



Newsletter

September 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters,

You last heard from us in June when we published a Special Edition newsletter -- a tribute to our Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders and change-makers who co-resist to co-exist; they refused to see each other as enemies during the very tense month of May. If you missed this special edition, please note that all former newsletters can be found on our website : <https://b8ofhope.org/newsletters/>. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you to follow us on FB and Instagram for on-going updates and posts.



And now a glimpse of our summer :

The end of June and all of July were punctuated by pleasant surprises!

Indeed, we were nicely surprised and much honored by a visit from [Women Wage Peace](#) activist, [Yael Treidel](#). The stars aligned in our favor: by pure coincidence, our friend the Parisian film director [Hanna Assouline](#) came to Geneva the very same day as Yael! Hanna directed an inspiring documentary which was partially funded by B8 of Hope: [Les Guerrières de la Paix](#) features our grantee movement Women Wage Peace (WWP). The movement unites thousands of Israeli women from all walks of life. It works hard to prevent hostility while promoting a non-violent, respectful, and mutually endorsed solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We took full advantage of this fortunate coincidence by organizing an impromptu casual gathering that allowed a group of women from our local community of donors and supporters to meet Yael and Hanna. Co-founders David and Mehra Rimer hosted the small event at their house.



Yael elaborated upon WWP's activities during last spring's tensions and peaks of violence, while Hanna shared her experiences as a filmmaker back in 2017 when she shadowed WWP's courageous women as they went about their daily activism leading up to the huge march. Yael and Hanna were greeted and welcomed by a warm audience of women from our B8 of Hope Genevan community. What a pure moment of joy and compassion to start the summer!

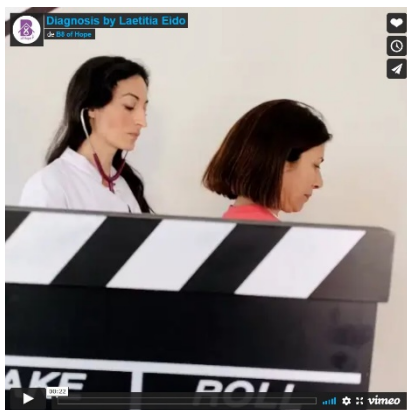


Another surprise visit that warmed our hearts came from **Saskia Keeley**, a New York-based Swiss photo-activist with whom B8 of Hope regularly collaborates. In the US as well as in Israel and Palestine, Saskia runs photography workshops that strive to bridge divides and foster healing. Saskia also sits on the board of the American Friends of **Roots**, our grantee organization. Catching up and comparing notes with Saskia is very useful for contemplating how our respective groups can more efficiently support Roots. To learn more about Saskia's work [click here](#).

In July, we received a delightful visit from a delegation of 12 high-school students and their teacher, **Summar Farraj**. Coming from Maghar, a town in the North of Israel, the group visited us at our B8 of Hope workspace. "Maghar is an interesting place that encompasses elements of a Druze, Muslim, and Christian town within a Jewish majority country", explained **Shmuel Aiello**, the founder of **Debate For Peace** who organized the trip.

Debate for Peace assembles Arab and Jewish students from Palestinian cities and over 70 cities and towns in Israel. Once together, students participate in Model United Nations conferences where they debate, negotiate and attempt to resolve the most difficult and pressing challenges in international relations.

It was incredibly uplifting to welcome this delegation of young, dynamic teenagers from Maghar, and learn about their lives in this unique city. In return, they were given the opportunity to learn about B8 of Hope's work.



The most unexpected visit this summer came from French-Lebanese actress **Laetitia Eido**, also known as "Dr Shirin" in the Israeli TV series Fauda! For all you Fauda fans, Dr Shirin is still alive and well!

She examined our chairwoman Mehra Rimer while staying at our B8 of Hope work space: her diagnosis was devastating!!!

[Click here to watch](#).

Shooting this clip was so much fun! Many thanks to Laetitia for her friendship and for playing along with this funny skit idea!

On a more serious note, in July we launched the second cohort of the **Mid East Storytellers**, a project organized in partnership with **The Alliance for Middle East Peace** (ALLMEP). This workshop was facilitated and coordinated by **Pendulum**, a communication agency that focuses on change. The workshop explores how to create engaging, action-provoking content that helps peacebuilders inspire and mobilize others to become change-makers. All members of NGOs and movements supported by ALLMEP and/or B8 of Hope, the small cohort of Israeli and Palestinian participants engaged in several intensive sessions throughout the month to learn how to create videos, photos and texts.

In early August, participants teamed up with experienced mentors who helped them to master the creative processes. By the end of August, participants' photo stories were finalized and presented to a distinguished jury who selected the three winning projects. Stay tuned for more exciting news later this fall!

For a glimpse of the inspiring stories and a sense of the workshop experience, click on the link to access the Mid East Storytellers' website. The stories from the pilot edition as well as the second cohort can be found [here](http://www.stories.allmep.org).



We would like to thank each and every mentor and jury member. We extend a special thanks to the friends and supporters from our B8 of Hope community who generously gave their time and expertise to this this project.

Our sincere gratitude to those who served as **mentors**:



Lara Milosevic



Laura Wohlwend



Nabil Canaan,



Noa Grandchamp



Petar Mitrovic



Saskia Keeley

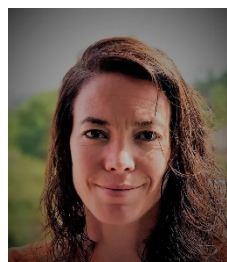
and those who acted as **jury members**:



Ahmad Abu Akel



Isabelle Gattiker



Isabelle Muller



Nico Daswani



This summer's only heavy-hearted news is the completion of our outstanding intern [Jessica Fayon's](#) 10 month internship program. Throughout her time at B8 of Hope, Jessica learned about peacebuilding while becoming familiar with each of our grantees' activities and activists. She acquired first-hand information through direct online interactions with the Israeli – Palestinian peacebuilding ecosystem. Having a bachelor's degree in communications, Jessica improved our website and presence on social media.

Jessica also co-founded and led our [B8 of Hope "Next Gen" youth group](#). Her involvement with this group will carry on: B8 of Hope Next Gen activities will resume in September. B8 of Hope attracts a considerable number of young people interested in peace-building: it was these young people that inspired the creation of this group.

B8 of Hope Next Gen's participants are based primarily in Europe and North America, and they study at prestigious universities. Some participated in B8 of Hope's internships programs, while others volunteer for events by offering their services on a regular or seasonal basis. Some reach out to us while researching their Bachelor's, Master's or PhD thesis topics.

The Next Gen youth group provides a framework for brilliant students to meet each other (either online or in person if they are in the same city), stay connected with B8 of Hope, and eventually become ambassadors for B8 of Hope's vision. The group has its own steering committee and objectives, but their goals always remain in line with [B8 of Hope's values](#).

[Click here to meet Next Gen's founders!](#)



News from the ground:

Concurrently, on the ground in Israel and Palestine, our grantees' activities resumed. We encourage you to click on the respective websites for more details (links are provided on the [Grantees page](#) of our website).

Some highlights of activities we funded that took place throughout the summer:

The [Judur/Shorashim/Roots](#) summer camps resumed after last summer's cancelation. Intended for children ages 5-12, the Roots annual summer camp is a week-long experience that offers photography, crafts, cooking, play with animals, and dance. It provides a fun and carefree setting for positive interaction between Israeli and Palestinian children in the West Bank (Gush-Etzion-Beit Umar region/Area C).

B8 of Hope is very proud to have supported these camps since our creation in 2016.



Photo credit: @Roots

The [Tech2Peace](#) seminars have run in close succession since the beginning of June, and are continuing to run. We are very proud to have partially funded all 4 seminars. Each 12-day seminar accepts an average of 30 Israeli and Palestinian participants who want to learn high-tech skills while developing their startup ideas together. Participants also address the hardest issues of the conflict in dedicated dialogue sessions.



Photo credit: @Tech2Peace

[Our Generation Speaks](#) (OGS) 's program in Boston was cancelled last summer due to Covid. This summer, the program resumed by using the funds that B8 of Hope had allocated for the 2020 cohort. OGS is a Boston-based, fully funded, three-month fellowship / incubator where Palestinian and Israeli entrepreneurs create ventures and startups from scratch. Exceptional candidates are handpicked to join the program. Candidates in their mid-20s to early 30s are chosen for their strong sense of leadership as well as their entrepreneurial mindset. The fellowship runs in collaboration with The Heller School at Brandeis University, MassChallenge, MIT's designX, Game Lab and MISTI.

This summer, [Polyphony](#) collaborated with the Israeli Opera to perform the “One Voice” concert at the Opera House in Tel Aviv. This concert featured Polyphony's Galilee Chamber Orchestra, Arab and Jewish soloists, as well as the Opera’s conductors and singers. Each year, Polyphony's programs reach more than 9000 Arab and Jewish youths who come together to share their love of classical music. B8 of Hope sponsors The Scholar in Residence Seminars, one of their many programs. Polyphony’s efforts to keep the voice of co-existence alive and audible yields results and reaches new levels of significance.



Photo credit: @Tal Shaha

In mid-July, the bereaved women of the [Parents Circle Families Forum](#) (PCFF) held their concluding session of the Women for Reconciliation Leadership Program. Twenty female Forum members participated in a training process for creating and leading projects that promote reconciliation. B8 of Hope’s support for PCFF focuses on activities of the bereaved Israeli and Palestinian mothers simply because we find them heroic! Over 40 PCFF female members - both Palestinian and Israeli - participated in an encounter that took place in Beit Jala. The excitement was palpable: Covid-19 had prevented them from meeting face to face for over two years! The purpose of this final encounter was to give visibility to the women in the leadership program, to allow them to present the five projects they had initiated, and to enable other women to take part in developing and implementing their projects. Many activities like movement, dialogue, and arts and crafts were included to help reconnect women who have not seen one another in such a long time.

One activity, for example, involved white masks that allowed the women to disconnect from patterns that control their lives, while obscuring the social, psychological, and political identities of others. This activity also enabled participants to feel unified: it reinforced connections that encourage the women to work together to end the conflict.



Photo credit: @Parents Circle Families Forum



B8 of Hope contributes to the overall program costs of the [Teachers' Lounge](#) Yearly Program, a program which ends in June. This year, the end of the program coincided with the period of acts of violence and civil unrest. The Teachers' Lounge's community was strongly affected by these events. The end-of-year ceremony was cancelled; however, despite the tensions, the groups of Jewish and Arab teachers were eventually able to meet and conclude their year. 62 teachers graduated from the program this year! The summer break allowed Teachers' Lounge (which is very much focused in Jerusalem and the surrounding region) to work on opening a West Galilee program for this coming fall.

That's all for now! Thanks for persevering with this long newsletter!

More about our other grantees : [Taghyeer](#), [Zimam](#), [Standing Together](#), [Combatants for Peace](#), [Karama](#), [MEET](#), [New Story Leadership](#), [Peres Center for Peace and Innovation](#), [A Land for All](#), [Road to Recovery](#) and [Greenland Society for Health and Development](#) - in our next editions!

B8fully Yours,
The B8 of Hope Team



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