



# MEND UK

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Volume 2, Issue 2

April 2007

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## What we're up to in Palestine...

On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of Feb, 35 participants, including MENDers, gathered at the Best Eastern Hotel in Ramallah for a workshop with Dr. Bernard Lafayette Jr., old friend of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Nablus group have been performing plays and visiting local institutions giving talks and workshops on nonviolence. The Tul Karem group has been working with local NGOs to prevent internal violence and have started taking part in localized action e.g. against the Wall. They also organized a major event on March 8th for women.

Lucy Nusseibeh, Director of MEND, participated on the 15-18 March in an academic conference at St. Anthony's College Oxford on "Civil Resistance and Power Politics" assessing the nature and significance of civil (i.e. non-violent) resistance, especially, though not exclusively, in the period since the 1960s.

MEND is currently planning a series of town meetings about applicability of active nonviolence in Palestine. By providing these opportunities, MEND continues to promote both the principle and practice of active nonviolence in this region.

## ...and in the UK

We would like to thank The Allan and Nesta Ferguson Foundation who have granted £7,500 towards the Nablus Active Nonviolence Centre. We would also like to thank a private donor for their incredibly generous donation.

MEND UK will be giving a presentation to a school in Tower Hamlets on May 3rd.

Gillian Mosely, MEND UK Trustee, gave a highly successful talk at Hoare & Co, Bankers, on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, focusing on MEND 's nonviolence programmes with children.

Anna Pearson is running the British 10k Run again this year for MEND. The run starts at Piccadilly, 09.35 on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July. If you would like to sponsor Anna, or if you would like to take part and help raise money for MEND, do contact [info@mend-uk.org](mailto:info@mend-uk.org)

## My experience with MEND

*Takanobu NAKAHARA, International Public Relations, MEND Palestine*

About two months have passed since I came to Palestine and joined MEND. All my experiences have been highly challenging and thought-provoking; but now I feel there is a strong need for warm international support for MEND's activities, especially our core project "Active Nonviolence Network" (ANN) and its Youth version, "Menders". Maybe the most rewarding part of my job here is my luck to visit the ANN branches at Tul Karem, Nablus, Ramallah, Izarrya, and Jericho, and meet leaders for all 8 branches. I could learn many, many things from these experiences, such as the political situation of each city or of Palestine in general, "Activist Arabics" such as "Jidaal" (the Wall) and "Ha'jiz" (checkpoint), and of course our network. With an estimated 1,000 adult volunteers and 200 Menders (14 to 18 years old), ANN has established a solid base in Palestinian society, albeit with financial difficulties.

I have also been extremely happy to meet the MEND staff in Beit Hanina, where MEND Palestine main office is located. Lucy Nusseibeh, with her charming personality and strong determination, has worked very hard to deal with the conflict. Other dedicated staff in Beit Hanina office, Elias, Fakhira and Hudoub, helped me both in implementing my work and maintaining mental stability. Our new volunteer Fatym Layachi from Morocco brings to Beit Hanina office a new wave of activity. And, I can never forget to mention Adel Ruished, MEND Board Member and my friend, whose experiences always remind me of the harsh reality. As a self-proclaiming idealist, his existence for me is invaluable in carrying out our programmes. I believe we are excellent partners to work with.

As my 3 months tourist Visa nears expiry, I am increasingly wondering how I can remain in this country. Using my *crazi-tivity*, I found out some potential excuses to stay here as a tourist, but it is not a question of "whether" but "how" I shall stay at MEND Beit Hanina office, if possible for years. We have such mountainous tasks to do. I have written this because of MEND's rich potential. MEND's message and its promotion of Active Non-violence as a way of life and that of resistance, I believe, is what many Palestinians want. What is more, I like the people here, and their concept of the organization. We should do more. And *we*, including the Japanese Public Relations representative, *will*, certainly, do more.

## Acoustic night

Enter a world of candlelit tables, a laid-back atmosphere and a fusion of live acoustic /experimental sounds and soaring vocals. Not your typical fundraiser, but on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, MEND UK hosted a club night at the Rhythm Factory, Whitechapel, London. The night, Ecocentric, brought together a wide variety of international musicians and artists. Acoustic singer/songwriter Karma Junkie opened the night with heart-wrenching songs, to be followed by the uniquely inspired Zoo. Next up was talented experimental singer Heart's Win, who's stunning vocals sent shivers down the spines of all present, while reminding all of the importance of MEND's non-violence work. We were also complimented by Irish poet Noel Macken's "Mickey Mouse for President" – an unorthodox, yet compelling, commentary on the current situation and Palestine in particular. His lively performance added a new dimension to the night. Live acoustic hip-hop duo Subculture lively-ed up the crowd with their Swansea banter, while simultaneously showing off their "freestyling" skills, showcase guitar rhythms, and promoting MEND... As the night came to an end, original DJs Bumerang Welt and Octopi, began an impromptu stand-off, leaving the comfy sofa's empty and the dance floor clamoring for more!

As the first Ecocentric/MEND night, it was a great success, reaching many new people in London, and a firm start on which to build a regular series of such events – with the ultimate aim of raising much needed funds, as well as awareness and support, from new and alternative members of the community. The next one will take place at the Rhythm Factory, on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2007.

For more information on future Ecocentric /MEND nights, please contact Anna at [info@mend-uk.org](mailto:info@mend-uk.org)

## MEND'S projects

*Fakhira Halloun, coordinator of the project and facilitator of the youth pilot group*



On 23<sup>rd</sup> March we had the last training session with the youth pilot group for the project "education for human rights, non-violence and acceptance of the other". The training was in Hebron and we had an intensive long day which started at 9:30 and finished at 17:30.

We had 22 participants who arrived with a lot of excitement about our first joint training session for a long time. We had participants from Hebron, Ramallah and East Jerusalem. The topics for this training day were focused on the issue of "we and the other who are different to us, and acceptance of the other". The last session of the day was focused on summary and evaluation of all the processes that the participants experienced over the last year of training in this project.

It wasn't an easy day for me as a facilitator of this interesting and challenging group. The training was held in the Palestinian youth club located in the city centre of Hebron, and the last day of training dealt with the very sensitive issue of "accepting of the other and about the Israeli Palestinian conflict". We had very wild discussions about our relations within Palestinian society toward people, or groups that are different from us, and we expanded our discussion to the way that Palestinians deal with people or groups which are outside Palestinian society. Are our relations or reactions towards different people or groups within Palestinian society similar to our reactions toward different people and groups outside of Palestinian society? What are our relations with Israeli people and how does the Palestinian Israeli conflict influence our relationship with Israelis and our view toward Israeli people? How does the relationship between both societies influence our daily life and our way of thinking? What is our definition of the words "accepting of the other", what do we mean by 'accept the other' who is different to me? Does that mean I should be like him? Does that mean he should be like me? Or are there other definitions? And which definition is it easiest for us to accept in Palestinian society? All these challenging and complicated questions were raised and discussed in depth. These issues brought sometimes mixed emotions from the participants, confusion in others and raised different voices and different ways of thinking, to the collective voice that we are used to hearing. The discussion was at the same time hard, tense, complicated, challenging and enriching for all of us in the room.

The summary session looked at which processes the participants found most enriching during the training. They mentioned that the issues discussed were very important to their daily lives and they didn't have the opportunity normally to discuss these issues which gave them a new way of thinking. It was a very interesting and moving day for all of us, participants and staff.