

## ■ From participant to organiser's point of view ▼

# "Let's meet the three cultures" : from Cordoba to Jerusalem



Cordoba 2004

**M**y name is Francoise Cafri and I am the Director of the International Exchange Division at the Jerusalem Municipality. For many years I have been organising, together with my team, bilateral and multilateral youth exchange programmes for the benefit of young people from Jerusalem. I first heard about the Euromed Youth Programme from our National Coordinator, David Krauz, and I very much wanted to learn more about this programme and its large network. After my participation to the "Step In" seminar and to an "Action 5" seminar as a "workshop coordinator" I felt the need to go further.

The perfect opportunity came through the "Let's Meet the Three Cultures" training course, held in Cordoba in May 2004. Living in Jerusalem, the heart of these three cultures (Christianity, Islam and Judaism), I thought it could be very

fruitful to deepen my knowledge and skills on the subject through intercultural work with new motivated partners from Europe and Mediterranean countries.

The concept of using the history of Cordoba (symbol of co-existence between the different cultures across the centuries) as a platform to understand the common ground of the three cultures was very appealing. I was eager to meet the other participants.

The training course was attended by 30 representatives of youth organisations from 19 different

EU countries and 11 countries of the Mediterranean basin. What an opportunity to build a friendship network!

This training course, organised by the SALTO-EurMed Resource Centre, in collaboration with the Regional Government of Andalusia and the National Agency of Spain, was a great success on both the professional and personal development point of view.

Assigned to multicultural and multi-lingual teams we were able to experience a taste of artistic creation and collaboration in an atmosphere of respect and friendship.

It was a meeting of people who believed in the values of an open, tolerant and united world. The motto was respect for each other's identity and needs, sharing the aspiration of creating true partnerships for future projects in the Euromed framework. Even though I was completely exhausted at the end I found the whole process to be a very moving experience. In fact this was true for each and every one of the participants as well as the trainers and organisers!

As the days passed I began to see a continuation of the training course this



Cordoba 2004 : active discovery

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time in Jerusalem. Using the "Cordoba experience" as a framework, Jerusalem, which has a unique history of these three cultures, would be an ideal setting to explore how these cultures co-exist in the city today, home to more than 700.000 residents, Moslems, Christians and Jews.

With the approval and support of Senior Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem Yigal Amedi and the joint efforts of the Municipality of Jerusalem, the Salto-Youth EuroMed Resource Centre and the Israel Youth Exchange Council, the second "Let's Meet the Three Cultures" took place in Jerusalem in December 2005.

After being a participant in Cordoba, I now had the challenge of undertaking the responsibility of being one of the organisers of this TC. It was a most rewarding experience. 25 youth workers from 15 different countries gathered in



Jerusalem 2005



Jerusalem 2005

Jerusalem to experience learning and working together in order to enrich their knowledge and awareness of the three cultures.

The objectives of this course were fulfilled thanks to constructive discussions, joint efforts and positive spirit. By providing the participants with professional

leadership training, the TC gave them the necessary tools and expertise to make a difference back in their own societies.

I have no doubt that getting to know the "other" through these "people to people" programmes is an important process that brings diverse communities

closer and creates opportunities to bridge gaps between youth workers with a multiplying effect on the youngsters they are responsible for.

To conclude, I would like to thank the wonderful people who were genuine and dedicated partners in this joint venture: Bernard, David, the trainers: Claudio, Hiba, Susana, Vito, my colleague Marion and to all those who contributed to make my dream a reality!

Detailed information on the course can be found on our website :  
<http://threejerusalem.muni.il/> or  
<http://www.salto-youth.net/threeculturesisrael/>



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