

CB Strategy Paper

2012-2015

After several years of successfully developing and implementing peace dialogue and capacity building projects in two of the world's hot spots: the Horn of Africa and MENA region, Crossing Borders (CB) has newly launched a strategy paper to guide its activities from 2012-2015.

In so doing, CB intends to build upon lessons learnt and experiences gained from the field in order to sustain and expand its contribution to youth participation in democracy and peace building across the MENA region and Horn of Africa. CB will take a more concentrated focus on these two world hot-spots in order to contribute more and create a bigger impact in the area, while maintaining its core, cross-cutting target group of youth.

Crossing Borders Background

Crossing Borders (CB) began its dialogue-centered activities in 1999, to enable youth and educators among the conflict parties of the Middle East. It was born out of the "**Learning to Live Together in the Middle East**" Project, which consisted of a summer seminar in the city of Elsinore from the years 1994 to 1998, and was held for Middle East educators and journalists from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, and Tunisia.

In response to an increasing demand for its activities and methods, CB was registered in Denmark as a non-profit NGO in 2004. Crossing Borders is located at Krogerup College in Humlebaek, 35 km north of Copenhagen. Krogerup College is a Danish Folkehojskole, founded in 1946 following World War II, to promote democracy and active citizenship as a means of achieving greater peace.

Aim

While maintaining the core, overall aim of contributing to greater world peace, Crossing Borders will expand its outreach in order to benefit a greater number of people in the MENA region and Horn of Africa, providing dialogue space and enabling skills and capacity building for youth.

Key Focus Areas

Crossing Borders has, over the course of the past twelve years, made active contributions towards enabling youth to:

- ❖ *Become active citizens*
- ❖ *Build civil society and strengthen democracy*
- ❖ *Encourage and partake in peace dialogue*
- ❖ *Share good social practices*

Thematic Focus Areas of Intervention

- ❖ *Placing Youth issues prominently on the political and development agenda, in order to ensure youth participation and inclusion in the democracy-building processes of countries throughout the MENA region*
- ❖ *Encouraging peace and capacity building to give the youth of the Horn of Africa an alternative to war and violence with a special focus on Somalia, North and South Sudan*
- ❖ *Sustaining and consolidating Crossing Borders' dialogue projects for Israeli and Palestinian youth through the proposed CB Jerusalem Café, as a focal point for keeping the channels of communication and dialogue open between Jerusalemite youth on both sides of the divide*

Uniqueness of Crossing Borders

Crossing Borders' ability to provide both impartial dialogue space and the opportunity for people from conflict areas, i.e. the Middle East, to build their own capacity...." is the cornerstone of Crossing Borders' uniqueness. Thus, Crossing Borders has helped participants be able to assist in the non-violent transition processes towards democracy, i.e. the Arab Spring in Egypt and Yemen.

The Core Idea

In order to acquire the social competencies necessary to play an active role in one's democracy and civil society, especially in conflict areas, it is and always has been essential for individuals to meet with and create/produce together with their counterparts across physical, cultural and especially psychological borders.

Such social competencies include: multicultural awareness; knowledge; understanding; and cooperation skills—all of which are needed to effectively communicate and engage in a meaningful dialogue with fellow human beings across cultures.

Vision

The vision of Crossing Borders is to see as many young people and educators as possible cross as many personal, cultural, geographic, professional and generational borders as possible, as often as possible, and always on equal terms.

Crossing Borders' vision resonates with the concept of the free movement of ideas, people and useful goods and services across the globe in equality. We want to facilitate the crossing of borders in order to cross-fertilize ideas, cultures and professions in order to enable people to share their best ideas, best products and best practices.

In this way the seeds will be planted for the people to become more human through essential face-to-face interactions where they can be stimulated, grow and learn from one another. We wish to see modern science and technology enable people everywhere, anytime, to learn about and benefit from the many good ideas and cultures of the world. With greater conscious effort where people act, build, and produce together we can propel globalization to globalize respect, good ideas and human rights—encouraging co-existence, common human products and a common heritage.

Mission

Towards the realization of the above vision our mission is to provide an impartial dialogue space and relevant capacity building for youth, educators and young media people in areas of conflict so that they can actively and effectively take part in the positive development processes of their respective societies.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the concept of Crossing Borders is not just limited to addressing geographical borders, but instead spans the distance across other potential dividers of humanity, i.e. psychological (xenophobia), gender, professional, social, economic, and generational barriers.

Therefore, peaceful coexistence requires the free meeting of peoples, cultural exchange, and cooperation across cultural boundaries on equal terms. As we have seen, geographic proximity, centuries of contact, trade, shared natural resources, and modern technology – all of these potentially unifying factors have not eliminated misperceptions and other barriers within communities and across the world.

This is a serious problem that cannot be ignored, or resolved, at the official level alone; it requires sustained contact and meaningful dialogue and cooperation at the grassroots as well as educational levels. Experiences from around the world have shown that face-to-face dialogue meetings on equal terms do help foster better understanding and mutual respect across borders. Meeting face-to-face helps demystify the other and replace potential “enemy” images with a more nuanced perception of the other.

Activities

Crossing Borders’ activities constitute an approach towards conflict prevention, resolution, management, transformation, communication and mutual understanding in an increasingly globalized world. These activities are directly generated by the continued application of the process of ‘demystification’.

Activities from the field have shown that people in conflict situations need an impartial dialogue space to make contact with and engage in meaningful dialogue with their counterparts. With an impartial dialogue space and professional and impartial facilitation, conflict parties will eventually learn about themselves and their counterparts and thereby the other will be demystified. Such demystification leads to the recognition that the other human being has a name, family, personal narrative, needs and interests—realizations that are keys towards conflict resolution and durable peace-building, the first important steps toward democratic change and an active civil society.

This is why at Crossing Borders we bring conflict parties to meet abroad on an impartial ground where they learn to live under the same roof, eat at the same table, work on joint projects, write joint articles, and co-produce/ co-create media, such as their own youth magazines and video films together. After meeting and learning to live, study and produce useful products together, the participants are ready to meet in their localities and continue to work in tandem.

Methods

The methods at Crossing Borders are based on the belief that the target groups must be involved in the processes which aim to enable them to take the lead. The idea is to provide the space, facilities and facilitators which allow the target group to share their life stories, knowledge, visions for their societies, ideas and solutions, so that they can design and build the futures in which they wish to live.

The programs are therefore always designed to enable the participants to work together and to make their voices heard. The programs revolve around the following key elements:

1. Start on common ground such as professional background or interests
2. Stimulate learning and create a safe space characterized by respect and inclusion
3. Provide solid input as an introduction to the topic under study
4. Encourage active and ongoing participation of each and every individual participant
5. Create concrete and joint outputs of immediate and long term benefit to both the participants and their communities

The CB magazine and many video films are examples of these joint outputs which lead to joint ownership and shared responsibility. These methods have been effectively put into practice with Israeli and Palestinian youth, educators and media people. They have also been carried out with people from other warring groups in Burundi, South Africa, among the Roma minority and the majority populations in Central Europe, between the Ethiopian and Eritrean, as well as the North, South and West Sudanese and Somalis in the Horn of Africa.

The necessity of reaching Youth and Educators

Youth are the future of society and educators are the ones who primarily prepare the youth for their local and global citizenship development. In essence, young people make up a fundamental target group precisely because they are at a formative age when they are especially receptive, open and eager to learn.

Teachers remain the important source of knowledge, values and attitudes for young students. By reaching and training one teacher, many more learners, readers and future members of society are reached. Targeting teachers as a group means that their cross-cultural competencies can be developed. It also allows for the creation of a network among the teachers themselves.

As educators, the target group acts as a role model for their students and pupils. Through them respect for the other side and intercultural understanding can be enhanced and promoted. The active participation of teachers is thus believed to foster community interest in entering into dialogue with fellow community members from other cultural groups. Therefore, choosing teachers and educators is a conscious recognition that education is key to developing positive citizenship at the local, national and global levels.

During the protracted and multifaceted Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East, various top-down political peace accords without popular participation have not proven adequately effective. Decades of cold peace between Israel, Egypt and Jordan are living examples of top-down peace agreements that have failed to translate to people-to-people peace. For such peace accords to be realized and sustained they must be inclusive; it is therefore essential to involve the population throughout the entire process. For an area like the Middle East where two-thirds of the population is under the age of 25 it is a matter of justice and inclusive democracy to include the voices of youth and educators.

Organization

Crossing Border is organized as an NGO. The daily management of CB is done by the CB director, three part time coordinators, volunteers, interns and a bookkeeper. CB also draws from a pool of highly qualified trainers and facilitators when implementing CB activities.

Crossing Borders wants to strengthen its organisational capacity in order to be able to execute its strategy more efficiently and create synergy between its growing number of activities and actors. Therefore, the organisation is seeking to establish a permanent head office at Krogerup Hoejskole and to hire a Director of Policy and Media Strategy to assist the CB director and convert the part-time staff into two full-time project coordinators and one full-time financial manager.

Crossing Borders' Achievements

Crossing Borders is one of the very few peace building, non-governmental organisations that has remained committed to facilitating dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian youth in spite of the political deadlock. In recognition of its contribution to peace dialogue, Crossing Borders was awarded an "*Honourable Mention for the Euro Mediterranean Award for Dialogue between Cultures 2006,*" with the theme of "Mutual respect among people of different religions or any other belief" by the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and the Fondazione Mediterraneo.

Since its inception in 1999, Crossing Borders has received funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EU Partnership for Peace Programme, the EU Youth in Action Programme, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the EU Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme and EU Fundamental Rights, the Hermod Lanung Foundation in Denmark, Politiken's Foundation and the Jylland-Post's Foundation. In addition, CB has received funding for specific activities from the Norwegian People to People Programme in Jerusalem, the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, UNESCO Participation Programme, SID (now 3F), the Danish Association for International Cooperation (MS) and the Copenhagen municipality.

For a complete list of Crossing Borders projects currently underway and all completed projects since establishment in 1999, please refer to Annex 1.

Source of Inspiration

The concept, methods and programs of Crossing Borders are all inspired by the Danish Folk High School movement and its spirit of equality, peaceful co-existence and the tradition of *samtale*. In essence *samtale*, which translates to 'talking together', means that democracy and peace can only be achieved and sustained through ongoing dialogue.

Strategy Summary

In an increasingly globalized world the need for purposeful, face-to-face interaction among young people of various backgrounds grows ever more urgent. Encouraged and enabled through the direct contact and interaction at the core of Crossing Borders' projects, youth and educators will be able to make meaningful contributions and take greater strides together towards the realization of peace, democracy and partnership in our world.

Crossing Borders' Project Focus for the 2012-2015 Strategy Period:

In the coming period we would like to build upon lessons learnt and experiences gained in order to develop and implement the following core projects, which comprise our key areas of interest.

Crossing Borders Jerusalem Cafe (CBC)

1. *CBC is envisioned as an educational cafe, established in two rotating locations, one in the Palestinian and one in the Israeli parts of Jerusalem. The purpose of the cafe is to keep Crossing*

Borders alumni engaged in the dialogue process and attract new groups of youth. The café will be an informal meeting place and at the same time offer training courses and workshops in the areas of communication, media and conflict resolution, which can together contribute to peaceful co-existence in the Holy City. Crossing Borders will work with its local partner All for Peace, a joint Israeli-Palestinian Radio, on this project.

DEMENA Youth Climate Ambassadors

- 2. For the Youth Climate Ambassadors programme in the Middle East, the aim is to turn the much discussed climate challenges into opportunities and to launch a platform for dialogue and youth participation in tackling cross-cutting development issues such as conflicts, resource management and youth participation.*

DEMENA Voices of Youth- Participation in Building Democratic States

- 3. Mainstreaming youth participation in building democratic states in the Middle East and North Africa is a contribution to the current winds of change in the region, known as the Arab Spring. With this project, we want to contribute to enabling the youth to participate in and contribute to the democratisation processes underway in their region. We wish to bring a group of youth leaders together to engage one another in dialogue and mutual learning about democratic institutional building, after which to return home and organise democracy symposiums to develop youth-made constitutions as a contribution to the new democracy building blocks in the region.*

Peace in the Horn of Africa

- 4. Peace in the Horn of Africa aims to provide war effected youth with a positive alternative to violence, radicalisation and piracy. We want to enable Somali, Sudanese and Ethiopian youth to learn about and take advantage of new media in order to tell their stories and gain income-generating skills. They will learn how to use the new media to report on the situation in their communities and to gain project management skills and social entrepreneurship, so that they can apply for funding to lead decent and sustainable lives.*

Promoting Local Awareness and Global Perspective among Danish high school students

- 5. The aim of this project is to promote global awareness and a global perspective among Danish high school students. It will give CB Global Studies students who come from countries around the world insight into youth culture and the Danish education system. The project will also create conditions for better cooperation between CB and Danish high schools.*

EU Youth in Action Programme

- 6. The EU Youth in Action Programme aims to promote youth initiatives, exchange and capacity building of youth within the EU countries and its neighbouring regions as well as at the global level. These project activities have three interrelated dimensions: projects targeting youth within the EU programme countries; projects targeting young people in the EU and neighbouring countries of the EU; such as the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans and Eastern Europe and Caucasus; and finally the EU and its global partners in the Global South, US, Canada and the Australasia.*

Crossing Borders Annual Summits as part of the DEMENA Voices of youth to take place in Denmark, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

- 7. Crossing Borders' Annual Summit offers Crossing Borders alumni the opportunity to meet once a year in Denmark and to stay connected. The summit will help Crossing Borders build a global network, where the alumni can be introduced to democratic role models, including Danish decision-makers and scholars. The Summit will also include workshops, where the alumni can exchange ideas*

and best-practices to continue to inspire each other to be active citizens and community leaders, all of whom are focused on developing civil society through dialogue.

Annex 1

In addition to the following list of completed projects, CB has also published magazines, newsletters, manuals, video documentaries and films.

Summary of Projects Developed and Implemented with International Partners:

Project title	Objectives	Beneficiaries	year	Donors
CB Volunteers without Borders	Raise Awareness on the importance of volunteering among youth	500 high school students in Denmark	2011	Danish Ministry of Social Affairs
Afghanistan Workshops	Skills training for Diaspora organizations and NGOs to create and manage projects within Afghanistan	50 participants in CPH and Århus	2011	Danish Refugee Council
MDGs Campaign	Awareness raising on the progress made and challenges toward meeting the MDGs by 2015	600 Danish high school students	2010-2011	Project Advice and Training Centre under the Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs
DEMENA Youth Climate Ambassadors	Climate awareness and youth participation	200 youth from Denmark, Egypt and Jordan	2010-2011	The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – MENA programme
Youth for Good Governance	Youth Participation in promoting good governance in Ghana	250 youth from various districts in Ghana	2011	Project Advice and training Centre Under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
M3- Management, marketing and money for NGOs in youth work	Capacity Building	30 youth representing 12 NGOs from Turkey to Latvia, Portugal to Czech Republic	2011	EU Youth in Action Programme
Youth Against	Conflict	40 youth leaders	2011	EU Youth in

Violence	resolution	from Armenia, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia.		Action Programme
New Media Skills for Dialogue	Integration	40 high school students from Austria, Denmark, Finland and Holland	2010-2011	EU Youth in Action Programme
Youth Against Racism	Mainstreaming anti-racism in youth work	300 Bulgarian, Greek, Hungarian, Danish, Spanish and Italian youth	2010-2011	EU Fundamental Rights and Justice
Peace in the Horn of Africa	Peace building	50 youth leaders from Ethiopia, North and South Sudan and Somalia	2010-2011	UNESCO
Adult Lifelong Learning for Immigrant integration	Immigrant Integration	150 teachers and social workers from Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Italy and Latvia	2009-2010	EU Grundtvig Lifelong Learning programme
One Europe Different People	Human Rights and inclusion	100 youth Bulgarian, Danish, German and Hungarian youth	2009-2010	EU Fundamental Rights and Justice
Euromed Youth Climate Ambassadors	Peace building	30 Danish, Hungarian, Israeli, Jordanian, Finnish and Danish youth	2009	EU Youth in Action Programme
Marathon Video making in Jerusalem	Peace building	25 Israeli, Palestinian and Danish youth	2009	Anna Lindh Foundation
Media Skills Development for Dialogue	Peace building	30 Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli, Yemeni and Danish young journalists	2008-2009	DEMENA Youth Fund of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Peace in the Horn of Africa	Peace building	25 youth leaders from Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia	2008	UNESCO
Youth Coordinators	Peace building	30 Israeli, Palestinian, German and Danish youth	2007	EU Youth in Action programme
CB Media Skills for Dialogue	Peace building	25 Israeli, Palestinian, German and Danish young journalists	2007	Anna Lindh Foundation
CB Capacity Building	Capacity building of Roma youth	22 Roma youth leaders from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia	2007	EU youth in Action Programme
CB Youth Living Cooperatively	Peace building	50 Israeli, Palestine, Denmark and Germany	2006-2007	Anna Lindh Foundation
Dialogue among Teachers	Peace building	60 Israeli, Palestinian, Danish and Finish high school teachers	2006-2007	Anna Lindh Foundation and UNESCO
Capacity Building	Peace building	25 Israeli, Palestinian, Danish and German youth	2006	EU Youth In Action Programme
CB Young Journalists	Peace building	200 Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian youth	2003-2005	EU Peace Partnership programme
CB teachers programme	Peace building	Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian teachers	2004-2005	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO and US embassy in Tel Aviv.
CB youth Programme	Peace building	200 Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian high school students	1999-2002	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs