

B8 OF HOPE

FIRST QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2026



A NOTE FROM GENEVA

As we share our first quarterly newsletter of 2026, like many of you, we have been deeply concerned by the tragedy unfolding in the Middle East. The situation weighs heavily on many hearts and minds, bringing a sense of complexity, uncertainty, and anxiety that is felt even here in Switzerland.

In Geneva—a peaceful and multicultural city—many of us have close friends and partners across the region, including in Israel, Palestine. Our thoughts are especially with our grantees and partners, and we hope that they and their loved ones remain as safe as possible during these difficult days.

Against this backdrop, the first months of 2026 have been marked by renewed engagement with the civil society ecosystem we support and by urgent efforts to assist communities facing increasingly difficult realities.



ON THE GROUND WITH OUR PARTNERS IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

In February, B8 of Hope's Executive Director **Mehra Rimer** and Deputy Director **Elie Pritz** spent eleven days in Israel and Palestine reconnecting with the grantees, partners, and peers whose work B8 of Hope supports across the region.

For Mehra, it was her first time back in the region in more than two years. Elie had been on the ground last summer, but being there together allowed us to reconnect in person with many of the individuals and organizations we have remained closely connected with throughout this time.

The visit also coincided with filming by Israeli documentary filmmaker **Dan Shadur**, who has been following Mehra's journey into peacebuilding for several years. Earlier this year he filmed in Geneva, and during the trip he joined parts of the visit to capture moments with some of the people and places that have shaped that journey.

One of the first places we visited was the **Karama Center**, founded on the farmland of the Abu Awwad family between the Palestinian town of Beit Ummar and the Gush Etzion settlement bloc. In what might seem like an unlikely location, Palestinians and Israelis come together there through the work of **Roots/Shorashim/Judur**, choosing nonviolence in order to meet one another as human beings and imagine a different future together.

Roots—B8 of Hope's very first grantee—works toward a social and political reality grounded in dignity, trust, and mutual recognition of both peoples' historic belonging to the land.

For Mehra, the Karama Center holds particular significance: it was here, in 2014, that she first encountered Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding and where her own journey into this field began.



As part of the documentary he is filming about that journey, Dan joined us there to capture this return to the place where it all started. While he filmed conversations with the founders of Roots and the Karama Center, we also had the chance to reconnect with the team and hear firsthand about their work today.

In **Jerusalem**, we attended the **Amal-Tikva Summit**, where leaders and practitioners from across Israeli and Palestinian civil society gathered for a full day of exchange, learning, and connection.

Amal-Tikva are also B8 of Hope's trusted consultants on the ground, and we are deeply grateful for their guidance and expertise in our grantmaking. Seeing so many alumni of Amal-Tikva's programs—many of them also B8 of Hope grantees—gathered in one place was a powerful reminder of the broader community working across the region.



During our time in Jerusalem we were also invited to a small dinner at the residence of the **Swiss Representative Anne-Lise Cattin-Hennin** in East Jerusalem. Around the table were three Palestinian women leaders who are part of B8 of Hope's wider circle of grantees and partners. It was an intimate evening and a rare moment to sit together, share perspectives, and speak openly about the realities facing the region today.

The following day took us to **Beit Jala** in the West Bank.

Life in the West Bank has become increasingly difficult over the past two years, with movement heavily restricted, violence escalating in many areas, and many families facing growing economic hardship.

We first spent time with the leaders of our grantee **Women of the Sun**, whose work focuses on strengthening Palestinian women's political participation and leadership.

B8 of Hope also convened a gathering at the offices of **Combatants for Peace**, bringing together several West Bank grantees and partners, including **Combatants for Peace**, **Parents Circle-Families Forum**, **Green Land Society for Health and Development**, **Jerusalem Youth Chorus**, **Makers Tech for Good**, **Takadom**, and **Zimam**.



Many participants had traveled from **Ramallah**, **Hebron**, and other parts of **the West Bank**, navigating checkpoints and long hours of uncertainty simply to be there. While sharing a meal together, each organization shared updates about their work and the challenges they are facing.

What unfolded naturally was a conversation not only about the difficulties of the current moment, but also about how these leaders continue to persevere—supporting their communities, encouraging one another, and exploring ways to collaborate despite the constraints around them.

For us, it was simply a privilege to sit in the room and listen.

In the Arab town of **Abu Ghosh**, our grantee **Blend.Ar** invited us to join one of their educational visits with Israeli high school students. These encounters bring students into Arab communities to learn about culture, language, and daily life.

During the visit we stopped at the local mosque, where the imam shared about the Muslim community in Abu Ghosh and answered the students' questions about Islam.

Later, one of the teachers accompanying the group told us how important experiences like this feel right now, at a moment when fear and hostility toward Palestinians are rising in Israeli society. For many students, he explained, this may be the first time they meet people and communities they have only heard about from a distance.



In **Nazareth**, we were warmly welcomed into the home of **Nabeel Aboud Ashkar**, founder and director of **Polyphony Education**, who invited us for lunch and conversation. Polyphony brings together young Arab and Jewish musicians through intensive music education and shared artistic experiences.

Sharing a meal together was also a reminder that B8 of Hope's work is built on relationships. Over the years we have come to know not only the organizations we support, but also the people who lead them.



That same spirit carried into our time with the team behind the podcast **Unapologetic: The Third Narrative (UTTN)**. With B8 of Hope's support, UTTN is using the intimacy of long-form conversation to offer an unapologetically Palestinian, deeply grounded space where listeners can encounter stories, strategies, and calls to action that rarely surface in mainstream coverage of the region.

The day ended on a celebratory note as we attended the inauguration of **Standing Together's** newest **Purple House**, marking the movement's expansion into Arab cities and towns. There was food, music, and thoughtful speeches, and a room full of people committed to building a different future together.

It was another reminder of why we admire Standing Together's work so deeply and are proud to support it—and another opportunity to experience the work on the ground, not only through reports, but by being present in the spaces where it is unfolding.

In **Tel Aviv**, B8 of Hope hosted a day of gatherings at Standing Together's Purple House, bringing together many Israeli grantees, partners, and organizations working across the peacebuilding landscape.



Participants included 3ArabBrew, 50-50 Startups, A Land for All, Achinoam Nini, Comet-ME, EMDR4Peace, the New Israel Fund, Parents Against Child Detention, Parents Circle–Families Forum, the Palestinian Internship Program, Physicians for Human Rights Israel, Rana Choir, Road to Recovery, the Saving Children Program at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, Search for Common Ground, Standing Together, the Vivian Silver Impact Award initiative, Women Wage Peace, and Dori Hoffman (our social media designer).



Throughout the day, people moved between conversations, reconnecting with colleagues, sharing updates from their work, and exchanging ideas about how to continue supporting one another in the current moment.

We also shared lunch with members of the **Uniting for a Shared Future** coalition—an initiative whose early seeds B8 of Hope helped plant in 2024 and which has since grown into a network of more than five hundred Israelis and Palestinians working toward shared political solutions.

By the end of the day, after so many conversations and reconnections, we were reminded once again how strong and committed this community of changemakers truly is.

Our final day on the ground brought us to the **Gaza Envelope**, guided by our friend **Avi Dabush**, who is both a member of **A Land for All** and an active leader within **Rabbis for Human Rights**. Avi himself was in **Kibbutz Nirim** on October 7th, 2023 and has only recently returned there with his family. Joining us were friends of Mehra's from the organization **Other Voice**.

For both Mehra and Elie, it was the first visit back since the devastating events of that terrible day. Over the course of the day we visited **Kibbutz Netiv HaAsara**, **Kibbutz Be'eri**, **Re'im**, **Sderot**, the **Nova Festival site**, and—heartbreakingly, saw **Gaza in the distance**.

Standing in those places was a painful reminder of the stakes of this work—and of the courage it takes for those who remain committed to dialogue even after experiencing such profound loss.

After returning to Geneva, Mehra shared a powerful personal reflection about this visit and the people and places that shaped it. You can read her full reflection [here](#).



RAPIDLY MOBILIZING EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

In recent months B8 of Hope has mobilized emergency funding to help partners respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

Shortly after the start of Ramadan, **Roots/Shorashim/Judur** distributed food baskets to more than 110 Palestinian families across the West Bank with support from B8 of Hope's emergency fund. We also supported **Combatants for Peace**, who are providing food assistance to additional families facing severe food insecurity.

In **Hebron**, B8 of Hope funded emergency support for **Green Land Society for Health Development**, enabling rehabilitation services to reach people with disabilities who can no longer access clinics due to movement restrictions and economic hardship.

Through our partner **Takadom**, B8 of Hope supported vulnerable families during Ramadan by providing fifty “Ramadan dignity boxes” with essential food and hygiene supplies, along with Eid clothing for children. The initiative focused on women-headed and war-affected households in **East Jerusalem and the West Bank**, helping families meet basic needs while preserving dignity during a difficult time.

In Israel's **Negev/Naqab region**, we supported an initiative led by **Standing Together** to install emergency mobile bomb shelters in Bedouin communities that currently lack protective infrastructure.

Beyond Israel and the West Bank, B8 of Hope continues to support partners responding to the humanitarian consequences of the war in **Gaza**. Through our partner **Zimam**, we are helping deliver life-saving emergency assistance—including food, shelter, hygiene kits, and psychosocial support—to some of the most vulnerable communities.

We have also begun supporting **Clean Shelter**, a grassroots initiative providing water, sanitation, and shelter support to displaced communities inside **Gaza**.

Across these efforts, local civil society organizations continue to step forward to serve their communities even under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

LOOKING AHEAD: OUR 2026 GRANTMAKING CYCLE

At the beginning of the year, B8 of Hope launched its annual call for applications, reaching out both to current grantees and to organizations we have been following closely across the peacebuilding ecosystem. By the time this newsletter reaches you, our grant selections for the coming year will have been finalized. We look forward to beginning the distribution of funds at the start of the second quarter.



STAYING CONNECTED

Between newsletters, we invite you to follow B8 of Hope on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) to stay connected with updates and stories from the field.

If you feel inspired by our work—or rather by the work of our grantees and the extraordinary peacebuilders leading it—please help us spread the word. Let's make their voices more visible and central in our conversations than the voices of polarization and violence.