

Case study 4: “Water can’t wait”: The achievements of EcoPeace

EcoPeace – a trilateral Israeli/Palestinian/Jordanian environmental NGO – led the Israeli government to show unprecedented flexibility in water diplomacy, by more than doubling Israel’s water supply to Palestinians in the territories (Edelstein, 2016). In recent years, EcoPeace has played a leading role in reshaping transboundary water policy, advancing wastewater treatment infrastructure in the West Bank, and focusing attention on the degradation of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. In 2013 EcoPeace convinced the Israeli government to release fresh water from the Sea of Galilee into the Jordan for the first time in 50 years (Lidman, 2015). More controversially, EcoPeace has campaigned for water to be resolved independently from final status negotiations, advocating for an increase in Israel’s allocation of water to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The latter, according to a 2016 UN report, may be “uninhabitable” by 2020 due to the lack of clean water, among other conditions (UNCTAD, 2015).

Israel will benefit materially and politically by advancing the economic capacity of its 1.8 million Arab citizens. Yet such pragmatism all too rarely prevails within the adversarial cast of Arab-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian relations. It was years of civil society work that built sufficient support for the win-win approach to succeed.



EcoPeace’s Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian directors and staff standing together in the Jordan River as part of their campaign to rehabilitate the river which is dwindling due to diversion of its source waters and pollution. Photograph used by permission of EcoPeace.

Israeli governments to date have adhered strictly to the water allocation regime fixed in the 1995 Oslo II agreements, which were construed at the time as temporary arrangements for a five-year interim period. In the post-Oslo era, dynamics on the Joint Water Committee, which is meant to set policy and resolve conflict, all too often deteriorated into a dysfunctional “blame game” (Brooks & Trottier, 2012). EcoPeace and the World Bank have extensively documented the inadequacy of the present system, which results in a plentiful supply to Israeli settlements in the territories while neighboring Palestinian towns face chronic water shortages in the arid summer months (Traiman, 2016). For years, Israeli governments have

refused to alter current allocation policy, arguing that water must be resolved alongside the other “final status” issues. EcoPeace, by contrast, has campaigned for years under the headline “water can’t wait” (Bromberg, 2014).

At long last, it appears that the dam has broken. In December 2016 Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz used the platform of EcoPeace’s annual conference in Jordan to declare that, “whether you’re Israeli or Palestinian, you should have the same access to the same amount of water. Palestinians should be able to buy as much water as they want [from Israel]” (EcoPeace, 2016). In policy terms, Israel is drawing on its substantially increased water reserves, enabled by advances in desalination technology, to double the quantity of water sold to the Palestinian Authority in both Gaza and the West Bank, in the context of a tripartite “water swap” agreement with Jordan – all policy changes long advocated by EcoPeace (Edelstein, 2016). In parallel, the Joint Water Committee resumed its meetings after a seven-year hiatus, allowing at least 97 stalled infrastructure projects in the West Bank to move forward (Rasgon, Lazaroff, & Udasin, 2017).

Israel will benefit materially and politically by advancing the economic capacity of its 1.8 million Arab citizens, and by selling its surplus water to Jordan and the Palestinians. Yet such pragmatism all too rarely prevails within the adversarial cast of Arab-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian relations. It was years of civil society work that built sufficient support for the win-win approach to succeed.

In this section we have seen that jointly led Arab-Jewish advocacy campaigns can generate the policy substance and the political will for new directions to be taken, the implementation of which will have profound impacts on the lives of Israel’s Palestinian Arab citizens and the Palestinians in the territories, and contribute to creating the conditions for peace.

Part 3. The history of peacebuilding

For nearly as long as there has been Arab-Jewish conflict over sovereign rights to the Holy Land, Arabs and Jews have established civic initiatives aimed at resolving it. A 2016 study lists 500 joint Arab-Jewish non-violent activities dating back to the twilight of the Ottoman era (Katz, 2016). Civil society peacebuilding organisations remained few and far between, however, until the eruption of the First Intifada, or Palestinian uprising against Israeli military rule in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, in December 1987. Eighty-nine per cent of the (at least) 164 currently active civil society peacebuilding initiatives were established in the decades following the First Intifada, with subsequent historic turning points sparking new waves of civic response, particularly the peace process of the early and mid-1990s, the Second Intifada that followed its collapse, and subsequent episodes of negotiation and escalation. Chart 6 details the evolution of the field according to historical era.

Chart 6. Origin of peacebuilding initiatives by historical turning points

Historical turning points	Active initiatives founded	Percentage of current field
Second Intifada and after (2001-)	98	59.8%
Oslo Process (1994-2000)	32	19.5%
First Intifada (1988-1993)	16	9.8%
Egypt-Israel peace, Lebanon War (1977-1987)	12	7.3%
Previous	6	3.7%
Total	164	100%

It is a common misconception that “peace organisations” disappeared due to the collapse of the Oslo process, the eruption of the Second Intifada, and more recent wars between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. It is beyond doubt that two decades of failed negotiations and violent escalations have damaged the electoral prospects of the Israeli Left, often referred to as the “peace camp.” However, as this section illustrates, periods of escalation in the conflict have often inspired the genesis of new waves of peacebuilding initiatives in response.

3.1 Beginnings

From Israel’s founding until the late 1970s, there existed no civil society peacebuilding sector, “peace movement” or “peace camp” to speak of. Two organisations espoused early versions of a cross-cultural ethos and hosted nascent forms of Arab-Jewish encounter: the Jerusalem international YMCA, founded in mandatory Palestine in 1933, and the Jewish-Arab Centre for Peace at the Givat Haviva campus in the Galilee, founded in 1963. Each remains a hub of joint activity in 2017.

Most politically conscious joint activity (excluding patronage-based politics or intelligence gathering), was confined to Israel’s radical Left. The Communist Party, in particular, advocated consistently for the rights of Arab citizens living

under military rule from 1948-66, and, post-1967, of the Palestinians living under Israeli rule. Following the Six-Day War, activists from the Marxist *Matzpen* movement built ties with ideological counterparts in Palestinian society. Publicist Uri Avnery's broadsheet *Ha-Olam Ha-Zeh* spoke to a small Zionist far Left. Avnery advocated establishing a "Semitic Confederation" with the Palestinians in the 1950s, supported a Palestinian state as a member of Knesset beginning in 1969, and engaged in clandestine talks with PLO representatives in the early 1970s (Bar-On, 1996).

The advent of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO inspired a surge of cross-conflict civil society activity, including a second wave of youth encounter programmes, promoting dialogue between Israelis, Palestinians in the territories, and in some cases the wider Arab World.

3.2 Begin, Sadat and the emergence of the Peace Camp

Such activities remained the province of an ideological fringe, however, until the political earthquakes of 1977 – the Israeli Right's first electoral victory, and the first visit of an Arab head of state to Israel. In May of that year, Menachem Begin led Israel's Likud to its first electoral victory, ending six decades of Labour Zionist hegemony dating to the institutions of the pre-State *yishuv*. In Hebrew, Begin's victory is referred to as the "*mahapach*" – literally, turning the country upside down. Six months later, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat turned the conflict on its head, stunning Israelis and the world by traveling to Israel and declaring at the Knesset in Jerusalem, "No More War! No More Bloodshed!" This unprecedented state visit broke with three decades of unified Arab refusal to recognise Israel, and inaugurated the first Arab-Israeli peace process.

The sudden juxtaposition of an unprecedented opportunity for peace with the largest Arab state, contrasted with the ascendance of Israel's Right wing and expansion of Jewish settlement, inspired the genesis of the country's first peace-oriented social movement organisation, Peace Now. Beginning in 1978 with a letter of protest from hundreds of IDF reserve officers to the Prime Minister, the movement campaigned successfully to encourage withdrawal from the occupied Sinai Peninsula in order reach peace with Egypt, while opposing, with less success, the expansion of settlements in the Palestinian territories.

Israel's controversial 1982 invasion of Lebanon further galvanised Peace Now, and inspired the formation of radical Left initiatives such as Challenge and Yesh Gvul (there is a border), advocating conscientious objection to serving in occupied territories. This period saw Peace Now lead the largest demonstration in the country's history at the time – an estimated 400,000 Israelis protested in Tel Aviv after revelations that the IDF stood by as allied Lebanese militias massacred Palestinian civilians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1983. The groundswell on the Left mirrored the rise of violent extremism on the Right, directed first at Palestinians and then at Leftist Jews. In 1984, Peace Now activist Emil Grunzweig was murdered by a grenade hurled by right wing activist Yona Avrushmi into a protest march – a harbinger of the hatred that led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, and continues in the form of "Price Tag" attacks on Palestinians and peace and human rights activists and organisations today (Lebovitz-Dar, 2011).¹⁵

15. In 1986, the Adam Institute for Democracy was founded in Grunzweig's memory, beginning decades of anti-racism and dialogue work that continues today.

3.3 Arab-Jewish dialogue: the emergence of coexistence projects

The Arab-Jewish dialogue field emerged in the mid-1980s as part of a civic response to the rise of the openly racist Kach party, which earned two seats in the 1984 Knesset election before being declared illegal on grounds of racism by Israel's High Court. Seeking to counter anti-Arab prejudice documented in surveys of Jewish youth, Israeli progressives established a series of "coexistence" programmes designed to bring together Jewish and Arab students for facilitated conversations aimed at humanising perceptions of the other and building cross-cultural awareness – with initial support from the Israeli Ministry of Education (Abu-Nimer, 1999).

Givat Haviva's campus became a centre of dialogue meetings, as did the country's first Arab-Jewish intentional community, the village of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salaam, established in the early 1980s on a hill overlooking the Latrun plain between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. This founding generation of dialogues brought to the surface the inherent challenges of asymmetrical power relations and differing motivations between Arab and Jewish participants, voiced in seminal critiques that drove the development of critical methodologies and maturation of the field in subsequent decades (Maoz, 2011).

3.4 Watershed: Intifada, human rights and action on track two

In December 1987, the First Intifada – a popular uprising of Palestinians against Israeli military rule – dramatically altered the dynamics of the conflict, shifting the front lines of confrontation and the vanguard of Palestinian politics to the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian civil society in the territories organised underground educational, economic and social institutions to support the sustained political struggle marked by strikes, civil disobedience and daily stone-throwing confrontations with IDF soldiers that became the icon of the Palestinian national movement (King, 2007). The uprising was the crucible of a Palestinian civil society operating independently of Israel and leading, rather than following, the exiled leadership of the PLO. In turn, this generated profound shifts in Israeli and regional politics. In July 1988, King Hussein of Jordan relinquished all claims to the West Bank, canceling the "Jordanian Option" that had been the preferred peace strategy of the mainstream Israeli Left. In November, the PLO issued a "declaration of independence" that implicitly recognised the pre-1967 borders, shifting their strategic goal from replacing Israel to establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

The impacts on Israeli civil society were no less profound. Influential, mainstream figures from the Labour and Likud parties became engaged in intensive "Track Two" dialogues with PLO figures. Previously the province of radical Left intellectuals, these became a mainstay of mainstream diplomacy, providing back channels for negotiation and generation of policy options, and playing key roles in the breakthroughs and breakdowns of the 1990s. Track Two forums, such as the Economic Cooperation Foundation and the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) among others, have remained a crucial "touchpoint" of Israeli-Palestinian interface up to today (Hirschfeld, 2014).

In the public eye, harsh IDF responses to the Intifada, and its highly asymmetric casualty toll, sparked increasing discontent in Israeli society. Prominent human rights NGOs – B'tselem and Rabbis for Human Rights among others – were established in the late 1980s to expose and, ideally, deter abuse of Palestinian civilians. Peace Now and other Israeli Left groups took up the call for two states

for two peoples, building ties with like-minded Palestinian leaders such as Faisal Husseini and Sari Nusseibeh, Orient House in East Jerusalem and the Rapprochement Center in the West Bank town of Beit Sahour became meeting points for Israeli and Palestinian activists.

3.5 The Oslo era: “peace process” and “people-to-people”

In the early 1990s, the Intifada faded from global headlines as the Iron Curtain fell, the Soviet Union collapsed and the US cemented its power-broker status in the Middle East with a decisive victory in the first Gulf War. The realignment of the international system enabled historic breakthroughs in the Arab-Israeli peace process, as in other conflict regions: the 1991 Madrid conference initiating the first official Israeli-Syrian, Israeli-Jordanian and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations since 1949, and the 1992 election of Yitzhak Rabin’s Labour government in Israel, which signed the “Oslo” interim agreements with the PLO in 1993-95, and the Jordan-Israel peace treaty of 1994.

Tectonic shifts in global politics set the stage for historic changes in the Middle East – yet civil society developments of the previous years fueled the capacity and motivation in both societies to take advantage of the moment. The track two efforts of the previous decade provided negotiators with concepts, experience and basic familiarity with positions of the other side; the uprising, with its popular and largely unarmed nature, made ending the occupation an urgent objective for large constituencies in both societies.

The advent of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO inspired a surge of cross-conflict civil society activity, including the foundation of a second wave of youth encounter programmes, now promoting dialogue between Israelis, Palestinians in the territories, and in some cases the wider Arab World.

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The Seeds of Peace programme came to symbolise a popular new model of internationally-based Israeli-Palestinian encounters, after its initial cohort of Arab and Israeli teen-aged participants were photographed with Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Bill Clinton at the 1993 White House signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. An innovative fusion of environmental advocacy

fused with peacebuilding developed through the work of a pair of NGOs – EcoPeace Middle East, and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies – work that has grown steadily through the tumultuous times that have followed. The 1995 “Oslo II” agreements established an official “people to people” programme, directed by the Norwegian government, aimed at generating grassroots support for the official peace process. The proliferation of civil society work was paralleled by a number of bilateral governmental initiatives at multiple levels, as well as “twinning” and

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partnerships between schools and other institutions outside the peacebuilding field (Endresen, 2001) – although such cooperation declined after the election of Binyamin Netanyahu in 1996 (Hai & Herzog, 2005).

The Oslo era transformed a handful of activists and initiatives into an Israeli/Palestinian civil society peacebuilding field. It is important to note, at the same time, that many 1990s initiatives were inspired not by “euphoria” over Oslo, but by recognition of its fragility amid the virulent opposition that ensued.

Bereaved Israeli parents founded the Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF) seeking to support the peace process and send a message of nonviolence and reconciliation after their children were killed in Hamas attacks; the group soon evolved into a joint Israeli-Palestinian movement involving hundreds of bereaved families on both sides (Barnea, 2014). New human rights and feminist peace initiatives coalesced as the peace process stagnated during Netanyahu’s first premiership.

The Oslo era is sometimes imagined, in nostalgic excess, as a golden age of funding and momentum, yet actual international funding was too little and too late. Two years of negotiations passed before civil society received official mention in an annex of the 1995 Oslo II Agreements; Yitzhak Rabin had been assassinated and Netanyahu elected before the official “people-to-people” programme ever began its work (Endresen, 2001). The EU’s parallel “people-to-people” fund was established in 1998, the same year that the US government added a small grant programme for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding to the Wye River interim agreement between Netanyahu and Arafat. Even this minor allocation fell hostage to partisan divisions in Washington and funded its first project only in 2001 – months after the Oslo process had collapsed. “Euphoria” no doubt inspired a spontaneous infusion of private funding for peace initiatives in Oslo’s early years, but systematic international support paled in comparison to the International Fund for Ireland, which began its more comprehensive work twelve years before the Good Friday Agreement was signed (International Fund for Ireland, 2009).¹⁶

3.6 Crisis and perseverance: the Second Intifada and the era of separation

In 2000, the failure of final status negotiations led to the eruption of a second and starkly different Palestinian uprising, marked by the suicide attacks of Hamas and Fatah militias rather than mass demonstrations and civil resistance. It proved to be the most lethal period of Israeli-Palestinian violence since the 1948 War; five years of Palestinian attacks and Israeli military assaults led to approximately 1,000 Israeli and 3,200 Palestinian fatalities (BBC News, 2005), culminating in the Israeli government’s construction of the “Separation Barrier,” a sprawling maze of fortifications separating Palestinian population centres in the West Bank from Israel and Israeli settlements (UN/OCHA, 2007). These drastic developments dealt severe setbacks to advocates of peace – harming the electoral prospects of Israel’s political “peace camp,” undermining trust in the other and the possibility of peace among both populations, and causing a crisis for the fledgling peacebuilding field (Bar Siman Tov, 2007). According to one

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16. The IFI was, additionally, only one of multiple sources of sustained funding in the Northern Ireland context, including the EU Peacebuilding Fund in Northern Ireland, the Atlantic Council, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, the Community Relations Council among others. The EU Fund alone has invested approximately 2 billion Euros in Northern Ireland since 1995 – more than twenty times the EU investment in Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding – on a population of 1.8 million people, which is less than 15 per cent of the aggregate population of approximately 13 million Israelis and Palestinians (Hamber, 2017).

estimate, roughly half of the “cross-border” peacebuilding projects active in 2000 ceased in the first year of the Second Intifada – particularly governmental or municipal-based partnerships, and others dependent on any degree of official goodwill (Hai & Herzog, 2005).

Among peacebuilding NGOs, by contrast, a core group persevered, adapting programming to the chaotic Intifada environment and revising strategies for the harsh post-Oslo political realities (Gawerc, 2012); at least 66 pre-Intifada organisations remain active today. Moreover, a new wave of joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives arose in response to the changing context. Grassroots initiatives such as Ta’ayush and Machsom Watch combined aspects of nonviolent direct action, human rights monitoring and humanitarian relief in opposing the entrenchment of occupation, proliferation of checkpoints and construction of the Separation Barrier in the West Bank – the latter generating a radicalised activist milieu often critical of people-to-people activities (Hallward, 2009).

Today’s field is led by “learning organisations” that have become multi-dimensional and methodologically sophisticated as their operating context has grown ever more challenging.

A series of innovative “Track Two” projects brought together Palestinian and Israeli policy figures to negotiate solutions to the core final status issues, and engaged in lobbying and popular advocacy campaigns to pressure governments that would not negotiate and to inform those that did. In the most prominent instance, the Geneva Initiative was widely credited with effectively pressuring Ariel Sharon to embark on his 2005 withdrawal of Israeli settlements from Gaza and the northern West Bank, and advocacy of further West Bank withdrawals – exerting political impact, albeit not without unintended consequences (Hirschfeld, 2014).

International donors – particularly USAID’s Department of Conflict Management and Mitigation and the EU Partnership for Peace (now the Peacebuilding Fund), incentivised the integration of peacebuilding content into projects aimed at enhancing societal capacity and social-structural change, in environmental protection, economic development, health, medicine, technology and other areas of interdependence and mutual interest (CMM Field Study, 2014). Additionally, these funds and the UNDP encouraged “internal” dialogue within the fragmented Israeli and Palestinian societies, and projects aimed at engaging ethnic, religious or politically conservative communities that have classically been alienated or excluded from both the official peace process and civil society peacebuilding (Lazarus, 2016).

3.7 The contemporary peacebuilding community

Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding did not disappear after the Second Intifada; the field has continued to evolve. Moreover, today’s civil society peacebuilding field is not primarily a product of the Oslo era; new initiatives originated as civic responses to breakdowns in the peace process as well as breakthroughs, and of course, there have been more of the former than the latter. The contemporary peacebuilding community is comprised of a determined, experienced – if perpetually embattled – cadre of civil society activists and NGOs who have persevered through the vicissitudes of the conflict (Kahanoff, Salem, Nasrallah, & Neumann, 2007). Organisations operate independently in parallel, with

increasing degrees of collaboration developing in recent years through cross-sectoral forums like the Peace NGOs Forum and the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP). Programmes continue to operate both “cross-border” and, increasingly, internally within Israeli or Palestinian society.

Today’s field is led by “learning organisations” that have become multi-dimensional and methodologically sophisticated as their operating context has grown ever more challenging. Their work reflects John Paul Lederach’s paradigm of conflict transformation – efforts to build cross-conflict touchpoints and networks and strengthen internal societal “capacities for peace,” within an assumed context of ongoing conflict. Lederach’s ideal CSO for intractable environments is a “transformative platform”:

A context-based, permanent and dynamic platform capable of nonviolently generating solutions to ongoing episodes of conflict ... an ongoing social and relational space, in other words, people in relationship who generate responsive initiatives for constructive change... A platform is responsive to day-to-day issues that arise in the ebb and flow of conflict while it sustains a clear vision of the longer-term change needed in the destructive relational patterns. The creation of such a platform is one of the fundamental building blocks for supporting constructive social change over time (Lederach, 2005, p. 47).

The Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding CSOs that have innovated and persevered through volatile conditions embody this ideal of resilience, versatility, contextually grounded responsiveness and long-term vision.

3.8 Professionalisation: the emergence of an evaluation culture

In the last decade, international donors, particularly the EU, US Institute of Peace, and USAID, have contributed to professionalisation in the field by providing modest levels of sustained funding, and especially setting standards and offering guidance in project design and evaluation (EU Peacebuilding Fund Report, 2015). At the turn of the century, practitioners commonly described evaluation as a major challenge, and experts commonly reported a severe capacity deficit in the field (d’Estree, 2001). Today’s leading organisations, by contrast, are often skilled in articulating theories of change, establishing indicators and speaking the language of impact assessment. The next section will survey the evaluative research that has been conducted on the outcomes of Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding.

Part 4. Evaluating peacebuilding: the research record

This section examines *the empirical record of Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding*, gleaned from academic literature and programme evaluations, highlighting models and strategies that appear worthy of sustained support.

4.1 Peacebuilding and the age of evaluation

There was a time when the consensus was that “people to people” projects had not been rigorously evaluated; early reports argued over whether measuring outcomes in such a field was even possible (Spurk, 2008). After the collapse of the peace process, however, evaluation became a requirement. No longer clearly on the right side of history, it was incumbent on peacebuilding proponents to empirically demonstrate

Meta-studies of the Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding field

Adwan, S. & Bar-On, D. 2001. *The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Peace Building Between Palestinians and Israelis*. Jerusalem: Prepared for the World Bank by PRIME: Peace Research Institute in the Middle East.

Endresen, L.C. 2001. *Contact and cooperation: The Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people program*. Oslo: FAFO.

Baskin, G., Dajani, M., Schwartz, R. & Perlman, L. 2002. *Yes, PM: Years of experience in strategies for peace making: Looking at Israeli-Palestinian people to people activities, 1993-2000*. Jerusalem: Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI).

Hai, A. & Herzog, S. 2005. *The Power of Possibility: The Role of People-to-People Programs in the Current Israeli-Palestinian Reality*. Herzliya: Prepared for Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung by the Economic Cooperation Foundation.

Kahanoff, M., Salem, W., Nasrallah, R., & Neumann, Y. 2007. *The Evaluation of Cooperation Between Palestinian and Israeli NGOs: An Assessment*. Jerusalem: Prepared for UNESCO by the International Peace and Cooperation Center and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies.

Jean, I. & Mendelsohn, E. 2008. *Cumulative Impact Case Study: Much Process but No Peace, Israel-Palestine (1993-2008)*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

Lazarus, N., Kadayifci-Orellana, A., Kahanoff, M. & Haloun, F. 2014. *Evaluative Learning Review Field Study: USAID West Bank/Gaza People to People Reconciliation Annual Program Statement Grants*. Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development/Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.

Lazarus, N. 2015. *Intractable Peacebuilding: Case Studies of Innovation and Perseverance from the Israeli-Palestinian Context*. Arlington, VA: School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

Dammers, C., Atamneh, J., Lazarus, N. & Said, N. 2015. *Evaluation of the Partnership for Peace Programme and inputs for the design of a new civil society programme in support of the peace process*. Jerusalem: Prepared by AETS Consortium for the EU Representative Office to the West Bank, Gaza and UNRWA and the EU Delegation to the State of Israel.

Carstarphen, N. and Shapiro, I. Forthcoming 2017. *Special Report: USIP Dialogue Grant Projects and Transfer*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

value (Neufeldt, 2011). In 2017, we are more than a decade into the age of evaluation and outcomes are no longer shrouded in mystery. The local field has a steadily growing “paper trail” of evaluation reports, meta-evaluations (i.e. evaluations of evaluations) and scholarly studies, drawing on a variety of methodologies including experimental design, longitudinal studies and qualitative research.

At the level of individual projects, the leading grant programmes in the field – EU, USAID and USIP – all maintain rigorous monitoring and evaluation standards, requiring regular, in some cases quarterly, reporting on both finances and indicators/results, as well as detailed summative reports and often external evaluation. The leading organisations have developed their own internal evaluative capacities in concert with the requirements of their funders – who have, in turn, invested resources in training grantees towards that end.

Together, the EU, USIP and USAID programmes have funded more than 300 projects to date. Even allowing for the uneven quality of reporting by implementers, many intervention outcomes have now been documented. Moreover, each of these funders have commissioned meta-studies of their overall grant programmes, which have included study of many dozens of projects by external evaluation teams through extensive document review, field visits, interviews and focus groups with implementers and participants. These reports join a list of at least ten large-scale evaluative meta-studies of Israeli-Palestinian civil society peacebuilding since 2000 with two others in progress.

These reports draw, in turn, upon a wealth of academic literature. From the early years of Arab-Jewish coexistence programmes (Weiner, 1998) and clandestine Israeli-Palestinian “Problem-Solving Workshops” held at universities abroad (Kelman & Cohen, 1976), joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives have attracted considerable scholarly attention, with the lion’s share of scholarship being oriented towards impact assessment of one form or another. Certain programmes, such as Seeds of Peace and the Hand-in-Hand school network, have inspired multiple doctoral dissertations and peer-reviewed articles. Indeed, seminal debates on the psychology and methodology of intergroup contact are disproportionately, sometimes almost entirely, grounded in dozens of studies of Israeli-Palestinian encounters.

Evaluative research is not an exact science, of course; each study provides a list of caveats and limitations. There is a disproportionate focus on dialogue-based interventions, as the oldest and most common methodology in the field, despite the methodological diversification of recent years. While much work remains to be done, the breadth and depth of existing research is substantial for a field that has only existed in earnest for 25 tumultuous years. It is doubtful that similar scrutiny has been applied to civil society peacebuilding in any comparable conflict context, including the Northern Ireland precedent.

4.2 Will seeds of peace ever bloom? Evaluating the impact of a generation of Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding projects

The following section examines what a generation of evaluative research tells us about the impact of peacebuilding projects on the participants’ attitudes and long-term engagement in peacebuilding.

A generation has passed since the early 1990s; youth who were born in a more hopeful era came of age during the unprecedentedly violent Second Intifada, and established their own careers and families in the shadow of stalemated negotiations, ongoing settlement expansion and recurrent wars between the IDF, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Participants in dialogue, whether adolescents or adults, have

long since faced the classic problem of “re-entry” from the safe space of a facilitated intergroup encounter to the stubborn realities of intractable conflict – a dissonance I have called the “Peacebuilder’s Paradox” (Abu-Nimer & Lazarus, 2008). So, as they have grown and the conflict has persisted, what has become of the children whose smiling faces adorn countless programme brochures?

Since the onset of the Second Intifada, a host of skeptics have questioned whether participation in peacebuilding projects has any impact at all (Bar-Zohar, 2012). *Haaretz* columnist Matthew Kalman’s 2014 column, “Will Seeds of Peace Ever Bloom?” asserts that “I am hard-pressed to find a single prominent leader ... among the graduates of the people-to-people projects, despite the fact that they are now in their twenties and thirties” (Kalman, 2014). The question was timely, following 50 days of fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas militants in Gaza that claimed the lives of more than 2000 Palestinians and 70 Israelis. Moreover, Kalman correctly highlights the theory-of-change implicit in most dialogue or education-based interventions – the aspiration that encounters will enhance the motivation and capacity of participants to become “agents of change” – advocates of peace, or a more humanised image of the other – in their communities.

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ALLMEP Regional
Director

At the same time, Kalman failed to see the evidence of impact all around him. To identify former dialogue participants turned peace activists, Kalman needed to look no farther than his own newspaper’s July 2014 “Conference on Peace,” which six adult graduates of Seeds of Peace (SOP) attended – three of them leading SOP’s programmes in Israel; the others working as directors of MEET (Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow), Peace Now’s Settlement Watch, and the Peace NGO Forum, respectively. In interviews, all these leaders have identified their teenage experiences in SOP as the inspiration for their adult activism.

Lior Finkel-Perl, then director of the Peace NGOs Forum and today Executive Director of “Civic Leadership,” the umbrella organisation of Israeli civil society, asserted in a 2015 speech that “my 1996 Seeds of Peace experience was ... the first time my life path became clear; I realised what is meaningful to me, what I want to achieve and what I am going to fight for... in hindsight, this is the moment that started it all” (Lazarus & Ross, 2015). Finkel-Perl’s testimony to the enduring impact of a youthful encounter experience is remarkable, coming two decades and five wars after the fact – yet it is echoed in the life story narratives articulated by dozens of peacebuilding activists I have interviewed for current and previous research.¹⁷

Huda Abu Arqoub, ALLMEP Regional Director and aforementioned leader of a contingent of 1000 Palestinian women at the October 2016 March of Hope, similarly recalls her first encounter experience as a turning point in her life. She began her path to peacebuilding in 2002, at a University of the Middle East (UMIDEAST) teacher training programme which included participants from Israel and Arab countries. Previous to the UMIDEAST programme, Abu Arqoub met Israelis solely as settlers and soldiers; the clashes and curfews of the

17. I refer here to interviews with several hundred peacebuilding activists and participants conducted throughout a decade of research – see Works Cited for sources.

First Intifada were her formative experiences of the conflict. She was surprised, therefore, by her first meeting with Israeli teachers:

One of the weird things was that I clicked instantly with the Israeli teachers. And the (non-Palestinian) Arabs in the programme were mad at us – they wanted to be for the Palestinians, with the Palestinians, and yet we were working with the Israelis and doing projects together. So I realised that one of the things that I need to work on is that the other is not a monster, and is not necessarily going after me, and I can build relationships with them that will change their lives and change my life at the same time.”

Abu Arqoub joined the UMIDEAST programme not in the halcyon days of the peace process, but in 2002, during the most violent year of the Second Intifada, when more than 1,000 Palestinians and 400 Israelis lost their lives in conflict-related violence (UN/OCHA, 2007). She describes her “re-entry” experience after her summer at UMIDEAST:

Then we were hit by a wave of violence, assassinations, suicide bombings, and every time I would run to the phone, checking on the internet after these teachers from Israel, making sure they were not on the bus, them or their children. And they were doing the same [for us]. And every time I saw the names of [Palestinian] martyrs or of Israelis killed, on the television, I felt the pain ... I didn't want to see their names.

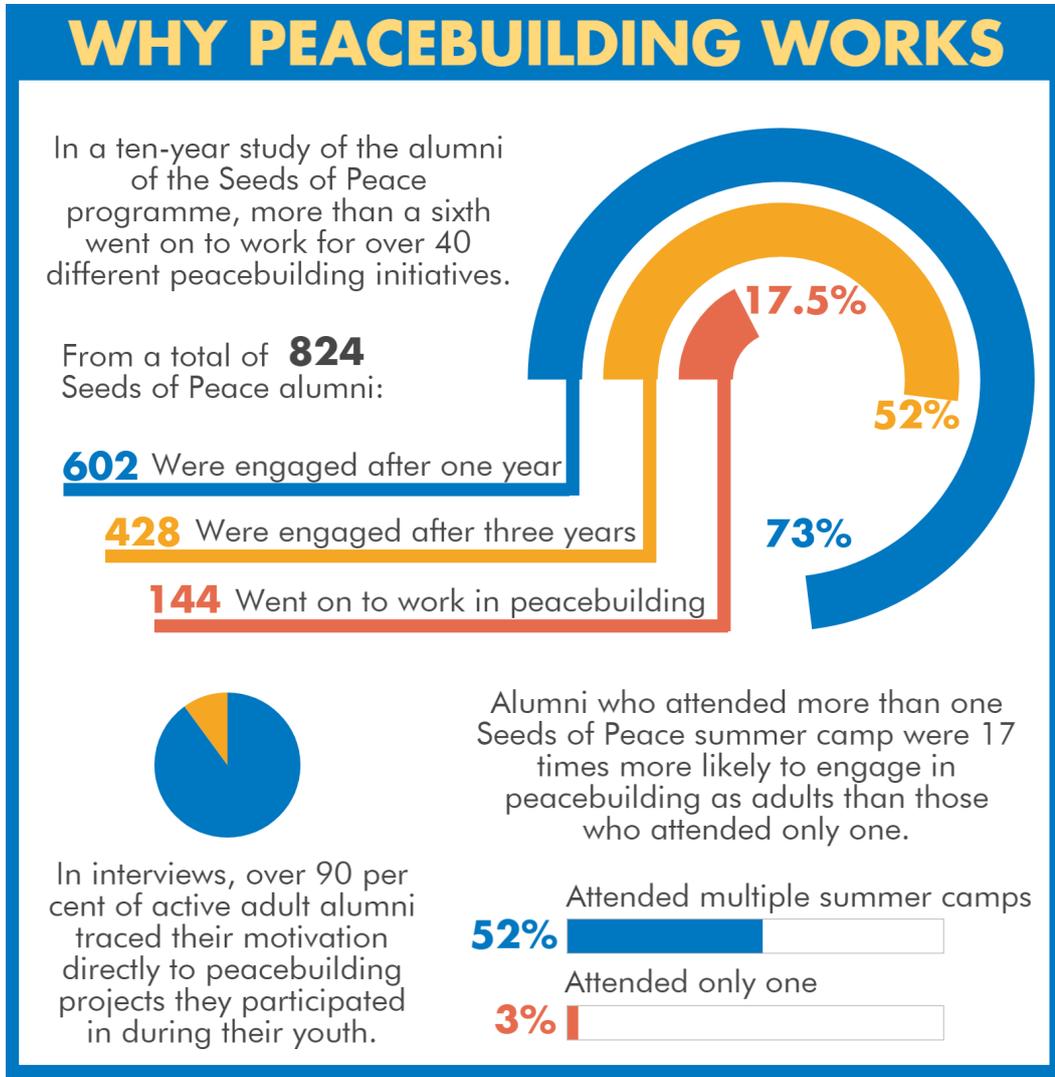
Yet rather than “revert” to previous attitudes or inaction, Abu Arqoub redoubled her efforts: She completed an MA in Conflict Transformation at Eastern Mennonite University and worked with Abraham's Vision, IPCRI, and other peacebuilding CSOs before joining ALLMEP in 2014 (Abu Arqoub, 2016). Her Israeli colleague is Eldad Levy, a graduate of Seeds of Peace who went on to lead SOP's regional programme staff and facilitate dialogue for multiple initiatives, before joining Huda at ALLMEP.

The list of alumni of youth encounters, now long-term activists, includes Gershon Baskin, founder of the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) in 1988, now better known for his role mediating Israel's 2011 prisoner exchange with Hamas, as well as Rabbi Arik Ascherman, a longtime leader of civil disobedience and humanitarian efforts in the territories with Rabbis for Human Rights. Both began their lengthy careers before the First Intifada with Interns for Peace, a CSO founded in 1983 that brought young Jews to live, learn and engage in community service/organising in Arab towns in Israel. Interns for Peace also inspired Sarah Kreimer, founder and former director of the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development, which brought millions of dollars of investment to joint economic enterprises during two decades of shared society work in Israel.

Farhat Agbaria, early participant and co-director of Interns for Peace, subsequently dedicated his life's work to facilitating dialogue and training facilitators for Seeds of Peace and Givat Haviva. Another lifetime activist, Mohammad Darawshe, began his career at Givat Haviva in the 1980s – and today is director of Shared Society programmes there, after years of innovative

Studies identify many graduates of dialogue programmes who have engaged in long-term peacebuilding and social change activity as adults – bucking the dominant trend.

leadership at The Abraham Fund Initiatives. Beyond the dialogue field, one might note Michael Sfar, the director of the Yesh Din legal aid organisation for Palestinians in the territories, who was inspired by dialogue experiences at Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salaam (NSWAS) to dedicate his legal career to human rights advocacy (Eglash, 2017).



The list of prominent P2P alumni also includes three of Israel’s leading opposition parliamentarians. Stav Shaffir of the Zionist Union, the youngest member of Knesset – renowned for her role in the 2011 social protest movement – is a graduate of the Olive Tree Israeli-Palestinian scholarship programme at City University London (Shaffir, 2014). Zionist Union faction leader MK Hilik Bar, founder of the Knesset’s two-state solution caucus, was a co-founder of the Young Israeli Forum for Cooperation (YIFC), an NGO which engaged university students from around the Middle East in dialogue – including fellow Zionist Union MK Ksenia Svetlova, herself a ubiquitous presence at peace advocacy forums in recent years (Bar, 2014). Bar co-founded the YIFC with Ofer Zalberg and Nimrod Goren, both prominent peace researchers today, with the International Crisis Group and the Mitvim foreign policy think tank, respectively (Goren, 2014). Both the YIFC and the Olive Tree programme closed recently after a decade of work – yet their impact lives on in the work of these graduates-turned-leaders and activists.

4.3 The evidence base: measuring the impact of peacebuilding programmes on attitudes



Adult Seeds of Peace alumni demonstrate at Israel's Ministry of Justice against closure of investigations of October 2000 police killings of 13 Arab protestors, including SOP graduate Aseel 'Asleh (Abu Baker & Rabinowitz, 2005). (Photo: ActiveStills)

The encounter-alumni turned activists listed above are not isolated examples; multiple studies identify many graduates of dialogue programmes who have engaged in long-term peacebuilding and social change activity as adults – bucking the dominant trend of hawkish political opinion among their generational cohort. *In surveys, 18-29 year-old Israelis and Palestinians are frequently found to be the demographic least supportive of peace. Encounter graduates are often, though not always, exceptions to the rule* (Braunold & Saltan, 2016).

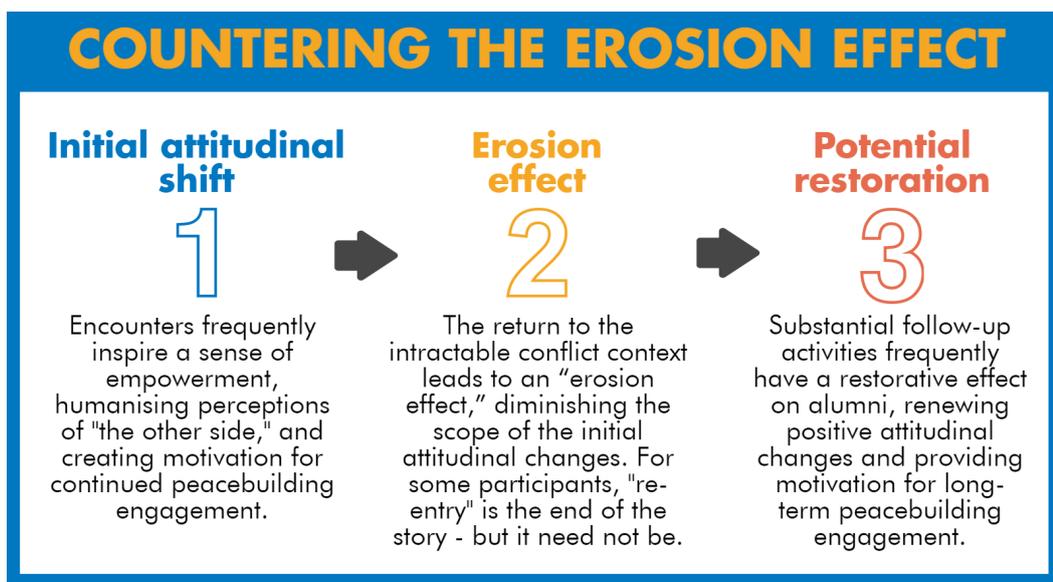
The body of longitudinal research on the impact of youth intergroup encounter and peace education programmes presents a three-stage pattern of attitudinal shift over time.

- **Initial attitudinal shift.** First, effectively facilitated encounters frequently lead to significant initial attitudinal shifts among a majority of participants, inspiring a sense of empowerment, humanising perceptions of “the other side,” and creating motivation for continued peacebuilding engagement.
- **Erosion effect.** After the conclusion of the initial encounter programme, the return to the intractable conflict context leads to a “re-entry problem” or “erosion effect,” diminishing the scope of the initial attitudinal changes. For some participants, “re-entry” is the end of the story – but it need not be.

- **Potential restoration.** Crucially, substantial follow-up activities frequently provide what Salomon called a “restoration effect” for alumni, renewing positive attitudinal changes and providing motivation for long-term peacebuilding engagement (Salomon, 2010). Numerous encounter organisations have evolved programmatically from just an initial round of dialogue meetings into multi-year, long-term programmes that include thematic seminars, community action projects, engagement of participants’ friends and families, joint public speaking tours, facilitation and mediation training, and activism in response to political developments (see “impact factors” section below for more detail) (Thomas, 2017).

This pattern is clearly reflected in the largest longitudinal study of a dialogue-based encounter programme, the present author’s doctoral dissertation. The study tracks the first 10 years of Israeli and Palestinian Seeds of Peace (SOP) participants from adolescence through young adulthood, tracing percentages of 824 total alumni engaged in post-encounter peacebuilding activity, over spans of 8-15 years. Clear patterns emerged in the data – majorities of alumni engaged in peacebuilding declined to a smaller minority over the years, but a significant core group remained consistently active or returned to activity as adults.

The initial encounter experience sparked great enthusiasm, with 73 per cent of graduates engaged in SOP and other peacebuilding forums their first year post-encounter, and 44 per cent highly active. 52 per cent of alumni remained engaged through the remainder of high school, approximately 3 years post-encounter, with 29 per cent highly active. Engagement dropped to 42 per cent and high activity to 15 per cent between ages 18-21, with the enlistment of Israeli alumni for compulsory IDF service cited as the primary discouraging factor by both Israeli and Palestinian graduates. After age 21, however, *at least 144 graduates went on to work for more than 40 different peacebuilding initiatives*, and to study conflict resolution at multiple academic and professional programmes: 17.5 per cent of all Israeli and Palestinian SOP alumni from the programme’s first decade of operation (1993-2002) (Lazarus, 2011).



Many of these alumni remained active in peacebuilding more than ten years after their initial encounter experiences as teenagers. Note that this figure only includes alumni *explicitly working in joint peacebuilding initiatives* – it does not include many other alumni who have gone on to engage in social change activism of other kinds.

Chart 7. Activity of Seeds of Peace alumni over time (initial participation years 1993-2002)

Palestinian citizens of Israel (87)	First-Year	During high school	Post-high school (64) ¹⁸	Adult ¹⁹
Active	36%	27%	15%	16.2%
In-touch	32%	20%	21%	n/a
Out-of-Touch	32%	53%	64%	n/a

Israelis (425)	First-Year	During high school	Post-high school (367)	Adult
Active	50%	34%	11%	16.7%
In-touch	25%	24%	27%	n/a
Out-of-Touch	25%	42%	62%	n/a

Palestinians (312)	First-Year	During high school	Post-high school (282)	Adult
Active	46%	25%	20%	18.9%
In-touch	24%	24%	29%	n/a
Out-of-Touch	30%	51%	51%	n/a

All Alumni (824)	First-Year	During high school	Post-high school (713)	Adult
Active	44%	29%	15%	17.5%
In-touch	27%	23%	27%	n/a
Out-of-Touch	29%	49%	58%	n/a

18. The number in the Post-HS column represents total graduates ages 18-21 at the time of coding (2003-04).

19. For adult graduates (ages 21-30), data was available only for highly active graduates, not “in-touch”.

Moreover, in interviews, more than 90 per cent of active adult alumni traced their motivation directly to youthful encounter experiences. Palestinian graduate Mahmoud Jabari, active in local and international peacebuilding forums in his hometown of Hebron, described SOP as “the beginning of peace activism”; dozens of his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts emphatically echoed these sentiments in interviews (Lazarus, 2015, A).

Karen Ross has conducted parallel studies on two smaller youth encounter programmes involving Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel: Peace Child Israel, which operated from 1988-2012, and Sadaka-Reut, currently in its 33rd year of operations. Half of Ross’s 74 adult alumni interviewees were engaged in peacebuilding or social change activism; her interviewees commonly described youthful encounter experiences as enhancing senses of empowerment and self-efficacy, critical thinking in regards to dominant conflict narratives, and increased motivation and capacity for civil society engagement aimed at social change (Lazarus & Ross, 2015).

Such ideal outcomes – alumni going on to long-term peacebuilding and/or social change engagement – were far from universal in both studies, but at the same time significantly more prevalent than witnessed among the general Israeli population.

Several smaller studies echo these findings, albeit with varying conclusions. In a study of 46 teen-aged Hands of Peace and SOP graduates, Hammack emphasises the erosion of attitudinal changes – a reversion to the master narrative, as he puts it – among most of his subjects as they approach age 18 (Hammack, 2006). This finding echoes the decline in engagement previously noted among SOP graduates aged 18-21, ascribed primarily to Israeli graduates' compulsory IDF enlistment. Hammack's tracking stops, however, at age 18, failing to capture any subsequent evolution of graduates' perspectives. Maddy-Weitzman, by contrast, describes sustained peacebuilding engagement of several cohorts of SOP graduates through the trials of the Second Intifada (Maddy-Weitzman, 2004). In a more recent project – the most comprehensive experimental design study of a dialogue programme to date – Risen & Schroeder find consistent positive attitudinal shifts among three full cohorts of Israeli and Palestinian SOP participants in comparison to control groups (Schroeder & Risen, 2014).

4.4 Impact factors which encouraging long-term engagement in peacebuilding

These longitudinal studies have identified a number of factors that encourage greater levels of long-term engagement in peace and social change activism among encounter alumni.

Impact factor: sustained follow-up activity

The SOP study emphasises the importance of a *sustained programme of follow-up activity*, as opposed to a “one-shot” or short-term encounter. Alumni who engaged in follow-up encounters in the Middle East were nearly twice as likely to remain active over the long-term. Even more strikingly, 52 per cent of the subset of alumni who returned to SOP summer camp a second time were actively engaged in peacebuilding as adults – compared to just three per cent of those who attended a single camp session. Each initiative develops its own unique variety of follow-up programming, but almost all veteran organisations in the field – particularly youth organisations – have evolved from focusing on an initial set of meetings to programmes in which participants can be engaged in different forms of joint activities for several years or more. Seeds of Peace, Sadaka-Reut, and Kids4Peace among other examples have each independently developed multi-year, phased models in which new cohorts of youth join the programme early in high school and participate in a new curriculum of activities each year through at least the remainder of high school. SOP and Kids4Peace have additionally developed family programmes in which parents, inspired by their children's experiences, can voluntarily join parallel adult dialogue groups (Thomas, 2017).

Clear patterns emerged – majorities of alumni engaged in peacebuilding declined to a smaller minority over the years, but a significant core group remained consistently active or returned to activity as adults.

Impact factor: conflict content

Ross emphasises the influence of curricular content and political orientation, finding that adult alumni of the explicitly politicised Sadaka-Reut programme were more engaged in peacebuilding and social change activity as adults than graduates of the self-declared “non-political” Peace Child Israel programme. Sadaka-Reut emphasises

critical analysis of power relations in Israeli society and training in the methodology of community organising, while Peace Child eschewed direct discussion of the conflict in its theater-oriented curriculum. Overall, studies endorse a sequenced approach, combining activities designed for interpersonal trust and relationship-building with substantive dialogue sessions focused on collective identity, historical narratives, asymmetric realities and perspectives on the conflict.

Impact factor: intergroup friendship

Risen & Schroeder find a strong correlation between experiences of intergroup friendship during the initial encounter, and the long-term resilience of positive attitudinal shifts over time (Schroeder & Risen, 2014).

Impact factor: skills-development and professional training

A number of adult encounter programme alumni described facilitation training courses, designed for young adults, as crucial opportunities that inspired renewed cross-conflict peacebuilding activity and added new depth to their perspectives. Maayan Poleg, an Israeli Seeds of Peace alumna, explained the profound impact of returning to dialogue settings as a facilitator in her twenties, after years of disconnection during and after her mandatory military service:

It's like someone was ripping the cover off my eyes. It's the first time I really saw occupation, that I realised I am an occupier ... It started a process, that I can never again ignore the conflict ... There's no way I can imagine myself waking up here to a normal job. Waking up, going to work out, going to my job, sitting in a coffee shop, not talking about the conflict, not dealing with it, not taking responsibility.

Poleg became a frequent facilitator, eventually leaving her “normal job” to co-direct SOP regional programmes full-time. While busy orchestrating encounters for a new generation of teen-aged participants, Poleg emphasises the added value of adult dialogue: “Everything changed for me in a way that didn't happen when I was 14 – and that is the value of a long-term process. I needed experiences both as a teenager and as an adult to get to where I am today” (Poleg, 2016).

*The critical factor, then, is to build frameworks for sustained cross-conflict engagement at different stages of life, rather than designing encounters as isolated meetings.*²⁰ Thus, dialogue should not end at age 18 – nor, conversely, does it need to begin before the onset of maturity. A number of frameworks for adult dialogue in the country convene around shared professional interests, advanced study or geographic proximity, and often allow for more substantial intellectual and civic engagement. A notable example is the “Advocates/Agents of Change” project of the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salaam (NSWAS), which since 2007 has partnered with Israeli universities to lead 1-2 year courses combining facilitated dialogue, academic study and action

Palestinian graduate Mahmoud Jabari, active in local and international peacebuilding forums in his hometown of Hebron, described Seeds of Peace as “the beginning of peace activism”.

project development for specific Israeli-Palestinian peer groups – journalists, lawyers, environmentalists, mental health professionals, urban planners and aspiring politicians among other sectors (NSWAS, 2015). The project component, in which dialogue groups serve as incubators for subsequent work “on the ground” in local communities, is emulated in numerous other contemporary initiatives, embodying a principle of “dialogue to action.”

20. The potential created by the initial encounter, and the crucial role of follow-up, are illustrated by a nascent civil society initiative entitled “Israeli alumni of Israeli-Palestinian encounters”. This began as a Facebook group established in 2016 by two adult alumni of small encounter programmes which were unable to provide substantial follow-up activities. The group grew rapidly to 500 members, and has since convened multiple regional meetings. According to the (volunteer) directors, a common theme is the enduring impact of the encounter experience, a desire to discuss the experience with peers, and to “do something with it,” (Ross & Pe’eri, 2016).

Impact factor: dual-narrative approaches

One innovative dialogue initiative has effectively synthesised all of these key findings: The “History through the Human Eye” (HTHE) project of the Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF), a joint peacebuilding CSO comprised of 600 Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost members in conflict-related violence (Lazarus, 2015, A). Beginning as a pilot project for the group’s own members to confront the divergent Israeli and Palestinian historical narratives, HTHE evolved into a *sui generis* dialogue curriculum that PCFF members jointly facilitate for outside groups. Each group proceeds through multiple dialogue sessions, including sharing personal stories of bereavement and loss, hearing firsthand testimonies of Holocaust survivors and of Palestinian refugees, and concluding with an exercise challenging participants to “stand in the other’s shoes” and represent the other perspective empathically. The PCFF has led 28 different groups through the process in recent years; they are currently adding a post-encounter project component at the recommendation of previous participants (Faraj, 2016).

In a more recent project – the most comprehensive experimental design study of a dialogue programme to date – Risen & Schroeder find consistent positive attitudinal shifts.

The “History through the Human Eye” project has been accompanied by filmmakers, who produced the 2013 documentary “Two-Sided Story,” and evaluators, who have consistently recorded positive impacts among the vast majority of participants against a series of attitudinal indicators. In a 2014 evaluation, 94 per cent of participants rated the programme “very interesting”; 87 per cent rated it as “contributing to a great degree”; 80 per cent reported greater willingness to work for peace; 77 per cent reported increased belief in the possibility of reconciliation; 71 per cent improved trust and empathy for the other; 68 per cent increased levels of acknowledgment and knowledge about the other narrative (Kahanoff & Shibly, 2014) – levels consistent with two subsequent assessments (Atamneh, 2016). At least five veteran organisations in the field have, in a similar vein, developed in-house facilitation training courses for their own former participants and the wider community.

4.5 Intergroup immersion: integrated bilingual education

In most cases, intergroup dialogue is an exceptional event – demanding a special framework outside the boundaries of normal, formal education. However, as noted previously, recent years have seen the emergence of at least eight integrated, bilingual Arab-Jewish schools – an immersive framework integrating peace education into everyday education. This is a small subculture within Israeli society, encompassing an estimated 2,000 students around the country, and only one campus – the Max Rayne Hand-in-Hand K-12 in Jerusalem, with 696 students – extending beyond sixth grade.

Despite their fledgling nature, these schools have already attracted considerable research interest. Scholars have noted the candour with which the HiH schools address both Israeli and Palestinian collective memories, including the emotionally and politically charged “national remembrance days” commemorated by both groups. This open approach to identity and narrative is contrasted with integrated schools in post-conflict contexts such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, where students of different ethnicities attend separate history classes, and Northern Ireland, where discussion of conflict issues or sectarian identity in school was discouraged (Donnelly & Hughes, 2006)(Ben Nun, 2013).²¹

21. Approaches to intercommunal pedagogy in Northern Ireland are reportedly evolving through a “shared education” programme designed by Professor Tony Gallagher of Queen’s University Belfast, which in 2015 was officially endorsed by the Minister of Education (Kashti, 2017).

Preliminary studies of HiH schools have pointed to a significant outcome of this pedagogical approach in terms of students' views of identity, finding that HiH students are more explicitly conscious of identity/ethnicity than peers in mainstream schools, yet less likely to "essentialise" or stereotype members of other ethnic groups. A 2011 article asserts that "interethnic exposure [at HiH] alleviated children's essentialist bias towards ethnicity and did so via making children aware of, rather than blind to, ethnic categories" (Deeb et al., 2011). Anthropologist Zvi Bekerman of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who has closely studied HiH schools, asserts that HiH students "talk about identity, their own and of the other group, in a much more articulate, nuanced way than their peers in mainstream schools... The schools show that kids can understand profoundly complexity, and have no trouble living with it" (Bekerman, 2013). Bekerman additionally asserts that teachers are perhaps the most deeply affected by HiH's open engagement with identities in conflict. The faculty is comprised of teachers with mainstream Ministry of Education training and diverse political views; they are not a "self-selecting" group.

The critical factor, then, is to build frameworks for sustained cross-conflict engagement at different stages of life, rather than designing encounters as isolated meetings.

Teachers represent one level of an integrated bilingual school's "ripple effect"; families, of course, are another. HiH has made a concerted effort to expand this further, by turning its campuses into bi-cultural community centres, hubs of joint Jewish-Arab activity reminiscent of the Jerusalem YMCA or Givat Haviva. HiH has solicited grants in recent years to expand its "shared communities" programme, and its campuses now commonly offer Arabic and Hebrew language courses, study groups, concerts and lectures, mixed Jewish-Arab athletic teams, shared holiday celebrations and other events for the general public. HiH Executive Director Shuli Dichter explicitly envisions the growing school network as cornerstones of a social movement:

We are building intercommunal shared spaces that will educate, inspire, and sustain the citizens and the public consciousness to support such a movement ... that will bring the voice of shared communities to the Knesset, to the media ... that will catalyse moves in the city hall and become a source of power for better sharing of resources. We are building here, bottom-up, a civic power. (Dichter, 2012)

As detailed in section two, the HiH school network has expanded steadily in recent years, while their integrated, bilingual model has garnered increasing legitimation from state authorities. Indeed, Minister of Education Naftali Bennett of the right wing Jewish Home Party recently visited HiH's flagship campus in Jerusalem, accompanied by State Comptroller Yosef Shapira. After meeting with students and the Arab and Jewish co-principals, Nadia Kinani and Arik Saporta, the Minister was quoted as asking, "*What do we have to do to defeat racism?*" (Hand-in-Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education, 2017).

4.6 Mainstreaming: Arab teachers at Jewish schools

The recent successes of Hand-in-Hand notwithstanding, fully integrated bilingual frameworks remain a bridge too far for the vast majority of Israeli families at present. A more modest proposal for mainstreaming educational integration has been effectively advanced in recent years by a pair of Arab-Jewish civil society groups – placing Arab teachers at mainstream Jewish

schools. This model, piloted in parallel by The Abraham Fund Initiatives (TAFI) and Merchavim CSOs, have been adopted into official curricula for entire school districts, “scaling” their programmes to a degree never before achieved by Arab-Jewish educational interventions.

In 2013, external evaluators found outstanding results for TAFI’s *Ya Salaam* programme, which at the time had trained 90 Palestinian teachers in an interactive curriculum for teaching 5th and 6th grade Arabic, and then placed them at Jewish schools. After two years of implementation, 90 per cent of participating principals reported improved student performance, parental support and successful integration of Arab teachers in Jewish-majority school, and recommended national adoption of the programme; 95 per cent of Arab teachers reported successful integration at school; 89 per cent reported that their work positively impacted students’ perceptions of Arabic language, culture and people.

Hand in Hand students are more explicitly conscious of identity/ethnicity than peers in mainstream schools, yet less likely to “essentialise” or stereotype members of other ethnic groups.

Students studying with Arab teachers in the programme exhibited significantly more positive attitudes towards Arab people and culture, and significantly less anti-Arab bias than the control group (Henrietta Szold Institute, 2013). The programme was subsequently adopted by the Haifa and Northern regional branches of the Ministry of Education, and currently operates in more than 200 schools. The Merchavim programme sponsors a parallel programme for Arabic-language education, and in 2014 partnered with Israel’s Ministry of Education in a new plan to integrate 500 Arab teachers for English, Math and Science at schools around the country (Maor, 2016).



History through the Human Eye: Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups visit the Yad VaShem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem as part of the Parents Circle Families Forum Narratives Project. Photograph used by permission of Parents Circle Families Forum / Yifat Yogev.



History through the Human Eye: *Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups visit the ruins of the pre-1948 Palestinian village of Lifta, as part of the Parents Circle Families Forum Narratives Project. Photograph used by permission of Parents Circle Families Forum / Yifat Yogev.*

4.7 The future of evaluation

The evaluative research record is far from comprehensive. To date, most programme evaluations and scholarly studies have focused on intergroup dialogue or educational interventions, measuring impact in terms of attitudinal change among participants. Other peacebuilding strategies remain under-researched, and demand different approaches. The methods of measuring impact must evolve to keep pace with the expanding repertoire of peacebuilding practice.

Advocacy efforts are developing their own impact “indicators,” such as tracking the percentage of Arab interviewees on mainstream Israeli news programmes following the “Representation Index” campaign led by Sikkuy and other NGOs (Darom, 2016), or the number of bus routes established as a result of lobbying the Ministry of Transportation (Gerlitz, 2016). Interventions in the practical sphere come with some ready-made measures of impact – cubic

Ninety-five per cent of Arab teachers reported successful integration at school; 89 per cent reported that their work positively impacted students’ perceptions of Arabic language, culture and people.