



Credit: Stars of Hope

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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# A word from Mehra Rimer, Co-founder and Chair

In 2016, a group of 8 enthusiastic friends from different ethnicities and backgrounds in Geneva came together to form B8 of Hope. We hoped, we dreamt, and we made it happen!

In very short time, we built a large community of support in Geneva, with hundreds of supporters from all ethnicities, religions and nationalities. Jews and Arabs from their respective diasporas, international expats, and Swiss locals all attend our events with a spirit of tolerance and a sense of making a positive contribution, together, in support of our vision. We believe that peace comes from the bottom-up, through personal connections knocking down the barriers of fear and stereotypes. Our mission is to provide crucial help for grassroots Israeli and Palestinian initiatives that allow dialogue, bridge-building and non-violence to blossom and thrive.

We are very proud that we are a source of inspiration in Geneva, an example for a pro-solution approach that respectfully considers both sides, and a key player on the ground in Israel-Palestine. In 2019, our pool of grantees grew to include 13 Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations and movements – the pool has quadrupled in size since our foundation in 2016 and the work we do with our grantees has only grown!

On another note, 2019 was the year that we launched our “synergies project”. B8 of Hope wants to extend the impact of our various Israeli and Palestinian grantees and protégés by encouraging them to collaborate and share best practices – to help make each other stronger, to face their difficulties and common challenges. Each on-site NGO and movement operates from a different perspective, yet they all share similar values and goals. By working in synergy instead of in a bubble, they can save funds, improve efficiency and expand their impact. We encourage them to be creative in finding ways to collaborate and partner.



The “synergies project” also applies to B8 of Hope! We too work with different NGOs and foundations in Switzerland and abroad, and readily join forces where and when it is needed. Our new moto, “Let’s act outside the box”, makes our shared values louder, our distinct perspectives complementary, and a greater impact possible!

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our donors for their amazing generosity and support, my co-founders and steering committee members who back and guide me with their wisdom. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to our volunteers who contribute appreciably to B8 of Hope’s work and the success of our events.

Finally, I offer a heartfelt thank you to the pool of young interns from prestigious international and Swiss universities who expressed interest in our internship programs! What touches me most is their readiness to keep in touch and continue volunteering remotely after their internship ended (vive la technologie !). I believe that B8 of Hope’s future is guaranteed thanks to these young people who stay interested and involved. As we say in French, “La relève est assurée”.

B8fully yours,  
**Mehra Rimer**

# About B8 of Hope

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B8 of Hope is a Geneva based, Swiss registered non-profit association founded in 2016 by a group of 8 friends that hail from diverse backgrounds. Our name is pronounced “Beit”, the Arabic and Hebrew word for home combined with a numerical reference to the 8 co-founders.

## OUR VISION

All political solutions in Israel-Palestine have failed so far. We believe that peace will come from the bottom up, and will result from the important work of established grassroots initiatives led by Israeli and Palestinian civil society activists. These activists share a goal: the creation of personal connections between individuals, and the uniting of divides through humanization, transformation and reconciliation. We support initiatives that reject all forms of violence while working toward cooperation, not polarization. Supporting these initiatives creates conditions favorable to a sustainable peace: Israelis and Palestinians who have had a change of heart will pressure their political leaders to bring the peace agenda back to the table.

## OUR MISSION

Among the many barriers to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, we focus on four main obstacles that generate true divides and lack of synergies:

- 1) Internal divides inside each community  
Israelis do not form a monolithic bloc, nor do the Palestinians. There are many political, ethnic and social divides. To bridge these gaps, we support initiatives that unite rather than polarize, initiatives that enable people to find a common ground and shared values, initiatives that encourage people to accept the necessity of a peaceful solution. Unity and inclusiveness are our key words. Positive transformations happen with inclusion - not exclusion!
- 2) Cross-border divides between Israelis and Palestinians  
Despite their close proximity to one another, Israelis and Palestinians live in almost complete separation. Both sides have little knowledge of each other’s lives and too often are raised to fear and hate each other. It is essential to encourage dialogue and bridge-building activities in a place where joint meetings and get-togethers are difficult and dangerous.

The impossible becomes achievable when you listen to the “other”, when you hear their narratives and perspectives and share bread together. Their humanity becomes visible, and your shared dreams of a better future for your children

become a powerful, uniting force.  
As Ali Abu Awwad has so eloquently stated, dialogue is the secure place for argument; it is a place where “two truths can meet”; dialogue is the place where one can accept that “the painful price of peace is cheaper than the terrible price of war”; it is the place place where “we can live by respecting our differences” and “where peace can be finally achieved”.

- 3) Divides outside of Israel and Palestine  
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict polarizes public opinion outside of Israel and Palestine. We need to put an end to the inflated influence of external factions and interests. Adding more fuel to the conflict is not helpful. Instead, B8 of Hope promotes a “pro-solution” perspective and supports the courageous Israelis and Palestinians on the ground that work tirelessly to pave a path for a peaceful solution.
  - 4) Lack of synergies among the peace-builders  
Funds for Israeli and Palestinian peace-builders are scarce and the challenges on the ground are numerous. This unfortunately creates a climate of competition between peace-building NGOs and movements. Most organizations work in their own little bubble and have limited interactions with their peers. Creating synergies and collaboration opportunities will be a game-changer that will boost the impact of each initiative. B8 of Hope is creating a safe space and forum for our pool of grantees that want to tackle the peace issue from different angles. They share values and goals, while working separately. Perspectives can be complementary. Collaboration and partnership make the voice of peacemakers louder and their impact bigger. This rule also applies to B8 of Hope and its partners in Switzerland, Europe and the US.
- We support our Israeli and Palestinian initiatives in many ways:
- a) Providing funds for their activities through fund-raising events in Geneva. Our funds come mainly from private Arab, Jewish, international expat and local Swiss donors that support our cause.
  - b) Giving visibility to initiatives through conferences, documentary screenings followed by Q/A sessions (these include the peace activists and protagonists from the film), and press and media coverage for interviews and articles.
  - c) Creating networking opportunities with philanthropic institutions and influential decision-makers.
  - d) Offering advice in terms of governance and capacity-building during our due diligence phase and after. We periodically provide an in-depth analysis of our grantees’ reports and management styles, we collaborate with them in order to develop plans to improve infrastructures and put in place capacity-building training.
  - e) Providing a safe forum and platform to promote synergy building activities and workshops. This encourages collaboration between the initiatives, and increases their impact while saving funds and energy
  - f) Creating a community of supporters abroad that is inspired by their work.



# Events and activities in 2019

## January, February, March

The first quarter of 2019 focused on preparations for our second fund raising gala. The gala took place on March 11th at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva. We had a full room with almost 500 guests, including members of Geneva’s Jewish and Arab communities, international expats and Swiss locals. The amazing Israeli and Palestinian speakers moved us to tears. Raz Kones (an Israeli peace activist), Yara Amayra (a Palestinian peace activist), Huda Abuarquob (the regional director of Alliance for Middle East Peace/Allmep) and Ali Abu Awwad (the founder of Taghyeer/Change) represented the voices of the initiatives we support. Maz Jobrani (an Iranian American actor and stand-up comedian), on the other hand, made us laugh until we cried! The evening was a great success in terms of atmosphere and fund-raising. Our message (let’s be pro-solution and help those who are paving a path for peace) was well received by our supporters.



Immediately following the gala, B8 of Hope capitalized on the fortuitous presence of two leaders in Switzerland: John Lyndon, the European Director of Allmep in Paris, and his regional director, Huda Abuarquob. We took them to Bern for a meeting with members of the Swiss Conseil National (parliament) and the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) lobbies governments for international funds to support Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations. ALLMEP believes that civil society and grassroots activists can make a strong impact – from the bottom up – on a sustainable peace process. B8 of Hope and ALLMEP work closely together and welcome opportunities to help each other.

## April

In early April, Yara Amayra returned to Geneva for a screening of « Guerrières de la Paix », a documentary by young French Director, Hanna Assouline that we partly funded. The film follows the Women Wage Peace movement. Yara, one of the documentary’s protagonist, was present and answered the audience’s questions. The association Giving Women, in partnership with B8 of Hope, hosted this screening.

Later in April, Professor Zachary Metz, from Colombia University’s School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) invited our chairwoman Mehra Rimer to present our work to his Masters in Peace Building students.

## May

In early May, chairwoman Mehra Rimer traveled to Israel to meet the members of The Road to Recovery an organization that B8 of Hope decided to add to its roster. The Road to Recovery is a network of Israeli volunteers that drive Palestinian patients from checkpoints to Israeli hospitals. They frequently partner with Palestinian volunteer drivers. One of Road to Recovery’s main messages is that the important thing is less the transport but more the conversation in the car. While in Israel, Mehra also attended the Combatants for Peace’s Alternative Memorial Ceremony – which is also supported by B8 of Hope. She wanted to experience the impact and power of this ceremony, where bereaved parents share their sorrow and pay their respects to beloved, deceased family members in the spirit of Sharing Sorrow and Bringing Hope. Throughout her stay, Mehra was accompanied by Katia Philipon, head of a French foundation called Kaleidoscope. This joint trip offered Katia and Mehra an opportunity to talk about collaborative philanthropy and to compare notes about shared grantees and potential prospects.

Later in May, B8 of Hope joined forces with the International Oriental Film Festival to sponsor a screening of «The Field », a documentary film about the creation of Judur/Shorashim/Roots, an Israeli-Palestinian joint initiative for dialogue and bridge building. B8 of Hope served as a liaison for the festival, and hosted Rav. Mordechai Vardi, the film’s director. Vardi answered questions from the audience after the screening. The associations J-Call and Cercle Martin Buber also sponsored this event and invited their network to attend the screening.



June

Highly recommended by our friends and partners at Coexistences (an association based in Lausanne that organizes bridge-building programs for groups from Israel and Palestine), the Jerusalem Youth Chorus joined our pool of grantees. In June, the JYC also visited Switzerland to participate in a weeklong Coexistences program. While there, the JYC gave two concerts – one in Lausanne and the other at the United Nations in Geneva.

Over the summer, B8 of Hope instituted an internship program and welcomed three amazing interns for the first time. Coming from the Geneva Graduate Institute, Mc Gill in Montreal and Wesleyan in Connecticut, Brooks, Ilona and Parker spent the summer working for B8 of Hope. They still keep in touch with us and continued to volunteer remotely for the remainder of 2019. Mylene, an older PhD student from the University of Bern, also joined our team as a volunteer: work for her thesis on the symbolic of names and places in the Holy Land brought her to Jerusalem for one year where she was able to offer us on-site help during her stay.

July

July was a busy month for chairwoman Mehra Rimer and Jean-Marc Liling, a member of our steering committee as well as a representative on the ground in Jerusalem. During her month in Israel and Palestine, Mehra had briefings and update sessions with Jean-Marc and participated in many B8 of Hope-sponsored workshops in Nablus, Gush Etsion, Jerusalem, and Rishon Lezion. She also attended meetings everywhere from Tel-Aviv to Jericho and investigated promising new organizations including near Gaza frontier in Kibbutz Beri. David Rimer, one of the eight B8 cofounders, joined Mehra and Jean-Marc to help organize a small on-site event -- a “synergies project” dedicated to building connections among the pool of activists that B8 of Hope supports.



Photos from Summer Trip



Taghyeer’s Woman’s Group in Nablus



Mehra with Osama and Uri from Combatants for Peace in Kibbutz Be’eri



Roots women’s photography workshop in Gush Etzion - Beit Umar



Taghyeer’s women’s group in a village called Jubet Adh Dib



Mehra and Ali from Taghyeer at Karama Center Gush Etsion - Beit Umar



Mehra with Rami and Bassam from Parents Circle Families Forum in Jerusalem



Women Wage Peace Event in Rishon Lezion



The Lighthouse is Here Kibbutz Be’eri



September

September was a month for big changes: Chrystelle Thiébaud, our new administrative assistant, joined B8 of Hope. She is the only remunerated staff member to date, since other team members work pro-bono. One of her first tasks was to help prepare for a move in October, when Chrystelle and Mehra could finally relocated from the Rimer family’s kitchen table to a bigger and better workspace on Route de Chêne, Geneva. The Rimers have donated this new workspace, but it is important to note that our official address remains the same: Avenue de Champel 4, 1206 Genève, courtesy of co-founders Leila Hawa and Arun Chandrasekharan

October

For the first time, Mehra attended the J-Street Conference in Washington, D.C. near the end of October. This important conference provided an excellent opportunity for Mehra to lend her support to several representatives from our pool of NGOs who participated in the conference’s panel discussions.

A real highlight of the J-Street Conference came from Abdallah Hamarsheh, founder of Zimam, one of our grantees. He proclaimed: “Martin Luther King said I have a dream. I say WE have a dream and WE are going to make it happen TOGHETHER!”



November

November was a busy month thanks to a visit from A Land for All - Two States One Homeland. Representatives of this movement came to Geneva to present their vision during a conference co-organized by B8 of Hope and the University of Geneva. We also organized meetings for them with diplomats and key figures in Switzerland. This trip gave A Land for All - 2 States 1 Homeland an opportunity to gain visibility and receive constructive feedback on their vision.



Leila Hawa (B8 of Hope) and Ameer Fakhoury and Meron Rapoport (A Land for All: Two States One Homeland)



# A Word About Our Grantees

Here is a quick overview of our grantees and the year that they joined our pool:

**2016:** Judur/Shorashim/Roots, Women Wage Peace, Taghyeer and The Peres Center for Peace and Innovations

**2017:** Combatants for Peace and The Karama Center

**2018:** A Land for All 2 States 1 Homeland

**2019:** The Jerusalem Youth Chorus, Polyphony Foundation, Tech-2Peace, The Road To Recovery, The Teachers’ Lounge, and Zimam



(Roots Summer Camps) photo credit Bruce Shaffer

## Judur/Shorashim/Roots

Roots is a unique network of local Palestinians and Israelis who have grown to see each other as the partners they both need to end the conflict. Based on a mutual recognition of both peoples’ connection to the Land, members are developing understanding and solidarity despite their ideological differences. Roots fosters a grassroots movement of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Israelis and Palestinians. It offers spaces where people can take responsibility by challenging their communities’ assumptions about one another, build trust, and create a new discourse for the conflict in their respective societies. The list of activities is long: youth programs and encounters between the two communities for projects like photography workshops and speaking tours abroad. With its projects and workshops, Roots builds trust and partnership; the necessary societal foundations for the growth of future political agreements.

In 2019, B8 of Hope chose to continue sponsoring Roots activities that focus on children, teenagers and young adults. We sponsor their holiday camps and pre-army academy visits, the Youth Group and Young Adult Alumni program.

- o Summer holiday camps  
Roots has run an annual summer camp for children ages 5-12 since 2016. This weeklong camp offers photography, crafts, cooking, dance and time with animals while providing a fun and carefree setting for positive interactions between Israeli and Palestinian children. A weeklong overnight camp is also organized for teenagers. It includes trips to different parts of the region.
- o Pre-army Academies  
Roots brings its message to the Israeli pre-army academies. High school students who are about to start their military service are exposed to both the Palestinian and the settlers’ narratives. This exposure serves to build their understanding of the people with whom they will be interacting during their service. For many young Israelis, this is their first encounter with Palestinians. They witness constructive and respectful discussions and hopefully have a glimpse of others’ perspectives.
- o Youth Group and Young Adult Alumni Program  
Meeting every other week, the Roots youth group consists of 20 local Israeli and Palestinian high school students. Israeli and Palestinian university students as well as an adult advisor help organize the group activities and facilitate discussions. Meetings include discussion groups, recreational activities, and day trips to heritage sites that are important to the cultural identities of participants. With these exercises, the members explore their different narratives.

After one or more years in the Roots Youth program, alumni often want to keep in contact with each other. Participants have asked Roots leaders to help them continue what they have started. This request has resulted in the creation of the Young Adult program. One must never forget that there are few places in Gush Etzion and the West Bank where people from both sides can feel comfortable about meeting each other. Roots gives them that space at Karama.



## Taghyeer

Taghyeer (“Change”) is the Palestinian, Nonviolence civil society movement that encourages Palestinians to unite for both social change and self-determination with the hope of achieving Palestinian national rights.

Taghyeer encourages Palestinians to become decision-makers and agents for their own liberation by transcending the constricting narrative of victimhood and anger. In other words, Taghyeer believes that Palestinians should manage their anger rather than be controlled by it; they should harness it to building the future in a constructive way, by living according to the values of good citizenship and integrity, and by embracing nonviolence as a unifying identity for their people. They should adopt nonviolence as the means to end the occupation.

Nonviolent struggle, according to Taghyeer, starts by cultivating a non-violent identity--an identity that draws upon the best of a person’s (and a society’s) humanity. On all levels (individual, community and ultimately national), Palestinians must build trust amongst themselves and with others in order to take a stand. They must use nonviolent action against despair, fragmentation and injustice. Palestinians should:

- recognize and adopt the tools of a nonviolent identity in actions and communications
- empower Palestinian youths and women

-care for the environment. They should clean the streets, make villages greener, avoid the use of chemicals in agriculture, and enhance nutritional health

B8 of Hope helped Taghyeer build a stronger team. B8 of Hope’s David Rimer spent many long hours giving them structural advice, supporting them with their recruitment activities and B8 of Hope also provided specialist support on strategy training. In terms of activities, our funds covered the costs of the Women’s group, as well as nonviolence workshops in numerous West Bank towns and villages.

## Women Wage Peace

Women Wage Peace, an Israeli movement with thousands of members, includes women from the political right, center, and left, Jewish and Arab, religious and secular. All are united by their appeal for a political agreement that will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The movement focuses particularly on women’s roles in the conflicts (as per UN resolution 1325). Women Wage Peace has partnered with Palestinian women from the West Bank who pursue the same goals.

B8 of Hope supports WWP in various ways this year.

- o Regular screenings for *Guerrières de la Paix* (Warriors for Peace) by French film director Hanna Assouline  
This powerful documentary features Women Wage Peace. The film has become a tool to spread awareness and inspiration.

- o Politics of Acquaintance meetings

During 2019, Women Wage Peace organized several meetings in Israel and the West Bank. The goal was to create an alternative language; a language based on sincere curiosity seeking to uncover common values and share possibilities.





# Peres Center for Peace and Innovations

Founded in 1996 by the late President of Israel, Shimon Peres, the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation develops and implements impactful and meaningful programs. They promote the image of a prosperous Israel, support and highlight Israeli innovations and pave the way for peaceful coexistence between all Israeli citizens. They promote a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.

We support the Peres Center’s “Saving Children Program”. This program helps Palestinian and Syrian children to receive treatment in hospitals throughout Israel. It provides them with complex and often life-saving medical care. Every month, the Peres Center handles dozens of requests: since the program’s launch in 2003, 12,500 children have been treated. Beyond the vital humanitarian aspect of saving the lives of children in need, this program creates a unique meeting point for families, medical teams, and hospitals – it builds bridges of hope and peace.



Mehra with Chemi Peres

# Karama Center

Karama, a Palestinian peace center that is built on a small piece of land belonging to a family of peace builders: the amazing Abu Awwad family!

Karama is located in an agricultural region near Gush Etsion and Bethlehem, in the Palestinian Authority Territories (Area C). It is a 20-minute drive from both Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

A true Oasis of Peace, this center hosts inspiring workshops for peace organizations, including Judur/Shorashim/Roots.

B8 of Hope is helping to improve Karama’s infrastructure and buildings. The goal is to turn it into an incubator for local peace organizations. Geographically speaking, it is ideally located in Area C where both Israelis and Palestinians can meet. Steering committee member and representative on the ground Jean-Marc Liling is involved in building Karama’s board and registering it as a Center under both Israel’s and Palestinian Authority’s legislation.

## Karama Center Before (2014)



## and After (2019)





# Combatants for Peace

In 2006, Israeli ex-soldiers and Palestinian former combatants laid down their weapons and founded Combatants for Peace on the basis of nonviolence principles. The movement, an egalitarian, bi-national, grassroots organization, was founded upon the belief that the cycle of violence can only be broken if Israelis and Palestinians join forces. For over a decade, Combatants for Peace have embodied the humanistic values of freedom, democracy, security and dignity for all. Through joint nonviolent actions, they lay the foundations for a nonviolent future. This movement has already changed attitudes on a wide scale: both the Israel and Palestinian public and governmental decision makers have been impressed by their work.

In keeping with their values, the Combatants for Peace work towards a mutually agreed upon solutions that allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live in their homeland with freedom, security, democracy and dignity.

Combatants for Peace organizes various activities that involve group meetings where Palestinian and Israeli members can present their personal stories, and participants can hold open discussions. Of their many activities, B8 of Hope was particularly inspired by their Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day ceremony. This ceremony has taken place on the Israeli Memorial Day for the last 15 years. We financially support this powerful event. It is led by and produced in collaboration with the Parents Circle Families Forum, a group of 700 families from both sides who have lost a child in the conflict. These parents have chosen to grieve their losses together, to build bridges across their sorrow and to pave a path toward a better future for the next generations. This ceremony celebrates togetherness and hope. In May 2019, more than 6000 people participated; a significant growth from 15 years ago when there were only 50!



(CFP – Alternative Memorial Ceremony in Tel-Aviv, May 2019)

# A Land for All – Two States One Homeland

A Land For All - Two States, One Homeland was founded by a diverse group of Israeli and Palestinian lawyers, geographers, thinkers and others – whether conservatives or revolutionaries. Putting their brains together to think “outside the box”, they found a more just, up-to-date and realistic version of the Two-States Solution: two sovereign States, two flags, two governments, freedom of movement throughout the land, and several joint institutions within the framework of a confederation.

What interests us in this initiative is not so much the political statement as the fact that people from both sides sat down together in order to design an optimistic vision of the future. We want to promote this effort, and show our supporters that it is possible for people from both sides to come together and develop of a solution-- one that comes from the grassroots.

B8 of Hope sponsored this initiative’s media outreach and the improvement of their social media activity and website. Bringing two of their activists to Geneva last November, we increased the initiative’s visibility and networking opportunities by organizing individual meetings with relevant people.



# Newcomers in 2019 :

After our very successful fund raising gala, B8 of Hope welcomed a cohort of new grantees in 2019. The Jerusalem Youth Chorus, Polyphony Foundation, Tech2Peace, The Road To Recovery, The Teachers’ Lounge and Zimam all joined our roster.

## The Jerusalem Youth Chorus

The Jerusalem Youth Chorus empowers young singers from East and West Jerusalem to become advocates for peace in their communities by providing a space where they can engage with one another in musical and verbal dialogue. Through a combination of high level music-making and interpersonal engagement, the Jerusalem Youth Chorus seeks to create life-changing experiences for its members. The results resonate onstage: they have inspired audiences in Jerusalem and the world-over since their inception in 2012.

We contributed to the running costs of their musical activities. But more importantly, they thanked us with a very inspiring musical moment at our “Synergies building” kick-off meeting in July. Thirty activists from the B8 family were made to sing in harmony, in Hebrew, Arabic and English. An unforgettable moment of bliss!

## Polyphony Foundation

The Polyphony Foundation was founded by Nabeel Abboud-Ashkar, a classically trained violinist who acts as Executive Director of Polyphony Education in Israel. Polyphony has created programs that unite young Arabs and Jews in Israel through classical music. A model for global cooperation based on cultural exchange and education, communication and partnership, the foundation believes that new channels for engagement are essential for sustaining a just and peaceful society. Polyphony programs reach more than 9000 Arab and Jewish youths annually. They provide training and employment for over one hundred teachers in Israel.

We support Polyphony’s workshops, including their joint seminar with Keshet Eilon Music Center. A strategic partnership has developed between the Polyphony Foundation and Keshet Eilon. Both share the belief that Music and the Arts have the power to transcend the long-standing cultural and social boundaries between Arab and Jewish communities in Israel. Acting upon this belief, both have worked tirelessly to create opportunities so that Arab and Jewish youths can make music together while striving for excellence. Their joint program, The Scholar in Residence Seminar, aims to create a highly meaningful, shared musical experience for talented young Arab and Jewish classical musicians. This safe and neutral environment enables participants to overcome enduring cultural barriers, common misconceptions and stereotypes while they discover how much they have in common.



# Tech2Peace

Tech2Peace is an independent initiative created by a young staff of students and volunteers. They strive to run high-tech and peace-building seminars that focus on creating a lasting, positive relationship between young Israelis and Palestinians. They believe that their participants will leave the seminars not only as peace activists, but also as potential colleagues with a strong basis for future positive interaction. Their mission is to equip the youth of Israel and Palestine with the skills necessary to ensure greater co-operation and co-existence in the future. Participants leave the seminar with solid training in Web Building, 3D and Graphic Design, or Mobile App Development. In addition, participants take part in experimental workshops focused on conflict resolution. This training helps to humanize the “other”, which in turn helps to humanize the conflict on a grassroots level. Upon completion of the seminar, Tech2Peace participants will not only become peace-building ambassadors, but also have the skills required to move towards a newfound career in the world of High-Tech.



B8 of Hope sponsored their seminars in August and September.

## The Road to Recovery

Road to Recovery, an organization of thousands of Israeli volunteers, drives Palestinians that require treatment – mostly children – across the border to hospitals in Israel. Road to Recovery is apolitical and motivated solely by humanitarian interests. They believe that their assistance, besides its compassionate motivation, will generate goodwill, deepen connections and contribute to peace between the peoples. Additional goals include the acquisition of medical equipment for those in need, and the organization of special recreational days for patients and their families.

B8 of Hope sponsors some of the routes by covering the volunteers’ gas costs as well as the buses for routes that do not have enough volunteers available.





# The Teachers’ Lounge

The Teacher’s Lounge is a professional development program in Jerusalem that harnesses the power of educators to positively redirect dialogue toward an understanding of the “other”. The Teachers’ Lounge addresses the deep reservoirs of fear, anger, and suspicion that continue to drive apart the city’s diverse inhabitants. In operation since 2014, this program brings together up to 60 Israeli & Palestinian educators-- in equal numbers per cohort. These educators meet in a safe space where their shared dedication to educating the next generation serves as the initial means by which they connect with each other. Through guided discussions and open sharing of their experiences with the group, teachers begin to develop the empathy and understanding necessary to overcome prejudices and stereotypes.

The program’s main goal is to produce a growing cohort of educators, both Palestinian and Israeli, who are committed to the ideals of shared society and peaceful coexistence. They are trained to promote those ideals in their professional and personal lives.

Our contribution contributes to the general running costs of the program.



# Zimam

Zimam is a Palestinian youth movement based in Ramallah that focuses on a domestic approach to conflict resolution. They work with the Palestinian leaders of tomorrow to build a more democratic, actively engaged and pluralistic society in the Palestinian Authority Territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Activities by Zimam that excite us are :

o Leadership Incubator  
Attracting young, emerging leaders, Zimam’s Leadership Incubator cultivates the voices of tomorrow, equipping them with the confidence and training necessary to lead their own communities. Zimam empowers young people to reach their potential as confident, capable architects of change who will run for elections on their campuses and in their municipalities. These young people will enhance democracy and accountability across Palestine. Zimam helps them with policy, skills and problem-solving workshops, engagements and meetings with business and political leaders, as well as providing opportunities for the implementation of their own social action initiatives in their communities.

o Transform campaign  
Using the arts to spark constructive conversation around hard-hitting social, political and religious issues, Zimam’s Transform campaign emphasizes community empowerment to combat radicalization and close-minded narratives. Zimam’s national campaign fosters freedom of expression, respect for differences, and acceptance of diversity as a positive trait. They encourage nonviolence, forward thinking and a more engaged society.





## Testimonies from our Grantees

**We would like to share a selection of the testimonies of gratitude that we have received from our grantees and partners. With these letters, we in turn would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our kind donors who generously supply the funds that make these initiatives possible:**

Thank you B8 of Hope, not only a support, but an inspirtation, coming together, under one roof, We – the YOU and I – the US working for the future. Love, Hadassa on behalf of Roots.

*Thank you for the funds ! I am impressed with the promptness and the no-nonsense manner in which you operate. Please convey our gratitude to your committee. We will use the funds to pay for mini-bus rides that we charter for the route from the Erez crossing (Gaza) to hospitals in Jerusalem. This is route for we are unable to respond to the demand with volunteers. Eli (Road to Recovery)*

We would like to thank the steering Committee of B8ofHope for your decision to support our program - Teachers' Lounge in the coming operational year. Your donation is meaningful and will be significant in allowing us to run the program. We are grateful for this partnership and we look forward to seeing you soon in Jerusalem. A big THANK YOU from the Teachers' Lounge Team

We are so thrilled to hear the good news of your support. It reflects trust in Zimam as a team and vision. The donation comes at a crucial time and we are determined to establish Zimam as the biggest and most influential movement in Palestine. We are honored to be part of B8 of Hope. Many thanks for the support and hopefully we will get to see you soon in Palestine. The Zimam Team

*Our deepest appreciation to the board members. We are truly grateful for your amazing support. All the best, Yael , on behalf of Women Wage Peace*

Thank you so much for your confidence...The youth ensembles project is coming together in a very nice way. Our orchestra tour was a huge success!! Best, Nabeel (Polyphony Foundation)

Your touching support gives us a lot of strength to keep on with bringing people together via music here in Israel. Gilad Sheba (Keshet Eilon/joint seminars with Polyphony)

A huge thank you to B8 Of Hope community for hosting me (avec famille!) in Geneva & the Alps the past few days, with lots of brainstorming & strategising on this pivotal moment for Israel/Pal-estine. B8 Of Hope are a real model for how to do effective strategic philanthropy in this space:

First, they're properly representative, with a founding committee of board members that reflect the religious & identity diversity of the region. I attended their gala last year, and have never seen such a heterogeneous room full (seriously: like 400pp!) of Jews, Arabs & Persians; Muslims, Jews & Christians- & many more besides- focused on P2P peacebuilding, and supporting so many ALLMEP members.

Second, they dive deep into their grantees' work. They don't just provide critical material support but also mentor, connect, strategise & troubleshoot. Mehra & David in particular have spent countless hours in the region and on the phone with grantees, talking through the most gran-ular of issues. They're real peers with grantees, shoulder-to-shoulder, allowing an honest and eye-level relationship that can last the distance & produce real change.

Finally: they do partnership as a reflex & way of life, not just as a slogan. The Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) doesn't have a better thought-partner in all of Europe. From events like the one arranged with Combatants for Peace I spoke at last week; to joint presentations of members works to diplomatic missions; to workshops in the region designed to incentivise cooperation & coalition-building. It's always broad & inclusive. If you want to go fast: go alone. If you want to go far: go together.

They're a real model to be followed & replicated elsewhere. Check below for more info, and if you're in Europe consider donating. You can be guaranteed that Mehra & the team will squeeze every last bit of utility & impact out of every single cent!

John Lyndon (General Director of Alliance for Middle East Peace)

It has been an absolute pleasure to get to know B8 of Hope over the last few months and we cannot thank you enough for your dedication and determination to support our organization.

Our relationship is, and will continue to be, a very special connection and we are looking forward to its growth as we all strive to create a better reality and future in the Israeli-Palestinian region. As we have continued looking at the other organizations B8 of Hope supports, we are given a regained sense of hope that OGS is not in this alone.

Thank you again very much.

Lobna, Our Generation Speaks (OGS)

*Dear Mehra, Luc and David, It was a great pleasure to meet with you at the wonderful lunch in Geneva... In order to be successful in the implementation of our projects and achieve our goals, we have been fortunate to be supported by steadfast friends like you. I appreciate the wonderful work B8 of Hope has been doing in our region, along with the needed support you have kindly provided to our Saving Children program.*

*I look forward to staying in touch with you, especially in light of exploring further avenues for cooperation and joining hands in our important mission.*

*Sincerely Yours, Chemi Peres, Peres Center for Peace and Innovations*

Dear B8 of Hope, I am amazed by your commitment, strength, understanding and love. 4 years of all of that and a huge amount of achievement. Keep going my dear friends ! Ali Abu Awwad (Taghyeer)

Thank you B8 of Hope for thinking about us and supporting our work. I was in a meeting today with Uri from Combatants for Peace and two women from Women Wage Peace and Uri said to us: you know what we all have in common ? We are all supported by B8 of Hope. It was nice.

Meron (A Land for All 2 States 1 Homeland)

Between the Tech2Peace seminar in Yeruham and the one in Nazareth, we want to thank B8 of Hope, a small Swiss NGO you might have never heard of. Because they're not an NGO that focuses on PR - but on doing real grassroots work. B8 of hope is literally a "house (bait/beit) of hope" for us. They are a group of Swiss people who care about Israelis and Palestinians, and are devoted to peace more than most Is-raelis and Palestinians are. Where we Middle Easterners see a dead-end, a zero-sum game, these amazing Swiss people see rays of hope. And they're super realistic. They believed in Tech2Peace from the first moment, not because they thought we'd change the world, but because we told them our realistic goals - how many young people we want to affect, what kind of community we want to build.

B8 Of Hope is for Tech2Peace everything a real partner can be. They connect us with other NGOs in Israel and Palestine we had no idea ever existed. I'm 12 years in this Israeli-Palestinian dialogue world, and they know the ecosystem much better than me Thank you for being our partners, listening to all our problems, connecting us with people, and most important - believing in us - young Palestinian and Israeli entrepreneurs". Uri (Tech2Peace)



### **B8 of Hope**

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