We Have Rights!
Dear Readers,

Do all men and women deserve rights? Are there people who do not deserve them? Who is in charge of implementing these rights?

We are teenagers, and it’s important that we know what our rights are. Unfortunately, we feel that in our world there is discrimination between adults and children, the rich and poor, blacks and whites, the healthy and the disabled, and also between Jews and Arabs. We believe that everyone deserves the same rights. The people responsible for implementing these rights are governments and corporations, organizations and individuals, also the school and the street — this means everyone.

We must make an effort and act in order to obtain our rights. The first step is to lift our heads and learn about what is going on around us. We went out to meet teenagers our age and they told us about their lives. We saw that the issue of rights touches the lives of each and every one of us. We put together all of the stories in this special issue, and we also left room for you to respond and tell your own stories… You are all welcome to be a part of our journey of learning and acting for the rights of all of us. We believe that through this struggle, for the rights of us all, we can learn about the war that is going on around us and we can make a difference so that the occupation, the misery, and this damn war will end.

Yours,

Windows Young Journalists
Reem Abu Shamsiyah, 14 from Ramallah

When will we obtain our rights and break through the limitations that are placed upon us?

Not long ago I went with my family on a short trip with a few friends. When we arrived at the place where the trip began we needed to climb a few mountains around the city of Ramallah. It was really fun, at least we didn’t feel like the enemy and the settlements were restricting us. But unfortunately, every time we turned towards a particular direction we got closer to the settlements that have the ability to see everything and everyone that gets near them, and so we had to turn back.

Is it conceivable that we would be prisoners in our own land?

Do we need to stand silently in front of the settlements and their control over our lands?

Do we need to live this way for the rest of our lives?

Here we are trying to forget about these things and be happy in the little bit of land that the enemy left us instead of putting it into the hands of the settlers. We are trying to be content with the status quo and pass away the pain with trips from here to there. We stand silently and suffer from the occupation and the take-over of our borders. Is anyone listening to us?? We are a people whose hands are held by heavy chains and we have no space to breathe. Until when will we carry these chains?

“We are a people whose hands are held by heavy chains”

Yasmin Abu Seif, 13 from Aqiel School in Jaffa:

A response letter to the article “Who chooses street names and why?” that was published in the previous issue:

In my opinion the girls who were having the discussion in the article were right. It is not fair at all that 99.9% of the street names in Jaffa are in Hebrew and carry the names of Jewish figures. We are returning to the question of democracy in this regard, as Lian mentioned. If there was democracy, the State would have taken us into consideration and would have commemorated the names of Arab figures and not only of Jewish figures. I really hope that this will all change after there is peace between the Palestinians and the Jews.

“If there was democracy the State would have taken us into consideration”

Martin Hayak, 13 from Yafa:

Why do super-heroes have to wear costumes? As you have noticed, all of the “super-heroes” we know always wear a cape or a certain outfit. The question is why!!

Is it attractive? Does it make them look better? Or are the tools they use to save the world kept inside the costumes? If you think about it… who needs super powers if there are costumes that contain the necessary tools to save the world? Maybe all of the heroes with the costumes are not really super-heroes! Maybe they are just heroes without super powers or anything and the costumes are actually doing all of the work.

If you ever see Superman and another man exiting a burning building and Superman is holding a little girl in his hands, who will you think saved the girl, Superman or the man alongside him? I am sure you will think it was Superman. But maybe it is the man? Maybe the man saved the girl, but asked Superman to say that it was him? In my opinion a hero doesn’t need to have a costume or anything. A real hero is a hero in his soul and not in his appearance.

“A real hero is a hero in his soul and not in his look”

The Letter that never came

We know that there are many voices that never reach us, maybe because of opposition to what appears in the paper. For this reason it is important for us to state that we aspire to include all voices and represent all sides and opinions. We invite you to write to us so that we will know what you are thinking and so that we can establish a constructive discussion that encompasses listening and respect despite the differences in opinion.

“We cannot continue living with hatred towards one another”
Mustafah, 13 from Yad b’Yad School, Jerusalem:
Hello, I’m Mustafah and I really like animals, which is why I volunteer at the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem. The holiday season is the most “packed” season at the zoo. Many Arabs visit the zoo for two reasons: the first reason is that they really like animals. The second reason is that they visit the zoo because there aren’t many places to go to in East Jerusalem, and they can’t enter the West Bank. The Jews, during the Jewish holidays, create a blockade around the West Bank, and no one can exit or enter it. The residents of East Jerusalem do not feel comfortable entering Israel, so they stay in the Eastern part of the city and have nowhere to go. The Arabs of East Jerusalem are totally unlucky. But of course the situation is better than within the West Bank itself.

“A child shall have freedom of expression”
Article 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child

“Know that there is not difference between us at school, we are all human beings”

Sawar id and Mais Jabarah, 13 from Yad b’Yad School, Jerusalem:
We both go to Yad b’Yad School in Jerusalem. Each classroom has two teachers, an Arab teacher and a Jewish teacher, from kindergarten to ninth grade. We also have two principals, an Arab principal and a Jewish principal. We like our school and it is no different from other Arab or Jewish schools in the country. After all, we study the same subjects, such as Arabic, Hebrew and English.

Maybe you think that this is a weird school, but know that there is no difference between us at school. We are all human beings. We would be glad to have you visit us and we offer you a pleasant experience where you will find out that there really is no difference between Arabs and Jews.

“A child shall have freedom of expression”
Article 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child

“Know that there is not difference between us at school, we are all human beings”

Ayah Satel, 13 from Agial School – Jaffa:
A response letter to the article “Fashion is Not Just Clothing,” which was published in the previous edition:
In my opinion, it is true that fashion does not just mean clothing. Fashion can also mean the places we go to and the hairstyles we create, as Orin stated in the article. In my opinion, the fashion chains are not those who determine fashion, rather it is we who choose the clothing we like. For instance, when skinny jeans went into fashion, other types of jeans also came into fashion at the same time, but as we saw, most people chose the skinny design. But let us not fool ourselves: the choice is in our hands and not in anyone else’s.

Adam Schneitzer, 13 from Agial School – Jaffa:
A response letter to a letter written by Farse from Jenin, “Many arrests take place in my city and many invasions into homes. One of the houses that was invaded was mine.” Farse’s letter was published in the previous edition on Page 6.
What happens in Palestine is outrageous. I wish the picture would change and these soldiers would take the place of the injured and the victims, so that they can feel what it is like when someone all of the sudden barges into your home, kicks you out of it and sleeps in your bed. Also the barriers that soldiers place at the entrance to cities are very unpleasant. I don’t live in Palestine, but I’ve been there, at friends of my parents, and they told us the problems they have had at the checkpoints. We also saw houses owned by settlers who had separate roads and land that belongs only to them, they are like intruders. The roads of the settlers cross and separate the olive groves owned by Palestinians. It is a real shame that the situation looks like this.

“Know that there is not difference between us at school, we are all human beings”

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Maybe you think that this is a weird school, but know that there is no difference between us at school. We are all human beings. We would be glad to have you visit us and we offer you a pleasant experience where you will find out that there really is no difference between Arabs and Jews.
**My name is Juliana Al-Masri from Bethlehem and I am in the eighth grade at “Fareer” high-school. I have two sisters and one brother, and I am the oldest. My hobbies include singing, dancing, drawing and sometimes also writing. Despite these hobbies, I do not know what I want to do in the future, but I hope that despite the conditions of life in Palestine, I will have the opportunity to do what I like and am good at.

Last year I joined the young journalists group at “Windows” and this is my second year. My group includes Palestinian girls from Jaffa and Jewish girls from Tel-Aviv. I wanted to continue because of the good experience I had meeting other people and hearing their stories, and telling them our stories about our lives. Today the members of the writing group are my friends.

Juliana Al-Masri from Bethlehem

Hello, I am Ofir from Tel-Aviv and I am in the eighth grade at A.D. Gordon School. This is a social school which includes vision-impaired children and believes in the value of work. A.D. Gordon, after whom the school is named, lived about one hundred years ago, and combined farmwork during the day with literary writing. He served as the spiritual father for the farmers, with whom he suffered from poverty and disease. Despite everything, he continued to believe that working the fields will connect the people to the land.

My hobbies include singing, dancing, acting (in theater), spending time with friends, watching movies, and listening to music. I wanted to point out that I am happy to have joined the “Windows” project because it is very important for me to see how Palestinian teenagers live in Israel and in the territories, what they think of us (Jews) and how they feel. It is important for me to hear from them firsthand and for them to hear me. Two close friends of mine experienced a grave disaster; their sisters were murdered in a suicide terrorist attack in Netanya. Since that incident I am always thinking about the lives of the Arabs and why they do such things to us. I felt the sense of loss and suffering that my friends experienced, and I am sure that you too have similar feelings. This is why I want, and it is important for me, to influence the youth to take peaceful measures and not to use violence. Only in this way will both sides be content and be able to live normal lives like every human being is supposed to live.

Ofir Ben Ari from Tel-Aviv

**Terrorist:** According to the dictionary, “one who deliberately harms people, property, etc.” This is the common term among the Jewish public in Israel for Palestinians who fight Israel.

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**My name is Lian Haddad and I live in Jaffa. I am in the eighth grade at the “Democratic Arab Jaffa” school.

I like animals and enjoy taking care of them. I enjoy spending time with my friends, reading, giving advice, sleeping and playing. Additionally, I enjoy participating in debates and hearing opinions of other people who have different opinions from mine, presenting different viewpoints on many topics, and rethinking things that people usually don’t doubt.

I don’t think it matters who I am and what I am: pretty or ugly, short or tall, rich or poor. What is most important to me is that I am happy. The last point I want to share with you is that no matter what I wear and what people think of me, I only need to do what seems right to me.

Lian Hadad, 13 from Jaffa

**It is important for me to hear from them first hand and for them to hear me**
A long, long time ago, thousands of years ago, in the beginning of human existence, no one had rights – the strong rules of nature governed with a mighty arm and sometimes the smarter ones were able to overcome them with some successful idea…

WE HAVE RIGHTS!!!

A few thousand years later, the cultural development brought with it laws that made order of the chaos, and the religions taught people compassion and consideration of the weak. But only in the 17th century was the term “human rights” coined, and the humanitarian attention to all human beings as equals developed in 18th century Europe – at first only for men and boys. Women in Europe and other continents, for instance, only gained the right to vote in the 20th century.

Children’s rights did not receive real attention until the 20th century. Up until then only a few individuals were documented in history as thinking that children needed to be protected, but a significant change only took place on November 20th, 1989, when the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

The Convention received the greatest number of votes in favor of, than any other human rights agreements when 191 countries approved it.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child lays out our rights in 54 sections and is guided by four basic principles:

- You should not suffer from any type of discrimination. Every child, in every time and place, deserves the right to develop his or her abilities.
- Your interests should be the top priority when decisions are made that directly affect you.
- You have the right to survive and develop. This includes the right to physical and mental health.
- You have the right to express your opinions freely, and these opinions must be taken into consideration in any matter that affects your life.
As journalists, the topic of children’s rights is very important to us. We studied the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we examined what is going on in the larger world, what bothers us about it. We also went out to meet teenagers who live here with us, and from their stories, we also learned about the situation of children and youth in our region. All of this appears in the pages to follow…

**2008, WHO IS PROTECTING THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD?**

**India**

India has around 15 million child-laborers. Around 85% of them work in agriculture or as cattle herders and are forced to comply with any demand made by their employers. The children are sold to their employers for sums not exceeding $15 US. They are sold by their families, who are not able to make a living and feed their children and the families later have a hard time getting them back.

**United States**

United States: Around 10% of American children do not have any type of health insurance and their families cannot afford to provide them with proper medical treatment.

**Guinea**

Guinea: In Guinea, eight-year-old girls are employed for eighteen hours a day as household workers, usually without pay. Very often they are beaten and raped by their employers.

**Romania:**

More than 7,200 Romanian teenagers live with the AIDS virus. Most of them contracted the disease between 1986-1991 as a result of a governmental effort to improve their immune system when they were exposed to needles contaminated by unexamined blood.

**Colombia**

Around 10,000 children fight in guerilla warfare and other semi-military organizations. Children account for close to half of the 5.4 million internal refugees in the country.

**Congo**

Adults abuse street children. For the past ten years, the armed conflict, the AIDS virus and the high costs of education have increased the number of children living in the streets, with no roof over their heads, food or any attention to basic needs. Children live in fear and with no security.

This information is taken from the website of the International Human Rights Watch organization.
So let’s talk about what’s going on over here.

“I very much understand the pain of the Palestinians in the territories, but I feel like they don’t even want to listen to our pain.”

“The financial hardship in which Palestinians in Israel live makes it difficult for many parents to send their children to study at universities. Instead of studying they are forced to work and support their families.”

“The fence takes away our right to freedom of movement and makes us feel choked.”

“I feel like the Palestinians do not recognize our right as Jews to live here even though we have no other country.”

“Due to the very difficult economic situation in Palestine, many little children are forced to work in order to help their parents.”

“Most of the streets in Jaffa are named after Jewish figures; I don’t understand why there are no names of Arab figures.”

“I participated in a march against the events that are taking place in Gaza; suddenly the Army came and shot one of the girls who was with us. I was very scared.”

“Children in my class mock me because I fast and observe a religious commandment.”

“Very often, when students in the classroom say what they really think, the teachers silence them claiming that they don’t know what they are talking about. I feel like we aren’t always allowed to express our opinion.”

Do you also feel like your rights are being infringed upon? Tell us and together we will think of what we can do.

The right to live here.
Hello Achlas, can you introduce yourself?

My name is Achlas Salman, I am sixteen years old and have lived with my mother in the village Bet Zafafa, located in the city of Jerusalem, since my father died. I have a large family and distance separates us. One of the reasons for this is the separation fence, which separates my mom and grandma, but despite this we keep in touch.

Do you imagine the falling of the fence?

Every wrongdoing in life is destined to surrender, and in my opinion the fence is the biggest wrongdoing of them all!

Do you think of migrating when you hear about the difficult situation we live in?

I don’t think of migrating at all! Running away is not the answer; this is where I was born and this is where I am going to stay, no matter what happens.

What does Jerusalem signify to you?

I cannot express what Jerusalem provides me, she is my mother. She hugs me when I arrive, and I only feel safe in her. I feel proud to walk in this city, and am reminded that the Prophet Mohamed and Jesus, God rest their souls, walked through her. She is my continuation.

What do you want to achieve in life?

I am planting today what I will harvest tomorrow. I dream of advancing in the communications field, to send a human message to the world, and also to give pleasure to the children of the world, especially Palestinian and Iraqi children. I also want to research issues relating to change and social reform and publish articles on the topic. I dream that justice and freedom will spread over the entire world, and that Palestine and the rest of the occupied people will be free.

Do you ask yourself what the future has in store for you?

Every person asks themselves this question, but no one knows what is hidden. I believe in God and am sure that what I do is good.

What’s your last word?

I want to end with a phrase I go by and encourage everyone to learn from: “one practical move is better than many plans.”

Thank you Achlas for the interview, I hope to meet again.

The right to move about freely

What does Jerusalem signify for you? And what do you think Jerusalem signifies for others?
**Interviewee:** Sa’ad Abu Warda, 16 from Gaza

**Interviewer:** Yara Jarar, Windows reporter, 13 from Jaffa

"Today, even a fly can’t enter or exit Gaza"

Sa’ad. Can you introduce yourself?

I am Sa’ad from Jabalia in Gaza, I am in the 10th grade and I have six sisters and four brothers.

Why are you here in the hospital?

I am at Tel-Ha’Shomer hospital near Tel-Aviv for eight months already. They want to send me home, they are telling me to go back in two months after the surgery… but because of the situation in Gaza, if I go back I’ll never be able to leave again. Today, even a fly can’t enter or exit Gaza.

Can you tell us what happened?

I was walking with my two cousins and suddenly we saw Israeli airplanes flying in our area. I told them, “Guys, it looks like these bombs are gonna fall on us.” My male cousin said, “Don’t be afraid, keep walking.” A few seconds later the bombs fell. My male cousin was hurt very badly and my female cousin and I were injured more lightly. I was hit in my legs and stomach. The hospitals in Gaza do not have the necessary equipment to treat us. That is why requests were filed on our behalf to be transferred to a hospital in Israel. My male cousin’s request was not granted because he has a relative in Hamas… the next day he became a Shaheed. My request was granted and I ended up in Tel-Ha’Shomer.

Do your parents come and visit?

My mother used to come, but for a long time now they won’t let her leave Gaza, not her and not anyone else from the family. I miss them very much!

How do you feel today? When will your treatment end?

Now I’m okay. I had many surgeries and I only have one left. After that they will perform plastic surgery on my legs.

How do the doctors treat you?

The doctors here at the hospital are very professional and good-hearted. They don’t differentiate between Arab and Jewish patients. There is even a little group of Jewish and Arab volunteers that come and help with little things, spend time with the children and support the parents.

Do you want to say anything to the children who read your article?

I want to tell them that God willing they will never experience pain like me and like many people in Gaza. My story is not very different from many stories in Gaza, I am just one of many. I hope that the situation changes and that everyone is able to move freely, work in what and wherever they want, without being afraid of leaving Gaza or coming back to it.

The Gaza Strip was conquered about forty years ago (1967) by the Israeli army from Egypt. In 1994, following the Oslo Accords, the Strip was transferred to Palestinian control. Since 1991, Israel has placed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, disabling its residents from exiting or entering as they please and from living a normal life. Today there are around 1.5 million people who reside in Gaza in very difficult humanitarian conditions and suffer from a lack of basic needs such as medicine, food, electricity, water and oil.

The right to live securely

**To become a Shaheed**

The Jewish-Israeli public tends to get confused and assume that a Shaheed is one who has chosen to commit suicide while killing the enemy. According to Islam there are a few kinds of Shaheedim, among them those who die by burning and by drowning. The highest level is of one who meets his enemy, fights with him and does not run away from him, in order to ensure that the word of God is above everything else.
“I was born in the Kibbutz. My dad was also born in the Kibbutz and my mom was born in Kfar Sabah. I really like living in the Kibbutz. I have never lived in the city, but I think the Kibbutz is a good place to grow up in. I didn’t experience much of the “old” Kibbutz, such as shared sleeping. I also don’t remember much from the dining room where we all used to eat together all of our meals. Today we only eat lunch together in the dining room.

I go to “Brenner” school, which children from other towns also attend. I enjoy the Kibbutz way of life. When I was little I was able to run without having to worry about roads, and I know many people who live here. I don’t know if I regret not experiencing the Kibbutz that used to be, but I would be willing to experience that lifestyle for a day or two -- when teenagers would go in the morning to go farming before school, in a garden nursery for instance. Back then, the children of the Kibbutz didn’t live with their parents but in a joint children’s house, and only saw their parents in the afternoons. Everyone ate together in the dining room, and the families were part of a joint social life and celebrated all of the holidays together with performances put on by members of the Kibbutz. Today we only celebrate Passover and Independence Day together. The idea of the Kibbutz was equality and sharing. Everyone then owned everything, the wages of the members entered a joint fund and the Kibbutz took care of the needs of all the members. A few years ago, the Kibbutz went through a process called privatization, which means: property became private and wages went into individual pockets. Many people eat mostly at home and most families, for instance, do their own laundry, which is not like in the past.

I participate in the activities of Ha’noar Ha’oved Ve’halomed (the Working and Learning Youth) at the Giv’at Brenner “nest.” I think that the missions of the movement contribute a lot to society and the state, for instance by helping youth in distress. I want to continue being in the movement and to contribute to society. I think that the involvement in the movement will benefit me a lot and will teach me about the “different” life, outside the Kibbutz. After I finish high school I want to join a Ha’noar Ha’oved Ve’halomed commune. Life in the commune is group-like: you live with other people of the same age group in one house, and you counsel teenagers in the surrounding area.

The Kibbutz also has a club for teenagers, where you go after lunch, during school breaks and in the evenings. I would like to participate in an aerobics class for girls, but we don’t have one. I travel a lot with my parents and I really like the North.

I think our country needs to be in peace with the Arabs. I also think that most of us hope for peace and are waiting for it. In school I am learning about Islamic culture. In the book we are learning from, called “Five Voices,” I read about an Arab girl who said that she goes to a Jewish school because it is a better school than the Arab schools. Her story interested me and sparked my curiosity because I have never been to an Arab school. I suppose that story is true because of the situation that we are living in, the tension and the discrimination between Jews and Arabs. I don’t hate Arabs; I want peace and if it was offered I would want to meet with Arab kids.

“...I think our country needs to have peace with the Arabs or at least an agreement.”
Hagar, do you want to tell us a little about your village Baina?

I, of course, love my village. I was born in Baina where my parents, my relatives and friends live, and all of the beautiful moments in my life have taken place there. It’s true that it is a small village with not much to do, but it is dear to my heart.

What makes your village unique from other villages?

Kfar Baina is close to Elbatooof Valley and is located at the bottom of mount Tur'an. It has many olive trees and also historical remnants from the Roman period.

Where do you and your friends go during your free time?

Our village is small and has no outing spots, so we go visit one another, and sometimes we like walking around the village a little or we go down to the valley.

What do you think of school?

I like school because that is where I meet my friends and learn new things. The advantage of it is that it's located close to home. I don’t really like school when we get a lot of homework, or during the exam period. My favorite subject is biology. We learn about live creatures and about daily life. I find it an interesting subject that makes me feel like I want to know more. Also the teacher is very good with us.

I see you are very interested in education.

Yes, I am, because I believe that knowledge helps a person succeed in life. I am interested in education first of all for myself and later so that I succeed in life and so that I am listened to in society.

What are your hobbies?

I play the piano. Playing consoles me and makes me happy. In my free time I also like to listen to music, even when I am studying. I also like to read books such as adventure books and romance books.

What songs and stories do you like?

Usually I listen to foreign music such as “Linkin Park,” but when I'm sad or I am studying I prefer to listen to classical music such as Beethoven. The stories I prefer most are ones by the writer Hanah Minah.

The 2005 government report entitled, “The National Education Plan”, describes how Israel has some of the largest socio-economic gaps in the world. Differences in status according to ethnicity (Arab-Jews), origin (Mizrachi-Ashkenazi or immigrant-Israeli born) are just some of the major gaps in Israel. These differences also can be seen in the different places people live in (wealthy-poor towns/villages). Another major gap is in the education system, however this is a result of resource allocation. The report found that resources for education are not equally distributed between Jewish and Arab communities. This is because the Arab communities are often of low socio-economic status.

Do you feel these gaps? What causes them? What do you think can be done to prevent gaps?

The right to stay alive

Hagar, may I ask you what your dream is in life?

My dream, like any girl, is to succeed, to have a happy family and to be a mother, do well in school and that my parents will be proud of me. There is no limit to where I want to reach, I will always want to reach the top and progress without stopping. In the meantime, I want to be a surgeon because I like that field.

Do you think that what you do today will influence your future?

Of course! Everything I do today I keep and I am sure that I will know to use it in the future. Support is important for success and I am lucky to have the sweetest parents in the world.
Amal Ahmad, 15 from Darfur, South Sudan

My name is Amal from Darfur in South Sudan. I live in south Tel-Aviv in an apartment with my dad and mom, a sister and two brothers. I go to Rogozin School and speak four languages. My mother tongue is Fur and I also speak Arabic, English, and now I am learning Hebrew in school.

My family and I left Darfur in 2002 because of the war that is going on there. Many people left from fear of the war. My grandmother, my aunt and her sons stayed there and I don’t know what ended up happening to them. From Darfur we took a bus to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and from there to Aswan in Egypt. From Aswan we got on a ship to Cairo. We spent five years in Cairo and lived in El-Ma’adi neighborhood. My father taught there at a school for children who left Sudan with their parents and was supported by the UN. In Cairo, I didn’t go to school and I studied at home with my father. He taught me important subjects such as Arabic, English and computers. My mother does not work and she is a housewife. Egypt’s treatment towards us was not good. They were racist towards us and would ask, “Are you Muslim?” in a degrading way. I have many friends from that period and I am still in touch with them through the internet. Most of them were not Egyptian, but foreigners like me, Filipinos, Sudanese, and from other places. After a while we left Egypt and other Sudanese left as well; some to Europe, some to North America and some to Israel.

We arrived in Israel last July through the Sinai desert. Many people stood by us and helped us when we were most in need of help. The treatment of us here is very natural and I feel comfortable. I have many friends from Russia, Colombia and London; they all go to school with me. I take part in a photography class in a group of Sudanese boys and girls, but I am the only one from Darfur. We held a photo exhibition at the Cinematheque in Tel-Aviv where we presented the journey we went through until arriving here. Soon we will have another exhibition. I enjoy photographing but don’t like having my picture taken. I like taking pictures of natural landscapes and of my friends. We received a residence permit in Israel and I feel safe. But when the situation settles down I want to go to my home country, Darfur.

Thousands of refugees are crowded into temporary apartments and shelters under difficult conditions and survive thanks mostly to the help of many volunteers.

The right to live in peace

About two years ago African refugees began crossing the border with Egypt and entering Israel in increasing numbers, asking for shelter from political persecution. The immigration office of the Israeli government works to arrest them and move them away from the Egyptian border. The Israeli police and the Ministry of Interior are convinced that most of them want to find work and arrived through manpower organizations in Egypt and Sudan. This is despite the fact that most immigrants who arrive hold protection papers from the UNHCR.
"But Sderot is not just Qassam rockets. There are many positive things in Sderot."

I was born and raised in Sderot. My grandfather and grandmother came to Sderot when they arrived from Morocco, and my parents were born here.

How is life in Sderot?
Scary because of the rockets. We can't leave the house or wander around very much. It's better to stay at home and not risk it. When it's calm we can go out, but not very often.

What is calm?
When there aren't serious attacks.

And what is a serious attack?
More than 20-30 rockets a day.

So how do you continue living this way?
For most people life goes on as normal — they go to school, work, errands. You can't sit at home all day. But extra curricular activities, for instance, are a choice and it's about taking responsibility. I do theater and radio, and volunteer at a school for children with severe disabilities — some of the children can't speak, walk, or function on their own and I feed them, play with them and read them stories. For two years now I've been participating twice a week, in the afternoon hours, in the “Neta” project which includes social activity and computer science. Not everyone can be admitted. There's a selection process and you have to commit. The classes are in English and after four years you receive a professional diploma that you can use for anything. It's nice to have a structure outside of school, with friends and trips. It is an excellent national project that helps us a lot. Our instructors, Inbal and Idan, are wonderful. I enjoy studying at “Neta,” and like studying in general. I like my school, the education, my classmates and the teachers. The rockets are the only thing I don't like.

What happens when there's a warning of rockets?
My house has a safe room and my school has “safe” classrooms, but not everyone has these. If there are “code red” warnings that a Qassam is about to fall, then class stops, and we move to the safest corner of the classroom, far from the windows. After we hear the “boom” of the fall, some people start crying. Sometimes I cry and sometimes I don't, but it is always scary. Before they announce the “code red” the alarm makes a click sound, and sometimes when something squeaks people jump and react as if it is the alarm, and start running. Almost a third of the residents are treated by psychologists because of the trauma. But Sderot is not just Qassam rockets. There are many positive things in Sderot. We have a good life and there is progress in terms of education and social life. On the other hand there are problems of violence between teenagers like in any city. I want to thank those who donated vacations and trips outside of Sderot; this cheered us up very much. I think most people care about what's going on in Sderot, but not really at the level of doing something so that it stops. We need to inform people about what is going on here so that they pass a message on to the government to do something.

Why do you think rockets are fired at you?
I think that those who fire the rockets do it out of evil intent, to kill and hurt people. This war is completely unnecessary. In my opinion there is nothing to be mad at each other about. There are two peoples here, indeed with different beliefs, but we are all people. If the IDF shoots and a child is accidentally killed, they say the IDF is to blame, but if we have children hurt by rockets, they don't say that Arabs hurt children. We are all human beings and there is no difference. I respect them as people, but I would not be able to have a relationship with an Arab who killed with a rocket. Nothing is accomplished this way.
I live with my family in Shakeeb el-Salam. My father is from the Abu Jarbiah tribe in Be’er Sheva, and my mother is from Ramallah. I don’t like living in the cement house we live in, and I prefer living in the tent outside with my grandmother and grandfather. In Shakeeb el-Salam I feel crowded and when I go to my grandparents I have a large space to play and there are many trees and animals. Besides, this is where my father, uncles, and aunts grew up and in every corner I find memories of my family.

Walid Sami Abu Jarbiah, 7 from Shakeeb el-Salam

My name is Rashah and I live with my family in Em el-Tut village, located six km east of Jenin. Em el-Tut is characterized by serenity, nice weather, an amazing view, valleys, the wadi, and the mountains. I am aiming to finish school and become a pediatrician so that I can help the parents of poor children who cannot afford to pay for medical treatment for their children.

My talents are: sports (especially jumping), writing, and drawing. I practice my jumping talent in gym class at school and in the backyard of my house. My parents and teachers support me, but there are no clubs that are equipped for this sport and only the gym teacher helps me. There are regional competitions but I don’t participate in them.

The relationship between Em el-Tut and Jenin is very strong and they do business together. People from the village go to Jenin to sell their vegetables, olive oil and wheat, and they buy things in the Jenin market that they are missing. Besides, the main hospitals and clinics are located in the city. My friends and I like to play together and talk about our schoolwork, about what we heard on the local and international news and also about what is new in the arts, such as television series, and educational and entertainment programs.

The conflict between us and the Israeli army scares and worries me. When the El-Aksa Intifada (uprising) first began, I never left the house and didn’t even open the door for anyone. To this day I am afraid to travel even short distances. My school is close to home but on my way to school I am still afraid that the army will find me and shoot me. The occupation took away my sense of security and freedom to choose. If I could, I would choose to live at my grandfather’s, father’s and mother’s house in Zar’in, which is located on 1948 land.

Rashah Basam Zacharanah, 13 from Em el-Tut village in the Jenin region

140,000 Bedouin residents live in the Negev, half of them in permanent towns, and the rest in unrecognized towns. In 2007, 92 villages were considered unrecognized, all of them Arab, 59 of them Bedouin towns in the Negev. An unrecognized village or town is a place that the state authorities do not recognize, and therefore it does not have a local council and it is not included in the regional council. This type of town does not have a jurisdiction, its residents are not entitled to services such as water supply, electricity and telephone, and it is not included in the health and education plan, or in infrastructural and public transportation plans. It also does not have election booths placed within it on Election Day.

Taken from Wikipedia and www.ajial.org

1948 Land-
One of the expressions Palestinians use to refer to the land on which the State of Israel was established in 1948.

The right to live securely
They gave the camp this name because its residents from Beit-Jabreen village became refugees during the 1948 Nakba

Windows’ group of reporters from Bethlehem interviewed Machmed el-Amarin, a member of the group:

Machmed, can you introduce yourself to the readers?
My name is Machmed and I live in Bethlehem in Beit-Jabreen refugee camp. I am in the tenth grade. My hobbies include swimming, reading, listening to music, traveling, and learning about different cultures. One of my interests is the popular Palestinian Dabka dance. I am a member of the Dabka group at the Handalah center in the camp. I am very interested in issues related to human rights, especially related to children. I am a member of the international organization for the protection of children.

Why is your camp named “Beit-Jabreen”?
The camp was given this name because its residents came from Beit-Jabreen village, and became refugees during the Nakba events in 1948. The residents of the camp originally came from several Palestinian cities and villages, such as: Tel-Altzafti, Beit-Jabreen, Beit-Natif, Ajur, Ras Abu Amer, Elkabab, and others.

Why is the camp so crowded? Can you not build new houses?
Beit-Jabreen refugee camp is considered the smallest camp in the West Bank and Gaza strip, both in terms of land and in terms of population. The camp spreads across 20 dunams, and houses around 3000 people. Due to the constant population growth and the limited space, building is very difficult, be it houses or educational or health care buildings. Additionally, the camp’s land does not belong to the residents but to UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency).

Is there anyone in the camp who takes care of everyday issues, such as cleaning and education?
UNRWA takes care of these things and offers many services. The camp does not have schools and students need to go to school in nearby camps. UNRWA ensures schools for 1st to 8th grade, but afterwards students move to public government or private schools depending on the family’s ability. The same goes for medical services. There are clinics and you can get medical treatment in UNRWA centers in a few areas in Bethlehem.

Are there centers for children and extracurricular activities in the camp?
There is a center for children, but it lacks activities that are appropriate for the children’s needs. There are also no open spaces for children to play.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Nakba. How do you feel as a refugee child?
I feel bitterness because many children in the world live in much more humane conditions than us. At the same time, I am proud of myself because I work hard and am always working to advance and reflect the real picture of my life, my beliefs and my feelings as a refugee.

Do you have anything else to tell the readers?
Life in the refugee camp isn’t easy, and despite this I say, “My homeland is not a travel bag and I am not going anywhere.” I hope that there will be real peace on the Palestinian land.

The Nakba events/The War of Independence:
Jews and Palestinians treat the 1948 war differently. While for the Jews it was the War of Independence that allowed for the creation of the State of Israel, for the Palestinians it was the Nakba (catastrophe) which resulted in the deportation of the Palestinians from their homeland, and the destruction of their society and culture.
Hello, I am Machmood and I’m in the 8th grade. Like anywhere else, there are both good and bad people in Jaffa. There are people with a good heart who like to help others even if they can’t, and there are others who only think of themselves. Jaffa is a special city. It encompasses all three religions, it has a long history, an ocean, and beauty. I was born in this city and there is no way I’m leaving it. I go to Ironi D’ School in Tel-Aviv because I think it is one of the best schools in the country. It has good teachers who give a lot of support to the students. School feels like family; you won’t find differences between a Muslim, Christian, or Jew.

My favorite subjects in school are history and science. The history interests me and gives me a lot of food for thought. Science also gives me a lot of knowledge about human beings, plants and medicine. You learn the philosophy of life through science and history. Anyway, I like anything that helps me understand life better. My dream is to be a heart or brain surgeon. But I still have time; I am a small person who has many plans for the future.

I enjoy being a teenager because teenagers don’t have limitations like adults. Adults have greater responsibilities, they have children, work, many laws to obey and they are not free to do whatever they want. Children, on the other hand, have more fun. When you are young you enjoy life more. Adults don’t like the same things as little kids. Their brain prevents them from playing little kids’ games, such as hide-and-seek.

I don’t really want to grow up, I don’t want to lose my youth. However, sometimes it’s hard being a teenager. Many things change during the teenage years, you start gaining more responsibility, but there is still time to have fun. The body starts to grow and develop. Usually teenagers don’t think of what is happening to them and why. That may be why they are called “stupid teen” (loosely modified from the Hebrew); they just don’t think about what they are doing.

They start experiencing peer-pressure, and their social status starts changing both in society and in school. Everyone just wants to be “cool.” They don’t really think about school. Some kids only like to study and some don’t care at all about studying, and some manage to combine the two.

About two years ago, school started to interest me more. Today I don’t think I want to be ignorant. I want to be informed. Things that help me improve make me feel good and strengthen my self-confidence.
Why did you become a vegetarian?
I became a vegetarian in 4th grade, four years ago. A friend of mine became a vegetarian and I asked her why she did it. She explained to me that one time she sat with her dad at a restaurant and ordered a steak. Her dad said to her: “Poor cow…” and when she asked him why he said that, he told her that the cow is killed so that she will have good food. From that moment, I also decided to become a vegetarian. I have been a vegetarian even since, but my friend has stopped.

Are you a vegetarian for ideological reasons?
Yes, I don’t think we have to eat animals and that humans can live off of other things just like I manage to do, and I don’t think animals should be killed just for food. From that moment, I also decided to become a vegetarian. I have been a vegetarian even since, but my friend has stopped.

Do you wear leather or fur clothing?
No. It grosses me out and I don’t think you should kill for clothing. For instance, I wear synthetic clothing: fake leather, fabric, and the like.

Do you take vitamins or other meat supplements?
No, I don’t take vitamins. I did a blood test and I don’t need to take anything, but I eat legumes such as beans, lentils, and others…

Are you a strict vegetarian or do you sometimes eat meat?
I never eat meat.

What is hard about being a vegetarian?
Sometimes, for instance, in restaurants or trips with the Scouts I can’t find anything to eat.

Do your family and friends support you?
My family is not vegetarian, but my mom was a vegetarian for ten years, so she understands me and supports me. I also manage with my friends and they usually support me.

Do you have anything to add?
Yes, we have a cafeteria at school with a meat kitchen, but also with vegetarian options. But one time I ate a vegetarian omelet and I found a piece of salami in it. I was very upset, and I went to the kitchen and told the cooks. I felt like they didn’t take me seriously and that really made me mad. But these types of things don’t happen very often.

Animal rights organizations also have legal struggles: the Israeli Supreme Court ruled four years ago that it is no longer permitted to fatten geese in Israel. Although this phenomenon has significantly decreased, it still takes place.

The right to integrate in society
Hello Maor. Tell me about yourself
I am 14 and-a-half years old from Tel-Aviv. I go to Savionim School in Yehud. This is a combined school with regular classrooms and classes for the deaf.

Who are the teachers? How do they communicate with the deaf students?
Most of our teachers know sign language and conduct class in this way, but there are also teachers who don’t know sign language and they talk as usual, in which case a translator comes to class. I have known sign language since I was born. Both of my parents are deaf and it’s something I slowly developed, just like people learn to talk.

What is your favorite subject in school?
I like gym class the most, but I also like literature.

What do you like to do in your free time?
I really like television and I watch a lot of it, all of the shows. I like playing basketball with friends. Sometimes I read a little. I really like animals, mostly dogs. I have a dog called Bar, and I call him Bari.

What do your parents do for work?
My father works as a tour guide at the Israel Museum in the section where people who hear enter the world of the deaf. They put on headphones which don’t allow them to hear at all. They learn to communicate with one another and participate in many activities without being able to hear. My mom works as a teacher at a school for the deaf in Kfar-Saba.

Do you have siblings?
I have an older brother named Ma’ayan who is in the army. He is also hard of hearing, however, he hears better than me and my parents. We usually speak through text messages and video conferencing. It is convenient because we can see each other while we use sign language.

Children use their cell-phones a lot and it is very important to them. What do you think of this phenomenon?
I know of this situation pretty well. But I am not proud of my phone – because what can I do with it? Just send text messages and video chat.

Do you do any extracurricular activities?
Not really. On Monday nights I usually go to a club called “Shmah” (Hear), and there I meet up with friends and talk to them about all kinds of things.

Do you have both friends who can hear and ones who are deaf?
Yes, most of them are from my school and from the club.

What is the difference between what you do with a deaf friend and what you do with a friend who can hear?
Our entire communication is different, and slower or faster, depending. But the things we do are pretty similar. I have more deaf friends than friends who can hear because communication with them is faster and I feel more comfortable talking to them. Kids at school know very little sign language. Sign language is made up of movements you do with your hands in order to communicate.

There are many slang words in our language. Who gives a definition to a new slang word in sign language?
Us deaf people. There is no particular person who decides all of these words. They are created and added with time also to sign language. I want to tell the readers that being a deaf person is not weird. A deaf person is just like a normal person who simply cannot hear.

I love animals especially dogs.
The Children of Peace Foundation was established in 1988. The foundation’s goals are to educate towards democracy, tolerance, human rights, and pluralism in Israeli society through theater. The target audience of the program is Jewish and Arab teenagers between 8th-10th grades.

More than 100 teenagers and young adults between the ages 14-25 from northern and central West Bank and the Gaza Strip participated in a communications project. The project was meant to enable Palestinian teenagers and young adults to express their interests and needs as a first step towards their active and independent activity in the field of communications. The project was initiated by the Palestinian Council for Communications and the Advancement of Youth Positions, UNICEF International, and the Center for Communications at Bir-Zeit University.

In order to save the lives of many children around the world, children participating in the “Emergency Act Network” of Amnesty International write letters to ambassadors of different countries and create political pressure.

12-17 year old students from Antigua, an island state in the eastern Caribbean, who are active in the organization Amazing Grace Youth in Action help other children who are living in more difficult conditions.

Kosovar students talk on a local radio station in the city Jakova, on the border with Albania, about their activity in the youth council during the war and its continuation after the return of the Kosovar refugees to their villages and cities.

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And Despite it all

“In my opinion, it’s true that peace is a big word, but every big thing starts from something small. Each nation generalizes its point of view towards the other nation. Our job, through the alternative media that we offer, is to show the true reality behind things.”

Maria: “I hope that all children of the world obtain their rights as they should, and I hope that there will be peace and that we can visit Lebanon and other countries we cannot visit.”

Instead of sitting around and imagining we must do something!

Juliana: “I hope that all children of the world will obtain their rights without any preconditions and without any discrimination.”

Natalie: “I hope that we, the children of Palestine, will obtain equal rights with the rest of the world’s children, and that we will be able to live normal lives. It is our right to be happy and each other’s positions and rights so that we can live in peace, security and stability.”

Tamara: “A child has a priority in life and his rights are a basic thing. I pray for the end of slavery around the world and that freedom will reign.”

Orin: “I think that while working on this issue I learned how other children live. I understand that there are children who live with bigger problems than I have and I want to help them, but I feel like I don’t have any way to do so.”

Ori: “While writing the newspaper and during the seminars, and also through our visits to the checkpoints and the separation fence, I learned a lot about infringing on the rights of children. This really raised my awareness and concern for the issue. Some would say this is not enough, but I hope that the readers will get a sense and their awareness will also rise regarding these issues.”

Jenit: “In the past I was afraid to react to acts by the police and people who are older than me. Now I know what human and children rights are, and I am able to oppose violations of them.”

Yara: “Working on this issue really stirred my emotions because I saw what was happening to children in the area, I saw that they were deprived of rights and so am I. I really want to do something, to express my opinion everywhere and make a difference.”

In the upcoming issues we will deal with some of the topics that came up in the stories and we will try to answer questions that came up. You are welcome to share your opinions and personal experiences with us.
Every person has the right to satisfying access to water. In order to ensure this basic right, it is the responsibility of each country in the world to ensure the quality of their water and a constant supply of water sources.

75% of the earth is covered by water. 97% of the water on earth is in oceans. Only 3% of the earth’s water is meant for drinking. 75% of drinkable water on earth is frozen in icebergs in the poles.

70% of the water consumed in the world is used for farming.

The water that flows in streams is the water that is distributed around most of the world and provides most of the water supply.

We cannot exist without water. Even though a human being can survive for over a month with no food, it is impossible to survive without water for more than a week on average.

Overall, there is enough water to provide for everyone’s basic needs, but the amount of water in the world is limited. The number of people is growing rapidly and water consumption is growing even faster.

About a third of the world’s population lives in countries that are lacking in water supplies. This statistic is predicted to rise to two-thirds by 2025.

**Why is water an international problem?**

**Authority**

The international water crisis is mostly an economic and political problem – while many countries lack water supplies, others have an excess supply that does not reach places that are lacking. The lack of water in certain places sometimes creates war over water supplies. More than 5 million people die every year from diseases transmitted through water, ten times more than the people killed by war around the world.

**Poverty and Water**

The poor in Third World countries suffer the most from lack of water; it very often forces them to walk long distances to obtain water, results in high prices for water, and diseases caused by drinking contaminated water. Lack of water also hurts farming and industry and this causes irregular food supply.

In order to deal with the poverty it is necessary to develop economically, but this requires a greater supply of water for farming and industries that drive development. The world has enough resources to drive economic development even in poor countries, but, as we said, due to struggles over control and money, solutions are not found for the problems.

A flood at the An Dong evacuation site, outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Hundreds of families that were forcefully removed from poverty-stricken neighborhoods have been living here for two years.

**Contamination and Disease**

Contaminated water flows from inside the sugar plant into the Nile River in Egypt.

Drinking from contaminated rivers causes diseases such as Malaria and Typhus.

Sewage water from abandoned mines causes significant contamination around Europe.

**Climate Change**

Climate change will also affect water – but what its effects will be exactly we can’t really say.

Certain areas will be drier, others wetter. It is very possible that deserts will spread and rivers will shrink, but at the same time floods will occur more often.

“Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink” from the The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the English poet, critic and philosopher, 1772-1834.
The word for peace in Hebrew, "shalom," is very similar to the word for peace in Arabic, "salaam." How is that?

The Hebrew and Arabic languages are very similar to each other. There is much similarity not just in the vocabulary but also in grammar, word structure, and sentence structure. This happens because both are Semitic languages. Over three hundred million people speak languages included in the Semitic language family in the Middle East, North Africa, and horn of Africa.

The most common Semitic language is Arabic, which is the mother tongue of over two-hundred million people, 72 million speak Ahmaharit as their first language, and Hebrew is the mother tongue of about five million people.

I speak Arabic and a little bit of Hebrew.

I speak Hebrew and want to learn Arabic.

I speak Arabic and Hebrew.
The lazy cake

Ingredients:
Serves ten people:
100 grams of butter (just under 7 tablespoons)
4 packs of biscuits
3 tablespoons cocoa
2 tablespoons ground sugar
2 eggs
1/2 glass milk when needed, if the dough is thick

Preparation:

1. Break the biscuits into small pieces in a mixing bowl.
2. Melt the butter on the stove.
3. Add the butter to the biscuit crumbles.
4. Break the egg over the dough.
5. Add the sugar to the dough.
6. Add the cocoa and stir with a big spoon.
7. Shape the dough however you choose, cover it with tin foil, and freeze for 3 hours.
8. Take the dough out of the freezer and take off the tin foil.
9. Spread frosting according to taste. Serve the cake to guests or eat it with your family!!

Enjoy!

Tamarah
You have the right to express your opinions freely and these opinions should be taken into consideration on every matter that influences your life.