



Newsletter

May 2021

Happy Spring, dear Friends and Supporters!

Since our last newsletter in December 2020, so many things have happened. We are excited to bring you up to date with a summary of 2021's first quarter highlights.

In January, we welcomed the new year by **reconnecting with all of our 16 grantees in January**. Our on-going contact and ability to stay in touch with the change-makers on location is what makes us unique as philanthropists and peace advocates. We are not a remote organization that simply transfers monetary funds: we care, we follow, and we advise. We keep abreast of all the on-going changes, challenges and good news on the ground.

Synergy is a keyword in our B8 of Hope vocabulary. We work with peace-philanthropists outside of the Israel-Palestine region as well as our grantees. We encourage our grantees to collaborate with each other by sharing their best practices. We encourage them to brainstorm shared challenges and offer mutual support when it makes sense. These small interactions often result in a huge difference!

During our January virtual meeting, the 16 grantee NGOs and movements were represented by one or several members. One purpose of this meeting was to examine conclusions drawn from the B8 of Hope **evaluation survey**. Launched in the summer of 2020, our "360 degree" survey evaluated the impact we have on our grantees and peers as well as our followers and supporters in Switzerland. We highlighted potential areas for improvement and proposed plans for development.

During this virtual gathering, we informed grantees of our fund-raising and fund-granting plans for 2021. Covid-19 restrictions forced the cancellation of this year's fund-raising gala in Geneva, but we reassured all that we would do our best to find **new ways to raise the funds necessary to maintain our support** of their on-going projects. Continuity is crucial for keeping the same level of productivity (offered virtually and increasingly in person) and the same quality of workshops and activities.





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To watch our **[new short video about our grantees](#)**, click on the picture below!



If you wish to contribute to our cause and support the amazing peace-builders on the ground, please [click here](#) to make a donation.

Another exciting event in January was the **launch of the Mid East Storytellers website!** At the end of 2020, B8 of Hope collaborated with the [Alliance for Middle East Peace \(ALLMEP\)](#) on a visual storytelling project: we organized this project together and shared the costs of a photo storytelling workshop for peacebuilders. The goal was to introduce participant to a new form of storytelling, to give them new skills, and ultimately to shed light on their endeavors.



By  **allmep** Alliance for Middle East Peace and  **8 of Hope**

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Two experts in photo storytelling enabled the 15 Israeli and Palestinian participants (all from B8 of Hope and/or ALLMEP pools of grantees/members) to tell powerful stories with short texts and impactful pictures. On January 21st, a dedicated website was launched, and a ceremony was held to unveil the exhibit. [Click here](#) to enjoy the exhibit: these photo stories will be exposed permanently online as well as in art spaces around Geneva once Covid restrictions are lifted.

A big part of this winter was focused on women!

In February, The Parents Circle Families Forum invited Mehra Rimer to join a **very special zoom session** with a large group of Palestinian and Israeli bereaved women – all of whom have lost one or several immediate family members to the conflict. The goal of this session was to learn how to press flowers. Each flower represented a loved one that had been lost.



While learning the art of pressing flowers, the woman shared stories about their lost loved ones as a way to connect. The pressed flowers, once dried, were assembled in an album that will be sent to VP Kamala Harris for International Women's Day.

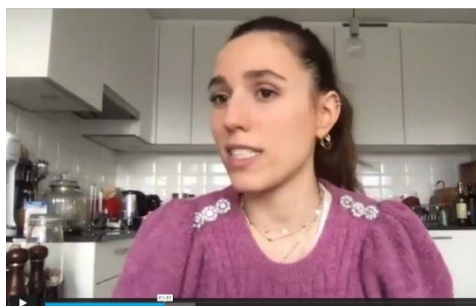
This event deeply touched our chair and co-founder who was very honored to have been invited by Parent Circle as a VIP foreign guest. [Click here](#) to view the album.

On the last day of March, Mehra Rimer moderated one of the breakout rooms of a zoom session hosted by [New Story Leadership](#), a peace building organization that's been on B8 of Hope's radar! The focus was on developing a community of leaders and influencers across Palestine and Israel. The 31st of March was the last day of **#WomensHistoryMonth**. NSL's 20 **#SheLeaders** met with 5 female representatives from 4 different countries. Together, these women dove right into a deep discussion about the problems facing their communities, and the role that diplomacy can play in finding solutions.



During the long Swiss winter and the even longer semi-lockdown, the news that lifted our spirits was the **completion of a guest house in Jubbet Adh Dib**. Jubbet Adh Dib is an isolated village near the Herodion in the Governorate of Bethlehem. The village has experienced many challenges in past years, and women have taken matters into their own hands. B8 of Hope's interaction with this courageous community of women in Jubbet Adh Dib took place thanks to the activists of Taghyeer, a Palestinian nonviolence movement and member of our pool of grantees. The Jubbet Adh Dib community of women is significant because it showcases Palestinians who take control of their destiny and build the change they need. This empowering movement heals while it creates something positive for the community.

During one of Mehra Rimer's visit to Jubbet Adh Dib, Noa Grandchamp, a young Swiss photo activist and B8 of Hope volunteer, took pictures of the villagers and listened to their stories. Noa, previously a photography student, organized an exhibit upon return to Geneva. She sold her pictures and donated the proceeds to Taghyeer, in support of Jubbet Adh Dib. Thanks to this organization and its



Noa Grandchamp

volunteers, an abandoned venue in the village was transformed into a guest house for internationals who visit the region to volunteer their help. The guest room is now up and running! Taghyeer gave us the great news this month, and sent us the most recent pictures. A big thank you to Noa for her wonderful and generous initiative and contribution! [Click here](#) to watch her share experience and to discover the guest house.

In March, for the third consecutive year, the Parents Association of Institut Florimont, a prestigious Geneva private high school, hosted B8 Of Hope for a **screening of Disturbing the Peace – a multiple award-winning film about humanization**. The film features impressive Israelis and Palestinians who are involved in an organization named Combatants for Peace. These inspiring individuals are agents of change who have paved a path to a better future in the region.



Stephen Apkon and Marcina Hale, the director and co-producers of the film joined the Q/A session from United States with a zoom call. The quality of questions asked by the students was outstanding! As one student aptly observed: Disturbing the Peace is about disturbing one's own



peace... about going out of your comfort zone and making change possible. Marcina and Stephen were as inspiring as always. This event also offered an opportunity for the co-founder of **B8 of Hope's Next Generation**, Jessica Fayon. Jessica invited our young audience to learn more about our peace advocacy and philanthropy activities.

On March 24th, Women Wage Peace organized a **webinar to promote the role of women** from every level of society, and more specifically, their role in reaching decisions related to Peace and Security. What a surprise to see former Israeli ambassador of the Israel's Mission to the UN in Geneva as a keynote speaker at this event! [Click here](#) to watch Aviva Raz Shechter's speech.

BREAKING PARADIGMS

Local Women Peace Initiatives to Promote the Full Participation of Women in Decisions Related to Peace and Security

Wednesday | March 24th | 19:00 | Live on WWP Facebook page



In April, the **Joint Memorial Ceremony** of Combatants for Peace and Parents' Circle reached over 280 000 viewers!

In 2006, Israeli ex-soldiers and former Palestinian combatants laid down their weapons and founded [Combatants for Peace](#). This egalitarian, bi-national grassroots organization is based on the belief that the vicious cycle of violence can only be broken when Israelis and Palestinians join forces to create a model for humanistic values and show that "there is another way".

Among Combatants for Peace's many activities, B8 of Hope is particularly inspired by their Israeli-Palestinian Joint Memorial Ceremony, a tribute to the bereaved Israeli and Palestinian parents from another organization which B8 of Hope supports: [Parents Circle Families Forum](#). This network of 600+ families from both sides of the conflict focuses on reconciliation through joint grieving. Participants build bridges through their sorrow and pave a path towards a better future for the next generations.

While the concept of a joint ceremony held on the Israeli memorial day is controversial and potentially painful for many Israelis and Palestinians, the event intends to push participants beyond their comfort zones (both Israelis and Palestinians) by celebrating togetherness, reconciliation and hope. The slogan of the Parents Circle's bereaved Israeli and Palestinian members is:

"If I who have lost a loved one, can walk the path of peace, then surely you can!"

We are very proud to have co-sponsored this ceremony and livestreamed it on our social media. To view it click below:



Locally in Geneva, during the month of April, B8 of Hope took part in the International School of Geneva's Parents **Promoting Pedagogy evening** where we talked about peacebuilding and its implications for education. Our chair and co-founder Mehra Rimer gave a talk about our educational role in Geneva and the range of activities we organize in different schools and universities.



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Universal
Learning
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**PARENTS
PROMOTING
PEDAGOGY**

Wednesday 14 April 2021

18:00 - 19:30

Online

<https://meet.google.com/swo-cvbs-bce>

As part of our reflection on what students should be learning in order to thrive in the 21st Century and be actors of change for the betterment of the planet and humanity, the parents of La Grande Boissière are invited to a think tank on education.

The event will be centred on the question of social impact.

SPEAKERS



Mehra RIMER
Executive Director of B8 of Hope

Building peace: implications for education



Sach CHANDARIA
Investor and entrepreneur

Social Entrepreneurship and educational values



Marietta SENKATUKA MUWANGA
Chief Information Officer & Director of IT at the International Organisation for Migration

Migration in the 21st century and educational challenges



Speaking of education and youth, the news of the Spring that gives us all the Vitamin C we need is ... the **launch of B8 of Hope's Next Generation** by Jessica Fayon, Ilona Métais, Noa Golan and Yara Amayra.



These 4 determined young ladies assembled a group of 30 brilliant and highly educated students and graduates of universities around the world. Their common ground: they are all interested in peace-building. All have all interacted with B8 of Hope at some point in the past years (by either attending our events, interning and volunteering for us, or contacting to us about their masters or Phd work, etc.). The B8 Next Generation's goal is to introduce this pool of outstanding young people to one another, create a network of like-minded young peace advocates, and assure them that they can be agents of change, even - and especially - at their young age. They are our ambassadors who ensure the continuity of B8 of Hope's work! [Click here](#) for more information.

In April, our **third episode of B8 of Hope Podcast series** was out! It focuses on a wonderful friendship between two women, a Palestinian and an Israeli who united in their struggle against breast cancer. Listen to Ibtisam Erekat and Ruth Ebenstein [on your preferred podcast platform](#)!



Thank you, Ruth and Ibtisam, for sharing your moving story. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to The Spot for producing the podcast!

In May B8 of Hope sponsored a couple of **iftar dinners in the West Bank**, area C, near Beit Umar and Gush Etsion.

One dinner was with the members of our grantee organization Judur/Shorashim/Roots: every year Palestinian and Israeli members of Roots celebrate Ramadan together and share a meal at the **Karama Palestinian Non-Violence Center**.

This year Israeli and Palestinian alumni of Tech2Peace also broke bread together on the occasion of an iftar, at the Karama Center!



The Center (which benefits from our support) belongs to a family of peace-builders and non-violence promoters : the Abu Awwad family

The dinner offered by B8 of Hope was a token of our gratitude to the young and courageous change makers, Alumni of Tech2Peace (one of our grantee organizations). Ali Abu Awwad the man who inspired the creation of B8 of Hope was also present and welcomed Tech2Peace. Nothing makes us happier at B8 of Hope than seeing interactions between initiatives we support! Synergies will scale up the impact of individual efforts of our grantees!

The change-making initiatives in Israel and Palestine are not isolated and marginal. We have supported 16 of them until now, but there are hundreds of them out there! We hope to turn the family of B8 of Hope into a "tribe"!

As a matter of fact, B8 of Hope has the pleasure to take **two new grantees under its umbrella**: Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET) and New Story Leadership (NSL).

Welcome on board!

Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET) brings together promising high school students for a cutting-edge three-year program. Each cohort consists of equal numbers of young men and women, and Israelis and Palestinians are equally represented. Together, they learn computer science, social entrepreneurship, and leadership skills, in a curriculum crafted with MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), their long-term academic partner. The goal of MEET is:



1. To create a generation of leaders who know how to work across political divides from a young age.
2. To extend MIT's cutting-edge technological education to communities who could not previously access it.
3. To promote STEM education and tech-sector leadership among women and minority groups in Palestine and Israel.
4. To inspire their program alumni to create and shape a more just society

New Story Leadership (NSL) focuses on developing a community of leaders and influencers across Palestine and Israel through a 7 weeks summer program in Washington DC. Palestinian and Israeli young adults who apply to this program are hosted by "pairs" by American families and get work-placements in the offices of Representatives and Senators and in other high-level organizations. Through the NSL program, they learn to use the Narrative Method to craft their personal stories of struggle and hope. Delegates share their stories at speaking engagements on Capitol Hill and across DC.

NSL's delegates participate in strategic meetings with organizations like the United States Institute of Peace, J Street, AIPAC, the United Nations Development Program, and the Swedish Embassy, and with various US Congressmen and Senators. Each delegate arrives in Washington, DC with a proposed Project for Change (PFC). Working together in Palestinian-Israeli teams, they collaborate on joint social impact projects.

The logo for New Story Leadership is a dark gray square with the words "NEW STORY" and "LEADERSHIP" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. Two horizontal orange lines are positioned above and below the text.

NEW STORY
LEADERSHIP



As always, please refer to our grantees' pages for more detailed news about their activities!

- A Land for All Two States One Homeland: <https://www.ogspeaks.com/>
- Combatants for Peace: <https://cfpeace.org>
- Greenland Society for Health Development: <http://www.glshd.org/>
- Jerusalem Youth Chorus: <https://jerusalemyouthchorus.org/>
- Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow: <https://www.meet.org/>
- New Story Leadership: <https://www.newstoryleadership.org/>
- Our Generation Speaks: <https://www.ogspeaks.com/>
- Parents Circle Families Forum: <https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en/>
- Peres Center for Peace / Saving Children Program: <https://www.peres-center.org/en/the-organization/projects/medicine/>
- Polyphony: <https://www.polyphony-education.com/>
- Road to Recovery: <http://www.roadtorecovery.org.il/Site/he/index.html>
- Roots / Judur / Shorashim: <https://www.polyphony-education.com/>
- Taghyeer Movement: <https://taghyeerpal.ps/news/>
- Teachers' Lounge: <https://teachersloungejer.wixsite.com/teachers-lounge-eng/initiatives>
- Tech2Peace: <https://www.tech2peace.com/>
- Women Wage Peace: <https://womenwagepeace.org.il/en/>
- Zimam: <https://www.zimam.ps/home>



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