



B8 OF HOPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

B8 of Hope
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**This annual report is dedicated to
Vivian Silver (Kibbutz Be'eri, Israel) and Ayat Khadura (Beit Lahia, Gaza)
May they rest in Peace. May their work and activism for a better future
remain an example and remembered by all.**

**The harsh reality of the conflict directly affected people whom we
know. We express our deepest condolences to the respective bereaved
families.**

**We grieve for the loss of our beloved peace activists and changemakers,
as well as all innocent lives.**

**Our hearts are heavy with the collective sorrow caused by these
profound losses.**



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A Word from Mehra Rimer, Executive Director and Co-founder

Dear Friends and Supporters,

B8 of Hope stands out as a rare space where Swiss citizens and residents from diverse ethnicities, cultures, and faiths, including Muslim and Christian Arabs as well as members of the Jewish diaspora, unite to support Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilders and changemakers paving a path for a shared future grounded in equal rights, dignity, safety, and self-determination for all those living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. In its brief seven years of existence, B8 of Hope has successfully cultivated this inclusive space in Switzerland, as is evident in the diversity of attendees at events such as our gala in 2023.

Unfortunately, in the Middle East, 2023 marked the most violent and challenging year since the creation of B8 of Hope and our involvement in peacebuilding. Political shifts and radicalization in Israeli politics led to historic protests by thousands of Israelis from January to October. Stronger tensions and violence between Palestinians and Israelis within Israel and in the Palestinian Occupied Territories also arose. Obviously, the unexpected murderous attack and the kidnapping of a large number of hostages by Hamas on October 7th, and the subsequent devastating war led by Israel, which is on an unprecedented scale, brought the death tolls and the conflict to a climax of another kind during the last months of the year.

The death and suffering of innocent civilians, whether Israelis or Palestinians, are regrettable and tragic. Our empathy is twofold. The experience of holding this dual empathy is draining, yet it remains the predominant emotion we feel. At B8 of Hope, we have tragically lost colleagues who were dedicated peace activists, both Israeli and Palestinian. Our hearts go out to their respective families, and they remain in our thoughts consistently. In navigating this complex landscape, we firmly align ourselves with the pro-peace and pro-life camp, standing against the promotion of violence. It is reassuring to note that this perspective encompasses individuals from both sides, reinforcing our conviction that a sustainable resolution can only be achieved through non-violent means.

Being a peace activist and an agent of change became increasingly difficult in 2023. Peace activism in times of war assumed an entirely new meaning, fraught with heightened risks. It became even more susceptible to threats, deemed unpatriotic in both societies, and required even greater courage. Despite all this, peace activists, including some of whom have lost loved ones themselves, continued their constructive work with courage and without hesitation. This isn't just out of some vain hope. It is out of a conviction that this work can transform individual lives, families, and communities.

So why can't it transform whole societies? These peace builders and changemakers are the embryo of a very different reality that right now represents a minority, but with YOUR support it can grow larger, more confident and can drive events in the region. Some of the initiatives



supported by B8 of Hope have been growing in a spectacular way and are leading some of the largest demonstrations for peace and democracy in a generation.

In 2016 we were only supporting 3 initiatives, today we support a total of 20. We believe that our work and the work of our activists are needed more than ever. Building peace under worsening conditions is the hardest and most necessary mission. It is about keeping faith in humanity and offering an alternative to the simple reflex of hate and violence. It is in this effort and spirit that B8 of Hope has continued its activity throughout 2023, investing in humanity and humanization. Concrete initiatives are described in this report.

On different note, we have also been actively engaged in our local mission in Switzerland and beyond, playing an educational role on fostering a healthier discourse around Israel and Palestine. This involves offering to our youth and other audiences a constructive, nuanced, and contextualized view of current events— particularly during violent flare-ups and their polarized reflections in social media. Notably, we have introduced a new element of empathy to enhance our educational mission.

Finally, the year 2023 was also the year of change for the association that we are, particularly in terms of our structure. This year, our organization underwent a significant period of internal transformation and introspection, prompting essential changes to enhance efficiency. Since our inception in 2016, we experienced organic growth, particularly as a predominantly pro bono-based entity. Recognizing the need for professionalization, we embarked on a journey of self-evaluation and restructuring. We embraced the challenge of reshaping our approach and processes to better align with our evolved organizational structure.

In conclusion, we would like to underline that our work and mission not only fuel our hope but also serve as a driving force to keep moving forward. The impact we achieve is, in essence, a collective effort, and we are deeply grateful to our friends and supporters for making it possible and being the ambassadors of our message. A heartfelt thank you to the B8 of Hope family and community!

Peacefully Yours,

Mehra Rimer



About B8 of Hope

Our Vision

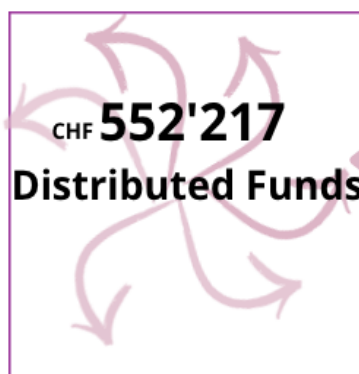
A peaceful coexistence and shared future between Israelis and Palestinians based on equal rights, respect, dignity, inclusivity, safety, and self-determination for all the people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Our Mission

To support Israeli and Palestinian grassroots and civil society initiatives paving a path for this vision, by giving them visibility, networking and capacity-building opportunities as well as funds for their activities

To depolarize perspectives in the diasporas by exposing our audiences to the efforts of both Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, encouraging them towards a pro-solution stance and a collective support for peace, rather than being strictly pro-Israel or pro-Palestine.

2023 Key Figures



B8 of Hope's Resources





⇒ Changes and Restructuring within the Association

Before going into the details of B8 of Hope's activities, we would like to share a few words about our structure and mode of operation and the changes implemented this year.

B8 of Hope works on a voluntary basis. Both our co-founders and our director (also a co-founder) work on a voluntary basis. On a day-to-day basis, we have just one employee and a network of volunteers who help us with various tasks.

This year, we've made a few changes at a structural level:

➤ Changes at the B8 of Hope Board Level

We have streamlined our original board of eight co-founders by creating a smaller Executive Board. In addition, a separate Advisory Board has been established to guide us on strategy, education, and the complexity of the conflict. Leila Hawa, Arun Chandrasekharan, David Rimer and Mehra Rimer are now the only members of [the new Executive Board](#) and Mehra remains the Executive Director of B8 of Hope, on a pro- bono basis. Alongside B8 of Hope's Executive Board, we put an Advisory Board into place.

➤ The B8 of Hope New Advisory Board

[The Advisory Board](#) will contribute to the mission and vision of B8 of Hope. It will provide guidance and expertise to the Executive Director, while ensuring that B8 of Hope's efforts have an impact on Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding NGOs and movements. Composed of a diverse set of experts from academia and the peacebuilding sector, its members possess a wide range of relevant expertise which facilitates the transmission of valuable insights and recommendations on a variety of issues concerning peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The Advisory Board's guidance and expertise will ensure that B8 of Hope's vision and mission reflect the needs of the Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding ecosystem in the field. We welcome this new board and its inspiring members:

- **Ahmad Abu Akel**, Neuroscientist at University of Haifa,
- **Fiuna Ongen-Seylan**, Chair of Association Coexistences
- **Hiba Qasas**, Founder and Executive Director of Principles for Peace,
- **Jean-Marc Liling**, Lawyer, and Consultant
- **John Lyndon**, Executive Director of Alliance for Middle East Peace
- **Meredith Rothbart**, Founder and Executive Director of Amal-Tikva

➤ Changes in Our Grant Process and Capacity-Building Support

In tandem with these structural changes, we are deepening our partnership with [Amal-Tikva](#). Our grant making process, capacity-building and presence in the field will be transferred to their local team. Of course, our Executive Director will remain in close touch with each grantee and their representatives to develop a "big picture" together while supporting them in their work.

Since May, however, [Ariel Markose](#) and [Ghadeer Sabat-Kort](#) (Chief strategy officer and Chief Operating Officer of Amal-Tikva) have been our grantees' direct contacts for grant requests

and assistance with the B8 of Hope grant process. We are thrilled to embark on this partnership with Amal-Tikva! It will help us make better decisions while offering more holistic support to grantees as they grow and scale. Moreover, we look forward to helping grantees access the support that Amal-Tikva provides, such as their [Fieldbuilding360 program](#), [Embodying Peace](#), and [the Amal-Tikva Leadership Institute](#).

B8 of Hope's Mission in Switzerland and Beyond

- * Giving visibility and networking opportunities to Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders and changemakers as well as raising funds for their activities.
- * Providing educational opportunities for our audiences, and exposure to peace activism, in order to create a healthier discourse around the conflict and build a community which is pro-solution rather than just pro-sides.
- * Working in synergetic efforts with other Swiss and international organizations to scale up our impact.

The sections below reflect the fulfillment of this mission in Switzerland during 2023:

⇒ **Volunteers New Year's Drink - January 2023**

COMMUNITY BUILDING!

B8 of Hope's activities rely very much on volunteer work to keep our costs in Geneva at a minimum. What would we do without their help? In January, we hosted an informal festive evening gathering in honour of our volunteers. This event was a token of our deep gratitude for their on-going help and an occasion to update them about peace building in Israel and Palestine and go over the values of B8 of Hope. We feel that our volunteers are part of our family, and it touches us to see that there is a sense of belonging and community.



⇒ Tech2Peace Seminar in Switzerland with Stiftung Urgestein January 2023

SYNERGIES!



B8 of Hope and other Swiss partners sponsored a tailor-made seminar for [Tech2Peace](#) in Switzerland. The seminar was, hosted and facilitated by the Swiss Association Stiftung Urgestein and took place in Guggisberg (Canton of Bern). This was the second edition of the Swiss seminar – supported by B8 of Hope and other Swiss partners.

High-tech and entrepreneurial training to young Palestinians and Israelis alternate

with dialogue sessions where hard discussions about respective narratives, challenges and beliefs lead to a better understanding of “the other side”. This type of work in the framework of Tech2Peace reminds us of a Nelson Mandela quote: “If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner ».

**FUND RAISING, EXPOSURE
COMMUNITY BUILDING!**

⇒ Gala - March 2023



The third edition of the B8 of Hope gala took place on March 16th. It featured wonderful Palestinian and Israeli keynote speakers, stand-up comedians, and artists: Obada Shtaya ([Zimam](#)) and Eran Nissan ([New Story Leadership](#)) moved and inspired us, the comedians (Noam Shuster and Sammy Obeid) made us laugh about Israel and Palestine which is an achievement in itself! The singers and musicians of the [Jerusalem Youth Chorus](#), Amer Abu Arqub, Shifra Jacobs, Sasha Fiks and Aala Judeh made the whole room (356 guests) sing with them, in Hebrew, Arabic and English. The fundraising through the auction sale was a resounding success, enabling us to raise the majority of our funds, which are typically supplemented by additional donations throughout the year. In addition, the exposure to our remarkable speakers was the most significant part of the evening. They touched many hearts and we saw many emotional tears. To view the photos of the gala, [click here](#).

VISIBILITY & NETWORKING!

⇒ Peace Prize Award - June 2023

On June 14th, [Ali Abu Awwad](#), leader of the Palestinian non-violence [movement Taghyeer](#), which is supported by B8 of Hope received the Luxembourg Peace Prize. B8 of Hope had nominated him for the award, and we are delighted that he won. Such ceremonies and awards are an opportunity for our peace activists to gain international visibility, recognition and to network.



Credit Photo: Alexander Anyfandakis 1

⇒ Dual Narrative Pilot Trip - June 2023

EXPOSURE!

At the end of May, B8 of Hope piloted a short dual-narrative trip in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, Nazareth, and Tel Aviv with a small group of friends. The pilot trip exposed our participants not only to a dual-narrative of the places we visited with the inspiring Israeli and Palestinian guides of Mejdi Tour, but it was also an occasion for them to meet some of the representatives of our grantee organizations and movements such as [Physicians for Human Rights](#), [Roots](#), [A Land for All](#), [Taghyeer](#), [Combatants for Peace](#), and [Standing Together](#), as well a representative of Breaking the Silence and an Israeli stand-up comedian. They also had a glimpse of the then on-going civil society protests in Tel-Aviv. The trip was a success, and we hope to implement the first edition as soon as it is possible and there is a return to normality and a true peace.



In addition, throughout 2023, B8 of Hope developed a new role: serving friends, supporters, journalists, and students as consultants for the planning of leisure or work trips to Israel and the Palestinian Territories. This new role is to be explored and is part of our mission in giving visibility to Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilders.

⇒ Coexistences Program for Parents Circle Families Forum Young Ambassadors - June 2023

SYNERGIES/YOUTH!

In June, 20 young, bereaved Israeli and Palestinian members of our grantee organization, Parents Circle Families Forum: Young Ambassadors for Peace youth group, participated in the Lausanne based Coexistences program. B8 of Hope sponsored the costs of their flight tickets. Coexistences is one of our main partners in Switzerland, which brings cohorts of Israelis and Palestinians to Switzerland for a unique experience. Here, away from the conflict zone, they deepen the dialogue started back home. They are placed in pairs of Israeli/Palestinian individuals with Swiss host families in the Lausanne region.

While deepening their engagement with each other, they go through an intensive and meaningful collective experience. Developing their leadership skills and their vision, they also learn about the Swiss model of coexistence and democracy. This group had the opportunity to go through the program, and it helped them reflect on and discuss how to become the next generation of activists for peace within the Parents Circle Families Forum. We are very proud to have covered the costs of their travel fees. Mehra Rimer was able to attend one of the events in Lausanne and meet these young and brilliant changemakers.



⇒ Summer Cocktail with Tuly Flint - June 2023

EXPOSURE!



Tuly Flint, the Israeli coordinator of [Combatants for Peace](#), is a psychotherapist specialized in PTSD. We seized the opportunity of his presence in Europe to invite him to Geneva for an informal visit and get-together around his presence. On Monday, June 26th, we hosted a cocktail dinner in his honor with 45 guests from the B8 of Hope community. Tuly shared his story as a former Israeli IDF commander that eventually led him onto the path of peace activism as well as PTSD therapist.

Listen to Tuly Flint Podcast



⇒ Coexistence Seminar of Facilitators (Module 2) – August 2023

EDUCATION/YOUTH!



Another opportunity to join forces with [Coexistences](#) was around its “STRENGTHENING THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN FACILITATORS OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE” seminar. The first module took place in September 2022 and this second module was held from August 14th to 21st, 2023. The testimonials of the participants clearly showed the impact of this seminar. Both modules were sponsored by B8 of Hope.

Since 2006, Coexistences hosted 33 dialogue groups comprising of 15-20 facilitators each. These facilitators (of different peace-building activities in Israel and Palestine) do not necessarily know each other and have different approaches. Via the Coexistences seminar, facilitators receive a unique opportunity to share their field experience & toolbox, as well as pay attention to their soft spots, their lack of a specific training they might have, etc. Throughout the seminar, a cross-fertilization of

diverse, rich, and effective practices emerges, all whilst each participant's psychological needs are addressed on the micro level. Several of B8 of Hope's grantee facilitators took part of the seminar.

⇒ **Swiss National TV - September 2023** **VISIBILITY !**

This documentary on RTS's 'Mise au Point' program, showcasing our work and the activities of our partner association, Coexistences in Lausanne, was filmed throughout the spring and the summer and broadcasted in September. Receiving this incredible platform to spotlight our meaningful initiatives was a great opportunity for B8 of Hope to get more visibility. Watch the short documentary **by clicking on the image**.



⇒ **International Peace Day with Tech2Peace - September 23** **EDUCATION/YOUTH!**

On the occasion of the International Peace Day (September 21st), B8 of Hope brought 2 young Palestinian and Israeli alumni of [Tech2Peace](#) to Geneva in the framework of our educational mission. The two spoke to a total of 800+ high schoolers of [the International School of Geneva](#) (La Châtaigneraie and La Grande Boissière Campuses). They gave the audience insight about their respective transformative experiences. By bringing their voices to Geneva, B8 of Hope aims to counter polarization about Israel and Palestine and encourage a pro solution, pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli constructive attitude.



⇒ Philanthropic Workshop “Let’s Talk About Peace” – October and November 2023

EDUCATION/YOUTH!

B8 of Hope & [Philanthropic Adventures workshop](#) “Let’s Talk About Peace” is an educational workshop about peace philanthropy. Philanthropic Adventures is a non-profit association for high schoolers to find information, inspiration, and support to take action for social and environmental issues they care about. Philanthropic Adventures aims to democratize the concept of philanthropy and help young people define their engagement and bring change. Every school year, Philanthropic Adventures and B8 of Hope offer a free of charge in person workshop to a group of 8 to 12 Swiss high schoolers (aged 15 to 18) from different schools in Geneva and the region. The workshop takes place at the B8 of Hope workspace.



This year’s edition was special given the tragic circumstances. On October 10th, B8 of Hope and Philanthropic Adventures took the courageous decision to maintain the workshop; however, we adjusted the format following the unfolding of events and decided to focus on empathy rather than peace philanthropy and fund-raising. The workshop took place throughout October and November. [Click here for a more detailed report.](#)

⇒ Internship Program – June to December 2023

EDUCATION/YOUTH!

This year we welcomed 2 interns:



Ella Vacic

[Ella Vacic](#), who is studying sociology at the University of Leeds in the UK. Ella interned for us in the early summer. While learning about the complexities of peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine, Ella helped us with several tasks related to the B8 of Hope Next Gen Youth Group, as well as with our website. Ella had the opportunity to meet Tuly Flint and attended the production of a podcast by Tuly.

Juliet Wishner, an exchange student from the University of Denver, completing a master's degree in international human rights and spending a semester abroad at the Geneva Graduate Institute. Juliet comes with a good knowledge of the Israeli Palestinian peace-building ecosystem. She got to learn more about our Philanthropic Adventures partnership and "Let's Talk About Peace" workshop with a focus on empathy this year. Juliet has been partly in charge of the Next Gen activities and writing reports on our activities.



⇒ Next Gen Activities 2023

EDUCATION/YOUTH!

The B8 of Hope's Next Gen Youth Group, which was launched in 2021, is a small network of brilliant and highly educated students and graduates of universities in Europe, the US and Canada. Their common ground is that they are interested in peacebuilding, and they have interacted with B8 of Hope at some point in the past years (by attending our events or workshops, by interning or volunteering for us or by reaching out to us as a source for their research work).

The goal of the B8 of Hope Next Gen Youth Group is for B8 of Hope not to lose contact with the younger generation and to also connect them to one another, creating a network of like-minded young peace advocates and ambassadors of our pro-peace message in their own circles. We hope that one day, some of them will ensure the continuity of B8 of Hope's work. Furthermore, being part of the network is also a way to have access to interesting learning opportunities and experiences.

Chronological Review of the Year:

→ **In January**, Mehra Rimer had the opportunity to spend some quality time with Ilona Métais in Paris. Ilona is one of the founders of the B8 of Hope Next Gen youth group and first ever B8 of Hope intern. Today, Ilona is undergoing a master's degree in law at Sciences-Po Paris. It is very interesting for us to learn how our "Next Gens" evolve and what carrier paths they embrace. It is a way for us to measure our impact and see in which way we have or not influenced our younger audiences.

We would like to share the story of how Ilona's journey intersected with B8 of Hope's, and how she transformed it into something proactive:

**Ilona Métais**

Ilona's first encounter with B8 of Hope was in her last year of high school in Paris, when B8 of Hope had been invited to give a presentation in her school. [Ali Abu Awwad](#) (Founder of Taghyeer, our Palestinian non-violence grantee movement) and [Jean-Marc Lilling](#) (representative of B8 of Hope in Jerusalem) were the key-note co-speakers. As a French teenager with Jewish-Algerian roots, Ilona was deeply moved by both Ali and Jean-Marc. Their narratives and discourses truly resonated with her. A couple of years later, this impactful high school experience led Ilona to enroll for

a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Middle East Studies at McGill University in Canada. There, she started learning both Arabic and Hebrew in an effort to better understand both sides of the conflict and to deconstruct any preconceived ideas that she had received growing up. During her summer break at the end of her first year at McGill, Ilona contacted B8 of Hope for an internship. We did not have a program back then, but we started piloting one and this is how our internship program began! During her academic years in Canada, Ilona stayed in touch with us, she helped us build B8 of Hope Next Gen together with our intern of that time, [Jessica Favon](#) (who is incidentally the architect of our whole website!). Two young Israeli and Palestinian peace activists Noa Golan and Yara Amayra became the muses of this group and worked alongside Ilona and Jessica to finalize the project of this youth network.

**Jessica Favon**

- ➔ **In March**, some of our Next Gen members participated in the B8 of Hope gala both in the audience and or as volunteers. A heartfelt thank you for their time and energy!
- ➔ **During the same month**, our two muses of the B8 of Hope Next Gen, [Yara Amayra](#) and [Noa Golan](#), were invited to deliver a speech in the launch of the movement Les Guerrières de la Paix (The Warriors for Peace) in Essaouira, Morocco on the occasion of the International Women's Day. On that day, women, and activists for peace from all over the world, Palestinians, Israelis, Liberians, Iranians, Afghans and more--gathered to share a common call for peace and justice.

[Guerrières de la Paix](#) is a global movement of Jewish and Muslim women for Peace, Justice and Equality, founded in March 2022 under the impetus of the documentary director and peace activist Hanna Assouline. The name of this association refers to the eponymous documentary featuring Yara and Noa, about Palestinian and Israeli women engaged in the Women Wage Peace movement, which is a grantee of B8 of Hope.

Please click here to read Yara and Noa's speech: [Speech](#)

➔ **In April** [Moritz Haegi](#) (currently doing his PhD at the University of Basel) joined our Executive Director in Jerusalem and shadowed her in her meetings with different grantees and entities on our radar; he also witnessed some of our grantees' activities. There was an opportunity for Mehra Rimer and him to meet up with another Next Gen, Yara Amayra (co-director of A Land for All).



➔ **In June**, on the occasion of B8 of Hope's summer cocktail in honor of [Combatants for Peace](#) activist Tuly Flint, several Next Gens were present, including Guillaume Muriset, co-founder of Trinity Cocktail was in charge of the refreshments and made us delicious drinks. Guillaume is a student at Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne - joined recently the B8 of Hope Next Gen after he got familiar with us at the Swiss Embassy in Washington DC where he was doing one of his EHL banqueting internships. Many paths lead to B8 of Hope, even the most unpredictable ones!



➔ On a more academic note, [Alexandra Merguerian](#), specializing in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden, finalized her Master's Thesis ["Intergroup contact beyond borders and historical trauma - A case study of the Jerusalem Youth Chorus"](#) It was published in the Spring of 2023, with the mention of B8 of Hope. We are grateful to Alexandra for her interest in us and acknowledgment of our work in her paper.



➔ **In November**, a happy few Next Gen members got to meet Ibrahim Abu Ahmad. We seized the opportunity of Ibrahim's presence in Geneva to host him at our B8 of Hope workspace, delving into insights about his work and activism. Ibrahim, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, serves as a geopolitical speaker and writer, focusing on topics such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, challenges facing the Arab minority in Israel, the war in Syria, instability in Lebanon, and Iranian intervention in the region. Additionally, Ibrahim serves as the Director of Alumni Relations at [ROPES](#) and leads tourism delegations, promoting geopolitical tourism for groups from the Middle East, with a focus on the complex political realities of the conflict.

- ➔ **November** was also the occasion for another several members to attend a dinner with B8 of Hope board-members and founders at the director’s residence in Geneva. In November the Next Gen also had a firsthand perspective on what transpires in the peace community during these tragic times and the kinds of conversations held between Israeli and Palestinian peace activists.
- ➔ One more concrete educational experience, a [Tech2Peace](#) online workshop was held on **November 27th, 2023**. Our intern Juliet and Laura, a member of B8 of Hope Next Gen, organized and hosted a Zoom session with two of Tech2Peace’s founders, Uri Rosenberg and Abeer Bandak. Considering the past six weeks, where many young people in the ‘middle’ are finding themselves isolated, this Zoom was a space for our NexGen network to come together as a community and learn from Uri and Abeer, who are continuing their important peacebuilding work even amidst the war. Uri and Abeer framed this session as what they do with their Israeli and Palestinian alumni when conflict breaks out. Although it was modified to fit our time constraints, the session was a great success, with around 12 NextGen participants. We are so thankful to Uri, Abeer, and our NextGen community!
- ➔ **Spring and Fall 2023 academic semesters:** Working with B8 of Hope grantee [Pathways](#) for Negotiation Skills

After participating in an interactive Zoom workshop on creative negotiation skills offered to the Next Gen community by B8 of Hope’s partner and grantee Pathways, Next Geners [Noa Welling](#) and Alexandra Merguerian were brought on board for part-time student jobs to support Pathways's Game Changers virtual exchange program. The unique virtual program brings together pre-service teachers from a variety of teachers' colleges in Israel (Al Qasemi, Sakhnin, Achva, Oranim, Arab Academic College, Beit Berl) with undergraduate students from universities in the United States for interactive joint learning and virtual exchange focused on building intercultural understanding and developing creative negotiation skills for leadership and impact in their schools and communities. As "tech hosts", Alexandra and Noa work with their group's lead facilitator to manage the technical flow of the sessions, including breakout rooms, chat and other production details. Noa and Alexandra did work for Pathways for both cycles of Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 academic semesters.



➔ Testimonials:

*"B8 of Hope Next Gen has been an amazing network for meeting like-minded peers and learning about new opportunities to contribute to positive change. After participating in a negotiation workshop by Avi Goldstein, I became involved with Pathways as a student-facilitator and later acquired the role of tech host. Working with Avi and Pathways has been an amazing journey through which I get to see behind the scenes of an international NGO, while at the same time developing my professional skills. I'm grateful to be part of an organization that teaches the new generation of Israeli, Palestinian and American students the skills needed to build a collective future." - **Noa W.***

*"Over the past year, supporting Pathways backstage as a tech host has been a thought-provoking and gripping experience. Avi's negotiation workshops give off such hints of insight and critical thinking! I recommend it to anyone who seeks connection and creativity in their interactions"- **Alexandra M.***

- ➔ **In December**, we sought a glimmer of compassionate light. Before taking a break during the winter holiday season, B8 of Hope's [Next Gen](#) members organized an after-work get-together over drinks and snacks at one of our Next Gen's member's art gallery, Window Fourteen, in Geneva.

We are grateful to [Noa Grandchamp](#) for hosting her peers and a few happy older-generation B8 of Hope community members. The atmosphere was warm, creating the perfect way to bid farewell to 2023. We had two special guests: Basheer Abu Baker, the Palestinian co-founder of our partner organization Amal-Tikva, and Yossi Zabari, an Israeli artist and peace activist.



⇒ Collaborations with International Entities:

SYNERGIES!

B8 of Hope is enthusiastic about fostering synergies. Therefore, we collaborate not only with peers in Switzerland but also maintain close relationships with counterparts in Europe, the US, and Australia!

- * [Alliance for Middle East Peace](#) is based in Washington DC with European headquarters in Paris. We collaborate on an on-going basis as most of our grantees are members of this huge umbrella organization.



- * *Amal- Tikva* is an organization based in Jerusalem which seeks to build capacity for sustainable and scalable peacebuilding between Israelis and Palestinians. Amal-Tikva is our consultant and partner. We work closely with their team with regards to our grant-making process and capacity building for our grantees.
- * *Kaleidoscope* is a French family philanthropic foundation with which B8 of Hope has collaborated since 2019. It shares mutual grantees with us, and we actively engage in collaborative philanthropic efforts.
- * *Project Rozana* is an international organization with the mission of promoting cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis in the field of healthcare. We engaged in collaborative philanthropy with Project Rozana' chapter and co-sponsored a hydro-therapy training for Palestinian physiotherapist in partnership with Alyn Hospital in Israel. We remain closely in touch by developing a friendly relationship and collaboration between our organizations.

In a distinct approach, B8 of Hope collaborates with organizations such as the *American Friends of Combatants for Peace, American Friends of Parents Circle Families Forum, Friends of Taghyeer Movement, and American Friends of Roots*. This collaboration allows us to exchange insights and ensure that we are efficiently supporting our mutual grantees.

B8 of Hope's Mission in the Middle East

B8 of Hope supports Israeli and Palestinian civil society and grassroots initiatives which pave a path for a shared future and peaceful coexistence based on equal rights, dignity, safety, and self-determination for all the people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Our support takes various forms, including *financial grants* provided based on specific criteria (please see [“Who is Eligible for B8 of Hope's Support”](#)) and *capacity-building opportunities* facilitated through our Jerusalem-based partners and consultants at Amal-Tikva. We meticulously *identify initiatives* for support through regular on-the-ground trips and visits, as well as through referrals.

To ensure the effectiveness of our contributions, we conduct *due diligence* in two ways. Firstly, we actively engage in the activities we fund to witness their impact firsthand. Secondly, we conduct a more comprehensive due diligence process led by Amal-Tikva. This dual approach allows us to make informed decisions and maximize the positive outcomes of our support.



The sections below reflect the fulfillment of this mission in Middle East during 2023:

⇒ **Capacity Building through our Partners Amal-Tikva:**

In 2023, 11 out of 19 grantees benefited from the capacity buildings programs of Amal-Tikva. A Land for All, Jerusalem Youth Chorus, Lissan, Parents Circle Families Forum, Road To Recovery, Roots, Taghyeer, Teachers' Lounge, and Tech2Peace participated in Amal Tikva's [FieldBuilding360 program](#), while [New Story Leadership](#) and [Zimam](#) took part in [the Leadership Institute program](#).

⇒ **Due Diligence through Amal-Tikva and Trips:**

Amal-Tikva provides us with a continuous on-the-ground presence, offering consultation services and conducting thorough checks on our behalf. They also manage our grant-making process, centralizing tasks such as budgeting, grant agreements, reporting, and feedback provision as consultants. Utilizing their sophisticated mapping system, they propose new initiatives and provide insightful recommendations. Additionally, B8 of Hope's director regularly visits the region to firsthand observe activities, witness their impacts, and explore new initiatives.

This year, B8 of Hope's executive director traveled to the region three times: in April, June, and October:

➔ **April**

This trip provided an opportunity to touch base with most of B8 of Hope's grantees and receive updates on their ongoing projects, including [Women Wage Peace](#) and their new Palestinian sister movement Women of the Sun, [A Land for All](#), and [Standing Together](#). Additionally, it allowed for updates on the Synergy Lab projects, such as the Aleph Synergy project by Lissan, Tech2Peace, Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow, 50-50 Start-Ups, and PIP, as well as the health synergy initiative by Road to Recovery and Physicians for Human Rights.

Furthermore, this trip offered a chance to collaborate with our consultants at Amal Tikva and to exchange insights with the Palestinian regional director of [ALLMEP](#).

During this trip, our executive director actively participated in some of our grantees' events. On April 24th, they attended the [Combatants for Peace](#) joint Israeli-Palestinian memorial ceremony in honor of [the Parents Circle Families Forum](#). The event took place in HaYarkon Park, Tel Aviv, where 15,000 people gathered (with an additional 300,000 watching online) to honor bereaved Palestinians and Israelis mourning their loved ones together. This shared expression of pain offers hope for reconciliation.



Another notable event was an emotional Ramadan Iftar dinner held at the Palestinian [Non-Violence/Karama Center](#) on April 16th. The dinner, organized by [Judur/Shorashim/Roots](#), brought together 80 Palestinian and Israeli guests to break bread and celebrate their shared humanity. The guest of honor was a courageous young Palestinian man who, through his actions, saved Israeli lives, symbolizing the potential for peace and understanding.

One of the most surprising and unexpected discoveries of this trip was encountering an initiative called [Blend.Ar](#) (Short for “to blend into Arabic and Arab culture”) and participating in one of their activities in the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods of Mea She'arim in Jerusalem. During this experience, we observed an Arabic lesson for a group of ultra-Orthodox Jewish students who were keen on learning about their neighbors. Blend.Ar not only promotes the learning of the Arabic language among Israelis from diverse backgrounds as a means to foster tolerance and understanding, but it also provides unique experiences through Israelis staying with host families in Arab villages and towns across Israel and volunteering in different activities of the local communities.

→ June

B8 of Hope piloted a brief dual-narrative trip in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, Nazareth, and Tel Aviv with a small group of friends. Executive Director Mehra Rimer, who led the trip, also used the time on the ground to meet with two volunteer doctors, members of our grantee organization Physicians for Human Rights. This provided her with profound insights into their work and the operations of mobile clinics operate in the West Bank and Gaza.

→ October

The purpose of this trip was for Mehra Rimer to attend an event co-sponsored by B8 of Hope and other international sponsors. The event named “Mother’s Call” was co-organized and led by Palestinian and Israeli women from 2 organizations: Women of the Sun and Women Wage Peace. Hundreds attended the event, including diplomats and ordinary citizens. Keynote speakers called upon Israeli and Palestinian political leaders to end the bloodshed and return to the negotiating table.



On October 7th, a day after returning from the grounds from an inspiring and hopeful trip, our Executive Director discovered the horrifying news regarding the attack on Israeli civilians. Her friend and peace activist, Vivian Silver (co-founder of Women Wage Peace) was among the missing people and assumed to have been taken hostage. It is with deep regret that we found out 38 days later that Vivian was killed on that dark Saturday.

We have been mourning her loss and the tragic way in which she was taken.

→ Second October Trip

In the third week of the month, we were scheduled to participate in the Amal-Tikva Annual Conference, which would have brought together all of their alumni. Additionally, we had planned a B8 of Hope side event dedicated to our grantees and the alumni of Amal-Tikva’s program. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing war situation, this trip and the associated events were canceled.

CANCELLED!

⇒ Supporting through Financial Grants

This year, we distributed a total of **552'217 CHF** grants to **19 organizations’ individual** activities, projects, and core funding. From this total, **100'000 CHF** were dedicated to **4 Synergies Lab** projects involving **10 organizations**.

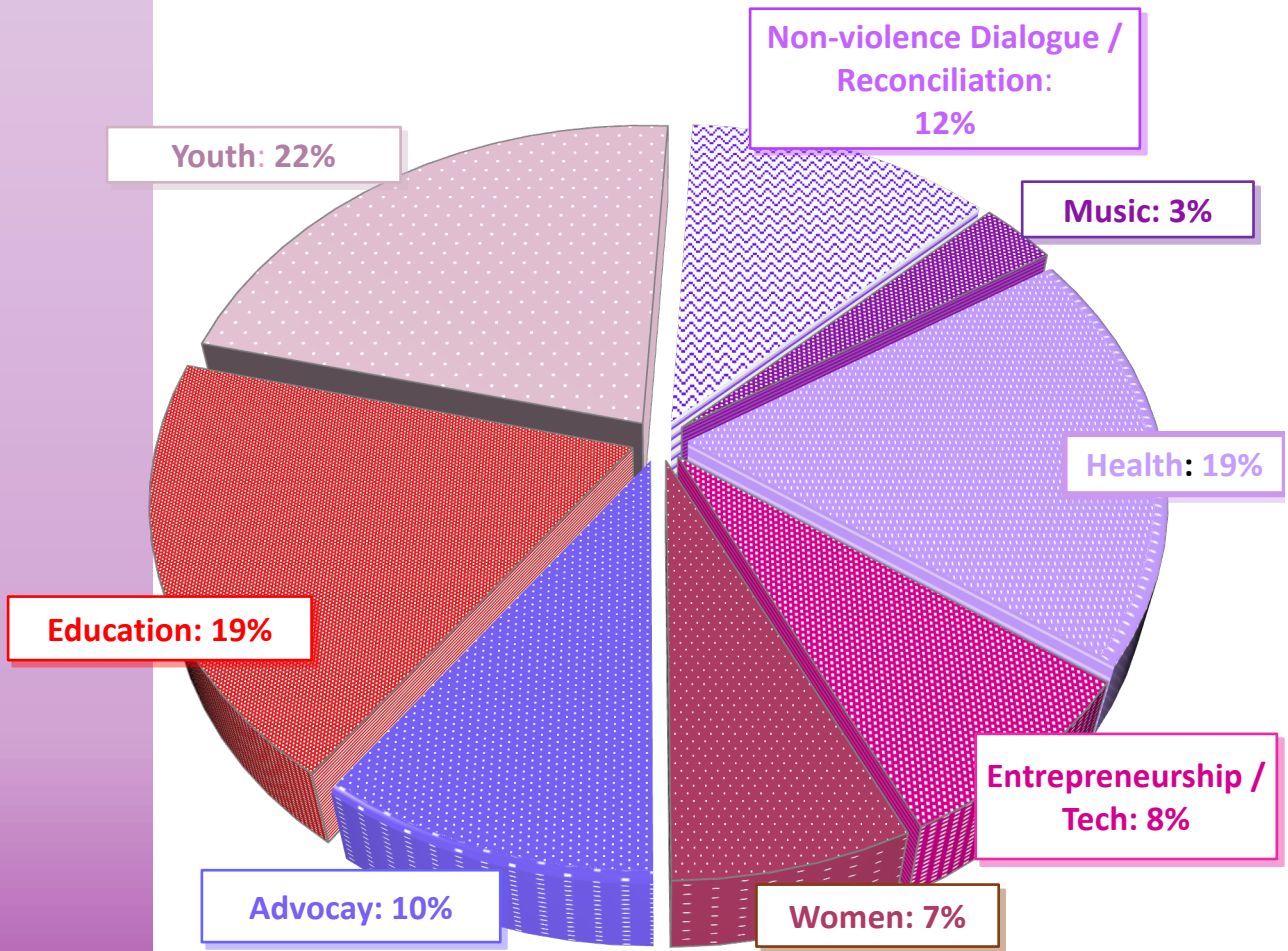
Our grants, our impact, and our donors’ impact is about building a Home, a “Beit” “بيت” of Hope, together, through a range of areas of action and synergies!

Since its creation, B8 of Hope has been supporting a growing pool of Israeli and Palestinian grassroots and civil society peacebuilding and change-making initiatives. Each of our grantees have their angles and they are all complementary to one another. In 2023, we supported the individual projects of 19 Israeli and Palestinian organizations and movements and supported some of them through capacity building opportunities. In addition to that, we funded 4 synergetic and collaborative projects (involving a total of 8 organizations and movements) to encourage synergies inside the “peace community” in order to share best practices and scale the sum of their individual impacts.

Overall, projects have been focused on building bridges between Israelis and Palestinians, but also on healing divides within the respective “sides” (as the internal divides across Israeli and Palestinian societies are also an obstacle to peace). It is important to note that a few of the projects were also mainly addressing health related needs of Palestinians. In the asymmetrical current context of the conflict, we consider that dealing with at least some aspects of Palestinian basic needs was crucial to our global peacebuilding approach. Who wants to think of bridge-building and peace if their basic needs are not met? The diversity of our pool of grantees shows the inspiring dynamics of the peace community and its importance.

The factor that altered some of the activities was the tragic events and subsequent war starting from October 7th. These changes are also evident in the sections below.

23 Initiatives
A Total of CHF 522'217 Distributed





The majority of our funds come from private donors in Switzerland and beyond, including Arab and Jewish donors from the respective diasporas. These funds primarily support the activities and projects of a coalition of NGOs and movements dedicated to fostering a better future for Israelis and Palestinians.

Our operational expenses in Geneva are covered by our board members. Additionally, B8 of Hope operates primarily through volunteer work, including that of our Executive Director, who works full-time without compensation. We have only one administrative staff member on payroll and engage the services of Amal-Tikva as consultants in our grant-making and due diligence processes. Our small but efficient network of volunteers assists us with various ongoing and occasional tasks, such as managing our IT system, editing newsletters, auditing accounts, hosting peace activists, and supporting our events. Furthermore, we are fortunate to have a workspace provided by one of our co-founders, who generously allows us to use their apartment free of charge.

Our Grantees

◆ *A LAND FOR ALL*

[A Land for All, 2 States One Homeland \(ALFA\)](#) is a joint Israeli-Palestinian movement founded by a diverse group of Israelis and Palestinians, from peace activists to lawyers to geographers and intellectuals. They sat together to think “out of the box” and came up with an alternative to the traditional two-state solution: their idea encompasses two sovereign states with joint institutions within the framework of a confederation.

At B8 of Hope, we maintain an apolitical stance with a dedicated focus on the people. It is not within our purview to express opinions on the future political system for Palestinians and Israelis; that decision rests with them. Our support for ALFA stems from its introduction of innovative ideas and constructive solutions. This initiative demonstrates a commendable willingness to explore new avenues, providing motivation for those actively working towards peace.

At 2023’s onset, ALFA set objectives for widespread public engagement, targeting both Israeli and Palestinian audiences through different strategies. However, the escalating violence against Palestinians across all regions demands urgent attention. Recognizing the need for a robust foundation, ALFA prioritized fortifying the Palestinian structure within the bi-national organization. Significant efforts were made in creating a collaborative management committee



and aligning the organizational structure on the Palestinian side. This strategic decision aimed to improve ALFA's public engagement work, paving the way for effective public initiatives and influence throughout 2024.

B8 of Hope's financial support was split between ALFA's public engagement work, the costs of its Third Annual Week of Debates in Israel, and the investment in strengthening ALFA's Palestinian structure.

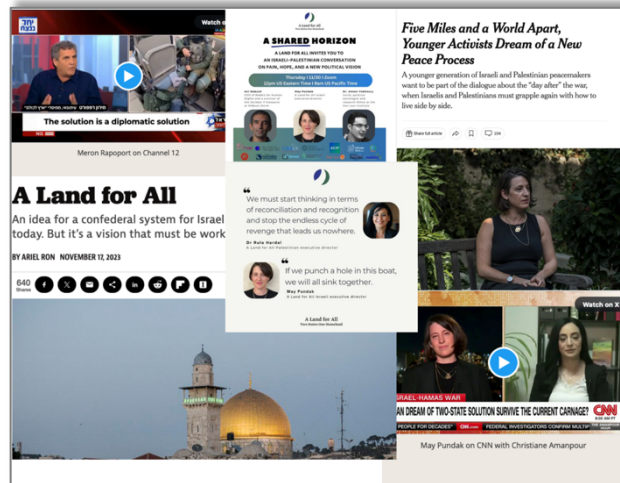
The Annual ALFA Debate Week witnessed continuous growth since its creation. This impactful week featured public panels on Israel-Palestine relations, hosting eminent researchers, politicians, and activists with an audience of thousands of participants. The event marked a record in an event showcasing collaboration with Haaretz newspaper, which will continue in 2024.

In 2023, as extremist forces tried to bring Palestinians and Israelis further apart, ALFA fortified the shared foundational structure of the movement, taking a groundbreaking step of creating a joint, equitable Palestinian-Israeli board of directors. Notably, the board convened its first meeting on October 10th, three days after the war commenced. This serves as tangible proof of the resilience and strength inherent in an equal Israeli-Palestinian partnership, thriving on both distinct and shared interests, even amidst challenging times.

The final three months of 2023 presented unprecedented challenges. It is hard to remember now, but preceding this period, this year was saturated with increasing political struggles, challenges, and escalating violence, fostering a climate of mistrust between the two nations. In navigating these complexities, ALFA remained committed to its goals; however, flexibility was crucial as the organization adapted to the evolving reality, responding to diverse demands on the ground.

Despite facing formidable challenges, throughout 2023, ALFA persevered unwaveringly in its commitment to advocate for a shared political vision. Conducting numerous public lectures, ALFA engaged Israeli, Palestinian, and international audiences, fostering dialogue, collaborating with educational bodies, and organizing a tour in the South Hebron Hills.

Throughout the year, ALFA initiated meetings with hundreds of influential figures, including leading public opinion shapers, academics, clergy, activists, and organizational heads worldwide. Additionally, ALFA significantly enhanced its media visibility with numerous publications, spanning opinion articles to interviews (Here are a few examples: (American Prospect, Foreign Affairs, Jacobin, Philosophie, Le Monde, New York Times, The Nation, and CNN). Diversifying its outreach, ALFA maintained a strong presence on Facebook and Twitter and ventured into new platforms. ALFA's expansion included launching an Arabic-Hebrew Instagram account and an English account, strategically targeting young audiences.



Furthermore, ALFA extended its engagement on WhatsApp in both Hebrew and Arabic, ensuring a multifaceted approach to communication. ALFA set a goal to open a new group in a year, but in six months the group was already full, leading the movement to already opening another two groups (one in English as there has been so much interest in their work from the English-speaking community).

In response to the war, ALFA pivoted to organize a series of Zoom events, engaging over 2000 individuals. These virtual gatherings were designed to bolster hope and foster discourse to promote a political solution.

ALFA finished the year with a robust foundation in place: its strategic focus for the upcoming year involves amplifying the impact of the movement through diversified initiatives. ALFA aims to work from a top-down approach by engaging in policy development translating our vision into actionable policies. Simultaneously, ALFA will employ a bottom-up strategy, channeling efforts into community organizing. ALFA's goal is to create inclusive opportunities, enabling more individuals and communities to actively participate in both the conceptual and practical evolution of ALFA's vision.

◆ COMBATANTS FOR PEACE

In 2006, a group of Israeli ex-soldiers and Palestinian former paramilitary combatants laid down their weapons and established [Combatants for Peace \(CFP\)](#), an egalitarian, bi-national, grassroots organization – founded by former enemies - on the belief that the vicious cycle of violence can only be broken when Israelis and Palestinians join forces to serve as a model for the humanistic values of freedom, democracy, security and dignity for all. Through joint nonviolence actions, CFP lays the foundations for an end to the occupation and a better future.

"If we are to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians, we must be able to understand where the other is coming from. We don't need to accept or agree with the others' narrative, but we need to recognize that it exists. One side's terrorists are the other side's freedom

fighters. One side's occupation forces are the other side's defense forces. One side's Independence Day is the other side's Nakba. Both sides have their dignity and their determination, and no side will be defeated into submission."- Combatants for Peace among the many activities of CFP this year, **we supported the costs of their Joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Ceremony which took place on April 24th as well as their joint Naqba ceremony which took place on May 15.**

[Please click HERE](#) and read their Report - Everything is there, including what they have been up to since October 7th!



As human beings we share the same pain. And perhaps if we see and meet and speak, the flames of hatred will subside, and there will be room to add reconciliation and life. -Yoval Svirin, in memory of his sister, Tamar

THE 18TH ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN
Joint Memorial Ceremony

On April 24, 2023, over 15,000 Israelis and Palestinians gathered in person to choose peace rather than revenge, reconciliation instead of violence, and shared humanity instead of hate. Thanks to B8 of Hope, Combatants for Peace was able to spread a message of hope to our largest audience ever. As our diverse community grieved together, we chose one another as we held fast to our vision of what so many have deemed impossible or unimaginable - a future of mutual flourishing for Israelis and Palestinians - rooted in equality, dignity, and joint freedom for all.

300K PEOPLE JOINED US ONLINE

15K PEOPLE JOINED IN-PERSON

◆ GREEN LAND SOCIETY FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

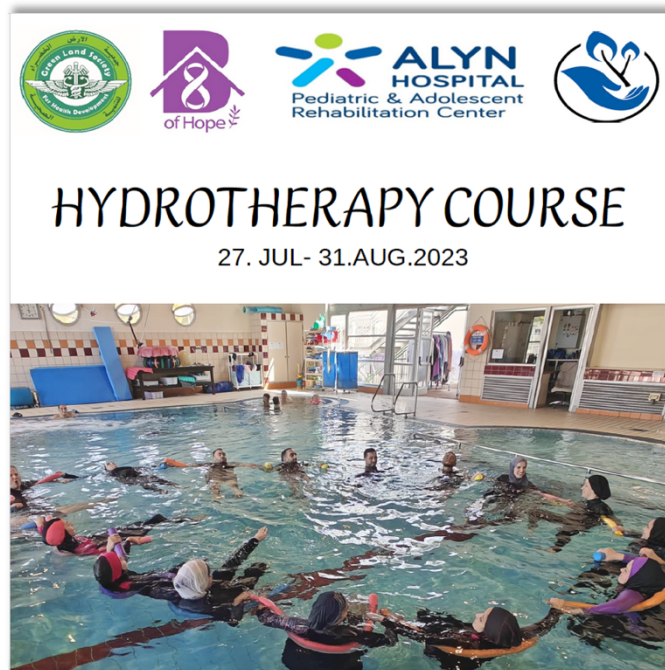
[Green Land Society for Health Development \(GLSHD\)](#) is a Palestinian non-governmental, non-profit organization established in Khalil/Hebron. Its aim is to improve health and environmental conditions, in addition to raising the level of preparedness for disaster response, through awareness campaigns, research, and the provision of health and environmental services in areas of need in the West Bank. Improving living conditions, including access to medical services, is a pillar of B8 of Hope's global approach to peacebuilding.

B8 of Hope usually focuses on one specific activity of GLSHD: the transportation of Palestinian patients (referred to by the Palestinian Ministry of Health) to receive treatment in Israeli

hospitals. Transportation is a generally complicated issue for Palestinian patients, even inside the Palestinian territories. Thanks to GLSHD, patients are transported by means of a home-hospital-home (including to Palestinian hospitals) service facilitated by a network of GLSHD volunteers, whether inside the West Bank or from the West Bank to Israeli hospitals in cooperation with Israel-based volunteers. The cost of gas used by the volunteers is what we cover.

This year we also co-sponsored with our Australian partners [Project Rozana](#) the costs of a hydro-therapy training for Palestinian physiotherapists by Israeli specialists of the Alyn hospital.

[Please click HERE](#) and read their Report - Everything is there!



◆ THE JERUSALEM YOUTH CHORUS

[The Jerusalem Youth Chorus \(JYC\)](#) is a choral and dialogue program for Palestinian and Israeli youth in Jerusalem. It provides a space for these young people from East and West Jerusalem to grow together in song and dialogue. Through the joint creation of music and the sharing of stories, JYC empowers youth in Jerusalem to speak and sing their truths, as they become leaders in their communities and inspire singers and listeners around the world to work for peace, justice, inclusion, and equality. As a performing ensemble, they seek to amplify their impact even further through local and international performances and media coverage.

The Jerusalem Youth Chorus has been featured on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, as well as in the New York Times, on the BBC, on PBS, in Haaretz, Alhurra, and more than 100 other news outlets. They have recorded with multi-platinum Israeli artist and peace activist David Broza in Jerusalem, with Duran Duran in London and with YouTube superstar Sam Tsui - which amassed over 400,000 views.

They have toured in Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, as well as Switzerland and have performed at venues as prestigious as the United Nations in Geneva and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. They were also a featured ensemble at the Yale International Choral Festival.

Most importantly, they regularly perform in Jerusalem, joining forces with other organizations working for peace, justice, and equality, reaching out to those who have never even considered that something like this possible, let alone beautiful.



After several years of funding JYC’s specific projects (such as the production of video clips and the costs of song writing retreats), in 2023, **B8 of Hope decided to fund the chorus’ core operations.** This type of core funding helped JYC establish a new structure by bringing new energetic staff – all musicians and youth in their 20s and 30s. A new conductor was also hired and reinvigorated the repertoire with his extensive knowledge of both Eastern and Western music.

Among the first activities of the 2023-2024 school year and its new cohort of participants, JYC organized a workshop with gospel singer Roderick Giles (from Washington DC). During this activity the new cohort of young Israeli and Palestinian singers from West and East Jerusalem got to know one another--this helped lay the foundation for the year to come.

At the start of the school year, JYC also built a parents committee, consisting of both Israeli and Palestinian parents. JYC believes that strengthening the bond between its singers from the beginning of the year and ensuring the parents are involved is crucial and indeed it has positioned JYC to be able to continue its programming, with some modifications, despite the challenging times that started on October 7th. Notably, when the activities of the new cohort



resumed (after going online after October 7th), a parents committee helped with carpools when safe transportation was needed.

Sadly, one of the main activities of the fall, the long anticipated JYC Alumni Concert Tour in the US, was cancelled. Instead, JYC with its alumni community organized an online gathering on Sunday, October 22. This virtual concert helped JYC's global community musically process the tragic events and pointed a hopeful way forward, together, even in those times.

JYC had the opportunity to partner with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The concert was hosted by JYC's board member Mira Awad, and was joined by some extraordinary artists like David Broza, Ziggy Marley, Achinoam Nini, MALINDA, the National Symphony Orchestra, and others. Despite these challenging times, over 2,000 people registered for this concert and watched it on a private link.

In spite of these difficult circumstances, the JYC alumni have been gathering for dialogue sessions amidst the violence. It has become apparent to JYC that these dialogues and alumni programming need to continue in order create an ecosystem for peace among JYC's to engage in their communities and spread their messages. In the meantime, the new cohort of high-school singers have resumed their in-person singing and dialogue sessions!

◆ JUDUR-SHORASHIM-ROOTS

Judur-Shorashim-Roots is our first and oldest grantee since 2016. This joint grassroots initiative is located in the West Bank and led by Israelis from the settlement block of Gush Etzion and Palestinians from the area of Beit Umar-Bethlehem and Hebron - in other words by people at the heart of the conflict.

Roots fosters understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Israelis and Palestinians through dialogue. The founders of Roots believe that dialogue is not necessarily a place to agree, but rather to mutually recognize each people's connection to the land in spite of their ideological differences. Roots' diverse set of activities offer a space where people can take responsibility and challenge the assumptions their communities hold about each other, as well as build trust and create a new discourse around the conflict.

Among the many activities of Roots (dialogue, interreligious exchange, joint break-fast meals, incident response, prevention of violence escalation etc.), **B8 of Hope focuses its support on their youth and young adult activities.**

In 2023, B8 of Hope's grant to Judur-Shorashim-Roots was used for the following activities:

- **Ramadan (breaking of the fast) Iftar meal**

An Iftar meal was held on April 17th and attended by B8 of Hope's Executive Director at the Karama Center (where Roots activities usually take place). The center is located in the Gush

Etzion-Bethlehem region. 70 local Israeli and Palestinian Roots members were present. A special ceremony was held granting an award to a Palestinian resident of Bet Omar who saved an Israeli couple who were attacked by rock-throwers.



– **Roots Young Leaders Program (spring quarter)**

20 Israeli and Palestinian high-school students met on their regular bi-weekly basis and also travelled together on-site visits. They studied together the different narratives of the conflict:

National Narratives:

- **May 22** Study Session: Early roots of the conflict: British Mandate Period. Exploring Israeli and Palestinian narrative of the event between 1920-1939.
- **May 29** Study Session: Discussion and Processing Session
- **June 2** Holocaust: Joint visit to Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum
- **June 19** Independence War: Israeli History and collective memory
- **June 23** Studying Nakba: History and legacy through field trip to Beit Natif.

– **End-of School Year Seminars**

- **July 2-5:** at Givat Haviva

Roots planned end of school year seminar, which combined completing exploration of national narratives through the Oslo period, was significantly disrupted by the Israeli military operation in Jenin, which began the first night of the program. This was an incredibly traumatic event for the Palestinian students, with many overwhelmed by tears and anger. After an initial assessment that Roots would be forced to cancel the program, Roots staff managed to hold the group together, and the group decided to continue the second day of the program and left in the morning of the third day.

- **July 14:** Uni-national Closing Sessions.



Israeli staff met with the Israeli participants to process the events of the seminar and prepare for the final session.

- **July 19:** Final meeting/ closing ceremony

The funding of Roots activities by B8 of Hope was not impacted by the tragic events and war in the fall as they took place before October 7th. However, it is important for us to report on Roots' activities in the fall:

After convening several conversations between its core staff and activists and then holding discussions separately with Israeli and Palestinian circles of activists and participants, Roots has been able to plot its course of action in these trying times. In a new (and hopefully temporary format), Roots has been hosting lectures and events (primarily on Zoom) in order to keep its network engaged, despite the emotional and physical challenges to holding joint meetings. Many participants in these conversations have responded with gratitude for providing them a safe space where they can speak with nuance and even express concern for what is happening to the other side, given the emotional impact of the ongoing fighting. It has been a place to support Roots' network in maintaining their values and also to share fears and frustrations and to explore the questions on people's hearts and minds.

In terms of concrete actions, in the last three months of 2023, Roots' Israeli leadership has sought, where possible, to actively oppose acts of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and the imposition of restrictions on their movement, in the areas where Roots network is active. They worked with local army officers to find ways to ease the restrictions on those Palestinian communities most affected by road closures, reported on abuses of authority by security and military personnel, and approached Israeli local leadership to set clear red lines against vigilante groups taking advantage of the heightened tensions. While the work seems endless against the backdrop of the continued war and tensions, these small acts of solidarity have their own potency.

◆ **LISSAN**

Lissan is a Jerusalem-based non-profit organization which promotes gender and social equality through language education. Lissan's flagship program, "Medabrot Ivrit," offers practical Hebrew classes for East Jerusalemite women to provide them with greater access to rights, resources, and opportunities. Through practical and accessible Hebrew classes for women, pedagogical and cultural sensitivity training for teachers, and joint programming for Israeli and Palestinian volunteers, Lissan aims to bridge the gap between East and West Jerusalem and strengthen East Jerusalemite women. Lissan's long term vision is for East Jerusalemite women to have ultimate agency in their personal and professional lives, and for the city of Jerusalem – both East and West – to become a more just and equal space for all its residents.

This year B8 of Hope’s support went to the core **funding of “Medabrot Ivrit” (which means “Women Speaking Hebrew”)** during the **2022-2023 program year**.



The 2022-2023 program year began with 400 students in 26 classes ranging five levels with 51 volunteer teachers. Classes met in a variety of locations with 17 courses meeting at the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University, 4 at Mati East Jerusalem in Sheikh Jarrah, 2 at the Willy Brandt Center in Abu Tor, and 3 on Zoom.

Students came from all over **East Jerusalem**: 18% from **Beit Hanina**, 10.5% from **Shuafat**, 10.1% from **Issawiya**, 8.3% from **A-Tur**, 8.3% from **Ras el Amud**, 7.9% from the **Old City**, 5.7% from **Kafr Aqab**, 5.7% from **Shuafat Refugee Camp**, 4.8% **Tsur Baher**, 4% from **Abu Tor**, 3.9% from

Silwan, 3.1% from **Jabel Mukaber**, 3.1% from **Wadi al Joz**, 1.8% from **Beit Safafa**, 4.8% other. Students ranged in age from 18-over 50. 36.9% of students were employed, 10.6% were students, 18.6% were looking for employment, and 33.8% were housewives.

According to Lissan’s end of year survey, students were very satisfied with their courses.

The following are some statistics about student satisfaction in how the course impacted their lives:

- 82.1% rated their experience as good to excellent.
- 97.7% would recommend our courses to a friend.
- 94.7% felt an increased sense of self confidence and independence in navigating the public domain.
- 89.3% felt more equipped to navigate the healthcare system and communicate with doctors in hospitals and medical clinics.
- 74.5% felt that the Hebrew they learned in their course helped them better access their rights.
- 16.3% stated that the Hebrew they learned allowed them to apply to a Hebrew speaking college or university.
- 30.4% stated that the Hebrew they learned helped them improve their function at work.
- 12.5% stated that the Hebrew they learned helped them find a new job that required Hebrew.
- 4.6% stated that the Hebrew they learned helped them open their own business.

At the end the program year, Lissan’s management team held conversations with each volunteer teacher and coordinator. They all reported a positive experience with their students and working with Lissan over the past year. They were extremely proud of their students and



of the progress they made, and happy to be a part of the Lissan community. In addition, many said that they would recommend this volunteer experience to friends, and that the encounter with their students was meaningful.

In response to the needs arising from the students, during the 2022-2023 program year Lissan launched a new sub-project Practice Your Hebrew in the new 2024-2024 school year.

This project offered students in level B and higher the opportunity to practice their Hebrew speaking skills over the phone with volunteers. Lissan ran two rounds of this project with 59 participants and 30 volunteers. Lissan plans to further expand this project in the future.

Since the horrific events of October 7th, and the resulting devastating war, Lissan has adjusted and added to its activities based on the needs of the different circles within the Lissan community. At a time when Lissan expected participants to drop out of our courses, they have asked and demanded to continue (or begin) learning Hebrew. With the rise in layoffs, unpaid leave, and need for medical services - East Jerusalemite women need the Hebrew language more urgently.

To respond to this need, Lissan has been at the height of preparations to launch this 2023-2024 year's project Medabrot Ivrit-Women Speaking Hebrew, which began in mid-December mostly on Zoom, with the hope of transitioning to in person courses when possible. Before the war, 625 students took placement tests and paid their registration fees, and 565 students (90%) confirmed their registration and began their studies in mid-December. We are in the middle of teacher training - thus far our 56 volunteer teachers and 11 coordinators have completed 2 out of 4 training sessions.

Lissan's community had never had to cope with this kind of period of tension, breaking down trust between members of their community. In order to be able to continue its work and uphold its multicultural community of volunteer teachers, the staff has begun a process to mediate between them, navigate the situation, and formulate organizational policies to respond to potential challenges that would arise in the encounter between Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians in the activities. Lissan plans to continue this process among the various levels of its community, including with its Medabrot Ivrit – Women Speaking Hebrew teachers and coordinators, under the guidance of external professionals in the field of shared society, to give them the support they need to continue this work during these difficult times, and preserve the hope and partnership.

◆ *MIDDLE EAST ENTREPRENEURS OF TOMORROW (MEET)*

Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET) brings together promising Palestinian and Israeli high school students for a cutting-edge three-year program in partnership with the prestigious American MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). 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, their long-term academic partner.

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

B8 of Hope **sponsors MEET's social events by covering costs of their logistics.** These events establish strong bonds between MEET's staff, students, families, and external guests, and create unique opportunities of empowerment and people-to-people connection. **In 2023, B8 of Hope's granted two events:**

- **The Graduation Ceremony for Year 3 students (of the 2022-2023 academic year) in the summer**

This ceremony marked and celebrated the final milestone of finishing the 3 year-long MEET Students Program and transitioning to the Alumni Program. As part of the event the diverse teams of final year MEET students presented their tech innovative startup projects that aim to make an actual social impact on their communities to their parents, classmates and MEET community members.

The ceremony was held on July 30th, from 18:00 to 21:30, at the Israel Arts and Science Academy's (IASA) campus in Jerusalem. 90 MEET students, both Palestinians and Israelis at the age of 17, celebrated their successful completion of the 3-year MEET Student Program. The event witnessed a total of more than 350 attendees, including students, 141 family members, MEET staff, and MIT instructors.

The schedule included a light outdoor reception with refreshments, a group photo session, the official graduation ceremony in the IASA auditorium where the diverse teams of final-year MEET students presented their tech-innovative startup projects, aimed at making a tangible social impact on their communities. The presentations were met with enthusiasm from parents, classmates, and MEET community members.





– **The MEET conference for Year 1 Students (of the 2023-2024 academic year) in the fall**

Due to the circumstances, this event was transitioned to an online format, ensuring that students still experience an engaging and enjoyable conference.

Originally planned to be a two-day event in Neve-Shalom Wahat-As-Salam (Oasis of Peace in Hebrew and Arabic) a village of Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel dedicated to building justice, peace, and equality, due to the circumstances following October 7th, the conference was transitioned to an online format in December. MEET ensured that students still experienced an engaging and enjoyable conference.

The Zoom sessions featured intensive computer science learning modules and various deeper understanding sessions and team-work exercises. Despite of the online format, Year 1 Students were still provided with an opportunity to connect with their peers and gain awareness of the different identities, backgrounds and perspectives amongst themselves and others.

The expenses for the online event were less than submitted in MEET’s grant application. They include educational materials and special packages for students, which were presented to them in person by educational team members before the event.

Given this adjustment, **we accepted MEET’s request to reallocate the remaining B8 of Hope grant funds to another overnight event for Year 1 students planned to be conducted in person at the beginning of 2024 (to be confirmed).**

◆ **NEW STORY LEADERSHIP**

New Story Leadership (NSL) focuses on developing a community of leaders and influencers across Palestine and Israel through a 7-week summer program in Washington DC. Palestinian and Israeli young adults who apply to this program are hosted in “pairs” by American families and get work-placements in the offices of Representatives, Senators, and 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. 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.

In 2023, B8 of Hope **subsidized the costs of the flights for the Israeli and Palestinian delegates to be able to join the program in Washington DC.**



NSL's 7-week 2023 summer program was the organization's most diverse and active delegation to date. The delegates participated in 19 Congressional meetings, hosted two Congressional Forums, for the first time - in the House and the Senate – and produced the most issue briefs for Congressional offices ever. They also met with Hady Amr, Special Representative for Palestinian Affairs at the US Department of State.

The delegation received world class training from the best DC has to offer. Trainers included: Jeff Nussbaum (former senior speechwriter for President Biden) and Tim Rieser (former Clerk for Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations; a draftee of the Leahy Law). Topics included: Narrative, Method, Speechwriting, Negotiation, Congressional Advocacy, and Allyship.

Since the events of October 7th, NSL has supported the community of its alumni and worked around the clock to elevate the voices of its brave alumni who remain committed to moving forward together. They have established a working group whose mission is to jointly negotiate and chart the path forward together.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, NSL's working group of alumni has:

- Drafted and distributed,
- Joint statements to Congress calling for an immediate ceasefire to hostilities, release of hostages, and detailing a plan for a final resolution to the conflict,
- Briefed House Reps. Jim McGovern and Jamie Raskin,
- Working to develop a comprehensive plan for mutual lasting peace and security to be presented to the international community.

This work has been done online over Zoom sessions. More working sessions are being planned to take place in Geneva in early 2024, under the hospices of B8 of Hope.

◆ **THE PARENTS CIRCLE – FAMILIES FORUM (PCFF)**

The Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF) represents over 600 bereaved Israelis and Palestinians who have lost an immediate family member – a daughter, a son, a mother, a father, a sister, or a brother as a result of the conflict. Instead of choosing revenge, PCFF's members are working hand in hand together, sharing sorrow and bringing hope by trying to stop acts of violence through reconciliation – a prerequisite to achieving a sustainable peace. The

organization uses all resources available in education, public meetings, and the media to spread these ideas. Their motto is: “If I who have lost a loved one into the conflict can walk the path of peace, then surely you can too.”

In general, B8 of Hope supports PCFF’s women’s group activities. In 2023, **B8 of Hope’s grant to PCFF was dedicated to the women’s group “Critical Voices Program”**. However, **we also supported PCFF’s Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) for the first time, by covering the costs of their Travel expenses to Switzerland in order to participate in our partner’s Coexistences’ program.**



1- Critical Voices Program:

This Program amplifies the voices of Palestinian and Israeli women working on reconciliation. One stream of the program is focused on public outreach through the production of testimonial videos in the storytelling and reconciliation workshops and posting them on social media. During workshops in early 2023, five videos were produced.

After Israel's Ministry of Education denied PCFF entry into schools to conduct the program, the organization held numerous DMs for the public-at-large.

PCFF women members participated in public outreach through Dialogue Meetings (DM):

- Co-facilitation of 17 DMs for youth, reaching a total audience of 425 people,
- Co-facilitation of 10 DMs for the general Israeli public, reaching 1,100 participants,
- Co-facilitation of 2 DMs specifically for Palestinian public, reaching 50 people,
- Co-facilitation of 38 DMs for delegations, reaching 950 people.
- In other aspects of public outreach, Israeli PCFF women members active in the anti-occupation bloc, as part of that niche, joined the larger protest movement throughout 2023 in Israel against the government's judicial reform plan.
- Several PCFF women (binationally) joined International Peace Day events on September 21 under the initiative of Women Wage Peace.

Another stream of the program focuses on building the relationships of the larger circle of PCFF women’s group with a smaller group of women leaders. This is done notably by

educational visits of PCFF's women's group to sites and communities relevant to the conflict, followed by discussion sessions. In the summer 2023, the first Resilient Leaders Workshop took place with 40 Palestinian and Israeli PCFF women members who visited Hadidiya, a Bedouin village in the Jordan Valley. They learned about its history and problems Israeli settlers create for them.

The women proceeded to meet with entrepreneurial women in Bardala and hear about their social initiatives. The PCFF participants were impressed by their achievements despite water and electric supply shortages resulting from the Occupation, which, for example, adversely affect gardening projects. Their successes despite the obstacles were an inspiring example of women's leadership. The PCFF women went with the women from Bardala to a women and children's center founded by the latter. Together, in solidarity, they planted flowers. The takeaway for PCFF women was inspiration from seeing Bardala's women as effective agents of change.

In September, a group of women had a preparatory meeting including new members in order to get to know them and introduce them to the PCFF Women's Forum activities. Unfortunately, as of October in person activities of the women's group have been suspended and will be hopefully reconducted in early 2024.

From mid-October, the women decided to hold uninational Zoom meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to share feelings, process the situation and anticipate next steps on how to resume live, binational meetings once circumstances allow Israeli and Palestinian women to hold meetings together.

Since October 7th, PCFF women members have been actively responding to interview requests by international media outlets. (Link to Robi's interview).

2- Travel expenses for Young Ambassadors for Peace trip to Switzerland:

In June, 20 young, bereaved Israeli, and Palestinian members of our grantee organization PCFF's Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) youth group participated in the Lausanne based Coexistences program. B8 of Hope sponsored the costs of their flight tickets.

Coexistences is one of B8 of Hope's main partners in Switzerland, and its Chairwoman, Fiuna Seylan is on our advisory board. The Coexistences program consists of bringing cohorts of Israelis and Palestinians to Switzerland for a unique experience. The delegations consist of members of existing NGOs and movements in Israel and Palestine. They are involved in dialogue and bridge-building activities back home, and when they come here in Switzerland, they deepen the work away from the conflict zone. They are placed with Swiss host families in the Lausanne region. In addition to deepening their engagement with each other, going through an intensive and meaningful collective experience, and developing their leadership skills and their vision, they also learn about the Swiss model of coexistence and democracy. The YAP group stayed with Swiss families and also lived together in a chalet in the Alps for a few days. The chalet was only for the YAP group, and the Israeli and Palestinian young participants lived as a family, cooking for themselves, cleaning, talking, laughing, and trekking in the Alps.

This group went through the Coexistence program, which included an opportunity to study for two days at the prestigious IMD Business School in Lausanne. Their stay in Switzerland helped them reflect on and discuss how to become the next generation of activists for peace within the Parents Circle Families Forum.

Overall, since October 7th, PCFF held its first joint, binational staff meeting on October 8th, followed by frequent uninational meetings and binational staff meetings to process and strategize. Summer camp participants (“14-18-year-olds”), YAP members, alumni of PCFF Parallel Narrative Experience program, and members have participated in facilitated uninational meetings, as they prepare for resuming binational meetings.



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The only real victory will be a collective victory, for us AND them. It's called peace

Yuval, bereaved Israeli son

Holding on to Humanity
נאחזים באנושיות
מתמסקון באנסאיתנא

ISRAELI PALESTINIAN BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR PEACE
בני משפחות שכולות ישראליות ופלסטיניות
עובדות יחדיו על מנת להשיג
שלום אמיתי ויציב ויבטיחו את
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האזרחים מן אזור המסחר

”

I believe that no conflict, however ancient, lasts forever.

Wajeeh Tomeezi
Palestinian bereaved brother

Holding on to Humanity
נאחזים באנושיות
מתמסקון באנסאיתנא

◆ PERES CENTER FOR PEACE AND INNOVATION'S SAVING CHILDREN PROGRAM

The Peres Center for Peace and Innovation was founded in 1996 by the 9th President of Israel, two-time Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shimon Peres, and is dedicated to advancing his vision of a prosperous Israel within a peaceful Middle East.

The Peres Center is a leading non-profit NGO that, together with local, regional, and international partners, develops and implements impact-oriented programs serving hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries of all ages, religions, genders, and cultural backgrounds. The Peres Center's Medicine in the Service of Peace initiatives have been active since the organization's founding, advancing health education and services and providing crucial humanitarian medical aid. To date, more than 13,000 Palestinian infants and children have been treated through the Peres Center's "Saving Children" program, and the Peres Center is one of the few organizations with the ability to assist children in the Gaza Strip. In addition to the medical outcomes of this program, "Saving Children" acts as a bridge of peace between people, building engagement and cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian public health authorities, medical teams, and between patients, their families, and doctors.



B8 of Hope's grant to the Peres Center is dedicated to the Saving Children Program. We would like to share the case of one of the children who directly benefited from our help:

- Case Study: M.A, 6 years old, from Bethlehem, West Bank

M.A was born with a dysplastic right heart with a need for multiple surgical corrections to repair, and periodic follow-ups in order to monitor and manage his condition. M.A. received a series of surgical treatments in an Israeli hospital through the Peres Center's "Saving Children" program.

He had his first surgery when he was 6 months old, and since then he underwent additional procedures in 2018, 2020 and 2021.

M.A. had another procedure in 2023. He had been admitted to Sheba Medical Center with cyanosis and fatigue on exertion. There, on October 10th, he underwent diagnostics and therapeutic catheterization. M.A. was discharged on November 11th and is expected to return for follow-up in 3 months.



In the interim, M.A. has been monitored by his local doctor. Incidentally, M.A.'s local doctor received specialized training in an Israeli hospital through a different Peres Center program that facilitates specialty training of Palestinian doctors in Israeli hospitals.

The "Saving Children" program has continued, in spite of the war, to bring children from the West Bank for medical treatments to Israeli hospitals. There have been several delays in appointments due to the fact that Israeli doctors have been called up for military duty. Unfortunately, because of the situation, children from Gaza are not able to come to Israeli hospitals at this time. The Saving Children Program hopes to resume the participation of children from Gaza as soon as this will be possible.

◆ *PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (PHRI)*

Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHRI) was founded in 1988 by a group of Israeli physicians and works to promote a just society where the right to health is granted equally to all people in Israel, in the West Bank and in Gaza.

PHRI employs a multi-faceted approach to achieve its goals through the provision of humanitarian aid and work promoting policy change. Through open and mobile clinics, volunteer medical professionals provide services free of charge to people with limited or no access to health care—primarily migrants, refugees, and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza. Promoting and protecting the right to health of Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territory is a cornerstone of promoting their basic human rights.

A key part of this entails supporting patients from Gaza who experience a severely underfunded healthcare system that is cut off from the remainder of the Palestinian healthcare system. Due to regular shortages of medication, supplies, and equipment and an inability of Gazan health professionals to train and further their professional development, Gazan patients frequently need to undergo medical treatment outside their area of residence, at medical institutions in Israel or East Jerusalem.

While the situation in the West Bank is markedly better, the healthcare system there is also severely underfunded and restricted, and many West Bank residents are also unable to receive the care they need where they live. Palestinian patients are thus regularly forced to contend with cumbersome bureaucracy simply to access healthcare.

B8 of Hope's grant to PHRI is dedicated to fund the core operations of the organization's medical and humanitarian work.

During the reporting 2023 period, a total of 10,883 Palestinian patients in Gaza and the West Bank received access to medical care through the mobile clinic visits, surgical operations, and referrals for medical care in Israeli hospitals. Additionally, PHRI delivered medical aid, including

medical equipment, supplies, disposables, and drugs, to the Palestinian healthcare system. Medication and supplies were provided both in the scope of our medical delegations and as deliveries to hospitals in Gaza, all in coordination with the Ministry of Health in Gaza. However, the work in Gaza has been discontinued since October 7th, and PHRI has since doubled their efforts in the West Bank.



THE RIGHT TO HEALTH. FOR ALL

The mobile clinics provided weekly cooperative Israeli-Palestinian medical care in rural Palestinian villages and towns in the West Bank and monthly delegations to Gaza. But since the war began, the activities in Gaza were suspended and instead doubled in the West Bank (two weekly clinics instead of one). The mobile clinics delivered medicine and gave patients access to specialist physicians. Within the unique framework of PHRI's mobile clinics, volunteer Israeli and Palestinian medical professionals (doctors, nurses, medical students, and specialists in alternative medicine) provided immediate primary and secondary medical care and prescriptions and, when necessary,

referrals for follow-up care. During the reporting period, PHRI's mobile clinics treated 10,595 patients (of whom 53% were women and 16% were minors) in 50 Mobile Clinics – 40 in the West Bank and 10 in the Gaza Strip.

These numbers include 10 women's mobile clinics (2 in the Gaza Strip and 8 in the West Bank), where 1,411 women were treated. Carried out by female medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, medical students, and translators, the women's clinics created a unique opportunity for Palestinian women to discuss their medical concerns and seek appropriate treatment in an exclusively female environment. During PHRI's women's clinics, the organization's volunteers conducted information sessions for the beneficiaries, addressing women's health issues in an effort to empower them to lead healthier lifestyles. PHRI also began developing Sakina, a new project that seeks to digitalize patient data from PHRI's weekly women's mobile clinic. In real-time, Sakina will provide queue management, comprehensive patient information, and accurate and disaggregated data collection.

In addition to mobile clinics visits, (before October 7th) PHRI sent 5 medical delegations to Gaza, during which their volunteer surgeons performed surgeries in various fields. These were conducted in partnership with local Gazan health staff to teach surgical methods not practiced in the Gaza Strip due to the lack of professional training and medical equipment, which are unavailable as a direct result of the Israeli blockade and control over the Strip.

During the reporting period, PHRI's volunteer surgeons conducted a total of 142 surgeries on Gazan patients. Of these, 8 were kidney transplants, 54 were in the field of orthopedics, 9 were gastrointestinal surgeries, 5 were vascular surgeries, 6 heart and chest surgeries, 23 were



ophthalmology, and 37 were general surgeries. 146 local healthcare professionals were trained during these operations. Before each delegation, PHRI purchased the necessary surgical equipment and disposables, which were used during the surgeries or delivered for future surgeries due to the lack of equipment in the Strip.

A noteworthy development during the reporting period is an intervention PHRI launched in January 2023 to perform kidney transplants. Based on conversations in previous reporting periods with Gazan doctors and the Gazan Ministry of Health, PHRI launched a program to build local capacity to support kidney transplants. During the delegations to Gaza, a PHRI volunteer – the head of the kidney transplant unit at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem – provides training to a local team, including technicians, a urologist, a vascular doctor, and an anesthetic team. The timeline is altered due to the war, but the goal is that in the future, local surgeons can independently perform kidney transplants. During the reporting period, PHRI successfully performed 8 transplants.

2023 saw the highest rate of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank in 20 years. PHRI conducted a number of solidarity visits and mobile clinics following a few of the larger attacks and added additional weekly clinics in the West Bank, since the war started.

Days after the pogrom in Huwara on February 27th, during which an estimated 400 settlers flooded the village, burning cars and homes and killing a man, PHRI staff and volunteers traveled mid-week to meet with the community and hosted a spontaneous mobile clinic.

During this solidarity visit, locals shared their experiences and presented the harrowing damage inflicted on their community to the PHRI team. PHRI was the first Israeli organization to visit the town following the attack, and locals appreciated sharing their stories and having access to medical care, given the obstruction they had experienced days earlier.

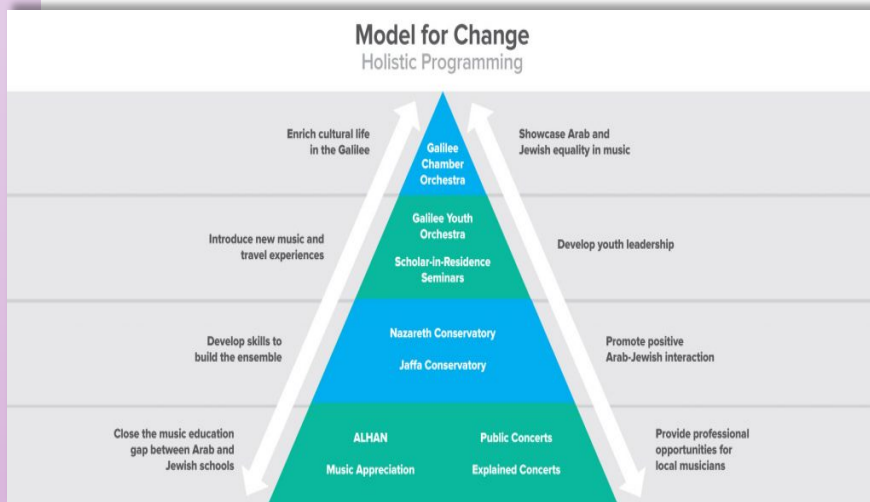
In July, PHRI visited the Jenin Refugee Camp following its military invasion, and the Burqah village in the Nablus area. Since the start of the war, there has been a surge of violent attacks in the West Bank against Palestinian residents and numerous roadblocks impeding access to local clinics and hospitals (between October 7th and November 24th, 216 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli forces or settlers). As a result, PHRI has doubled the efforts of their weekly mobile clinic and began deploying a mid-week medical delegation to reach those in disconnected areas and in the communities most impacted by violence.

This year, PHRI handled a total of 130 individual freedom of movement requests, helping patients obtain permits to access care outside their areas of residence. Of the cases handled during the reporting period, 28% were successful and 29% were refused (the remainder are either pending or were withdrawn by the patient). To support individual permit requests, PHRI filed a total of 15 court petitions and 11 pre-petitions in 2023. This year, PHRI's caseworker processed a total of 146 medical referrals to institutions in Israel and East Jerusalem, ensuring Palestinians could access treatment unavailable in the Palestinian occupied territories. Of these, 71% of referrals were for patients from the West Bank and 29% were from Gaza; 42% of referrals were for minors and 38% for female patients. Additionally, PHRI granted financial aid to cover 249 medical interventions.

◆ POLYPHONY EDUCATION

Polyphony Education is a prestigious music school based in Nazareth, using music in a holistic, multi-tiered approach through which Arab and Jewish musicians and music students come together to build an inclusive community. Arabs and Jews in Israel interact infrequently. Neighborhoods are segregated. People speak different languages—Arabic and Hebrew. Transformation begins when people have new experiences and are invited to perform together in new ways, building beyond the divides that separate them.

With Polyphony’s holistic, multi-tiered approach, music becomes the medium through which Arab and Jewish children come together in Israel to build an inclusive community.



B8 of Hope has been **supporting Polyphony Education’s Music and Society Seminar over consecutive years.**

The Music and Society Seminar is an immersive two-year program for 20 talented (10 Arab and 10 Jewish) musicians aged 15 to 18. The program is a partnership between the School for Cultural Studies and the Institute for Promoting Dialogue at Tel Aviv University, the Israeli Conservatory of Music-Tel Aviv, the Polyphony Conservatory Nazareth and leading musicians from Germany and Israel. It combines advanced chamber music study with an academic curriculum that develops participants into informed global citizens through intercultural dialogue and leadership training. The seminar takes place over eight weekends per year, alternating between Nazareth and Tel Aviv, with home-hospitality and includes 10 Arab and 10 Jewish participants.

In addition to our support to the Seminar, this year, Polyphony also received a beautiful violin, given by a B8 of Hope Next Gen Member and former young violinist, for the use of Polyphony students who need a better-level violin but can't afford one. This violin remains the property of Polyphony. It was hand delivered by our donor during a trip to Nazareth, and a special visit to Polyphony in the spring of 2023.



Since October 7th, we have been in contact with the director of the institution Polyphony, and we were very relieved to learn that despite of the circumstances the program was delayed but maintained and that there were no cancelations.

- **October 20-21:** The first Seminar meeting, to be held at the Israeli Conservatory of Music, Tel Aviv, was postponed due to the Hamas attack on October 7th, and the ensuing Israeli-Hamas war. Polyphony and students' families, eager to meet, decided to hold the first meeting in November and to make up the lost time by holding a few additional one-day gatherings during the rest of the academic year.
- **November 18 in Tel Aviv:** Because of the ongoing war, Seminar students met for only one-day in Tel Aviv at the Israeli Conservatory of Music, Tel Aviv. Since it was the students first meeting, the day included an exercise that allowed them to learn about each other. Polyphony's Nabeel Abboud Ashkar and the Israeli Conservatory of Music's Costin Canellis-Olier provided an introduction to the program. Student ensembles also had rehearsals in preparation for their mid-year concert.
- **During November,** Polyphony's Galilee Chamber orchestra participated in the production of a beautiful clip and special project of the Israeli Opera, featuring Leonard Bernstein's classic piece "Somewhere," from "West Side Story" revisited in Arabic, Hebrew and English.

Click [HERE](#) to listen.



- **December 1-2 in Nazareth:** This was the first full 2-day program of the third cohort. Students participated in rehearsals, a lecture-discussion, and social activities. The lecture-discussion centered on a powerful poem by Mahmoud Darwish called “Think of Others.” After the reading, participants wrote two lines of their own that they shared in groups that helped them learn about each other. One student said it was the first time they thought about “the other” and that if you don’t meet “others” who are different from you, you don’t think about your own identity.



◆ ROAD TO RECOVERY

Road to Recovery (RtR) responds to this acute need with its network of hundreds of Israelis who volunteer to drive Palestinian patients (especially children and their families) from border crossings (West Bank and Gaza) to hospitals inside Israel and back, assisting in financing complementary therapies, purchasing medical equipment and organizing fun and rest days for the pediatric patients (such as trips to the beach, respite camp at the Jordan River Village or a fun safari day).



Road to Recovery is motivated by humanitarian values. Their compassion-driven work creates and deepens connections between Palestinians and Israelis. All activities are organized, coordinated, and carried out by RtR's cadre of committed volunteers. RtR's work takes an active role in mitigating the negative effects of the ongoing conflict as it advances contacts between Palestinians and Israelis and is constantly sustained and expanded in its tier of volunteers and in cooperation with Palestinian families and aid organizations.

This unique model reduces fear and anxiety, alleviates negative stereotypes and

misperceptions of the other, and is leveraged to foster hope and trust between Israelis and Palestinians that are vital to mitigating the negative effects of conflict.

Palestinian patients, eligible for treatments in Israeli hospitals, are required to organize the logistical and financial setup on their own. While any lifesaving treatment regimen is complex emotionally and financially, it is particularly burdensome for this population. This is because in addition to all of the "regular" burdens that a situation like this entails (e.g., communication with doctors, long hospital stays, missed workdays, etc), these patients face additional barriers such as language, Israeli security restrictions, border crossings, and more. To access the hospital, these families have no other choice but to take private taxis that incur high costs. Since there is no public transportation from the checkpoints and treatments require multiple trips to hospital every week, the economic and emotional burden on the family is insurmountable.

Up to 2022, B8 of Hope's financial support of RtR had been mainly covering the gasoline costs incurred by the volunteer drivers as they drive Palestinians seeking treatment to hospitals. B8 of Hope contributed to the costs of the drivers' fuel expenses, not only because the humanitarian work of these volunteer drivers is crucial, but also because the conversations in the car are also meaningful. Amid a deeply rooted political conflict, RtR is about rendering simple humanitarian services and about the physical recovery of patients as much as about building trust and mutual respect among Israelis and Palestinians. Every patient they help, they form a warm, human bond with.

In 2023, we decided to **invest in the new RtR Coordination Center personnel, in its endeavor to continue scaling up its humanitarian aid work.**

At the commencement of 2023, RtR hired three new coordinators (part time - 75%). This move aimed to bolster the operations of the coordination center, previously reliant on volunteers alone. The paid coordinators alleviated the workload for the 17 volunteer coordinators, mitigated the risk of burnout associated with their demanding responsibilities 24/7 and allowing them to continue their voluntary contributions with enthusiasm. The decision proved to be apt, and allowed the growth in RtR activities, as reflected in the following statistics:

The Growth of "The Road to Recovery" in Numbers until the end of September 2023 (9 months):

- 902 volunteers, of whom 199 are new,
- 10,649 trips,
- Answering 16,331 requests. (When possible, volunteers drive more than one patient per trip)

This year, increase in the number of trips is smaller than the increase in the number of requests because of the coordination center's efficiency in optimizing travel arrangements. By consolidating cases, we successfully reduced the number of trips needed, allowing two patients and their companions to travel in a single vehicle. This improvement makes it possible to respond to more patients and reduces the costs of fuel reimbursements for volunteers.



Unfortunately, as of October 7th, RtR is no longer able to assist Gazan patients. However, they have redoubled their efforts in the West Bank. Additionally, they have been providing support to displaced Israeli families in the wake of recent tragic events.

The rumors that some of the Palestinians patients (from Gaza) benefiting from Road to Recovery's services had been recognized being among the terrorists of Oct 7th were denied by RtR's director Yael Noy. She confirmed to B8 of Hope that during the first week of the war, an Israeli minister spread this rumor on TV, and the information was not confirmed by any of the RtR volunteers--it turned out to be a nasty misinformation.

RtR was severely impacted by the horrifying Hamas attacks of October 7th, as many of RtR's volunteer drivers were residents of the kibbutzim bordering Gaza. The courageous interview of RtR's executive director summarizes the spirit of RtR's team.



◆ *STANDING TOGETHER*

Standing Together is a grassroots movement mobilizing Israeli Jewish and Palestinian citizens from all walks of life in pursuit of peace, equality, social and climate justice. Standing Together is building a shared home for all those who refuse hatred and choose empathy by not erasing their differences, but rather believing in a true partnership based on shared interests.

B8 of Hope's 2023 awarded **Standing Together with a grant allocated to support its Rosa Media project.**

Rosa Media is an alternative bilingual – Arabic and Hebrew – media platform powered and run by Standing Together. It attempts to navigate news, events, and the complex issues in Israel through a new lens that reorganizes the current political map by providing an alternative perspective as the one presented by the Israeli mainstream media. It does that by giving quality content in both languages, organized by a series of podcasts that present or analyze with guests from the civil society, covering an array of political, social, and economic events, both national and international.

In 2023, 51 Standing Together activists were involved in six different departments of Rosa Media, ranging from podcast production, the Rosa Media magazine, social media, digital campaigns, and yearly calendar creation. Management of the Rosa Media team is carried out by three paid Standing Together staff members.

* Podcasts

- The Wake Up Call podcast is a podcast that touches on issues affecting people in their day-to-day lives and the hope for fundamental change in society, politics, and the economy.
The total number of listeners for the Wake-Up Call podcast during the reporting period was 37,730, and the average number of listeners per episode was 877.
- The History of Sexuality podcast, launched in April, connects LGBT history to the present - with each episode meeting a different queer figure to see what it can teach us about society, politics, culture, and beliefs today.
- The total number of listeners for the History of Sexuality podcast for this period was 15,930, and the average number of listeners per episode was 418.
- There was a “live podcast” event in Haifa, where 60 people joined to watch the podcast recording.

* Online Magazine

The online magazine, launched in May, is a platform where articles touching on relevant political issues are uploaded for public access. So far, 26 bilingual articles (Hebrew and Arabic) have been produced, and there have been a total of 17,084 unique visitors to the site, as well as 22,918 site sessions. The volunteers involved in creating the online magazine went through a journalism training session with journalist Noa Landau.

* TikTok, Instagram and Twitter

The Instagram pages for Rosa Media have reached 127,578 people over the past 6 months and gained 2.4K new followers. Over the past two months (due to inability to access data older than two months), the Rosa Media TikTok account has reached 324.8K views and gained 5,743 new followers. The Rosa Media Twitter account has reached 61.1K impressions and gained 2.1K followers.

* The War in Israel/Hamas

Rosa Media has been producing content about the war, in line with Standing Together’s position towards the situation and promoting a de-escalation and peace message. Rosa Media has been facilitating trainings and community events for Jews and Palestinians around the country, opposing political persecution and war. It is planned to launch a “Jewish-Arab war diary,” with testimonies and stories of Jews and Palestinians since October, about solidarity, living together, and calling for peace.

On a general note, since the start of the war, Standing Together held multiple rallies and events all over Israel.



◆ **TEACHERS' LOUNGE**

In Israel, teachers from different school systems do not interact. The education system is segregated, and each community has their own curriculum (Jewish, Arab, secular, religious, etc.). An initiative of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), [Teachers' Lounge](#) began operating in Jerusalem in 2014.

A professional development program for Jewish and Arab teachers, its aim is to allow educators to get closely acquainted with colleagues from the other population. Through this acquaintance, the program instills multi-cultural tools for teachers from all sectors for dealing with racism and prejudice, in the school and in the community. Since its establishment, the program has expanded to five cities and municipalities in Israel, including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Ramle, the Western Galilee, and Haifa.



The Program's Structure:

Teachers' Lounge runs teachers' dialogue groups, with 16 participants per group. Each group consists of equal numbers of Jewish and Arab teachers, and each activity center has its own local coordinator and facilitators who accompany the program throughout the year. Program facilitators also represent Arab and Jewish Israelis equally. The program comprises 10 meetings throughout the school year in accordance with each center's unique schedule and with all religions' holidays and vacations. The teachers' meetings are scheduled from October to April of each year.

The funds allocated in 2023 to Teachers' Lounge by B8 of Hope contributed to the general operational costs of the 2023-2024.

As of June 2023, Teacher's Lounge started planning the 2023-2024 activity year.

With an increasing volume each year and activity expanding in 2023-24, the program was scheduled to have nine groups as well as an alumni program. After a long preparation period in the summer, Teachers' Lounge decided to open a new center in Haifa together with the city's

Education Department at Beit Hagefen, while the other centers were planned to continue their programs in a similar form.

During the summer, Teachers' Lounge recruited for all the program's facilitators and coordinators in the different centers. Each group has two facilitators, one Arab and one Jewish. All the facilitators went through two concentrated national training sessions during the summer.



Learning from previous years, Teachers' Lounge began the recruitment process for each group earlier in the year. Teachers' Lounge ran a local training session for each center to enrich them with the knowledge, experience, and mode of operation from Jerusalem to the rest of the centers. Through this process, the program was able to fill all the groups to almost full capacity in all centers.

After a process that took up a couple of months, Teachers' Lounge was also able to establish an organized alumni program for Teachers' Lounge graduates. This process will include recruiting a coordinator for the alumni program as well as planning and executing our alumni activity on a local and national scale.

After a process that took up a couple of months, Teachers' Lounge was also able to

As of October 7th, Teachers' Lounge experienced one of the most difficult times. Teachers' Lounge started its 2023-24 activity year with a lot of expectations and excitement, looking forward to its largest year of activity together with the continued growth of the Teachers' Lounge program, joined by new staff members, new partners and with the addition of an alumni program.

The harsh reality of war demanded that the program withstands the uncertain conditions on the one hand, while also coming up with new and creative solutions that can allow the program to continue and reach its goals. Teachers' Lounge's management team cannot envision what the program will look at the end of this war, but they know that it will play a vital role in the healing process that Israeli society must undergo in the years ahead.

Below are the measures taken by Teachers' Lounge since October 7th:

- Postponing programs' opening dates – the program's headquarters has convened a number of times for work meetings to rethink our strategy in light of the situation. The first decision was to postpone the programs' opening dates for all the centers.
- Each week a general status evaluation meeting was held (at headquarters level) as well as a regional meeting with each center.

- Each center has been affected differently and therefore getting the programs back on track will have to be according to each center's situation.
- The program's management team is investing time in studying the situation by participating in conventions to learn how other programs are dealing with this complex reality.
- The program's management team is examining new attitudes and ideas that will help them to run the program and adapt its content to this unique and complex situation where they are in. It is important to note that the Israeli Board of Education has not allowed for the opening of any professional training programs for teachers in Israel.
- The program's management team is in contact with all program coordinators and facilitators in all the centers to offer strength and support. Given the situation, there is the possibility that some of the staff will not be continuing with Teachers' Lounge and other solutions will need to be found.
- The program's coordinators are in contact with the teachers who signed up for the program to get a "grassroots feeling" and to understand which parts of the program may be feasible at this time.
- As part of the planned establishment of the program's alumni activity, Teachers' Lounge is reflecting about how, in light of the current situation, it can initiate appropriate and relevant activities for its graduates.
- Budgets are being reevaluated and grantors will be updated as soon as possible.

◆ **TECH2PEACE**

Tech2Peace (T2P) is a joint Israeli-Palestinian initiative, created and operated by a young staff and volunteers. The activity of this initiative is to run high-tech and peace-building seminars, focused on creating a lasting positive relationship between young Israelis and Palestinians. The target audience is university students interested in entrepreneurship in high tech.

T2P founders believe that participants to their seminars will not only leave as peace activists, but also as potential colleagues with a strong basis for future positive interaction in the tech-sector. Their mission is to equip the Israeli and Palestinian youth with the skills necessary to ensure greater co-operation and co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians in the future. The seminars teach participants skills in three specializations: Web Building, 3D and Graphic Design, and Mobile App Development. Additionally, participants take part in experiential workshops focused on conflict resolution, thereby humanizing each other, which helps

humanize the conflict as a whole from the grassroots level. Upon completing the seminar, T2P participants will not only become peacebuilding ambassadors, but will also have the skills required for the first steps in their newfound high-tech careers.

In 2023, B8 of Hope **sponsored two T2P 12-day residential tech, entrepreneurship, and dialogue seminars during the month of August**: one in Neve Shalom-Wahat-As-Salam (Oasis of Peace in Hebrew and Arabic), a village of Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel dedicated to building justice, peace and equality; and one in the Negev town of Yeruham. This was the first time T2P held two seminars in parallel - one in NSWAS and one in Yeruham. This posed logistical challenges but was a very important steppingstone in expanding T2P's capacity and creating greater impact.



The seminars followed the mold of past seminars, with an average of 30 young participants in each. Palestinians and Israelis were equally represented: Jewish Israelis from different backgrounds, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Palestinians from East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The cohorts were gender balanced. T2P had to go through hundreds of applications to choose the participants.

Each cohort lived together under one roof for 12 days, spending half of each day in dialogue and half learning tech skills, with evening lectures, social activities, and a 24-hour hackathon with Google for Startups. The tech courses in the seminar included Artificial Intelligence, Python, Web Design, and Video Editing.

Overall, the seminar was highly successful. 90.6% of participants feel more positively towards the other side after participating in the T2P program. 100% said that after participating in Tech2Peace, they are willing to work with the other side on common issues.

Sharing below a few testimonials from the participants:

*** What did you like about the dialogue sessions?**

- *"The facilitators pushed us out of our comfort zones."*
- *"Done gradually, with sensitivity regarding both sides."*
- *"To hear the other side not only their narrative, but also their feeling, fears, and dreams."*
- *"There's a place for every opinion. No judgment."*



* **What did you like about the tech workshops?**

- *“A lot of professional insights”*
- *“Seeing more perspectives and more opinions. learning about projects in tech and peace related.”*
- *“More understanding in professional opportunities.”*
- *“Practical, supportive and positive learning environment”*

Since October 7th, T2P navigated through turbulent times. While T2P co-founders and staff engaged with many members of their community and supported them--and had them step up in support of each other--they also acknowledged that conversations had become increasingly difficult. The prevailing sense was that divisions have widened, making it more challenging to bridge the gaps. Emotions have been running high, and it is natural for some to find it challenging to engage in open dialogue. The gap between perspectives has grown, which can create additional hurdles in T2P's mission to foster understanding and unity. Building trust and promoting peace becomes more complex when tensions are at their peak.

Despite these complexities, T2P's commitment to its mission remained unwavering. The co-founders and staff are dedicated to creating spaces for dialogue, understanding, and cooperation, even when the path is challenging. Many online meetings with alumni were held. Since October 7th, over 600 Israeli and Palestinian alumni have continued to engage in dialogue, skill-building, and fostering hope for a shared future. Their collaboration is not just idealistic; it is rooted in mutual economic interests and deep connections, even during challenging times. The difficulties faced are only reinforcing the importance of T2P's work.

"What we're doing here, all the personal connections we have, despite our different identities, I think what we do has a meaningful purpose, and we can see a change, and hopefully one day we can see this change becoming way more important than what anyone else decides for us."

Palestinian alum, December 2023

"When many hits pause, we hit accelerate. We are still afraid, we are all traumatized, we are angry- but we know what a better future looks like, we've seen it in our community, and we are not yet willing to let go of that vision."

Hela Lahar, Israeli director of Tech2Peace

◆ **WOMEN WAGE PEACE**

Women Wage Peace (WWP) is a grassroots movement with more than 44,000 members from different communities within Israeli society: right, center and left; religious and secular; Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouin; young women and older women; women from the urban hubs of the country and from the periphery.

Women Wage Peace was founded in the summer of 2014 in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge, uniting women of all walks of life. What these women had in common was their willingness to put an end to the cycle of violence, to bring diplomacy and negotiations back on the political agenda with the inclusion of women as per UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

B8 of Hope supports Women Wage Peace's and their West Bank Palestinian sister movement Women of the Sun (WoS) 's major marches and rallies.



In 2023 our support went towards the expenses of their October flagship event: “The Call of the Mothers to Stop the Bloodshed”. The day-long event, co-organized by WWP and WoS, took place on October 4, 2023, in a spirit of unity and hope. A total of 2000 participants from Women of the Sun and Women Wage Peace Movements were present, as well as representatives of the international community such as the US Embassy Chargé d’Affaires in Jerusalem, members of the Swiss Embassy in Israel, the Irish Ambassador to Israel, Finish and Belgian members of Finish and Belgian Parliamentarians, the Vice-President of the European Women’s Lobby, the Deputy Head of Mission of the European Union Representation, members of Norwegian army and United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and international women activists from the Paris based

movement Guerrières de la Paix.

The event aimed to amplify the voices of Palestinian and Israeli women dedicated to breaking the cycle of violence and fostering a path towards harmonious coexistence. Palestinian and Israeli mothers stood side by side demonstrating their shared commitment to a better future for their children. The core message echoed by the participants was a resolute determination to halt the cycle of violence. Both groups emphasized their unwavering resolve to alter the reality of the ongoing conflict, emphasizing the potential for positive change.

Spanning a full day with various stages, it began with Israeli women welcoming their Palestinian counterparts from the West Bank at a checkpoint in Jerusalem. Despite a prolonged wait for the younger Palestinian women, delayed by checkpoint procedures, Israelis and Palestinians marched together to the Tolerance Monument Park. Here, speeches were delivered by leaders from both Palestinian and Israeli organizations, WoS and WWP, alongside other VIPs and international figures. Subsequently, hundreds of Israeli and Palestinian women traveled by bus to a venue at the Dead Sea in area C, where more Palestinian women could join. This evening event proved equally inspiring to the earlier rally in Jerusalem's park.



The event made a profound impact on attendees, underscoring the potential for change when individuals come together with open hearts and open minds. The unity displayed by Palestinian and Israeli women served as a testament to the strength of their collective commitment to peace.

As a follow-up to the event, the organizers urged attendees and the wider community to actively support the Women's Initiative. They emphasized that lasting change requires ongoing efforts and encouraged everyone to continue engaging in dialogue, advocating for peace, and working towards a brighter future.

"Stop the Bloodshed" was a landmark event, exemplifying the determination of Palestinian and Israeli women to pave the way for peace. Sadly, only 3 days after this unforgettable WWP and WoS event, the horrifying attacks on Israeli civilians were carried by Hamas. Our B8 of Hope friend and peace activist, Vivian Silver (co-founder of Women Wage Peace) was among the missing people and assumed to have been taken hostage. It was with deep regret that we found out more than a month later that Vivian was killed on that dark Saturday. We mourn her loss and the tragic way in which she was taken.





Vivian's work and legacy will continue:

“At your funeral, Vivian, we women of peace will walk together, weep together, embrace and mourn the profound loss, and each of us will remember through you the friends who sacrificed their lives, Israelis and Palestinians alike, during yet another war in this accursed region in which we were born.

I promise to keep on going. Our destination will no longer be a cemetery; our destination will be the house of dreams, towards the house of peace we will walk.”

Samah Salame, Vivian's friend and member of Neve Shalom-Wahat-As-Salam

◆ ZIMAM

Zimam (“reins” or “taking the initiative” in Arabic) is a pioneering grassroots youth movement that challenges the status quo. Taking a domestic approach to conflict resolution, they work with the Palestinian leaders of tomorrow in order to build a more democratic, active, and pluralistic society, driven by values of tolerance, non-violence and responsibility. Zimam works across nine governorates in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Its programs empower young people and transform public thinking, fostering respect for others, building peace, and instilling democratic attitudes.

In 2023, B8 of Hope supported Zimam's 2023-2024 Ambassador program.

Despite the challenging situation in the West Bank in the fall of 2023, as the program started, 16 participants out of 20 registered participated to the program. An exhaustive report will be provided by the end of the academic year in 2024.

Zimam also provided help in Gaza in support of the displaced families. products and food were (instead of are) available in the South of the strip but are very expensive. The Zimam chapter in Gaza purchased and distributed:

- Hygiene kits: hygiene is essential as diseases begin to spread. Zimam's kit includes shampoo, hand soap, wipes, and detergents.
- Food: people can barely pay for food. Zimam works with cooks in various camps in Deir Albalah and Rafah to cook food and distribute it to camp residents once a week. The frequency will be increased as Zimam manages to raise more funds.
- Tents: thousands of families are now living in the street or in precarious tents made of thin plastic. Zimam was able to source more robust tents and its goal is to move as many people as possible into these better tents.



Regrettably, Zimam also had its share of heartbreaking tragedy with the tragic loss of several members of its Gaza-based activity group, including the brilliant young Ayat Khadoura, a passionate member of Zimam, who worked for their Gaza chapter. She, along with her three siblings and grandparents, lost their lives during an attack on their home in Beit Lahia. We mourn her loss and the tragic way in which she was taken.

Ayat was Zimam's star agents of change in Gaza. She was outspoken, sharp, critical of her reality and a lover of life. In the month before the war, Ayat was leading the production of a series of short films for Masa7aChannel about the beauty of Gaza, the coexistence between religions and cultures over the years, and a history that extends beyond conflict and bloodshed. May her work remain an example to her peers and be remembered by all.

◆ 50:50 STARTUPS

50:50 Startups is a groundbreaking and quite recent incubator for creating equal partnerships between Palestinian and Israeli startup co-founders. It brings together diverse participants to partner while offering them intellectual stimuli and driving the creation of their venture. 50:50 Startups's mission is to create change through venture partnerships that lower barriers, foster creativity and mutual respect, and drive economic prosperity in the Israel-Palestine region through meaningful connections in venture creation and technological innovation.



At 50:50 Startups, the Palestinian and Israeli participants are equal partners. The 7-stage acceleration program (in Israel as well as in the United States) provides them with the expertise of international specialists from the corporate, academia and investment worlds, representing CEOs, professors, and key players in the global tech startup ecosystem.

The 2023 cohort witnessed unprecedented interest, attracting 208

applicants. Among them, 99 were Jewish applicants and 109 were Arabs, including Palestinians and Arab-Israelis. After a meticulous screening process, 41 participants were officially admitted to commence the program.

B8 of Hope’s grant covered the expenses of the program and the transportation of participants.

Program Highlights:

- **Opening Event and Bootcamp (April 27):** 50:50 kicked off the program with an intensive 72-hour bootcamp in Tel-Aviv. The diverse group of Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Arabs, men, and women participated enthusiastically, engaging in ice-breaking sessions, communication workshops, diversity and inclusion activities, and entrepreneurial content such as problem identification, ideation, SMART goals, and community building. The participants formed nine teams, all consisting of Jewish and Arab co-founders, with seven out of nine teams reflecting Israeli-Palestinian diversity.
- **Entrepreneurship Center Sessions (May 8):** The program transitioned to its second phase at the Entrepreneurship Center of Tel-Aviv University, comprising 10 weekly in-person sessions. These sessions, held between 2-9 pm, included learning modules, exercises with on-site mentors, dinner, and teamwork time. Topics covered during this phase included client segmentation & market classification, MVP and Lean Startup workshops, Business Model Canvas, and more. Participants diligently worked on their ventures, meeting with mentors and attending sessions. Weekly transportation to and from Tel-Aviv University was provided for participants from the West Bank.
- **Intensive Course at Northeastern University, Boston, USA (July 17):** The third stage took participants to an intensive course at Northeastern University in Boston, USA, starting on July 17th for three weeks. Eighteen entrepreneurs were sent to Boston, where they engaged in advanced classes on market research, customer discovery, solution design, and other relevant topics. The phase also included visits to key innovation institutions such as Harvard iLab, Microsoft Garage, and Cambridge

Innovation Center, along with networking events, bonding activities like kayaking on the Charles River, and dedicated teamwork time.



Our Synergies Lab Grantees

Background: Since 2019, B8 of Hope has been actively encouraging connections between our grantees. Our efforts first consisted in bringing them together in the same virtual and/or in person meeting spaces. The first ambition was providing a space for community building, sharing thoughts and best practices to face mutual challenges. The launch of our synergy building concept was hosted in July 2019 by Swiss Ambassador Jean-Daniel Ruch's at his residence in Ramat Gan, Israel.

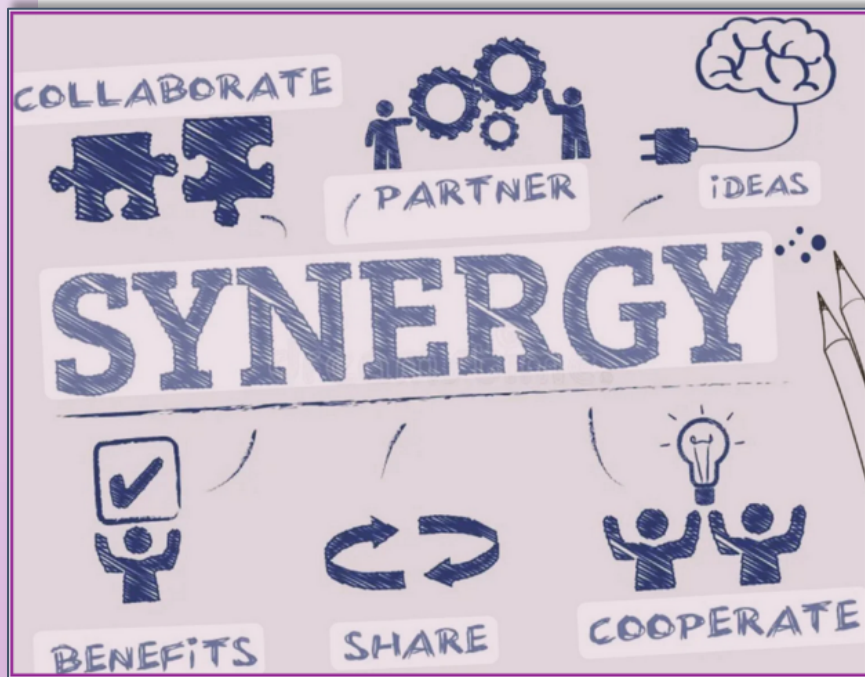
Step by step, our synergies building efforts shifted towards more concrete actions. In 2022, with the help and consultation of our partners Amal-Tikva (whose expertise is capacity building for Peace NGOs), we established a special grant called: "The Synergies Lab Fund". The call for application was also opened to organizations that we were familiar with but which we never funded directly. The idea behind this pilot Synergies Lab Fund was to push the organizations and movements which have been individually supported by B8 of Hope to partner on a program, share data and resources and develop capacity.

In the pilot edition, 15 requests were submitted in total. Once the proposals were reviewed and clarifications made, B8 of Hope approved 7 requests, involving a total of 15 organizations, with the total grant amount of CHF155,000. The partnerships that were accepted

demonstrated a clear shared language and aligned strategic direction and feasibility by the organizations. (More details available in our 2022 Annual Report).

Synergies Renewal Grants – 2023 Edition!

In June of 2023, B8 of Hope decided to provide additional funding to the 2022 synergies partnerships that proved most successful and impactful. **4 partnerships were selected. A total of CHF 100,000 was granted.**



◆ PROJECT ALEPH

by Lissan and Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET) and the participation of Palestinian Internship Program (PIP) and 50:50 Startups.



Project Aleph is a language-learning program designed for Israeli and Palestinian participants in peace and high-tech entrepreneurship initiatives, offering instruction in both Hebrew and Arabic at level A proficiency.

Participants in these programs are already establishing connections and identifying common ground. Aleph makes the language acquisition an additional component for furthering mutual understanding.

The collaboration between [Lissan](#), specializing in language education for bridge-building, and [MEET](#), a high-tech entrepreneurship program for Israeli and Palestinian high school students, is at the core of Project Aleph. Lissan provides high-quality classes and teaching methodologies, while MEET manages the application and registration process for the Aleph program. Although both organizations share responsibility for content development, management, and registration, participation is not limited to MEET students; it also extends to partner organizations such as 50-50 Startups and PIP.

Through Project Aleph, participants from MEET, [50:50 Startups](#), and [PIP](#) deepen their understanding of their counterparts and enhance their ability to collaborate across divides. Furthermore, in their socio-political context, proficiency in Hebrew opens career opportunities for young Palestinians that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Following a successful pilot during the 2022-2023 school year, with over 70 registrations, the second edition was initially slated to commence in October 2023 but faced delays due to the war. Classes are now scheduled to begin in February 2024 via Zoom. As of December 2023, 39 individuals had registered for Hebrew classes and 7 for Arabic, including 8 from MEET, 6 from 50:50 Startups, and 24 from PIP.



◆ **NEGOTIATION SKILLS IN ARABIC** *by Pathways and Zimam*

[Pathways](#) is a nonprofit institute specializing on negotiation skills education. The institute has been on B8 of Hope’s radar since 2020, engaging in workshops with our Next Gen group members. Pathways brings negotiation education into educational systems, notably in Israel, where it is also a mean to build bridges between schools from diverse communities.

[Zimam](#) is a Palestinian youth focused organization, working with the Palestinian leaders of tomorrow to build a more democratic, actively engaged and pluralistic society.



The concept of creating a Negotiation Skills workshop in Arabic based on Pathways methodology was born in 2022 and initiated by Pathways and Zimam. Both entities worked together and elaborated the first module of a Negotiation Skills workshop in Arabic, tailor-made for Zimam’s audiences. The module was co-designed, developed, adapted, and successfully piloted. The collaboration also included trainer sessions for the facilitators.

In 2023, Pathways and Zimam worked on creating module 2 during the fall. Despite of a slight delay due to the war, both entities confirmed that module 2 design will be finalized in January – during a retreat of the two teams in Geneva. The workshop will be implemented in 2024 and will benefit 10 participants/facilitators who will sequentially become facilitators/trainers for future workshops in the Zimam programs.

◆ **CO-FACILITATION OF PALESTINIAN PATIENTS’ ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE** *by Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) and Road to Recovery (RtR)*

This collaborative project concerns on-going coordinated assistance by [Road to Recovery](#) and [Physicians for Human Rights Israel](#) to 25 Palestinian patients from the Palestinian Occupied Territories in West Bank and in Gaza, during one year from September 2023 to October 2024. The 25 patients are recurrent beneficiaries of the project.

The joint efforts of the two organizations offer a solution for Palestinian patients who are unable to undergo the treatment they need in their areas of residence. While PHRI issues referrals to Palestinian patients for treatment and testing at medical institutions in Israel and East Jerusalem and provides financial coverage for testing and treatments that are not covered by the Palestinian Authority, RtR facilitates transport to and from the medical institutions and helps patients maneuver this complex process.



Since October 7th, both organizations have continued to provide the support outlined in the proposal. Patients from Gaza could not access the service anymore, but both organizations have intensified their efforts towards Palestinian patients from the West Bank. The agility and immediacy of the response of both organizations to meet the needs of their target populations at this time is incredible and inspiring. They are continuing to serve despite the difficult circumstances.

This project entails a dual synergy: not only do PHRI and RtR collaborate synergistically, but the project itself is funded by a philanthropic partnership between B8 of Hope and our French partner Kaleidoscope foundation.

Unfortunately, in the aftermath of October 7th, this project has been deeply impacted. Most of the patients targeted by the project were meant to be from Gaza and due to the complete shutdown of the Strip, they could not be admitted and transported to hospitals in Israel.

Immediately after October 7th, while 4 Palestinian patients had already benefitted from the joint efforts of this project since its launch in September, PHRI and RtR met to discuss and evaluate the continuity of their joint efforts and thought they would be able to nearly reach the target for the number of patients by increasing and focusing their efforts in the West Bank, as it was still possible working with West Bank patients. However, PHRI and RtR realized that most of RtR's West Bank patients already had a financial commitment from the Palestinian Authority to pay for the treatment, and they did not need PHRI to issue a referral and payment and most PHRI patients did not need transportation by RtR as their needs were addressed by the mobil clinics. However, the majority of patients needed help with purchasing costly medication that West Bank clinics and hospitals did not provide.

In agreement with B8 of Hope and our co-sponsor of the project, [Foundation Kaleidoscope](#), it **was decided that instead of suspending the project, the funds will be re-directed towards the emergency need for medications and medical aid in the West Bank.** This agility and immediacy of the response and flexibility proved to be very useful and appreciated.

◆ **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ARAB AND JEWISH TEACHERS IN RAMLE**

by Teachers' Lounge and the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue

The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue is an interreligious organization which promotes an inclusive society for all religious, ethnic, and national groups. One of their programs is about building educators' skills in facilitating conflict-related discussions among high school students, encouraging their respect for difference and diversity, and their role as enablers of an inclusive society.

Teachers' Lounge is a professional development program operating that harnesses the power of educators to positively redirect a dialogue toward understanding the "other" and thereby address the deep rifts of fear, anger, and suspicion that continue to drive apart the diverse inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The program brings together Israeli & Palestinian educators in equal numbers per cohort into a safe space where their shared dedication to educating the next generation serves as the initial means by which they connect with each other. The program's main goal is to produce a growing cohort of educators, both Palestinian and Israeli, who are committed to the ideals of shared society and peaceful coexistence, and who are trained to promote those ideals in their professional and personal lives.



By joining forces, Rossing Center and Teachers' Lounge were able to establish a unique program in the mixed **city of Ramle in Israel**. The effective facilitation provided by both organizations, combining expertise in intercultural dialogue, educational programs, and community engagement, was a success in 2022 and 2023. The leveraging of local resources and connections has been instrumental towards increasing participation in the program both through developing the relationship with the Ramle Municipal Education Authority and through the involvement of facilitators who are residents of the city with a deep knowledge of the context and the community.

The program was supposed to launch in October 2023, with 16 participants (equal numbers of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel). After an initial delay due to the war, the staff met and planned to begin recruitment and launch the program in 2024.



A heartfelt Thank You to our partner Amal-Tikva for offering their mentorship in developing our approach, clarifying our goals, and setting our criteria in our grant-making strategy!

B8 of Hope



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