

Living Different Lives: From Bethlehem To Hackney

What's the difference between living in East London and the West Bank? Young people from Hackney and Palestine got the chance to ask each other that question when a group of young Palestinians visited the capital at the end of last year.

In November 2007 'Mouth That Roars', a Shoreditch-based video project, and 'Hear By Right', a Hackney Youth Service participation project for young people, were host to some very special guests.

A group of young people from the Palestinian Friendship Association (PFA) came to Hackney as part of a cultural exchange programme called 'Bethlehem 2 Hackney' to promote awareness of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#), and to share experiences and skills with teenagers from 'Hear By Right.' The project was facilitated by Mouth That Roars, which trains young people in video production who wouldn't ordinarily have access to media resources.

The PFA has previously made **two films** with 'Mouth That Roars' in Palestine, *Forbidden Rights* and *Our Everyday Lives - Bethlehem*, which provide a view of life in Palestine which the Western world does not normally get a chance to see. We went to interview Rita and Shaaban from the PFA, as well as Erica and Mirian from 'Hear By Right', to talk about the work which they were doing together during the visit.



The young people from the PFA use films to put across a message to the world. Shaaban said: "We made these films to share with the world the situation that young people in Palestine live with." In particular the film *Forbidden Rights* talks about the human rights that are denied young Palestinians, like freedom and the rights to play and learn. "The film talks about lots of rights which we don't have in Palestine. [We wanted] to send a message to the people around the world that we want these rights," said Shaaban.

The project in London was slightly different. Instead of making a film, the Hackney and Palestine groups worked together on a participation project about Children's Rights. The Palestinians were trained by 'Hear By Right' to make workshops to deliver to young people in schools and youth clubs in Palestine. As Rita explained, "This visit, it's not a journey for the sake of a journey. There was a programme in place and we took a lot of things from this journey. We are going to share this experience and do

these workshops with young people when we go back to Palestine."

The Palestinian group enjoyed their experience working with young people from Hackney because of the opportunities for cultural exchange, as well as the fact that it was their first visit to Europe. When we asked Shaaban about his opinion of London, he said, "It's a nice place, a big city – a huge city. We don't have anything like this in Palestine. And there's a lot of people in London, and traffic jams! I think there is everything available here."

It seemed like Erica and Marian from 'Hear By Right' had learned a lot from the different perspective on life that the Palestinians shared with them. Erica said that working with Palestinian young people has taught her "to appreciate life, and to appreciate definitely what we have in England." Marian added, "We have so many rights that they could never even dream of. To actually meet people that don't have rights that here we take for granted...it's given us a bigger push to make a bigger impact with what we're doing."



The experience also taught Erica that, even though they live in different countries, "we actually do have the same things in common – we like the same things and we like to do the same things." Marian agreed: "It's like a different look at a different world, but we're still the same."

About this story

This story was produced by Gloire Ammany, 18, Mary McCarthy, 18, and Sarra Said-Wardell, 12. A version of it was published in *Hackney Today*.

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Palestinians and the Rest of Us in London

Helo, Hamas;

there is one thing for you guys to understand, no government governs the death. Your political strategy amounts to geonocide against the Paledtinians. Who for generations you clove on, parasitically, leaving them yearly with uncertainty, broken homes and graves.

All for your unflexible political stand against Israel. That a group like Hamas should project herself as representative of the Paledtinian masses is dangerous and unfortunate development. Hamas lacks a wholistic view of history and political matters.

The organization chose to sell her to a number of foreign interest, working with baseless ideaology which has vitually nothing to do with Paledtinian well being as a nation state.

Obviously, Paledtinians ignorantly allowed their ground to be use as base to attack Israel in the interest of other nations with little again not worth living for.

Hamas makes huge amount of selfish profit out of the Paledtinian situation. Using the area as coverage to attack Israel for nations who stationed them there.

Leaving the people perpetually raped: no peace, no prograss, no dedvelopment, no joy and no hope.

Some well to do Paletinians, of course, understand all these things but seem to be waiting for the right time to respond better; and to regain control of their country from forign forces, call Hamas.

And at the same time calling Israel to please, understand the state that they found themselfe in history side. With a mistate of the past that has cost them alot as people. the Paledtinian poeple today are victims of unfore-seen circumstances: killed by Israel for allowing Hamas to use them to rocket Israel daily. With their children force to throw stones against tanks, rather than stoping terror activities of Hamas in their homes; which they know is not helping in any way.

Hamas kills, occupys and enslaves Paledtinians in all terms.

We hope Hamas will learn the act of good politics. That flexibility is an irrevocable attribute and culture of good politics. Their none compromise with elastic issues, to many here in London, constitute an absurdity to reasoning. It is ruling but the deads.

Going by account and history on ground, we do not see Paledtinians under any form of colonization by Israel but what is truly there is the rule of a cabal call Hamas. A team of headlock military junta who uses that land as hideout to attack Israel for a reason no longer acceptable to some Paledtinian people today.

The truth of the matter is that, Hamas is not helping matters at all; as well as those that sponsor them to kill the Paledtinians in the name of fighting the Jews. Israel must exist as an independent nation. Just as it is already existing with all the right and privileges. And as such can chose to wall their country due to their political experiece, which is known to all of us. Just as we in United Kingdom can decide to wall ourselfe if we so desire and no body can stop us.

The Paletinians as well must exist as an independent nation away from all the nations around as well. Living in peace with themselves and with their neighbouring states.
Meanwhile, for Hamas or those they represent to think they can any means destroy Israel is a journey impossible. And can never be realized in time and in eternity. Hamas is trying to govern Paletinians in grave.

Austino;
Croydon

Austino (age 25) from Croydon; Loondon, 17 April 2010 15:40

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Yes young Palestinians yearn for freedom just as all colonised people do. Why blame Hamas when Israel is the culprit here - they still control all of Gaza's resources as well as air and sea access. You cannot abolish slavery if the the slave master still has the whip.

Karim from London, 30 December 1899 00:00

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It's very refreshing to hear about young Palestinians and young Londoners getting together to publicise the need for the rights of the individual that we take for granted (Not much longer under this government). Perhaps the terrorists of Hamas will see this film and begin to realise that their young people long for freedom and ease the iron hand of the police state that they have now.

Martin Freye (age 71) from Bristol, 30 December 1899 00:00

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