



Salam Institute
For Peace and Justice

Implementing Pathways to Forgiveness Guides

Pilot Project in Tunisia
(February-April 2026)



In a region where social cohesion and peaceful coexistence are increasingly essential, the Pathways to Forgiveness project is a timely and impactful initiative. Implemented in Tunisia by the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, the project integrates forgiveness education into school environments by equipping educators with training to implement the guides, which provide practical tools, pedagogical frameworks, and psychosocial skills for introducing children to forgiveness education. At its core, the project recognizes forgiveness as a transformative social practice that can help heal divisions, address interpersonal conflicts, and strengthen community bonds. By working directly with educators, the initiative aims to create a strong impact that extends beyond the classroom.



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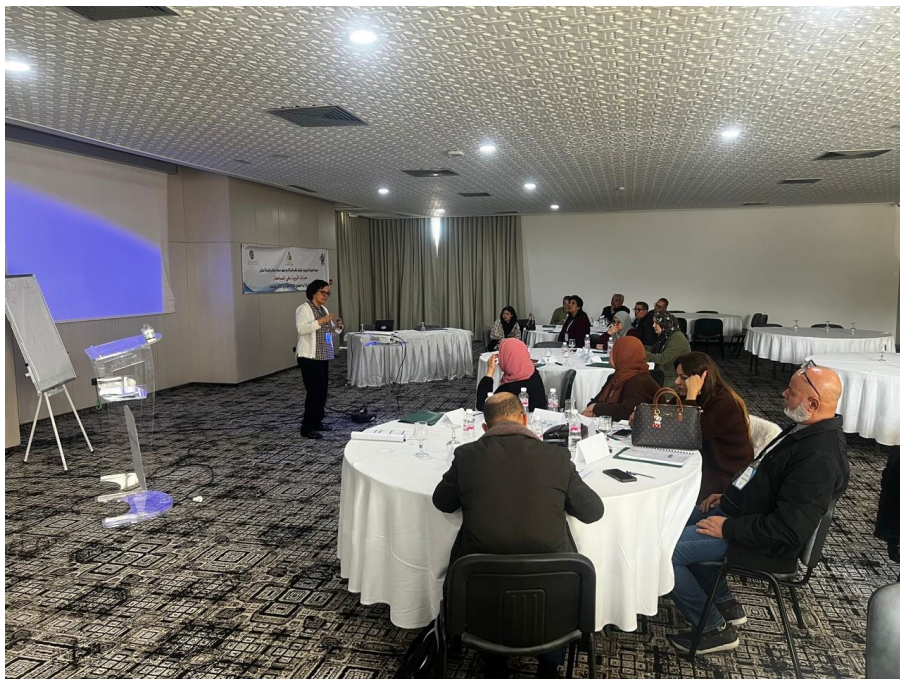
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Investing in Educators' Capacities for Transformative Learning

The forgiveness training in Tunisia engaged 25 teachers and school counselors in a three-day workshop on forgiveness stories and hands-on activities that foster forgiveness-related attitudes and behaviors. The training, designed and delivered by a team of international and local experts, combined theoretical grounding with experiential learning methods. It introduced participants to the principles of forgiveness, its psychological and social dimensions, and its relevance to education and peacebuilding.

The training focused on strengthening educators' pedagogical skills and deepening their understanding of core themes, including respect for diversity, nonviolence, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Participants explored practical strategies for addressing real-world challenges, such as anger management, bullying, and fostering inclusive classroom environments that value differences in religion, culture, and identity.

A distinctive feature of the training was its emphasis on active learning through role-playing, storytelling, group discussions, and interactive activities. Educators were not only introduced to new concepts but also practiced translating them into classroom activities. This approach ensured that participants left the training with concrete tools and a clear plan for implementation.



¹ Small group work during the training in Tunisia



From Theory to Practice: Action Plans and Classroom Implementation

One of the project’s key achievements was its strong focus on practical application. At the end of the training, each participant developed a tailored action plan outlining how they would integrate forgiveness education into their school context. These plans served as implementation roadmaps and were shared with trainers and coordinators for follow-up and evaluation.

Between February and April 2026, educators delivered at least ten selected lessons from the guides in their classrooms, targeting different age groups. For younger children (ages 5–8), sessions focused on emotional expression, safe communication, and building trust in the classroom. Teachers used gradual, supportive approaches to encourage participation and emphasized that acknowledging mistakes is part of learning, not a trigger for punishment.

For youth (ages 12–16), the sessions explored more complex dimensions of forgiveness, including accountability, empathy, and the challenges of apologizing. Interactive methods, such as storytelling, dialogue exercises, and group reflections, helped students overcome initial resistance and engage more openly with these concepts.

Educators reported that these activities not only deepened students’ understanding of forgiveness but also improved classroom dynamics. Conflicts were increasingly reframed as learning opportunities, allowing students to practice dialogue, empathy, and forgiveness in real time.



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² In the picture, one teacher is working with her students on a forgiveness story from the guide



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Measurable Impact: Shifting Attitudes Toward Forgiveness

The project's impact was assessed using pre- and post-training surveys measuring participants' attitudes toward forgiveness. The findings revealed encouraging shifts in situations requiring forgiveness. Before the training, many participants showed a strong inclination toward punitive responses in conflict scenarios. After the training, there was a noticeable decrease in support for punishment and a marked increase in openness to forgiveness. The number of participants willing to forgive more than doubled, reflecting a substantial transformation in perspective.

These changes were both quantitative and qualitative. Participants showed greater flexibility in their judgments, moving away from rigid "right or wrong" frameworks toward more empathetic understandings of human behavior. This shift is particularly significant in educational contexts, where teachers' attitudes directly shape students' perceptions and responses to conflict.

Sustaining Change: Follow-Up and Community Engagement

To ensure sustainability, the project included follow-up sessions and ongoing engagement with participants. These sessions provided educators with a platform to share experiences, discuss challenges, and refine their approaches. They also underscored the importance of peer learning and collective reflection in enhancing the training's impact. Educators emphasized the need for ongoing support, including additional training, localized materials, and digital tools to enhance engagement. They also identified parental and broader community involvement as critical to reinforcing forgiveness values beyond the classroom.

Despite challenges such as limited instructional time and academic scheduling constraints, overall feedback was highly positive. Participants rated the training 4.0-4.5 out of 5, underscoring its relevance, quality, and practical value.





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Toward a Culture of Forgiveness in Education

The Pathways to Forgiveness implementation project demonstrates that integrating forgiveness into education is both feasible and impactful. Equipping educators with the right tools and perspectives can transform classrooms into spaces of dialogue, empathy, and healing.

The initiative contributes to a growing recognition that peacebuilding must address not only structural and political dimensions but also the interpersonal and emotional dimensions of conflict. When approached as a skill and a practice, forgiveness offers a powerful pathway toward social cohesion.

As participants continue to apply and adapt what they have learned, the project lays the groundwork for a scalable model that can be replicated in other contexts across the region. In doing so, it reaffirms the vital role of education in shaping not only knowledge but also values—and in nurturing generations capable of building more just, compassionate, and peaceful societies.