

Episode 49: Solutions - Not Sides: Experiences in Education from the UK

Guests: Sharon Booth & Mohammed Ali Amla, Solutions Not Sides

Hosts: Mert, Alexandria, Yusuf

Bio: Sharon Booth is the Founding Executive Director of Solutions Not Sides, the leading British NGO focused on fostering constructive dialogue about Israel/Palestine in Schools. She studied Theology and Religious Studies at Cambridge University, taught English in Tunisia, and worked in Amman on youth-focused publishing initiatives. Sharon also served at the British Embassy and holds a master's with distinction from King's College London, specializing in nationalism and religion. In 2010, she founded Solutions Not Sides to empower students with the tools to engage in non-partisan, solutions-focused learning.

Mohammed Ali Amla is the Public Affairs Director at Solutions Not Sides, overseeing public affairs, crisis communication, strategic partnerships, and youth leadership programmes. With over twenty years of experience at the intersection of faith and policy, he is also a researcher, educator, and practitioner. Mohammed Ali founded Lita'arafu and Christian Muslim Encounters, advising widely on interfaith, equality, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and community leadership. He focuses on equipping young people to become bridge-builders and changemakers, while addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, and structural inequality.

In this episode: Mert, Alexandria, and Yusuf speak with Sharon Booth and Mohammed Ali Amla about the mission and work of Solutions Not Sides, a UK-based education organisation promoting constructive dialogue around Israel/Palestine. They discuss the organisation's non-partisan, solutions-focused approach, youth-led workshops, and longer-term programmes like the Bridge Builders Programme and the Olive Branch Award. The conversation explores how Solutions Not Sides addresses bias, antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism, and the challenge of teaching empathy and critical thinking in schools. Guests share insights from their work in the UK context, from school classrooms to campuses, as well as reflections on broader international implications. Listeners will gain practical insights into creating safe spaces for difficult conversations, fostering solutions-oriented thinking, and empowering young people to engage critically and empathetically with one of the world's most contested conflicts.

Links: <https://solutionsnotsides.co.uk/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Please also check out our other episodes to explore multiple perspectives.

Dedication:

We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed and injured in Gaza and their

grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.

To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeries Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.

Disclaimer:

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.

Legal & Historical Anchor Episodes:

This podcast may include controversial legal terms of specific technical significance. Their legal applicability requires a thorough expert contextualization; for this, we refer to our legal chapter. All relevant terms of international law, its institutions, current controversies, and the state of jurisprudence are explained in the anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß LL.M. (Cambridge) (Episode 36). He is co-author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court, and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia vs. Myanmar genocide case.

Historical matters are discussed from multiple perspectives in this podcast. Please check the cross-references in the shownotes of the respective episodes for details. All historically contested issues are addressed in the history anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer (Episode 21), author of the comprehensive work *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton 2008), a standard reference in the field. For her scholarly achievements as a historian, she was awarded the *Preis des Historischen Kollegs* in 2025, the highest distinction in her discipline in Germany.