

# Newsletter

## February 2020: The 4 Year Milestone

We hope that 2020 started well for all of you!

Despite all the madness in the world, we are staying focused on **our work: helping Israeli and Palestinian grassroots initiatives bridge the divides**, whether inside Israel and Palestine or cross-border. The extraordinary activists and organizations that we support need our help more than ever!

We strongly believe that reconciliation through person-to-person contact will make all the difference in the long run: **sustainable peace will grow from the bottom up.**



*Israel – Palestine : Can we believe that peace will be achieved one day?*

*"The most solid swings are fastened to the stars." (Arab proverb)*

*Cartoon by Plantu, who generously supported us at our last gala event*



February 2020 is a special month for B8 of Hope: it is the **4th anniversary the 8 co-founders' first meeting**. In 2016, we were a group of friends, all from different backgrounds and cultures, who decided to contribute as best we could to the inspiring movements and organizations in the region. Four short years later, we are an important organization as well as a key player abroad and in the field. In the coming months, we will launch a **survey that measures our regional impact**, and our importance for the survival of the organizations we support. Stay tuned for the results!

## **Rewind to the Last Quarter of 2019**

Before revealing our plans for the new year, a few words about the last months of 2019...

In October, our chairwoman Mehra Rimer attended the J-Street Conference. J-Street is an American Jewish pro-Israel, pro-peace lobby that wants Israel to be a secure, democratic and national home for the Jewish people. Working within the contexts of American politics and the Jewish community, they advocate for policies that promote shared US and Israeli interests, as well as Jewish and **democratic values that will lead to a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.

Attending this annual conference was a first for our chairwoman. It provided an excellent opportunity to support the representatives of several Israeli and Palestinian peace NGOs and movements from our pool. These representatives contributed to the panel discussions of this influential conference. Palestinian peace activists courageously attended, despite the presence of anti-normalization pressures. They voiced their concerns about the rights of their people, and took advantage of this platform to make it clear that the Palestinian peace camp exists.

One of the J-Street Conference's most inspiring moments occurred during the closing remarks given by Abdallah Hamarsheh Director of **Zimam**: Martin Luther King said "I Have a Dream". I say WE (Israelis and Palestinians) have a dream, and we have to make it happen together.



November was a busy month for B8 of Hope thanks to the visiting activists from **A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland**. The representatives of this movement, Meron Rapoport and Ameer Fakhoury presented their vision in a conference co-organized by B8 of Hope and the University of Geneva's Global Studies Institute. We also organized a series of meetings with diplomats and key figures in Switzerland to bring more visibility to A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland's proposal for a Two States Solution within the framework of a confederation. (In essence, they promote the creation of 2 sovereign States with joint institutions at a federal level, and the freedom of movement for all).

**Click here** to read the newspaper article about Ameer and Meron published by Heidi.news.



**Ameer Fakhoury and Meron Rapoport**

## Back to 2020

Near the end of January, we were very honored to host **The Parent Circle Families Forum (PCFF)** in Geneva for the first time. This joint Israeli-Palestinian organization consists of more than 600 bereaved families who have lost an immediate family member in the conflict. **Members refuse to see each other as enemies; they work hand in hand to build connections and reach reconciliation.** Their Israeli and Palestinian representatives Robi Damelin and Bassam Aramin spent three days in Geneva, attending various meetings.

The main event was their presentation at the International school of Geneva's Centre des arts, a venue that frequently and generously opens its doors to B8 of Hope for this kind of event. Robi and Bassam spoke to a full room of B8 of Hope and Ecolint guests from the Jewish, Arab, local Swiss and expat communities. The Parent Circle Families Forum's message is universal: *"If I, who lost a close family member, can walk the path of peace, then surely you can too"*.

**Click here** to read the newspaper article published by Heidi.news about Bassam and Robi.



**Bassam Aramin and Robi Damelin**

**Photo Credit : Geraldo Pestalozzi**

## Upcoming Events

### **February 2020: Raising Awareness of Geneva Students**

It is now a tradition to screen Steve Apkon and Marcina Hale's **documentary *Disturbing the Peace*** in local Geneva high schools, and spread its important message: **"There is another way" than violence.** This is a message that applies to any conflict. The **Combatants for Peace (CFP)** who are featured in this documentary will use Skype to talk with the audience shortly after the screening hosted by Institut Florimont. Students will be invited to ask questions to one of the protagonists and leaders of CFP.

Coincidentally, John Lyndon, the Director of the **Alliance for Middle East Peace (Allmep)**, will be visiting Geneva during this time. He has kindly agreed to attend the screening, and will also answer students' questions, all within the framework of this B8 of Hope event organized in partnership with Institut Florimont. We are infinitely grateful to the Geneva schools that are willing to expose their students to our work. (Please contact us at [info@b8ofhope.org](mailto:info@b8ofhope.org) for a screening and/or a presentation).

**Click here** to see the trailer of Disturbing the Peace on YouTube.



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### **March 2020: The Open Space Workshop in Partnership with ForumZFD**

One of the main focuses as of 2020 will be the **creation of more synergies and partnerships between the different movements and NGOs in our pool**. We will encourage and enable dialogue between organizations that are working toward the same goal, from different but equally valid angles. Last summer we kicked off the meeting of this synergies-building project with representatives from almost all of our pool. Many small, yet meaningful collaborations have formed since then. Building on the success of this meeting, we are partnering with a German organization called **ForumZFD**.

ForumZFD's expertise is capacity building. Their Jerusalem-based facilitators will organize a workshop on Partnership and Synergies building by adopting a new concept called "**open space workshop**". At present, the logistics are being sorted out, and Mehra Rimer will soon participate in this workshop. It will host our pool of protégés, a total of 30 representatives from our pool of Palestinian and Israeli civil society initiatives.

### **October 2020: Israel - Palestine As Seen Through the B8 of Hope Lens**

We are organizing a **pilot trip** for a small group of Swiss supporters who wish to learn more about our work. The group will meet activists based in Israel and the Palestinian Authority Territories in the West Bank. The one-week trip will begin on October 11th.

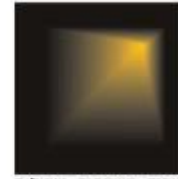
Available spots are very limited! This is an opportunity to travel with our chair and co-founder Mehra Rimer, while [discovering the Holy Land through the lens of B8 of Hope](#). If you are interested, please contact us as soon as possible at [info@b8ofhope.org](mailto:info@b8ofhope.org).

## News from the Organizations We Support

For further details about each organization, please check their individual websites (in alphabetical order):

1. A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland [www.alandforall.org](http://www.alandforall.org)
2. Combatants of Peace [cfpeace.org](http://cfpeace.org)
3. Green Land Society for Health Development [www.glskd.org](http://www.glskd.org)
4. Jerusalem Youth Chorus [www.jerusalemjuvthchorus.org](http://www.jerusalemjuvthchorus.org)
5. Karama Center [website in progress]
6. Keshet Eilon's school of music [specific projects involving Jewish, Palestinian and Bedouin communities around music]
7. The Parent Circle Families Forum [theparentcircle.org](http://theparentcircle.org)
8. Peres Center Saving Children Program  
[www.peres-center.org/en/the-organization/projects/medicine/saving-children/](http://www.peres-center.org/en/the-organization/projects/medicine/saving-children/)
9. Polyphony Foundation [polyphonyfoundation.org](http://polyphonyfoundation.org)
10. Road to Recovery  
[www.roadtorecovery.org.il/Site/en/EnIndex.html](http://www.roadtorecovery.org.il/Site/en/EnIndex.html)
11. Roots [www.friendsofroots.net/](http://www.friendsofroots.net/)
12. Taghyeer [taghyeerpal.ps/](http://taghyeerpal.ps/)
13. The Teachers' Lounge  
[teachersloungejer.wixsite.com/teachers-lounge-eng](http://teachersloungejer.wixsite.com/teachers-lounge-eng)
14. Tech2Peace <http://tech2peace.com>
15. Women Wage Peace [www.womenwagepeace.org.il/](http://www.womenwagepeace.org.il/)
16. Zimam [www.zimam.ps/home](http://www.zimam.ps/home)

# INITIATIVES WE SUPPORT



כורום משפחות שכולות  
 ישראלי-פלסטיני בעד שלום  
 ISRAELI PALESTINIAN  
 BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR PEACE  
 מנתחי מנתוזת טעמי פלסטינים  
 !סורתיילסי מן אהל السلام



מרכז פרס Peres Center  
 مركز بيرس  
 for Peace & Innovation  
 للسلام والابتكار  
 תחום חדשנות



Women Wage Peace

