants were far along in the process of developing the collective dictionary – having produced the first set of definition booklets and working on the second. They were also in the early stages of developing their projects for engagement. One thing that was striking to me at this stage in the process was the significant challenges that everyone was encountering in bringing the critical insights of their collective dictionary work – and their engagements with the range of visitors who came through the program over the year – fully to bear on the articulation of their projects. Seeing these challenges once again highlighted to me just how innovative a program Campus in Camps is. No one, not the founders, the project activators, nor the

participants is satisfied with replicating or simply tweaking existing models for intervention in camp life. Everyone seeks, rather, to embark on a really new way of thinking about what an engagement with camp life might be. Because of these innovative aims, this is an inevitably difficult process. Despite the tremendous work they had already done on re-thinking and re-making received concepts, the first iterations of projects that participants articulated continued to bear the stamp of the NGO mind-set with which their world is saturated. These first articulations were good projects, but they were not yet the paradigm-altering engagements that everyone sought (and to which they have reached). So, hard work was underway during this period.

For my own engagement with the smaller group working on life history interviews, we spent considerable time during the course of my visit listening collectively to interviews that they had conducted. We had extended discussions about the themes that were coming up in the interviews, generational differences that were becoming apparent across the conversations, and the overall dynamics of the interview process. We did some formal work of developing a code-book to analyze the interviews, and also had open-ended conversations about their content. It is not surprising that many of terms that structured the collective dictionary – terms such as common, well-being, participation, and responsibility –

featured prominently in the interviews (both because they shaped the questions and because interviewees brought them to the table). I was impressed with the cross-fertilization of the participants' different research engagements, and ended this visit eager to see how their engagements with practice would develop.

June 2013

I returned to Campus in Camps just a few weeks ahead of the public presentation of what are now called the participants' initiatives. This change in vocabulary – from project to initiative – indexes the extent to which the paradigm of engagement has indeed been altered. Each of these initiatives, as described in their respective booklets, has emerged through the participants' engagements with the spaces and places of the camps and their environs. But none of them approach the camp from a standard or expected starting point. They begin from the boundaries, from the unused spaces, from the outside, from the un-imagined, and even from what might seem like the opposite and track new kinds of pathways through the camp experience. From these journeys – some actual, some conceptual – participants seem to have found themselves in new relationship with places that are the most familiar to them. And it appears to have been from this new vantage point, this new embodied perspective on the camp, that they were able to embark on initiatives that engaged these spaces in

new ways. These initiatives are still in the early stages – and by their nature will never be concluded in a traditional sense. They are filled, in the best sense of the terms, with creative uncertainty and generative openness. I am eager to see what comes next.

— Brave New Alps

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