

# B8 of Hope

## Six Months of Projects Supporting the Peace

Founded in February 2016, B8 of Hope strives for peaceful solutions through dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. Inspired by Palestinian peace activist Ali Abu Awwad, we aim to re-establish as much as possible individual links between Israeli and Palestinian people.

Back in March, we organized our first fundraising gala. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to promote established initiatives that bring about discussion and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians and that reject all recourse to violence. You will find in this newsletter the latest news from the projects we support.

## FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

### JUDUR / SHORASHIM / ROOTS

Roots is the first initiative launched by Ali Abu Awwad, with an Israeli partner, Shaul Judelman.

Roots fosters a grassroots movement of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Israelis and Palestinians. It is a place where people can take responsibility and challenge the assumptions their communities hold about each other, building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict in their respective societies.

B8 of Hope funds Roots holiday camps and pre-army academies visits.

#### **Holiday camps**

During the summer, Roots welcomed 37 Israeli and Palestinian children for a five-day overnight experience in Kibutz Manera, in the north of Israel. Through a mixture of outdoor activities and workshops, the camp provided a fun and carefree setting for positive interactions.

During the same week, Roots ran four one-day summer camp at Merkaz Karame, with local children. Each day saw between 45 and 60 participants.

Here is a message from David, the camp director, to his staff:

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*The campers soaked up love, respect and the experience of being heard. They saw that even between us it is okay to disagree, to get angry, to be hurt. But, the main thing they saw is that it is okay to apologize. To forgive. To walk forward.*

*We can be proud with what we have done and I am telling you this is just a beginning. We are raising a generation for peace. We are writing the Ten Commandments of reconciliation. I promise that this is just a start.*

### **Pre-army academies visits**

Roots brings its message to the Israeli pre-army academies, exposing the students to both the Palestinian and settlers narratives in order to build up their understanding of the people with whom they will be interacting during their service. This program is met with resounding approval and will be developed over the coming months.

## **TAGHYEER / CHANGE**

Tahyeer is a national peace movement founded by Ali Abu Awwad at the heart of the Palestinian civil society.

This innovative Palestinian national nonviolence movement focuses on engaging the Palestinian society on a way forward to achieve social change and national goals through nonviolence.

With the financial support of B8 of Hope, Taghyeer organized several workshops during the summer to bring communities together around its strategy of social change through nonviolence.

### **Photo workshops**

Taghyeer initiated a series of photo workshops for Palestinian women. Day-long creative workshops were offered by photographer Saskia Keeley. The goal to give women opportunities for expression and empowerment through photography. These workshops allowed them to have a voice and to be more proactive in choices they want to make outside of their homes.

*“These women are the greatest victims of the conflict. They live under Israeli occupation, as well as in patriarchal societies with no equality or independence, and with limited rights.” - Ali Abu Awwad*

### **Summer workshops and collaboration with Women Wage Peace**

Taghyeer facilitated a six-day series of training workshops with the International Alternatives to Violence Initiative. The objective is to prepare activists to cope with violence, handle conflict and build trust and cooperation skills.

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In August, Taghyeer brought together a planning group of 70 women, including counterparts of the Israeli Women Wage Peace movement. Thanks to this collaboration, thousands of independent Palestinian women will participate in the *Journey to Peace* (read below), seeking a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## **WOMEN WAGE PEACE**

Women Wage Peace is a broad-based grassroots movement founded in Israel after the Gaza War of 2014 (Operation Protective Edge). It counts among its thousands of members women from the political Right, Center, and Left, Jewish and Arab, religious and secular – all of them united in their demand for a political agreement to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

B8 of Hope supports two distinct projects, Middle Eastern Salad and Politics of Acquaintance as well as the *Journey to Peace*.

### **Middle Eastern Salad**

Middle Eastern Salad is a series of gatherings organized by Women Wage Peace. During the months of July and August, three meetings were organized for 134 participants in total. Participants were Israeli and Palestinian men and women, children and teenagers, educators as well as young Palestinian activists from the Taghyeer movement.

Through ice breaking activities and lectures about the non-violence approach, the meetings aimed to create personal and professional connections between the participants and to re-write the usual “victimhood” stories on both sides in a positive, empowered and future oriented way.

For many Palestinians participating, the workshops were their first meeting with Israelis who are not soldiers.

### **Politics of Acquaintance**

During the summer, Women Wage Peace organized three events in different places of Israel with Huda Abu Arqoub, director of the [Alliance for Middle East Peace](#). These conferences gathered almost 800 participants in total, including many Arab Israelis.

Huda has embarked on this journey of meetings to forge connections with Israeli women. Her goal is to create another language, the Politics of Acquaintance. Huda aims to take leave of the slogans that bog everyone down again and again, and to create a language based on sincere curiosity that strives to reveal what we share and what is possible.

For many participants, it was the first time they heard a Palestinian speaking in this way. Many of them reported they felt empowered and deeply inspired.

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## **Journey to Peace**

On September 24th, Women Wage Peace began this journey of hope and peace with the financial support of B8 of Hope. The *Journey to Peace* demands the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a political agreement and the inclusion of women in the negotiation process.

The *Journey to Peace* began at the end of Rosh Hashana and will reach its high point during the week of Sukkot in the Tent of Sarah and Hagar – a huge tent of discussions, hope and peace, art and music happenings, encounters and talking with the decision makers. Israeli and Palestinian women will sit together, ask to end the long running dispute and call for the leaders of both people to begin continual negotiations until an agreement is signed. From there, the movement will continue to Jerusalem, where the largest women's congress in a mass event will be launched.

Thousands of Palestinian women from the Taghyeer movement are participating in the *Journey to Peace*. Meetings between Women Wage Peace and Taghyeer allowed women from both sides to meet, connect with one another, engage in conversations and plan future activities. Participants realized they all had the same desire for security, peace, and freedom.

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

### **VISIT AT THE KARAMA CENTER**

On June 29th, two members of B8 of Hope, Mehra Rimer and Luc Fayon, visited the Karama Center for dialogue and non-violence, near the Palestinian village of Beit Ummar in the area of Gush Etsion. The purpose of the visit was to meet Palestinian and Israeli activists we help and to have updates about the projects we sponsor thanks to the funds raised at our March Gala.

For us, it is extremely important that the different initiatives we help also meet and discuss among themselves. We want to foster cooperation in projects that have the same goal: paving the path for peace through dialogue, bridge-building and non-violence.

A synergy has been created thanks to this effort. A few weeks after our visit, activists from Taghyeer invited activists from Women Wage Peace from Tel-Aviv to come back to Karama to meet local Palestinian women in order to engage with them and include them in the Journey to Peace project.

### **PERES CENTER FOR PEACE**

B8 of Hope contributed, in a small proportion, to the Peres Center for Peace Children program. The Center treats Palestinian infants and children in Israeli hospitals for diagnoses

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and complex medical procedures in cases where such services are unavailable in the Palestinian healthcare system.

Our contribution covered the costs of treatment for a little boy called Ali. Ali is a 3 years old boy from Bethlehem who was born with sever cardiac disorders that needed treatment. He underwent diagnostic catheterization and open-heart surgery at the Sheba Medical Center's Safra Children's Hospital.

## THE EARTHWORM PROJECT

B8 of Hope helped implement an environmental project by connecting the Forest Tree Foundation with the Karama Center.

The Earthworm project aims to bring people together as caretakers of the land. At the Karama center, the project will show how humble actions, such as composting with worms, can help reduce waste, heal the land and create abundant and nutritious food. Palestinians and Israelis will come to learn how to integrate those practices in their daily lives.

In the spirit of the work of Taghyeer, earthworm composting is part of a wider nonviolent movement as daily acts of care for a land that has suffered so much from divisions and conflicts.

## SASKIA KEELY

Saskia Keeley, a Swiss photo activist based in New York, is a great partner of B8 of Hope. Her direct feedback through her photos and reports are very valuable to us.

Since several years, she spends a big chunk of her summer at the Karama Center facilitating workshops for Roots and more recently for Taghyeer. She is the author of an amazing album called : "[A Photographic Journey: Peace, Dialogue and Nonviolence in the West Bank](#)"

## EVENTS

### "DISTURBING THE PEACE" SCREENINGS

B8 of Hope is organizing a series of complimentary screenings of the movie [Disturbing the Peace](#) during the first week of October.

*Disturbing the Peace* is a multiple award-winning documentary about former Israeli soldiers from elite units and former Palestinian fighters and ex-prisoners who are now on the same side, "combating" for Peace. Combatants for Peace are nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 2017.

Entrance is free but registration compulsory!

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- Geneva, Centre des Arts Ecolint - Wednesday October 4th, 7:30 pm | [REGISTER HERE](#)
- Rolle, Rosey Concert Hall - Thursday October 5th, 8:15 pm | [REGISTER HERE](#)

[Watch the trailer](#)

## LE MONDE FESTIVAL

French daily newspaper "Le Monde" organized a discussion with Ali Abu Awwad and French-Israeli lawyer and peace activist Jean-Marc Liling.

[Watch the debate](#)

## B8 OF HOPE 2017 GALA

Our support to the all these great projects is made possible by the funds we raised at our gala, organized in March at the Intercontinental Hotel. We would like to thank you for your generosity!

[Discover the gala pictures](#)

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