

A view from east to west

The 0202 website provides translations of east Jerusalem and haredi media, for greater understanding of our fellow city dwellers

• By ARIEL DOMINIQUE HENDELMAN

Michal Shilor started 0202 for the same reason so many innovative projects have begun; she was looking for something that didn't exist. Shilor is a Jerusalem activist who became involved in dialogue circles in Zion Square during the summer of 2014.

"We were engaged in discussions with people from all over Jerusalem and I found myself answering questions about east Jerusalem with knowledge that wasn't firsthand," she recalls.

"I started asking questions about where I could find news coverage on east Jerusalem that wasn't filtered through some Jewish source; not left- or right-wing. I wanted to know what an east Jerusalemite sees and how that affects what he does."

Shilor connected with a team of seven like-minded people who believed in her vision. With the support of Search for Common Ground and the Jerusalem Intercultural Center, 0202 was born.

Shilor and her team worked on a pilot project for three weeks. They gathered approximately 150 Facebook pages from east Jerusalem, including mainstream news media, such as the Gaza-based Shahab news agency, as well as alternative news sources, community leaders, community centers, schools and parent organizations. In March 2015, the 0202 Facebook page was published.

"We are trying to show what is going on in east Jerusalem," Shilor says. "The first day we put the page online, we got 1,000 likes. It was amazing to see that it

filled a need. That gave us a lot of hope."

With time, 0202 became more professional. They brought in editors. Shilor and her team found that they relied less on the experts they thought they would need because they became experts themselves. The 0202 staff is a mix of Arabs and Jews, and currently includes 18 dedicated volunteers. Shilor believes the team is a model of how Jerusalemites can live and work together.

"It's activist-based," Shilor states. "It's about showing that we have to see what the other side sees."

A hurdle early on was in translating the language from the pages coming out of east Jerusalem; not Arabic into Hebrew, but the way things were written. Every time there was a mention of the police, army or municipality, the word "occupation" would come up. Shilor and her team found themselves questioning whether their readers would stay with them if they continued to translate word-for-word.

"It's really difficult to read that kind of language for people in west Jerusalem," Shilor explains. "But we have always maintained that we translate word-for-word. It's important to see the way things are written."

In the fall of 2015, Shilor and her team opened an English version of the page with funding from the Leichtag Foundation. She points out that there is no difference between the English and Hebrew pages in terms of content. They wanted to reach the Anglos in Jerusalem. Last March, 0202 celebrated its first birthday. It had an event where both Palestinians and Israelis came to speak about Jerusalem.

"On the page, we don't want to tell you what to



think, but in the event, we were able to bring guest speakers to supply more nuanced points of view," Shilor says. "A hundred people came, Arabs and Jews. It showed us the impact we're having."

Another way 0202 measures its impact is in the ability to create change on the ground. Last June, the head of the Association for Driving Instructors in east Jerusalem began posting about an issue in Arnona and East Talpiot. Signs prohibiting student driving on Saturdays were popping up.

"It was clearly racist," Shilor says. "On Saturdays, only Palestinians have driving lessons. The signs were put up unofficially, but somebody allowed it to happen without having any sort of discussion with the people it would affect."

0202 translated the posts and the issue reached the municipality. The signs were eventually taken down. The fact that the 0202 page had journalist and activist followers brought about tangible change. This was gratifying for Shilor and her team.

"To see that something happened because we're amplifying voices that people don't hear in west Jerusalem showed us that what we're doing has an effect," she says.

There was a similar occurrence with uncollected garbage. Mini Active, a group of female Palestinian activists, posted photos of garbage every day for a year with the tag line, "We don't want to live in filth." 0202 translated their campaign every day, and within a few months, NIS 3 million had been transferred to the sanitation department of east Jerusalem. The garbage issue today is one of the biggest and most talked about,



O202 founder Michal Shilor: 'I want to know what an east Jerusalemite sees.' (Photos: Marc Israel Sellem)



'Facebook in east Jerusalem is not a mirror image of street talk due to social pressure to say the right thing at the right time.' (O202)

thanks to Mini Active's posts and O202's translations.

In the fall of 2015, the stabbing intifada tested the O202 team's abilities in a new way.

"That was our first big chance to prove ourselves, and we really managed to be an important source for people who wanted to know what was going on in Jerusalem and what people in east Jerusalem were saying about it."

O202 hosted an event called "Why Is Jerusalem Burning?" that drew 150 people

"We had posts from September that showed the coming violence," Shilor recalls. "We took the opportunity to bring two speakers, one left- and one right-wing, to talk about why it was happening and why having access to what was coming out of east Jerusalem was so important. That was a major point for us to understand that we really have influence. One of the speakers was in charge of security at the Temple Mount, so he knows east Jerusalem very well and showed both sides of the spectrum."

Shilor emphasizes that the common theme found in every post coming out of east Jerusalem is the mention of the "occupation," even if the subject matter doesn't directly relate.

"The mind-set in the media is, no matter the subject, we're living in an occupied area," she says, "but I have to say what's most interesting is that Facebook doesn't really show what's happening in real life. Facebook in east Jerusalem is not a mirror image of street talk because of social pressure to say the right thing at the right time. When you look at the comments on posts, you'll see much more diverse opinions than

you'd see in a major post. You might see positive and negative comments, but posts will be negative across the board."

O202 is currently focusing on trying to lessen the gap between how east Jerusalemites talk in the street, as represented in Facebook comments, and what is actually posted on a page. They've begun translating comments on posts, in order to showcase the disparity.

"It's important to show how different the reactions are because there's a lot of identity confusion in east Jerusalem," Shilor explains.

O202 shows posts ranging from anger about settlers defacing al-Aksa Mosque, to what the children did in school that day. The message is that life is complex and east Jerusalemites are talking about all of it.

O202 is not attempting to provide a solution to the conflict. It is not in favor of or against one state or two. Shilor believes that no matter what happens, Jerusalemites are living here together and need to understand each other.

"We need to understand what the other side thinks and how that affects their actions," she says.

"One of the things we learned during the stabbing attacks was that it doesn't really matter what the news says is happening. There were many instances where in west Jerusalem, we were sure that it was an attempted stabbing. But in east Jerusalem, they were sure that it was an innocent woman walking by, pulling her phone out of her pocket, and being killed in cold blood. A third of the people are sure that they're being murdered in the streets while the other two-thirds are sure that they're being stabbed to death in the same streets.

It doesn't matter what the objective truth is; what matters is that this is how we're living. If both of us are that afraid, there should be discussion about the fear."

In the spirit of communication, Shilor is now learning Arabic. She ardently believes that the simple act of talking to each other can bring about understanding. Through her work with O202, she has come to see that east and west Jerusalemites live in two separate worlds, both mentally and socioeconomically. O202's translations provide a meeting point somewhere between these two realities.

She plans to create a page for every sector of Jerusalem. In September, they launched the haredi page, with the same process of culling news sources from a cross-section of ultra-Orthodox online and print media and providing accurate translations.

"If we're going to talk about Jerusalem, it has to include all of its citizens: haredi, modern Orthodox and secular," Shilor says.

"We want to pick something, work with the page until it steadies, and then open another. We want to create a complex look at Jerusalem so that people in and outside of Jerusalem can see. We decided that the first step would be the ultra-Orthodox world. That world is new for me. I wanted to learn about it and it looks like everyone else is interested as well."

The haredi page has a smaller team: three people on staff and three advisers, all of whom are ultra-Orthodox themselves or were in the past.

"This page draws from Hebrew to Hebrew," Shilor states. "It's amazing that it's still a whole other language. You've got acronyms everywhere. They use the

'It doesn't matter what the objective truth is; what matters is that this is how we're living. If both of us are that afraid, there should be discussion about the fear.'



Osama Abu Jaber, a staff member on the English version of the east Jerusalem page.



Prina Pfeufer, a haredi consultant for ultra-Orthodox materials.

same letters and words, but I'll have to read a post three times in order to understand it."

Shilor has learned about ultra-Orthodoxy: haredim, hasidim and the hundreds of subsets within each. The first posts the page displayed, revolving around construction work on the light rail on Shabbat, showed that from the haredi point of view, mainstream Israeli society was blaming them for the halted construction. There have also been issues concerning education. In the Kiryat Hayovel schools, there is ongoing debate about religious and non-religious studies. There was also an issue regarding the mandatory quota that at least 30% of each seminary's student body must be Sephardi girls. The posts showed concern that this was a maximum and not a minimum.

"There is an uproar about that and we really don't hear about it outside the haredi world," Shilor says. "We're usually limited to what's going on in the Knesset, but it is much bigger."

O202 draws its haredi news from 80 different source pages, and it joined journalist WhatsApp groups that yield significant information.

What O202 has done, in essence, is to strip away the bias that plagues today's journalism. It reports the news from a plethora of sources, unfiltered. Of course when the team searches over 200 pages, some opinion is bound to seep into the selection process, but even that is addressed by choosing from only popular posts.

"If we use something minor that nobody is talking about, then we would be bringing our own opinions into it," Shilor says. "It's difficult because we have to include editor's notes when we need to show a larger context to the picture. We do it with care and stay as neutral as possible."

Shilor plans to translate the haredi page into English in the near future. In addition, O202 is in the process of becoming a registered non-profit. The board is comprised of Palestinians and Jews, religious and secular. It's

O202 post on east Jerusalem, December 16, 2016: Translation from Al Jazeera Jerusalem

Why does settler Yehudah Glick oppose the muezzin law?

Likud Knesset member Yehudah Glick is not known for his tolerance or moderation. Instead, he is considered one of the most prominent personalities of the Israeli right-wing, characterized by extremism, and known in Israel as one of the primary supporters of the so-called "Temple Mount Movement," which purports the Jewish extremist claim to Al-Aksa's location, and seeks to control it.

Glick's recent behavior has been odd as he works to obstruct the Muezzin Law, which the Occupation seek to pass in the Knesset. Glick has worked to stop the preliminary reading of the law in the parliament and has called for religious tolerance; is a delusion to make right-wing Likud look innocent, or is his tolerance and political pragmatism a result of his survival of the assassination attempt [against him] and his fear of another attempt in the future?

Knesset member Zouheir Bahloul recently rushed to call Glick to convince him about the danger of the decision outlaw the muezzin, and the need to change Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision, fighting against this bill that harms the Islamic religion.

A heavy-weight resistance

In a conversation with Al-Jazeera, Bahlul said, "I see the importance of utilizing Israel's right-wing to increase my impact on this decision. When I turned to Glick, he accepted my invitation and together we planned a large gathering including Muslim and Christian religious leaders, in addition to a number of rabbis."

He added that during the meeting he proposed a settlement to arrange local religious committees in all mixed towns and cities [of Arabs and Jews]. In any dispute that arises between them concerning the muezzin's call, they can turn to a local religious committee, composed of Muslim and Jewish religious leaders, in order to reach a comprehensive solution. This is also a protest against the Knesset's decision, so that it may be taken off the agenda.

Bahlul added that the pressure exerted on the Knesset – by members from across the spectrum including the rabbis who came together for the proposed settlement – resulted in delaying the preliminary call for a vote on the muezzin law to an unknown date.

In analyzing Glick's recent behavior, the media spe-

cialist on Israel, Muhammad Masalha, sees that Glick is undergoing an ideological revolution, that entering the political battlefield and the attempted assassination against him, made him realize that politics is the art of possible, and that political extremism wrapped in religion leads to absolute populism. When he got what he wanted, he started to change his political dance to reach the level of international star.

Muhammad Massalha confirmed that Glick's motives in opposing the Muezzin Law is intended to make right-wing Likud appear innocent, and to ensure settlement recognition. He recently spoke about Palestinian rights to work and welfare, parallel to the right of settlers to build and expand.

Masalha added, "Glick is a smart politician, he did not change his ingrained religious beliefs on the right of the ownership of the Temple Mount for the Jews and the building of the Third Temple. But surely he is concerned by the bullets that might end his religious and political projects and dreams, and now has not won recognition and acknowledgment by extremists in his party and right-wing parties, and some settlers who as of late have attack him frequently."



An O202 staff meeting and tour in east Jerusalem. (0202)

important for the team to reflect Jerusalem in a real way, so that they can continue the work of holding a mirror up and providing a channel for understanding between disparate groups. Perhaps more importantly, O202 provides an opportunity for identifying commonalities.

“From everything I’ve seen, each of these groups feels like they’re under occupation,” Shilor summarizes.

“They feel that everyone is against them – especially the municipality – and that their voices aren’t being heard. When you think that everyone is against you, it stands to reason that you would think everyone is doing better than you. There are a lot of similarities in terms of the feelings, even if the actions are different. Understanding this will bring peace to Jerusalem.

“It’s about living in a way that we’re not afraid anymore, and not increasing the hate or the racism. It’s about making those small, human steps to promote tolerance over violence.”

www.facebook.com/0202updates/?fref=ts

www.facebook.com/0202ultraorthodox/?fref=ts

The Lesson from Bullets

Glick was subjected to an assassination attempt at the hands of Jerusalemite martyr Mu’taz Hijazi, who fired four bullets at him. Glick was immediately transferred to intensive care; this took place in October 2014.

In a recent interview with online newspaper Ma’ariv, Glick said, “before Hejazi shot me with four bullets, he told me while he was near to me: ‘I don’t like killing, but you enrage our [Palestinian’s] feelings and the feelings of all Muslims with your provocative visiting of the Al-Aqsa Mosque,’ and then fired immediately after.”

He added, “From the Almighty, I received a new life and the event affected my extreme political views in a huge way. That is why from now on I will be the extremist for mutual understanding and respect for opposite ideas, and I will return to the Al-Aqsa mosque but accompanied by Arab Knesset members to emphasize that holy places are for all religions, and has to be open to everyone to lay the foundations of love of religions and living together.”

Glick, 49, is a resident of the Otniel settlement which is established on Palestinian land in the West Bank city of Hebron, and worked for five years as head of the “Heritage of Temple Mount” organization, assisting the establishment of the Settler Leadership Forum in the West Bank.

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