

Jerusalem Post > Middle East

# Israeli, Palestinian NGOs lead grassroots campaign to improve conditions

15 leading Israeli and Palestinian NGOs will utilize new US funding for peacebuilding efforts to change the reality on the ground – from the ground up.

By JERUSALEM POST STAFF Published: NOVEMBER 9, 2022 00:33



Thousands of Jews and Arabs march in Tel Aviv for peace and coexistence, Saturday, May 22, 2021.

(photo credit: STANDING TOGETHER)

With Israel's latest elections finally complete and [violence between Israelis and Palestinians on the rise](#), 15 leading Israeli and Palestinian NGOs have launched a joint campaign to change the discourse from the ground up – and prepare for a major influx of funding from the US government and private donors.

The Build Peace Campaign, co-sponsored by Jerusalem-based Amal-Tikva and Swiss-based B8 of Hope, is part of broader efforts ensuring that peacebuilding NGOs work more efficiently, effectively, and at scale.

2022 marks the first year in which funding from MEPPA – the US government's \$50 million annual commitment to Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding – has begun to flow in. Efforts led by Amal-Tikva and others have begun to bear fruits, as the field sees exponential growth, proven impact and increased funding from private donors.

The grassroots campaign aims to demonstrate readiness for change, as well as raise awareness and funding for the field of cross-border [Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding](#). Participating organizations have planned extensively and strengthened their capacity to ensure that they are operated more professionally, effectively, transparently and cooperatively than ever.



Despite the pandemic, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict endures. (credit: MARC ISRAEL SELLEM)

"When it comes to the Holy Land, bad news is the news. Funding peacebuilding initiatives is investing in peace and becoming shareholders of a better reality. We invite donors and supporters to be part of the solution

rather than the problem, to be pro-peacebuilding rather than pro-Israel or pro-Palestine. This initiative enables anyone who is passionate about this cause to play a part," said Mehra Rimer, Co-Founder and Chair of B8 of Hope.

**"We invite donors and supporters to be part of the solution rather than the problem, to be pro-peacebuilding rather than pro-Israel or pro-Palestine."**

-Mehra Rimer, Co-Founder and Chair, B8 of Hope

### NGOs role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process

During President Joe Biden's visit to Israel and the West Bank, the US leader announced a \$5 million grant for Israel NGO Appleseeds. The Biden Administration's grant was given under the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA) initiative, which aims to bridge and connect Israeli and Palestinian societies via shared life experiences and mutual understanding through technology and shared economic ties.

The planning process offered to NGOs – with the hope of making them more viable – was launched by Amal-Tikva after its co-founders, Meredith Rothbart and Basheer Abu Baker, experts in the field who noticed that virtually all grassroots efforts were stifled due to a lack of professional skills, organizational infrastructure, and access to funds.

Much of that has changed in the two years since the program was launched. A report commissioned by Amal-Tikva on the state of local NGOs not only revealed the program's shortcomings, but also surprising facts – such as higher-than-expected participation by Israelis from right-wing, religious, and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

| The organizations participating in the campaign include organizations aiming to improve the quality of life for typically disenfranchised groups, such as women and elderly cohorts.

Participating organizations such as Lissan help [Palestinian women in East Jerusalem access the Israeli job market](#) and higher education and navigate public services and the healthcare system. Roots-Shorashim-Judor brings Jews and Arabs together across Judea & Samaria/the West Bank. The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue trains teachers in Jewish and Arab schools across the country to facilitate difficult conversations about tackling xenophobia in the classroom. Tech2Peace sends hundreds of Israeli and Palestinian through intensive tech and dialogue boot camps.

"Most people don't think of women empowerment, access to healthcare, language instruction and technology as 'peace' programs, but if we take a

step back from politics and think of what a more peaceful reality actually looks like, these are the key ingredients," said Meredith Rothbart, Co-Founder & CEO of Amal-Tikva.

"Our campaign aims to bring together the people who are working to improve the day-to-day lives of both Israelis and Palestinians. We know that by coming together, we will succeed in creating real impact and changing the day-to-day reality on the ground," Rothbart concluded.

For more information on the campaign: [www.causematch.com/buildpeace](http://www.causematch.com/buildpeace).