



Credit: Sarah Aweidah & Sarah Benazara – Jerusalem Peacebuilders

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020



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# A word from Mehra Rimer

## Co-founder and Chair

The word **PEACE** can have so many different meanings! When it comes to the Middle East Conflict, it sometimes has a negative connotation or at least an ambiguous one. B8 of Hope's vision is a respectful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, based on equal rights, dignity, inclusivity and security for all. We help Israeli and Palestinian civil society peace-builders pave a path towards this vision.



Throughout the four years of my involvement with B8 of Hope and my multiple trips on the ground, I have learned, from Israelis and Palestinians, that people can shift from a place of darkness to a place of light. The number of people who went through a personal transformation and are now leading the many inspiring initiatives in the field, is astonishing. There are hundreds of them. Their initiatives are not isolated and naïve ventures. The programs are well designed, each angle is different and counts. They all foster constructive change either cross-border or within their respective communities. They still need more visibility and funds, in order to scale up their impact. One way to enable a bigger impact is creating synergies between them and making their uniqueness complementary. Harnessing this potential is what stands at the core of B8 of Hope's work.

I am increasingly convinced that a just and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will come from the bottom up once the hearts and minds of Palestinians and Israelis have been touched on a massive scale. Only then can we hope for a political solution, because only then will the people demand and support policies of peace emanating from their leaders.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic confronted us with a difficult crisis - an additional challenge for Peace activists. Yet, even throughout this troubled period, we saw multiple examples of solidarity among ordinary Israeli and Palestinian people.

Despite the madness of the situation, we managed to bring visibility, networking opportunities, organizational guidance and funds to our pool of grantees. The following pages contain the details. We hope you will appreciate what has been done with the funds of our generous donors in Switzerland, whether Arabs, Jews, Swiss locals or international expats.

With my gratitude and deep appreciation to all those who make our work possible!



B8fully Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'MR' followed by a stylized flourish.

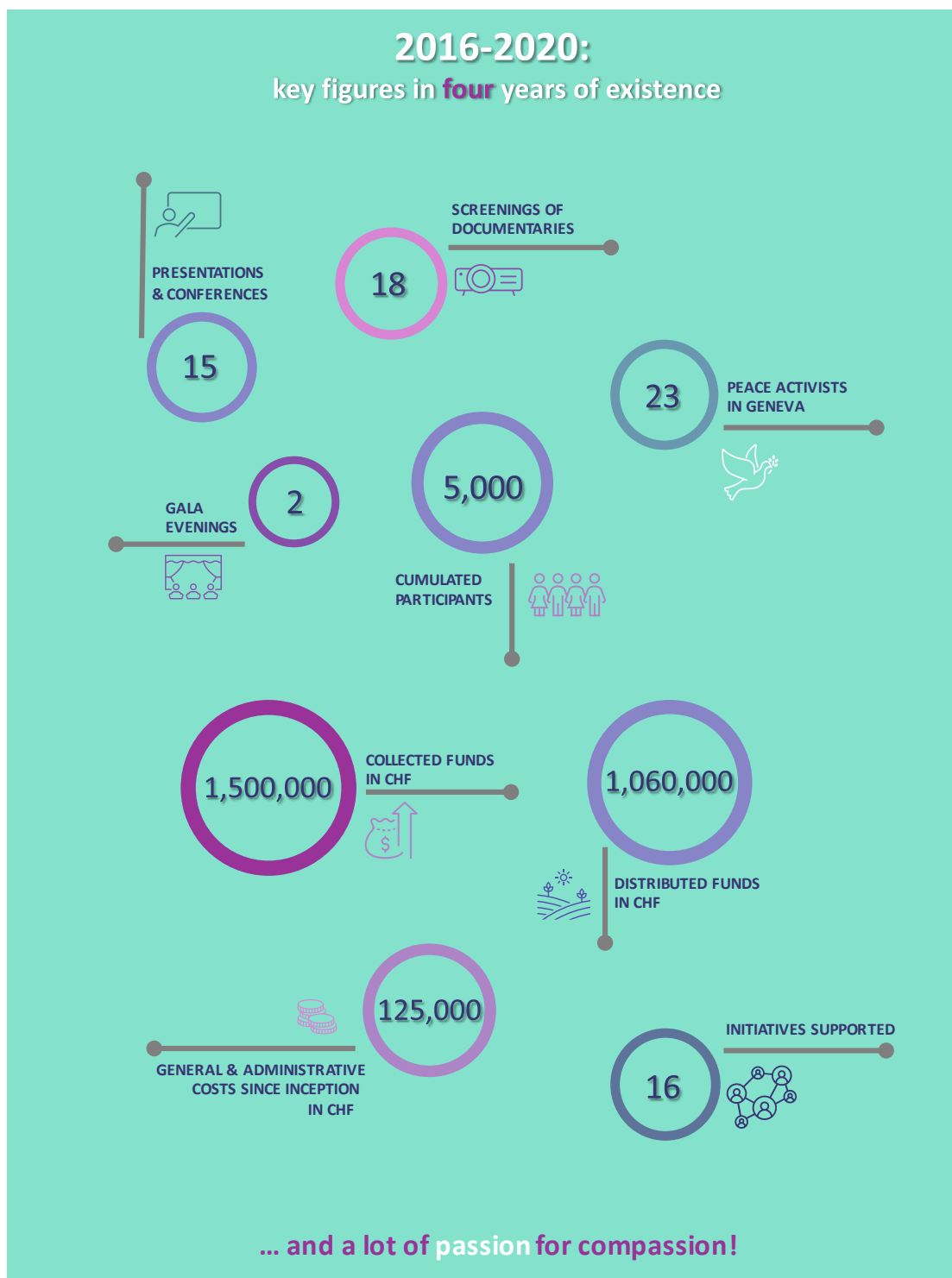
Mehra Rimer

#therealenemyisthevirus

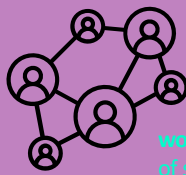
# About B8 of Hope

**Our Vision:** a peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians based on equal rights, respect, dignity, inclusivity and security.

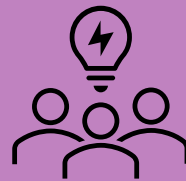
**Our Mission:** to support Israeli and Palestinian grassroots and civil society initiatives, bringing about dialogue, bridge-building, humanization, transformative interactions and any constructive action improving living conditions.



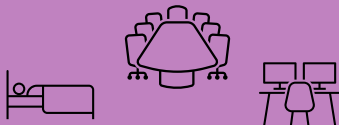
## B8 of Hope's Resources & Tools: mostly powered by



worldwide youth group  
of several  
student ambassadors

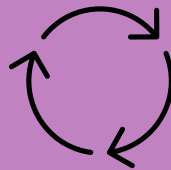


8 board members & sponsors  
among which  
1 full-time pro-bono director

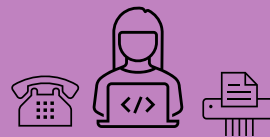


### 100% SPONSORED INFRASTRUCTURE:

- workspace for day-to-day activities
- meeting room for workshops
- accommodation for visiting activists  
courtesy of the Rimer family



reliable network of  
volunteers & partners  
for events in Switzerland



part-time multi-purpose employee  
augmented by qualified interns  
& volunteer professionals





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# Our work in Geneva

## January



The new year started with an inspiring encounter in Geneva. B8 of Hope's representatives Luc Fayon, David and Mehra Rimer were invited to meet Chemi Peres, son of the late Shimon Peres and current chair of the **Peres Center for Peace and Innovation**.

Connecting with Chemi yielded a nice occasion to talk about our support to the Peres Center's Saving Children Program, which offers life-saving treatment to Palestinian children in Israeli hospitals.

January was indeed a busy month. We also hosted **The Parent Circle Families Forum (PCFF)** in Switzerland for the first time. This joint Israeli-Palestinian organization consists of more than 600 bereaved families who have lost an immediate family member as a result of the conflict. Their work is essentially about 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 Geneva International School's Centre des Arts, a venue that frequently and generously opens its doors to B8 of Hope for this kind of events. Robi and Bassam spoke to a room full of B8 of Hope and Ecolint guests from the Jewish, Arab, local Swiss and expat communities.



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The Parent Circle Families Forum's motto is:

***"If I, who lost a loved one,  
can walk the path of peace,  
then surely you can too."***

The Geneva-based media outlet Heidi.News covered this event and interviewed the two peace activists. We managed to raise funds for the Women Group of the organization (all bereaved mothers, sisters and daughters, who lead on-going activities and reach out to other women in the region).

## February

February 2020 was a special time for B8 of Hope. We celebrated the fourth anniversary of the first meeting of B8 of Hope' co-founders. In 2016, we were a group of friends in Geneva, hailing from different backgrounds and cultures, who decided to start a small initiative in support of inspiring grassroots initiatives paving a path towards peace in Israel-Palestine. Four short years later, we have become an important organization, as well as a key player abroad and in the field.

A short clip that gives you a glimpse of the B8 of Hope co-founders and board members:



Just before the first lockdown, B8 of Hope organized a screening of "Disturbing the Peace" at Institut Florimont. We are very grateful to this prestigious Geneva high school for inviting us for the second year in a row within the framework of their traditional Human Rights Week. Steve Apkon and Marcina Hale's multiple award-winning documentary film serves as a great tool for in the pursuit of our local mission of education for peace. The important message of this film, "There is another way" (*than violence*), is universal and applies to any conflict.

By amplifying this message, we can give younger generations a taste of peace advocacy and philanthropy. Many high-school and university students have met peace activists thanks to us and have volunteered and interned for B8 of Hope. This young generation will one day take over from us as Genevan civil society and will continue the support of civil societies in conflict areas around the world. The future is secured!

At Institut Florimont, the representatives of **Combatants for Peace (CFP)** featured in “Disturbing the Peace” spoke with the audience by video conference shortly after the screening. Students were invited to ask questions. Coincidentally, John Lyndon, the Executive Director of one of our main international partner organizations the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP), was visiting Geneva during this time. He kindly agreed to attend the screening and also answered students' questions.



By the end of February, we welcomed our new intern Destiny Spruill from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University (SIPA). The internship program remained remote and virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic and concluded in September 2020. Our intern, who is pursuing a Master's degree in conflict resolution, acquired a deep understanding of the peace microcosm in Israel-Palestine. She gained first-hand insights from the peace activists, interviewing them about the challenges on the ground and the transformational and positive experience of peace-activism. Destiny also conducted a survey for us, getting feedback from the organizations and movements inside our pool of grantees. The survey's findings are helping us improve our ways of support. A second survey was completed later in the summer. Our friend and supporter Emmanuelle Hazan reached out to a group of our supporters and peers for their feedback about our impact on our audiences and colleagues.

The overall outcomes of this 360-degree reality check are summarized in this short clip:





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## March

In early March, just before the first lockdown in Geneva, our chairwoman Mehra Rimer was invited to speak at a private event in Geneva about our work at B8 of Hope.

It felt especially honoring for her to have François Zimeray as a co-speaker. François is a lawyer and served as former European deputy, French Ambassador to Denmark and France's ambassador in charge of human rights (more than 100 missions around the world!). On this occasion, François gave an accurate, sophisticated, lucid and nuanced perspective on the history and the discourse of the Middle East conflict. His book "J'ai vu partout le même visage" (Editions Plon) is fascinating and a true eye opener.



Our favorite quote by François:

***" 'We don't have a partner for peace.'  
I have heard this excuse so many times to justify inaction! What  
my journey in a world of conflicts has thought me is that it  
takes effort to find one's partner.***

***Mandela and De Klerk found each other. There is always  
someone on the other side to talk to about a possible  
reconciliation and future.***

***If you don't have a partner, empower one!"***

The rest of the month was a time to reschedule planned events and reflect on different strategies for the upcoming months, seeking to evaluate what could be maintained and what not.

## April

By April, B8 of Hope and our grantees on the ground turned into Zoom-bees, which allowed us to continue our respective activities online!

Humanization is a key word at B8 of Hope and most of the activities we support on the ground are about humanizing the other. However, the pandemic forced us to switch hats. Through April and May, we rolled up our sleeves and became hands-on, temporarily trading our familiar Humanization hat for a needs-based Humanitarian one. Our immediate short-term fundraising campaign was supported by a

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small yet extremely generous group of donors, who covered the costs of two urgent projects: 500 packages for a one-month supply of food were assembled and distributed in 23 West Bank communities, bringing much needed relief to 500 families (2500 people) made vulnerable by the pandemic's economic consequences. Our grantee organization **Taghyeer**'s volunteers and activists administered this life-saving project.



The second project was in support of Palestinian patients suffering from chronic diseases such as cancer, kidney failure and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. They were given supplies to protect themselves from COVID-19: Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves, hand sanitizers and hazard suits for 60 people were purchased by **Taghyeer** and distributed to the **Green Land Society for Health Development**, another B8 of Hope grantee, thus making sure that patients get this equipment for their weekly medical treatment. B8 of Hope helped chronically ill patients receive their medical treatments on time and protected from a potential COVID-infection. Our local partner organization **Green Land Society for Health Development** helped these patients access hospitals safely by providing 40 Palestinian volunteer drivers. From the West Bank to Israel, they ensured patients' security in transit and at checkpoints, as well as obtaining special medical movement permits to facilitate travel between the different Palestinian governorates.

On April 27th 2020, B8 of Hope invited its community of friends, supporters and peace-builders to participate in the joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day Ceremony (which was also partly financed by us). This virtual gathering, livestreamed from Tel Aviv and Ramallah, went on to become the largest joint Israeli and Palestinian peace event in history! Over 200,000 people joined from all over the world to show that war is not inevitable and that the pain is the same on both sides.

The ceremony is traditionally organized by **Combatants for Peace (CFP)**, a movement of former Israeli soldiers and former Palestinian freedom fighters, who put down their weapons to work together towards a just and peaceful solution. During this ceremony, they honor the **The Parent Circle Families Forum (PCFF)** and the hundreds of bereaved families from both sides, sharing their grief and joining forces on a new path of peace, equality, and dignity for all.

The joint Israeli-Palestinian ceremony is not about glorifying the manner in which anyone died, but about sharing what the bereaved families have in common: the indelible pain of losing a child, a mother, a father, a sister or a brother.

The first ceremony back in 2006 gathered several dozen people. Last year, the ceremony was attended by over 8'000 participants in a park in Tel-Aviv. This year, due to the event happening online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony set a new participation record of over 200'000!



## May

In early May, B8 of Hope participated in a song and videoclip called “Home (from home)”. The original version of the song was written by Greg Holden and Dew Pearson, and performed by Philip Philips. For the videoclip, the song was re-arranged by Micah Hendler for the **Jerusalem Youth Chorus (JYC)** Global Family, who were joined by many artists, including Israeli singers David Broza, Mira Awad and Achinoam Nini, stars from the Hamilton musical, other legendary vocal activists, as well as a hundred of JYC friends from around the world.





“Home” is a song of solidarity and togetherness. As vocal activist Melanie DeMore says in the clip:

*“Music is a weapon of mass connection!”*

Connections are important to us. B8 of Hope works tirelessly to encourage and enable dialogue between organizations that are working towards the same goal from different but equally valid angles. In the summer of 2019, we kicked off this synergies-building project with a meeting of the representatives from almost all of our grantees. Many small but meaningful collaborations emerged in the aftermath of the meeting.

Building on this success, we partnered with German organization Forum ZFD in early 2020 and benefited from their expertise in capacity building. Their Jerusalem-based facilitators designed a workshop on Partnerships and Synergies for us. Sadly, instead of taking place in person and over the course of 48

hours (the original plan!), this workshop happened online. We were very grateful that 30 representatives from our grantee organizations joined the virtual platform and spent time together exploring collaboration opportunities. The two-hour online session on May 7<sup>th</sup> will never replace a proper in person 2-day retreat! Nonetheless, the outcome was heartwarming.



May was definitely the month of synergies. We explored new international partnerships with organizations that share the same goals and values as B8 of Hope. New partners include the UK-based initiative TalkMatters, which hosts online discussions with many of the Israeli and Palestinian peace-builders supported by B8 of Hope. We also deepened our collaboration with Project Rozana and their American and Australian branches. A whole set of new friendships and potential future collaborations was also born. We are excited to now be in contact with: New Israel Fund (in Zurich), British Friends of Neve-Shalom-Wahat-al-Salam, Solutions Not Sides, Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine (FODIP), The British Shalom-Salam Trust (in London) and Paix Juste (in Bruxelles).

## June

June was a breath of fresh air for us. The first wave and the first lockdown with its restrictions were now over.

Tech2Peace opened the registrations for their summer seminars. Young Israelis and Palestinians responded in droves – the quantity of replies was overwhelming! B8 of Hope took part in the process of selecting the participants. We were very impressed by the applicants’ qualities and it was interesting to



be so directly involved in an activity that we support financially. We also provided Tech2Peace with 2 prestigious speakers from Geneva within the framework of Tech2Peace 's online alumni program.



It is heartwarming when colleagues and friends from our Geneva community get directly involved in the activities supported by B8 of Hope. We are incredibly grateful to Pierre Hazan who shared his expertise in conflict resolution and to Abir Oreibi who talked about her experience in high tech accelerators and incubators in Switzerland.

***"I know that if you, the younger generations, had a week to come up with an agreement, you would be successful! I'm sure of it! It is because you might not share the same past but you do share the same future."***

A new cohort of emerging Israeli and Palestinian change-makers from diverse political, religious and professional backgrounds come to Washington, where they live in Palestinian-Israeli pairs with American host families for 7 weeks. They are equipped with the tools

This is what François Zimeray said to the young Israeli and Palestinians participants in the New Story Leadership summer program. They truly appreciated this outlook on conflict resolution from the former French diplomat and politician. Once again, we tremendously appreciate his willingness to devote his time to young, motivated people by sharing his thoughts and discussing a European framework for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The New Story Leadership is an Israeli-Palestinian initiative centered around youth and based in Washington DC. Every summer, a



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necessary to create a new story of economic, political and social change. They have work-placements in the offices of Representatives and Senators and in other high-level organizations. A unique experience – sadly reduced to an online program this time.

June was also a month of visibility and action from our end. We arranged an interview for two representatives of the **A Land For All - Two States One Homeland** movement on an English-language medium in Luxembourg. As such, A Land for All's Meron Rapoport and Thabet Abu Rass had an opportunity to explain their vision of an alternative political solution with two sovereign states, Israel and Palestine, in one homeland – essentially forming a confederation that collaborates on central issues, not unlike the European Union.

We, at B8 of Hope, are not political. Our focus is centered around constructive civil society and people-to-people initiatives. What we LOVE about **A Land For All** is its "grassroots" approach and the efforts behind the vision of this group, in which Palestinians and Israelis from all walks of life, sit together and think OUT OF THE BOX about coming up with something they could all agree with. More opportunities for **A Land For All** are hopefully soon to come through our connections at the Schengen Peace Foundation in Luxembourg. We have nominated them for the Luxembourg Peace Prize for May 2021. We are keeping our fingers crossed.

The sunny and bright month of June ended on a very cheerful note with Yara Amayra and Noa Golan's visit to Geneva. These two young Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilders, and good friends, came to stay with us for 48 hours.



Noa studies in Amsterdam and Yara in Dijon. Before they headed back home to the holy land this summer, we gave them a chance to see each other without complications. It was also an opportunity for our B8 of Hope friends and volunteers to meet them. Many of them had seen the film "Guerrières de la Paix" (a film partly funded by B8 of Hope), which features Yara and Noa and their amazing story of friendship.

During their stay, Noa and Yara hosted a video meeting organized by our young B8 of

Hope volunteer Milena Caye (a Swiss student at Mc Gill University in Canada). The purpose of this get-together was to converse with a group of Swiss and French International students, which also included two of our interns from last summer: Ilona Métais (Mc Gill University) and Parker Bryan (Wesleyan College). The key words from this zoom were: Inspiration, Hope, Respect for the Other, Open-Mindedness, Coexistence and Appeasement.

We also took advantage of Noa and Yara's physical presence in Geneva to launch our B8 of Hope podcast.

Listen to the first episode here:



In the podcast's pilot episode Noa and Yara spoke about their unique story of friendship. We are very grateful to The Spot for producing our podcast!

Finally, at the end of the 48-hour stay, B8 of Hope held a socially distanced get-together with friends of the B8 of Hope community, including several young people, at David and Mehra Rimer's house. Borne out of the inspiration Noa and Yara instilled in them, they agreed to help B8 of Hope in a future project: helping us create the B8 of Hope Youth Group.





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June also marked the end of the school year and the closing of **The Teachers' Lounge** program. Jean-Marc, Chrystelle and Mehra represented B8 of Hope in the virtual closing ceremony. The Teachers' Lounge is part of the pool of grantees supported by B8 of Hope. The program brings together up to 60 Israeli & Palestinian educators in equal numbers per cohort into 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 about themselves within the group, they begin to develop the empathy and understanding necessary to overcome pre-conceived 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, and who are trained to promote those ideals in their professional and personal lives. What makes this program so unique in our eyes is that it connects Israeli and Palestinian teachers – who never meet or compare notes and the connection indirectly impacts many classrooms and thousands of students.



[Click here to watch the video](#)

## July

In July, B8 of Hope hosted Grégoire Durrus, our fellow Swiss citizen who works in Jerusalem for a German capacity building organization. His work is very much linked to that of our grantee Combatants for Peace. Being able to brainstorm with Grégoire face-to-face was a great opportunity to think of new ways of engaging young people and the Swiss public in peacebuilding by Israeli and Palestinian civil society initiatives.

## August

Rem Hellmann from Tufts University's Hillel Association interviewed our chairwoman Mehra Rimer for an episode of the association's "Keeping Democracy Alive" series. B8 of Hope is always appreciative of those who give visibility to our work, and even more so to the work of our grantees. Exposure to university students' associations helps us develop younger audiences as part of our educational mission regarding peace-building.



## September



Another podcast series - *Peace Talks* based in Israel - gave Mehra Rimer the opportunity to speak to an Israeli audience about B8 of Hope's diverse pool of grantees.

During this month, we also resumed our own podcast activity and started to work on episode 2 with **Road to Recovery** (a Israeli grassroots initiative and B8 of Hope grantee made up of a network of Israeli volunteer drivers who drive Palestinian patients from checkpoints to Israeli hospitals for specific treatments not available in Palestinian hospitals).

Dan, an Israeli volunteer driver, and Susan, a Palestinian mother of two young children, one of whom suffers from cancer and the other from a severe disorder called periodic paralysis, were our podcast guests. Yuval and Eli the founder and financial director of Road to Recovery also joined the conversation.

The podcast served as an illuminating first-hand experience of Road to Recovery's work: humanitarian action and humanization.



[Listen to the second episode](#)

Life is hard enough - who wants to talk about conflict and peace when basics needs are not met?

**Road to Recovery** addresses some basic medical needs. But not just that. The conversation in the car and in the waiting room also matter. Stopping by the beach or going to the park on the way back home and finishing a hard stay at the hospital on a positive note also matter. Changing the mindsets of people and creating people-to-people connections are pre-conditions for a path to peace. Road to Recovery is definitely paving a path! Every angle counts!

## October

At the start of fall, we welcomed our new intern Jessica Fayon, a graduate of London's Regent University with a Major in Media and Communications. She is currently remodeling our digital presence.

From October to December, we collaborated with the Geneva-based initiative The Philanthropic Adventures, conducting a workshop on peace philanthropy with a small group of high-schoolers at the B8 of Hope workspace in Geneva. After the onset of the second lockdown we switched to Zoom.

The purpose of this workshop was to venture on a journey towards peacebuilding through the lens of B8 of Hope, while simultaneously acquiring philanthropic skills with Philanthropic Adventures' main facilitator Paola Genovese. Philanthropic Adventures is an educational platform for young people to find

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information, inspiration and support to take action vis-a-vis social and environmental issues they care about. Philanthropic Adventures aims to democratize the concept of philanthropy and help young people define their engagement and bring change.

*"Because giving back and giving well  
is an adventure full of discovery and emotions"*



## November

In October, B8 of Hope organized another screening of “Disturbing the Peace” in collaboration with **Combatants for Peace (CFP)** and the Association of Arab Students of the University of Geneva (Association du Monde Arabe de l’Université de Genève / AMAGE). As usual the screening was followed by a very inspiring panel with the documentary’s protagonists, who are active members of **Combatants for Peace (CFP)**. We are delighted by the fact that our audience in Switzerland includes a growing number of young people.

## December

B8 of Hope partnered with the **Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)** to organize and share the costs of a photo storytelling workshop for peacebuilders. The purpose was to introduce them to a new form of storytelling and to train them in these new skills, in order to shed light on their peace-building activities.

Two photo-storytelling experts taught the 15 Israeli and Palestinian participants (from B8 of Hope and/or ALLMEP pools of grantees/members) to tell powerful stories through short texts and impactful pictures. A dedicated website will be launched in January 2021.

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# A word about our partnership with The Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)

The **Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)** and B8 of Hope share a history of 4 years of friendship and collaboration. Increasingly, we have joined forces as umbrella organizations, in order to help our mutual members and grantees practice the synergies we preach to them.

ALLMEP is a coalition of over 125 organizations (including most of those supported by B8 of Hope). ALLMEP works to improve its members' finances and human resources, as well providing them with a global platform for their visibility. ALLMEP's direct advocacy to the United States Congress has created and sustained the USAID Conflict Management and Mitigation grants program, which has distributed over \$100 million to Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations over the past ten years. In December 2020, the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, an historic legislation delivering unprecedented levels of funding for people-to-people peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine, was passed into law. The law provides \$250 million over five years to expand peace and reconciliation programs in Israel/Palestine, as well as supporting projects to bolster the Palestinian economy. This legislation is the result of over a decade of advocacy by the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) toward the creation of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. The Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)'s work is crucial.

Meet John Lyndon, Executive Director of ALLMEP, and to about the major work of our partners from ALLMEP:



# Building a Home (B8) for Hope

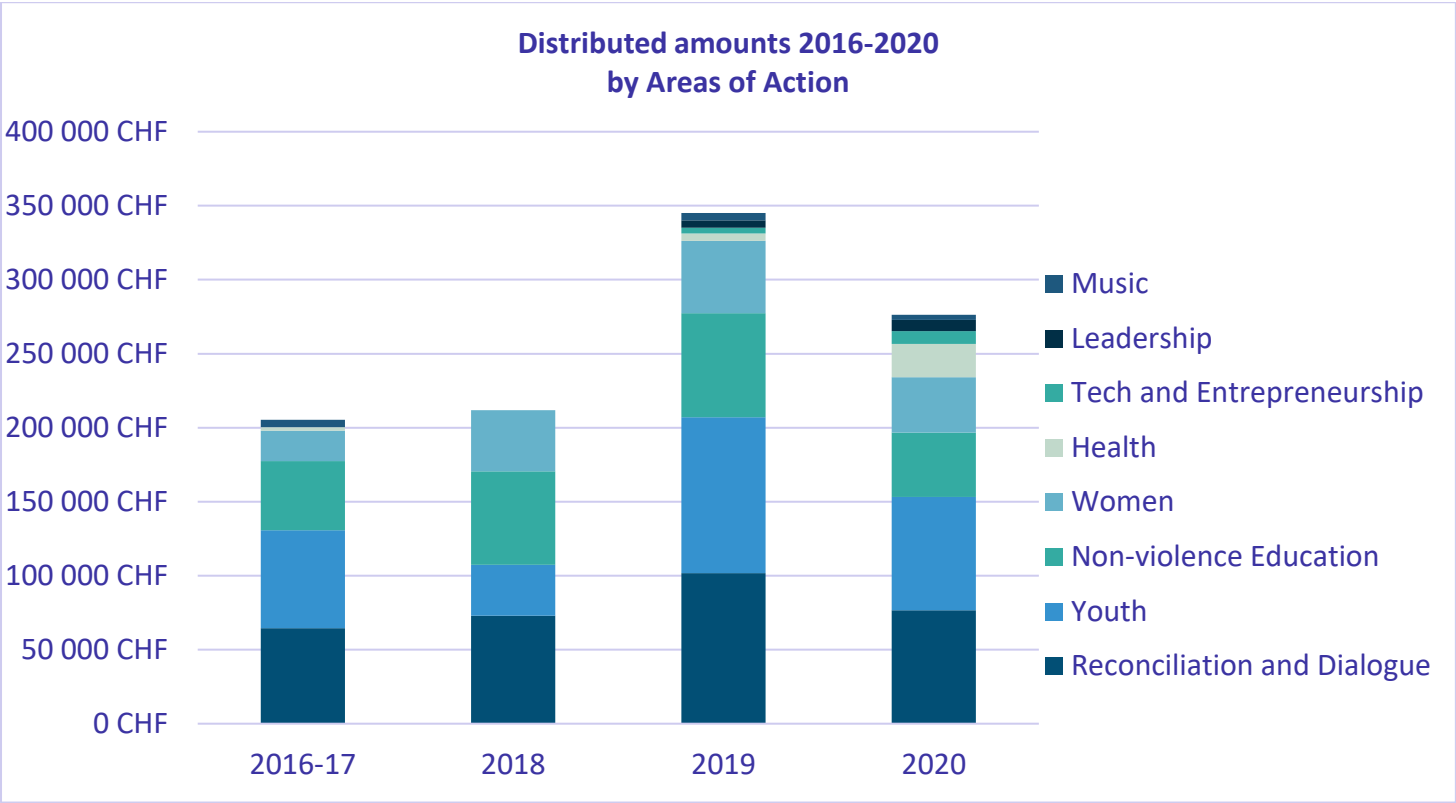
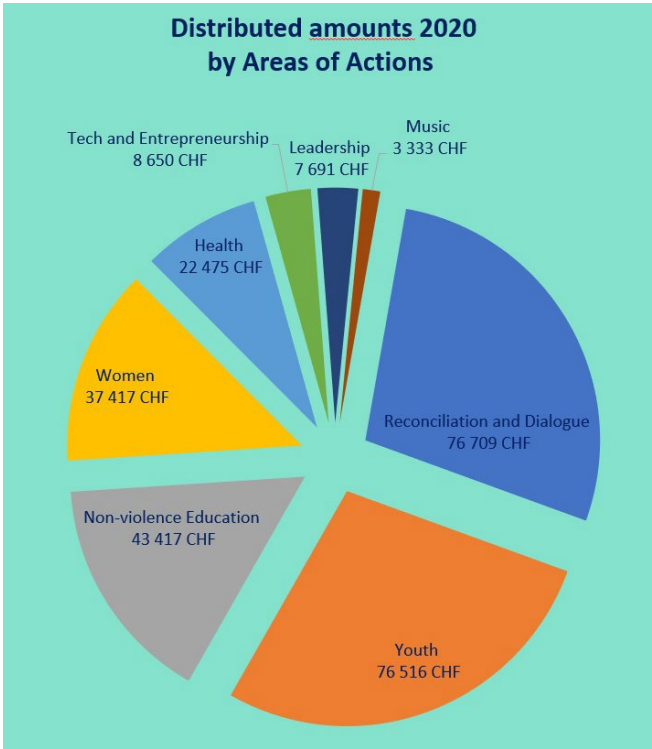
## Our Grantees and Areas of Action on the Ground

Our funds come from private donors from the Arab and the Jewish diasporas in Geneva, as well as international expats and Swiss locals.

The funds serve the activities and projects of a pool of NGOs and movements, striving towards a better future for Israelis and Palestinians.

Each of our grantees has different approaches and angles. They all matter and complete one another.

The diversity of our pool of grantees shows the inspiring dynamics of the peace community and its importance.





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## Our grantees

### A Land for All - Two States, One Homeland

**A Land For All - Two States, One Homeland** was founded by a diverse group of Israelis and Palestinians, from ordinary citizens over lawyers to geographers and intellectuals. They sat together to think “out of the box” and move towards more just, up-to-date and realistic alternative to the traditional two-state solution: Two sovereign states with an emphasis on freedom of movement between the river and sea and the implementation of joint institutions within the framework of a confederation or a union.

What appeals to us about this initiative is the fact that people from both sides work together towards a common vision for the future - a vision for all people, paving a path towards peaceful and sustainable co-existence.

Throughout 2020, B8 of Hope supported their media outreach in the press, in Israeli television, and in radios. Thanks to our funds, they managed to survive in the challenging times of the pandemic and produced a booklet summarizing the principles of their vision and how they imagine their implementation. As mentioned in the activities section, we have nominated A Land for All for the May 2021 edition of the Luxembourg Peace Prize. We are keeping our fingers crossed. How symbolic would it be for them to win the prize in the emblematic city of Schengen – as A Land for All’s principles are very much inspired by the model of the Schengen Area and the European Union.

### Combatants for peace

In 2006, Israeli ex-soldiers and former Palestinian combatants laid down their weapons and established **Combatants for Peace (CFP)** on the basis of non-violence principles. The movement – an egalitarian, bi-national, grassroots organization – was founded on the belief that the vicious cycle of violence can only be broken when Israelis and Palestinians join forces.

For over a decade, Combatants for Peace have embodied and served as a model for the humanistic values of freedom, democracy, security and dignity for all. Through joint

nonviolence actions today, they lay the foundations for a nonviolent future.

Among the many activities of Combatants for Peace, which include group meetings where Palestinian and Israeli members of the movement share their personal stories and hold open discussions with participants, B8 of Hope is particularly inspired by their Israeli-Palestinian Joint Memorial Ceremony, which is held on Israeli Memorial Day.

It is led and realized in collaboration with another B8 of Hope grantee: the Parents Circle Families Forum, which unites bereaved families

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from both sides of the conflict, grieving together, building bridges through their sorrow and paving a path towards a better future for the next generations.

The Joint Memorial Ceremony is about togetherness, reconciliation and hope.

This year, in spite of the challenging pandemic situation, the ceremony was held online and went VIRAL! Back in 2006, only 50 participants gathered for this event. Each year, the number

increased. In 2019, the number of participants grew to 9'000 in the Yarkon Park in Tel Aviv, and in 2020 170' 000 people joined online and broke the record with a huge increase in attendance! (Read the New York Times' article.)

B8 Of Hope co-sponsored the ceremony, contributing to the technical costs. While for many Israelis and Palestinians the concept of a joint ceremony is controversial and potentially even painful, B8 of Hope considers this event a harbinger of a brighter future.

## Green Land Society for Health Development

**Green Land Society for Health Development (GLSHD)** is a Palestinian non-governmental, non-profit organization established in Hebron. Its aim is to improve health and environmental conditions, in addition to raising the level of preparedness in disaster response, through awareness campaigns, research, and the provision of health and environmental services in areas of need in the West Bank.

B8 of Hope focuses on one specific activity of this organization: the transportation of Palestinian patients (referred by the Palestinian Ministry of Health) to receive treatment in Israeli hospitals. These patients are transported by means of a home-hospital-home service facilitated by a network of GLSHD volunteers, in cooperation with Israel-based volunteers. Improving living conditions, including access to medical services, is a pillar of B8 of Hope's approach to peace-building.

In order to address a COVID-specific need, this year we financed the distribution of personal

protective equipment (PPE) kits for GLSHD volunteers who transfer patients from their homes in the West Bank to Israeli checkpoints and vice-versa.

GLSHD obtained official approval for its volunteers to move around and help patients who were being transferred to and from checkpoints. To this end, B8 of Hope purchased the personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, which allow the volunteers to conduct their work in a safe way, even amidst the COVID-19 crisis. With the help of the Taghyeer Movement (also a B8 of Hope grantee), we purchased and distributed 40 infrared thermometers, 130 boxes of protective masks, 130 hazardous masks, 130 protective gloves and 130 hand sanitizers to GLSHD. Our friends from Project Rozana, an international philanthropic organization that also supports GLSHD, participated in the cost of this very nice collaborative act of solidarity and synergy.

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## Jerusalem Youth Chorus

The **Jerusalem Youth Chorus (JYC)** is a choral and dialogue program for Palestinian and Israeli youth in Jerusalem. It provides a space for these young people from East and West Jerusalem to grow together in song and dialogue. Through the joint creation of music and the sharing of stories, JYC empowers youth in Jerusalem to speak and sing their truths, as they become leaders in their communities and inspire singers and listeners around the world to work for peace, justice, inclusion, and equality.

The community built by the Jerusalem Youth Chorus is strong. Their singers take the lessons learnt in the JYC and share them widely, with friends, family, and classmates, inviting peers to see their rehearsals, parents to see their concerts, and sometimes even publicly challenging authority figures to see things from a different perspective.

As a performing ensemble, they seek to amplify their impact even further through local and international performances and media coverage.

The Jerusalem Youth Chorus has been featured on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, as well as in the New York Times, on the BBC, on PBS, in Haaretz, Alhurra, and more than 100 other news outlets. They have recorded with multi-

platinum Israeli artist and peace activist David Broza in Jerusalem and with Duran Duran in London. Their viral music video, Home, with YouTube superstar Sam Tsui, has amassed over 400,000 views. They have toured through Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, as well as Switzerland and have performed at venues as prestigious as the United Nations in Geneva and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and were a featured ensemble at the Yale International Choral Festival.

Most importantly, they regularly perform in Jerusalem, joining forces with other organizations working for peace, justice, and equality, and also reaching out to those who have never even considered that something like this possible, let alone beautiful.

In 2020, thanks to the workshop with the Geneva-based association Philanthropic Adventures (described in our activities section above), B8 of Hope shed light on the JYC among youth in Geneva. The youth raised funds for the production of a JYC video clip in 2021 and we matched their efforts. We look forward to sharing this new video with our audiences and with the Geneva high schoolers who put their minds and hearts into this project.

## Judur/Shorashim/Roots

**Roots** is a network of Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank. It is a joint initiative by Israelis from Gush Etzion and Palestinians from the area of Beit Umar. It is based on a mutual recognition

of each people's connection to the land and underpinned by understanding and solidarity in spite of their members ideological differences. Roots' diverse set of activities offers a space

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where people can take responsibility and challenge the assumptions their communities hold about each other, as well as building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict.

B8 of Hope focuses on Roots' youth activities. We usually support their annual summer camps: a week-long experience of photography, crafts, cooking and traditional dances, setting the scene for positive interaction between 80 Israeli and Palestinian children (aged 6-12). These summer camps were cancelled this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The pre-army academy visits, which we also sponsor, were partly continued in between lockdowns. These visits expose cohorts of 18-year-old Israelis (about to do their military service) to both the Palestinian and settler narratives. It allows them to build up their understanding of the people they will interact with during their service. For many of the future soldiers, these visits are the first time they encounter Palestinians from the West Bank. Over 5000 students have met Roots members since 2016, which was the year we started supporting Roots.

We are also invested in the Youth Group and the Young Adult Alumni program of Roots. Meeting every other week, the Roots Youth Group is composed of cohorts of 20 local Israeli and Palestinian high school students every year. The meetings are organized and facilitated by Israeli and Palestinian university students and

advisors. They involve discussion groups, recreational activities, and day trips to heritage sites that are integral to the identities of the participants, in order to explore the different narratives surrounding them.

After a year or more in the Roots Youth Program, the alumni often want to keep seeing each other. The Roots leadership gives them the opportunity to continue what they have started thanks to the Young Adult Program. One must not forget that there are few places in Gush Etzion and the West Bank where people from both sides feel comfortable meeting each other. Roots gives them that space at the Karama Center.

In 2020, the Young Adult Program conducted a month of online staff workshops and recruiting work with the first meeting of their new cohort! On a slightly reduced scale, in order to keep with COVID-19 restrictions, a group of 30 Israeli and Palestinian young adults began their journey as the fifth cohort! Even more so, in a truly exciting opportunity, Roots is now developing another student program with their activists in the Jordan Valley region.

Originally this year we had allocated funds to the Youth Group's trip to Switzerland hosted by our partner organization Coexistences (in Lausanne). Obviously, the trip was cancelled – and the funds were reallocated to some of the continued local activities of the Youth and Young Adults groups.



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## Karama Center (Chazon Karama)

Karama is a Palestinian Non-violence center, built on a small piece of land that belongs to the Abu Awwad family. Ali and Khaled Abu Awwad have been involved in different peace-building initiatives for many years. Before setting up the Karama Center, both Ali and Khaled were active members of the Parents Circle Families Forum.

Karama is located in an agricultural area close to the village of Beit Ummar, near Gush Etsion in the West Bank (Area C, under full Israeli control), a mere 20 minutes away from both Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Karama's location, near a central junction in Area C, allows both Israelis and Palestinians easy access and a safe place to meet.



The center is a true Oasis of Peace hosting inspiring encounters and activities, including those of Judur/Shorashim/ Roots.



During 2020, B8 of Hope helped improve the infrastructures and buildings of Karama, funded the minimal upkeep costs for the center during the episodic closures and dramatic drop in visits.

We also funded the legal and administrative costs related to establishing Chazon Karama (Hebrew and Arabic for "Vision of Dignity"), an independent not-for-profit entity. Jean-Marc Liling, our board member and representative on the ground, was closely involved in registering the center as a legal entity with a proper board, management and financial transparency.

Due to the pandemic situation, Karama could not host many activities in 2020. The Abu Awwad family took the opportunity to make some changes and refurbish the bathrooms – which we partly funded.



The youth group of Roots also gave a touch of colors to the walls the first time they could reunite after the first lockdown.

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## Our Generation Speaks

**Our Generation Speaks (OGS)** is a Boston-based incubator and ‘people accelerator’ that joins Palestinian and Israeli entrepreneurs to create ventures from scratch. Their fellows don’t just build companies—they are becoming the next generation of change agents.

Each year, OGS handpicks a group of promising Israelis and Palestinians entrepreneurs and professionals to immerse into their three-month summer program. Long after graduation, fellows stay involved with OGS and their alumni community through regular workshops and gatherings, thereby building a powerful network of change agents that stretches across borders.

Since its inception in 2014, OGS has nurtured dozens of successful ventures, which in turn have raised over \$5.5 million in external funding – and OGS is still growing.

This year, due to the pandemic, the new cohort of change-makers could not travel to Boston

and the program was cancelled. Nonetheless, they kept engaging their community in the most meaningful and productive ways possible. OGS held for its 2020 fellows a series of Political and Trust-building Conversations, as well as monthly alumni events online.

OGS also used the “pandemic pause” in 2020 to edit and complete their 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, in addition to making an ambitious move by planning to double their impact over the next five years, and exponentially expand their alumni community from 100 to 410 Israeli and Palestinian agents of change.

The B8 of Hope contribution towards the costs of the 2020 cohort remain with OGS and will be used in 2021. OGS is excited to ramp up its efforts, expanding the summer cohort from 30 to 50 fellows in 2021.

## Parents Circle Families Forum

This joint Israeli-Palestinian initiative consists of more than 600 bereaved families, who have lost a daughter, a son, a mother, a father, a sister or a brother in the conflict.

Instead of choosing revenge, the Parents Circle’s members have chosen to work hand in hand towards reconciliation and breaking the cycle of violence. Their motto is: “If I who have lost a beloved one can walk the path of peace, then surely you can too.”

The **Parents Circle Family Forum** is one of the newest additions to our pool of grantees. We had already been supporting them through Combatants for Peace’s joint memorial ceremony, which is co-organized with the Parents Circle. This year, they have become direct beneficiaries.

The Parent’s Circle Israeli and Palestinian representatives Robi Damelin and Bassam Aramin spent three days in Geneva at the end of January. Throughout their stay, we managed to

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raise funds for their Women's Group activities and projects.

[Click here](#) to read the newspaper article published by Heidi.news about Bassam and Robi.

The bereaved Women's Group was born out of a need to express and propel the voice of women in the organization. The Women's Group has gained much momentum and strength since its foundation. Its aim is to equip women from both sides of the conflict with an authoritative voice and a real say in any future reconciliation process. The group was formed by some 20 women and now includes more than 150 women from all walks of life, creating and participating in a variety of vital international campaigns.

The Women's Group holds large gatherings known as "Neighbors", which are open to the

public and focus on various topics, including the role of women in the reconciliation process. Many of the women in the group have received training to lead dialogue groups, which have become an integral part of their work both in Israel/Palestine and internationally.

The Women's Group operates numerous events and projects, which have become pivotal parts of the organization's core campaigns: It has put together art exhibitions that have been showcased in museums and galleries all over the world, as well as producing a joint Palestinian-Israeli cookbook, titled "Jam Session", which has been sold internationally. The group's "Taking Steps for Peace" project has been introduced in the European Parliament, the Bundestag in Germany and US Congress in Washington D.C. The group has created and continues to hold intensive workshops.

## Peres Center for Peace and Innovation

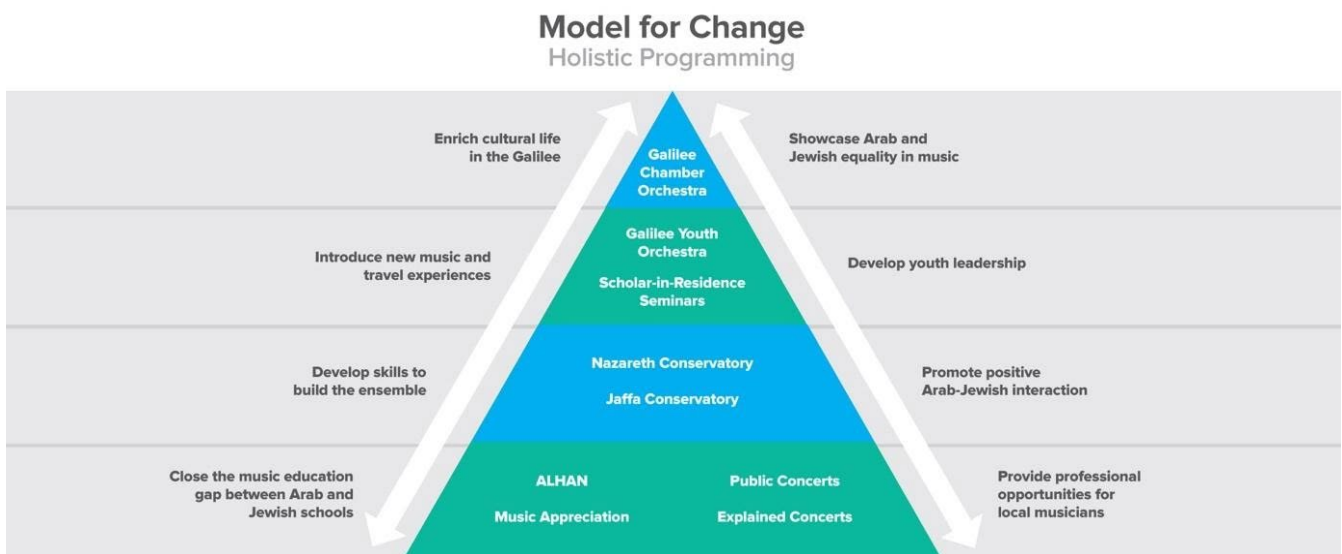
The **Peres Center** helps Palestinian and Syrian children in hospitals throughout Israel, providing them with complex and often life-saving medical treatment. Every month, the Peres Center handles dozens such requests. Since the launch of the program in 2003, 12,500 children have been treated. Beyond the vital humanitarian aspect of saving the lives of children in need, this program creates a unique meeting point between families, medical teams, and hospitals - building bridges of hope and peace.

While helping many different initiatives that have an impact on a larger scale, B8 of Hope takes pride in covering the treatment costs of one Palestinian child in the Peres Center's Saving Children Program every year. Peace-building is important, but who wants to think of peace when health needs are not addressed?

## Polyphony Education

The social and cultural divides in Israel are sizeable and continue to grow. Arabs and Jews interact infrequently. Neighborhoods are segregated, with Arab communities often underserved and isolated. People speak different languages—Arabic and Hebrew.

**Polyphony** is a prestigious music school based in Nazareth, which uses music in a holistic, multi-tiered approach through which Arab and Jewish musicians and music students come together to build an inclusive community.



In spite of COVID-19, Polyphony worked hard in 2020 to continue advancing its mission, in order to be a sound of reason and reconciliation amidst an incredibly challenging reality.

B8 of Hope's support is usually directed towards Polyphony's Scholar-in-Residence seminar. This

year, our support was to turn challenges into opportunities by developing the capacity to move its educational programs online when needed. This led to the production of a series of 26 videos and podcasts called Mosaics, which are accessible on Polyphony's website :





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## Road to Recovery

**Road to Recovery** is an organization of thousands of Israelis (retired men and women), volunteering to drive Palestinian patients from checkpoints to hospitals in Israel.

Road to Recovery is motivated by humanitarian values. Their compassion-driven work creates and deepens connections between Palestinians and Israelis.

Road to Recovery also provides medical equipment and organizes special recreational days for patients and their families.

B8 of Hope supports Road to Recovery in covering the gasoline costs incurred by the volunteer drivers during those trips. The total distance travelled this year amounted to around 155'000 km, entailing 9 650 trips to about 15 000 patients, mostly children. Road to Recovery took the patients to the following hospitals: Rambam (Haifa) in the North; Ichilov, Sheba-Tel Hashomer, Meir, Beilinson, Wolfson and Assuta in the center; and to Alyn, Hadassa, Shaarei Zedek, Al Maqassid, Augusta Victoria and St John Hospital in Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, Road to Recovery had to reduce its activity due to the lockdowns. No patients were allowed into Israel, except for the highly

urgent case described in the next paragraph. Moreover, considering that the volunteers are mostly retired and therefore a high-risk group with regards to COVID-19, Road to Recovery published request for new young volunteers to join. More than 120 joined within a day.

Our funds for this year were also used for the medical fees of Mahmoud, a little boy suffering from cerebral palsy affecting the lower limbs (severe contractures of the hips, knees and ankles). He needed surgery as well as physiotherapy.

Mahmoud's older brother, Adam, suffers from cancer. Road to Recovery volunteer Dan Morgenstern drove him several times to the Sheba-Tel Hashomer hospital in Ramat Gan. We took the opportunity of running a podcast with the driver Dan and Susan, the mother of the two boys, while they were in the waiting room of the hospital. For B8 of Hope, it was extremely important to help the mother of two very ill children, as well as making her voice and her reality heard. It was a tiny drop of hope amidst the vast sea of problems this woman has to face.

## Taghyeer

**Taghyeer (Change)** is a Palestinian non-violence movement, which was founded in 2016 and works towards social and political change.

B8 of Hope is a longtime supporter of Taghyeer, because of the movement's uncompromising belief in the power that rests in individuals, who

are motivated by positive identities and constructive solutions. Taghyeer's commitment towards active nonviolence as a way of life offers Palestinians an alternative political vision. Through nonviolent action, Palestinians can develop and improve their own community, while reclaiming their dignity and asserting their

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rights. B8 of Hope believes that, once thousands of Palestinians demonstrate for nonviolence in the streets of Palestine, many more Israelis will follow suit and demonstrate for peace in the streets of Israel.

Taghyeer has been working on three main initiatives: Messengers of Change, Women's Leadership and the Palestinian Charter for Non-Violence. The Messengers of Change are individuals from different communities throughout the West Bank. These messengers are trained in nonviolence and leadership, thus empowering them to spearhead community-led social actions in their respective regions. Women's Leadership seeks to empower women to take up a leadership role in Palestinian society. Finally, Taghyeer plays a unifying role among Palestinians by encouraging them to come together under the principles of a Palestinian Nonviolence Charter. This Charter is being adopted by grassroots organizations throughout Palestine and will be presented to

the regional and international press once enough support in Palestine has been garnered.

In 2020, B8 of Hope helped Taghyeer address the urgent needs of several West Bank communities who had become particularly marginalized due to the COVID-19 crisis. On short notice, B8 of Hope raised and sent money to Taghyeer, in order for them to deliver 500 food parcels to families across 23 communities. These parcels covered the needs of 2500 people for one month. We also provided funds to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) in partnership with the Green Land Society for Health Development (mentioned in the earlier sections of this annual report). This protective equipment ensured the provision of medical services to chronically ill patients not affected by COVID, but in need of medical attention. Finally, B8 of Hope has continued to provide financial and strategic support to Taghyeer across all of its initiatives.

## Teachers' Lounge

Teachers from different schools (Jewish/Arab) in Jerusalem do not interact. Thanks to the **Teachers' Lounge** program, educators from different communities in and around Jerusalem meet each other and create an open dialogue, thereby recognizing Jerusalem's strength through its vivid and varied cultures.

We consider teachers to be crucial elements in the moral and educational model of every sector and community. Teachers can create a real change in the classroom and in their students' lives by dealing with racism and prejudice through increased tolerance and a more inclusive climate of co-existence in

Jerusalem. The Teachers' Lounge created and developed a space where conversations take place between teachers from around the city.

Every year, around 50-60 teachers, Jews and Arabs, from the Jerusalem metropolitan participate in the Teachers' Lounge (30 hours annually).

During these sessions, teachers are asked to explore their personal, professional, and cultural identities, while discussing common educational challenges. The experience of "meeting the other" takes place through an innovative narrative-experience approach, which includes the use of artistic tools such as

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theater, plastic art, and photography. The sessions allow their participants to meet one another in a direct manner and to share narratives that, above all, create a safe space and a sense of a joint educational mission. As a part of the program, a special ‘tour of the city’ is scheduled. This tour is designed and led by the teachers themselves and entails visiting

participants’ homes, visiting areas of gatherings and conflicts, as well as sharing personal stories.

B8 of Hope contributes to the general operational costs of the program.

## Tech2Peace

**Tech2Peace** is a joint Israeli-Palestinian initiative, created and operated by a young staff of students and volunteers. Their aim is to run high-tech and peace-building seminars, focused on creating a lasting positive relationship between young Israelis and Palestinians. They believe that these participants will not only leave as peace activists, but also as potential colleagues with a strong basis for future positive interaction in the tech-sector.

Their mission is to equip the Israeli and Palestinian youth with the skills necessary to ensure greater co-operation and co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians in the future. The seminars teach participants skills in three specializations: Web Building, 3D and Graphic Design, and Mobile App Development.

Additionally, participants take part in experiential workshops focused on conflict resolution, thereby humanizing each other, which helps humanize the conflict as a whole from the grassroots level.

Upon completing the seminar, Tech2Peace participants will not only become peace-building ambassadors, but will also have the skills required for the first steps in their new-found high-tech career.

B8 of Hope supports their two-week-long intensive seminars. We also regularly identify interesting speakers for their alumni group seminars.

In spite of COVID-19, Tech2Peace had a successful year. They brought together 60 new Israeli and Palestinian participants through two in-person summer seminars, partly supported by B8 of Hope funds. They had plans for a third seminar, which ultimately had to be canceled due to the second COVID-19 lockdown. The 12-day summer seminars featured a range of learning opportunities, including courses in Python, App Development, 3D Design and Animation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Video Editing; as well as public speaking workshops, two-day startup design and pitching workshops in cooperation with Google for Startups, Hackathons, and lectures from industry professionals.

The Israeli and Palestinian seminar participants are not “traditional peaceniks.” They develop greater empathy vis-a-vis the other side, thereby influencing others within their respective communities and workplaces to see the conflict from different perspectives. Ideally, they end up founding start-up together.

In one of the 2020 summer seminars, Yaara, a 22-year-old Jewish paramedic from Israel, and

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Zafer, a 25-year-old Palestinian general practitioner in the West Bank city of Nablus, started to develop a unique app that would help medical staff communicate better while

transferring Palestinian patients from the West Bank to Israel. [Click here](#) to read the Times of Israel press article.

## Women Wage Peace

**Women Wage Peace** is a grassroots movement with more than 44'000 members from different communities within Israeli society: right, center and left; religious and secular; Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouin; young women and older women; women from the urban hubs of the country and from the periphery.

Women Wage Peace was founded in the summer of 2014 in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge, uniting women of all walks of life. What these women had in common was their willingness to put an end to the cycle of violence, bringing diplomacy and negotiations back on the political agenda. Women Wage Peace's vision is resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by means of a mutually acceptable agreement, with the participation of women from diverse groups of Israeli society, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

B8 of Hope usually supports Women Wage Peace's major marches and event, as well as their meetings with Palestinian women in the West Bank.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Women Wage Peace held online discussions, stood on balconies and called for solidarity, peace, equality and democracy.

They also campaigned to prevent the annexation of parts of the West Bank and for a return to negotiations. This year, our help for

Women Wage Peace essentially focused on supporting this campaign. The campaign's highlight took place on June 18th – 12 days before the planned annexation – at the HaShalom Interchange next to the government offices in Tel Aviv. On this occasion, the courageous women of Women Wage Peace gathered from all over the country, in order to call on the new government to stop the annexation and begin negotiations towards a mutually acceptable political agreement. B8 of Hope values dialogue, bridge-building, inclusivity, humanization, transformative interactions and constructive changes - all within the framework of a profound respect for equal rights, dignity, security and the rejection of all forms of violence. Unilateral decisions jeopardize the work of courageous Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, thereby unfortunately undermining the chances of a mutually agreed-upon solution.

[Click here](#) to watch the video of this march.

Many of the organizations and movements that benefit from our support took a stand against the planned annexation. In the spirit of our beliefs and values, we commend the hard work of our pool of grantees and peacebuilders, which is why we supported Women Wage Peace's action against the annexation plan. We are very relieved that the unilateral move to annex did not happen.



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## Zimam

**Zimam** (“reins” or “taking the initiative” in Arabic) is a pioneering grassroots youth movement that challenges the status quo. Taking a domestic approach to conflict resolution, they work with the Palestinian leaders of tomorrow, in order to build a more democratic, active and pluralistic society, driven by values of tolerance, non-violence and responsibility.

Zimam works across nine governorates in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Its programs empower young people and transform public thinking, fostering respect for others, building peace and instilling democratic attitudes.

B8 of Hope supports two aspects of Zimam’s work: The Leadership Incubator and the Transform Campaign.

The leadership incubator inspires the voices of tomorrow, equipping them with the confidence and training to lead their own communities. Through policy, skills and problem-solving workshops, as well as meetings with business and political leaders, these future change-makers receive the opportunities to implement their own social action initiatives within their

communities. As such, Zimam empowers young people to realize their own potential as confident and capable architects of change, running for elections on campuses and in their municipalities, thereby enhancing democracy and accountability across Palestine.

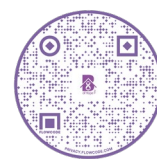
Zimam’s Transform Campaign uses the arts to spark constructive conversation around hard-hitting social, political and religious issues. The campaign emphasizes community empowerment in the face of radicalization and close-minded narratives. Zimam’s national campaign will foster freedom of expression, acceptance and respect for difference by embracing diversity as a positive trait, thus reducing violence, and fostering a more forward-thinking and engaged society.

Each year, Zimam uses a different controversial symbol in its Transform Campaign, in order to demonstrate that difference is not a bad thing, but that diversity is a sign of a healthy, free and non-violent society. Zimam promotes the idea that difference can be accommodated without fragmenting society and that Palestinians can come together despite their differences so to build a better future together. Zimam’s motto is: Respect the difference, share the dream.



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