



Newsletter

April 2022

Dear Friends and Supporters,

While a tragic conflict rages in Europe and history repeats itself in different parts of the world, cycle of violence after cycle of violence, year after year, century after century, it is clear that human beings will remain the same. They are as capable of the best as the worst: inventors of the universal and fundamental human rights yet also the ones who tread on them.

At B8 of Hope, we strive for goodness through good thoughts, words and deeds. This is what makes us human in the fullest sense of the word. It is this effort to do Good, promote humanity and attempt to understand the other, that we, the founders of B8 of Hope, admire in others and this is what we try to instill in our audiences and circles, while steadfastly focusing ourselves on this goal.

We stand in solidarity with all refugees and victims of wars - with a special thought for those from Ukraine at the moment. In our modest way, **we will not give up on humanity** and continue to believe in the Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers. We continue to work for our region of interest to promote a respectful coexistence based on equality, dignity and security for all those who live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

We are happy to share with you our updates below.

January 2022 was a month of reflection. We held our first board meeting of the year. Finances were approved, creative ideas (to continue raising funds for our grantees) were discussed and a clear agenda to give those grantees of ours visibility and advice was established.

More than everything: it was wonderful to reconnect with our B8 of Hope family; co-founders and board members after having not met since November.

➤ **Education for Peace in Wettingen (Canton of Argovie), Geneva and Paris!**

February 2022 marked our sixth year in existence. We began this celebratory month with a hybrid event.

By the means of technology, we, B8 of Hope, found ourselves simultaneously in Geneva, Wettingen (Canton of Argovie), Tel-Aviv and Ramallah - all at the same time! Welcome to the MetaB8ofHope!

The [Wettingen high school](#) (in the German speaking part of Switzerland) hosted us in the framework of an interdisciplinary week-long project around the theme of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.





As part of our local educational mission in Switzerland, we presented our vision and activities to a classroom of 23 students (age 16+). A screening of the multiple award-winning film [Disturbing The Peace](#) was played followed by a virtual Q&A with two of the film’s protagonists Chen Alon (from Tel Aviv) and Souli Khatib (from Ramallah).

Chen and Souli are co-founders of Combatants for Peace ; a movement of former Israeli soldiers and Palestinian freedom fighters who chose to give up their weapons for a fairer and better future. Disturbing The Peace features many of the movement’s members and carries a universal message that applies to all conflicts.

Stephen Apkon and Marcina Hale (film director and producer as well as co-founders of Reconsider) challenge us to think that no matter who we are, where we live or what we do: *"one must understand the narrative within one lives, to look at one’s current role in society, and to take responsibility for that role one plays - questioning if it creates a more humane world, for all?"*

On February 24th &25th, B8 of Hope was hosted by [Institut Florimont](#) (a prestigious Genevois high school) for a screening of Les [Guerrières de la Paix](#) + Q/A with film director Hanna Assouline. The audience: 167 12th graders.



Our participation to Florimont’s February week of human rights has become a tradition. It is now the fourth running year that we are being invited. Although we are focused on humanization rather than human rights (strictly speaking), we are extremely grateful that the institute gives our message visibility which in turn gives the students the alternative of being pro-peace-builders rather than pro-sides.

One of the impacts of this school presentation touched us in particular. Several students (on the initiative of 2 classmates: a Moroccan Jew and an Egyptian Muslim) expressed their desire of travelling together to the Holy Land and visit it through the lenses of B8 of Hope!

Our educational mission continued in **March**. The [American Graduate School in Paris](#) hosted B8 of Hope in the framework of their Speaker Series.

Mehra Rimer was joined by Sulaiman Khatib, Palestinian co-founder of Combatants for Peace. While Mehra talked about the projects of [Combatants for Peace](#) which receive funds from B8 of Hope, Sulaiman talked about his story of transformation which brought him to peace-building. If you are interested in Sulaiman’s story, his book “In this place together, A Palestinian’s Journey to Collective Liberation”, co-written with Penina Eilberg-Schwartz is available for purchase [here](#).





➤ B8 of Hope Next Gen and a new intern!

Talking of education and youth, our [B8 of Hope Next Gen](#) members are growing in numbers: 40 young men and women are officially now part of this group. This winter a few Next Gen members had the opportunity to volunteer with [Pathways Institute for Negotiation Education](#), an organization that has been on B8 of Hope's radar for a while.



Since January, we welcomed a new intern: Orson Ophir, 17. Orson is a Year 12 high-school student at [Ecole Internationale de Genève – International School of Geneva](#) (La Grande-Boissière Campus). Definitely our youngest intern ever! In 2020, he participated in the Philanthropic Adventures workshop exploring B8 of Hope's work. He was an attentive and motivated participant. His interest for the Middle East combined with his skills in graphic design made him eligible for our internship program! He is working under the supervision of Chrystelle Thiébaud - our admin, special projects and internship program manager.

While learning about B8 of Hope and the role of narratives and storytelling in conflict resolution, Orson is creating the graphic design of our next street exhibit of "[Mid East Storytellers](#)". Stay tuned and come and see the results at Promenade Saint-Antoine in the old town from June 1st to June 17th!

➤ Oasis of Peace

This winter, we had a short visit from Samah Salaimé, educational director at [Wahat Al-Salam - Neve Shalom](#) (Oasis of Peace).

Wahat Al-Salam - Neve Shalom is a small village of Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel living together on the land. It has a population of 70+ families, all dedicated to building peace justice and equality. Situated equidistant from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the community was established in 1970 by Father Bruno Hussar on land of the Latrun Monastery. It is a model of equality, mutual respect and partnership that challenges existing patterns of racism, discrimination and the continued conflict. The community has established educational institutions based on its ideals and conducts activities focused on social and political change. Many of the village members work in peace, justice and reconciliation projects.

We were very flattered to show our own Oasis of Peace (also known as the B8 of Hope work space) to Samah. Thanks to Samah's visit, we learned more about the activities of this unique village where Israeli Jews and Arabs live together, speak both languages and manage their community in unity. Wahat Al Salam - Neve Shalom is the symbol and the embodiment of what could be possible at a larger binational scale.

To learn more about Wahat Al-Salam - Neve Shalom, [click here](#) to listen to the fifth episode of the B8 of Hope podcast featuring Samah.





➤ The long awaited trip!

After two years of not having been on the ground, our Chair and co-founder Mehra Rimer, along with Chrystelle Thiébaud (B8 of Hope’s admin, special projects and internship program manager), flew to Israel and the West Bank for an intense and short week of work.

Despite the restricted travels of these past two years, B8 of Hope has maintained (throughout these times) regular contacts with its grantees via online meetings. However this 'in-person' reconnection was truly needed and dare we say - magnificent! It gave a grand boost of energy to both B8 of Hope and to the on the ground peace-builders.

Jean-Marc Liling, one of B8 of Hope's board member and representative (living in Jerusalem) joined Chrystelle and Mehra in a series of meetings across the land. From Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem all the way through Gush Etsion, Beit Jala, Ramallah and Hebron, B8 of Hope traveled and met with 170 representatives of different Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. Some of these organizations are B8 of Hope's grantees and others have been on our radar since more recently.





The purpose of these meetings was to reinforce synergies. We brought together more than 20 NGOs and movements in one same room.

One of B8 of Hope’s core mission is to foster synergies between its grantees (and more generally between grassroots and civil society change-makers). We encourage these movements to join forces when it makes sense. We believe synergies are key in scaling up impact. We also believe they are a way of optimizing the spending of funds that organizations receive from us.

Our concept of synergies was born in 2019. A few collaborations have started since then, but all are still fairly nascent. So we have come up with the concept of the Synergies Lab to deepen and explore further the idea. For the first time ever, we are offering an additional grant opportunity to current grantees incentivizing them to build bridges with one another and thus scale themselves. Whether they choose to do so via a joint running of programs, sharing data & resources, or developing capacity - at B8 of hope we are confident that such synergies will bring them further success.

We apply this concept to ourselves; as we are weighing a potential partnership with a sister organization – [Amal-Tikva](#).



Based in Jerusalem, Amal-Tikva specializes in capacity building for NGOs. Many of our grantees have benefited from their curriculum which offers a comprehensive range of programs. We believe that a partnership between B8 of Hope and Amal-Tikva will assist our respective beneficiaries; more extensively the entire Israeli Palestinian peace-building community shall win from it.

Amal Tikva helped us refine, polish and finalize the Synergy Lab. It has been concluded that each winner of the new grant will receive (alongside the grant) a couple of hours of consultation from Amal-Tikva so that funds are used in a most optimal way.

At the end of March, one of our generous supporters hosted Ali Abu Awad, prominent Palestinian activist of non-violence, in Switzerland. Ali, who is the founder of [Taghyeer Movement](#) had the opportunity to stay in a peaceful surrounding - isolated from the conflict as to work intensively on his manifesto: a document which will gather all of his thoughts on non-violence and conflict resolution.

We are extremely grateful to our donor for giving this incredible opportunity to Ali. We believe that taking a step back from one's daily activism to put ideas on paper (so that they can be spread further away) is an important step to scale ones’ activism. We are therefore looking forward to the rippling effect of this manifesto.

We are also happy that we could have some of Ali’s time in Geneva, for him to have conversations with some of B8 of Hope’s board members as well as some of the Geneva based members of our [B8 of Hope Next Gen](#) youth group.





Last but not least: our 2021 annual report – if you have missed it in our previous mailing – please [find it here](#).

B8fully Yours,
The B8 of Hope Team



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