

Placemaking for Tolerance – Tolerance Week

In the eyes of millions around the world, Jerusalem is the ideal - the center of prayers and yearning for centuries. Yet today it is also seen as a symbol – and the epicenter - of conflict: Haredi – secular, Jewish-Arab, and more. When violent incidents occur, their ripple effect is broader and more intense in Jerusalem.

At the same time, our field work shows a different Jerusalem. In the spring of 2018, leading up to Jerusalem Day, a poll was taken of Jerusalemites, which demonstrated their high degree of tolerance of the 'other.' According to the poll, a full 82% of Jerusalemites are happy that there are different groups in the city; 82% feel it's important to meet people different from them, and 96% report that they do in fact meet people who have a different religion or nationality than them on a daily basis; 70% wouldn't have a problem living in the same building with someone from a different sector; 95% noted that they would help a person in need, even if he / she was from a different religion.

Reality on the ground is one thing, widespread perceptions are another. Today, the need is not only to promote tolerance - in the public sphere, through arts and culture initiatives, but to fill the public sphere with tolerance initiatives in order to change public perception.

The prime example of the current situation is Jerusalem Day. In 2016 the JICC initiated A Jerusalemite Day of Diversity on Jerusalem Day, which sought to make the public sphere a more tolerant place through a range of arts and culture. Through these initiatives, the JICC seeks to celebrate the diversity of Jerusalem in a way that respects and celebrates Jerusalem's political, social and cultural diversity, in stark contrast to the more traditional, often highly vocal and sometimes violent celebrations of Jerusalem Day. When a few years ago many used to hide at home or leave the city in order to get away from the blatant racism expressed in the streets, today there is an alternative.

In light of the success of Jerusalemite Day, the JICC initiated similar peak events, the second 'anchor' being Tolerance Week surrounding International Tolerance Day in November (November 16). In 2019, Tolerance Week included 50 events throughout the city, from tours and lectures to performances and discussions, including the 'What a Dish Tells' festival in restaurants throughout Jerusalem. Here's a description of the 2019 event:

<https://jicc.org.il/tolerance-week-2019-continuing-a-tradition/>

And from previous years:

<https://jicc.org.il/third-annual-tolerance-week-hits-the-streets/>

<https://jicc.org.il/summing-up-tolerance-week/>

<https://jicc.org.il/put-on-your-tolerance-hat-tolerance-week-november-10-18/>

**You are welcome to join us on Tolerance Week 2020, that will take place on
November 15-21.**

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