

meters of clean water increased to Gaza, successful heart surgeries performed for children, sewage treatment plants established, funds invested in infrastructure, jobs created – yet more nuance will be necessary to verify their contributions to peacebuilding.



*Hand-in-Hand teachers at the organisation's third annual educators' conference, Jerusalem. Photograph used by permission of Ned Lazarus.*

The Near East Foundation's (NEF) Olive Oil Without Borders project provides a model: its 2014 evaluation report combines economic data with attitudinal surveys of participating vendors (Near East Foundation, 2014). The report highlights the gradual process by which NEF brought the Palestinian and Israeli olive growers and oil vendors to negotiate a trade agreement with the IDF and relevant Israeli Ministries that opened up cross-border olive oil sales for the first time since the Second Intifada. This allowed Palestinian olive growers to sell their surplus on the Israeli market, solving a longstanding problem that had limited the potential of previous harvests. NEF Director Charles Benjamin summarised the success of the project in terms of "Two headline numbers ... 24 million dollars of increased sales for Palestinian farmers – and the [attitudinal] change: Over 90 per cent of our participants reported increased trust in the other and increased optimism about cross-border economic cooperation" (Benjamin, 2016).

**Interventions in the practical sphere come with some ready-made measures of impact – yet more nuance will be necessary to verify their contributions to peacebuilding.**

## Part 5. Navigating the obstacles to peacebuilding

Inside the encounter, they are all human beings. Outside the encounter, their freedoms, protections and status – or lack thereof – are determined not by common humanity, but by the different identity cards they are issued by the authorities. Inside the encounter, they face each other armed only with powers of communication. Outside the encounter, lethal violence is an everyday expectation, with machine guns on ubiquitous display in public places. Inside the encounter, ground rules encourage empathy, openness, and respect to foster a “safe space” for all. Outside the encounter, they are divided by barriers erected in the name of security for some. Inside the encounter, discussion leaders mandate equality between participants. Outside the encounter, power structures dictate that they live in separate, unequal societies. Inside the encounter, they may find hope in the discovery that in terms of emotion and psychology, they are mirror images of each other. Yet outside the encounter, reality does not adapt itself to their newfound understanding. (Abu-Nimer and Lazarus 2008, p.19).

This section details three inter-related obstacles faced by every endeavour to work across the conflict divide, to humanise the other or otherwise challenge the dominant “ethos of conflict” in either society, particularly in the “cross-border” sphere. Every meta-study of the Israeli-Palestinian field emphasises these inherent challenges: financial and political volatility, the asymmetry of power between Israelis and Palestinians, and the resultant lack of societal legitimacy for peacebuilding.

### 5.1 Obstacle: mutually reinforcing financial and political pressures

2016 saw the closure of three internationally recognised peacebuilding initiatives with notable achievements – each a poignant illustration that in present context, effective work is not enough to guarantee organisational survival.

- After 12 years, the Olive Tree scholarship programme at City University London graduated its final cohort of Israeli and Palestinian MA students; it counts the dynamic Israeli MK Stav Shaffir and Peace Now Settlement Watch director Lior Amihai among its 58 alumni (City University London, 2013; Johnson, 2014).
- The SAYA design firm, established in 2006, won accolades and international exhibitions for its pioneering work in “Resolution Planning,” bringing architecture and planning expertise to propose concrete solutions to the elaborate infrastructural challenges of implementing a two-state solution, particularly land swaps, borders, and establishing adjacent capitals in an open Jerusalem (Berg, 2014). Co-director Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat explained that the firm’s fortunes shared the fate of the Track One negotiations. After a flurry of activity accompanying the “Kerry Process” in 2014, commissions all but ceased in the wake of the 2015 Israeli elections. “The knowledge we have gained will be very relevant,” he noted, “when the political climate changes. But not now” (Greenfield-Gilat, 2016).

**The funding environment for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding is uneven, unstable, and vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the conflict and the short-term nature of the grant cycle.**

- All for Peace Radio, the first joint Israeli-Palestinian, multi-lingual radio station, won international prizes including the United Nations Intercultural Innovation award, for broadcasting peace-oriented news and talk shows to tens of thousands of Israeli and Palestinian listeners (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, 2011). Established in 2004, the station broadcasted to growing audiences on Arabic and Hebrew FM frequencies – until the Israeli Communications Ministry revoked its Hebrew broadcast rights in 2011 (Anmuth, 2012). Suddenly unable to air Hebrew advertisements, All for Peace lost its primary source of revenue and was soon forced to release its paid staff; volunteers continued to broadcast online until 2015 (Baransi, 2016).

In these cases among numerous others, directors of embattled initiatives cite a cycle of mutually reinforcing financial and political pressures as rendering unviable the continuation of previously successful work.

The funding environment for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding is uneven, unstable, and vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the conflict and the short-term nature of the grant cycle (Hai & Herzog, 2005) (Kahanoff, Salem, Nasrallah, & Neumann, 2007) (CMM Field Study, 2014). Private sector sources can be a case of feast or famine, shifting abruptly with political winds, as illustrated by the case of SAYA among others.

USAID and EU grant programmes operate on short-term project cycles. Grants extend over one-to-three years, and renewal, even for successful projects, is the exception rather than the rule.

In the post-Oslo era, a pair of governmental grant programmes – USAID/CMM’s Annual Program Statement Fund (APS) and the EU Peacebuilding Initiative – have been the most consistent sources of funding for peacebuilding projects. Since 2004, the APS has provided approximately \$10 million per cycle to 10-12 projects; the EU Peacebuilding Initiative, established in 1998, currently divides a total of 5 million Euros between a similar number of annual grantees.

USAID/CMM’s guidebook for “people-to-people peacebuilding” explains the rationale behind sustained funding:

Peacebuilding requires sustained and long-term efforts ... programming is based on a theory of change which depends on the community and key actors realising attitudinal change, mutual understanding, and positive interaction. This organic process of change occurs over time through recurring constructive engagement, which can be both expensive and lengthy (USAID/CMM, 2011, p. 25).

Yet the USAID and EU grant programmes, nonetheless, operate on short-term project cycles. Grants extend over 1-3 years, and renewal, even for successful projects, is the exception rather than the rule. Evaluations of both funds have noted that while a handful of initiatives have expanded steadily with renewed support, other promising projects have been thrust into uncertainty, or curtailed, after initial funds expired. As one Palestinian grantee explained, “It takes time to build the staff, the discourse... two years is not enough ... an educational process demands time, as well as money.” An Israeli grantee echoed the same sentiment: “This is the gap between the theory of change that they are using ... and the reality of social change. Social change takes a long time – a long investment. And the period of the contract is maximum three years – if they don’t renew it, it can do damage ... You will cut in the middle, and then you will disappoint even the target groups that you are working with” (CMM Field Study, 2014, p. 52).

CMM's own guidebook acknowledges the effects of the financial short-termism imposed by the project cycle, explicitly stating that it is unrealistic to "produce long-term results with short-term resources ... let alone on a timeframe nicely aligned with fiscal cycles" (USAID/CMM, 2011, p. 25).

Financial short-termism prevents peacebuilding NGOs from engaging in long-term planning and undermines sustainability. Unlike the issues of asymmetry and legitimacy discussed below, financial short-termism is an obstacle created by donor policies – not the only one, but perhaps the most consequential (Gawerc & Lazarus, 2015) (2016). It is, therefore, an issue that donors are fully empowered to address.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned above, in Northern Ireland, the IFI began funding peacebuilding fully 12 years in advance of the Good Friday Accords, and the sums vastly exceed what has been invested in Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding to date. Two leading Northern Ireland funders – the IFI and the EU's Northern Ireland PEACE programmes, have invested approximately three *billion* Euros in peacebuilding projects in the territory to date – at least 15 times more than the combined investments of the EU Peacebuilding Fund and the USAID/CMM programme in the Israeli/Palestinian context – while the population of Northern Ireland constitutes less than 15 per cent of the aggregate population of Israel and the Palestinian territories (Hamber, 2017).

For the current fiscal year, UK government funding for coexistence work through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund was £400,000 (Stewart, 2016). Spending on peace and coexistence amounts to just 0.2 per cent of the £72 million DFID spends in the Palestinian Territories, principally in support of the PA and in humanitarian and development aid (Braunold & Lyndon, 2016). The Israeli government and the PA do not play meaningful financial roles in the cross-border peacebuilding sphere at this time – and this is likely for the better. Direct governmental financial support for a cross-border project, from either party, would inevitably come at the expense of the same project's legitimacy among the other population.

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Israeli state and local governments are, by contrast, meaningful funders in the "shared society" sphere, given that the target populations are Arab and Jewish Israeli citizens. As detailed in section two of this report, securing state and local government funding for shared society NGOs can be a sign of success for peacebuilding NGOs in Israel – whether in terms of advocacy campaigns to equalise resource allocation and infrastructure to the Arab sector, or official adoption and "scaling up" of successful pilot programmes in dialogue, education or sport. At the same time, international and private funding sources remain absolutely crucial to preserving the operational independence of civil society organisations from the state.

### 5.2 Obstacle: asymmetries of power, status and resource

While Israelis and Palestinians inhabit the same geographical territory, they conduct their everyday lives in "parallel realities," in distinct cultural and social frameworks and starkly disparate material and political conditions. To be clear, both Israeli and Palestinian civilian populations live with chronic threats of violence from the conflict (Waxman, 2011) and the collective memories and lived experiences of both peoples are characterised by existential fear and victimisation (Bar-Tal, 2007). Yet beyond this mutual vulnerability, a separate and unequal status quo prevails between the economically prosperous, technologically advanced, democratically governed and militarily powerful State

22. The present report strongly supports the establishment of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding on the model of the International Fund for Ireland – an idea which has garnered recent endorsements in the House of Commons (Sugarman, 2017) and the US Congress (H.R. 1221)(Tibon, 2017).

of Israel and the Palestinians living in semi-autonomous enclaves of territory surrounded by Israeli security barriers, military camps and settlements, and lacking control of their borders, movement or natural resources (CMM Field Study, 2014).

Inequality also prevails within Israel between the Jewish majority and Arab minority, a legacy of decades of discriminatory resource allocation and exclusion of Arab citizens from the social and political mainstream (Peleg & Waxman, 2011). This asymmetry is hardly unique; it is a common feature of intractable conflict situations (Bar-Tal and Schnell 2014). It is, nonetheless, pervasive and consequential. All aspects of Israeli-Palestinian interaction, including peacebuilding initiatives, are refracted through the prisms of cultural difference and the imbalance of power between Israel and the Palestinians (Rouhana & Korper, 1997).

Beginning with the first generation of Arab-Jewish encounters in Israel, scholars and evaluators of the peacebuilding field have noted the impact of this inherent asymmetry on the motivations and experiences of participants and the dynamics of Palestinian-Israeli organisational partnerships (Gawerc, 2012). Motivations for engagement in peacebuilding are often described in terms of Palestinian participants emphasising structural change or political mobilisation, in contrast to Israeli participants seeking to “humanise” perceptions, to build

“Work with [our] Palestinian partner wasn’t equal. We don’t live under occupation, their movements are limited, they don’t have our educational opportunities.”  
– Israeli peacebuilder involved in CMM Field Study 2014

relationships, reduce intergroup hostility, and to enhance their senses of acceptance and security (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). Each side seeks validation from the other, albeit in different forms: Israelis in terms of Palestinian acceptance of Israel’s legitimacy and opposition to anti-Israeli violence; Palestinians in terms of Israeli acknowledgment of the imbalance of power and Palestinian rights (Maoz, 2000).

In terms of visceral responses to dialogue, an MIT study found that a dialogical, or two-way interaction enhanced empathy between Israelis and Palestinians, but through divergent mechanisms. For a majority of Israeli subjects, listening to Palestinians tell

personal stories of suffering inspired them to feel increased empathy toward Palestinians in general. The majority of Palestinian subjects, by contrast, experienced empathy for Israelis after telling their own stories to an Israeli listener and eliciting an empathetic response (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012).<sup>23</sup> Daniel Bar-Tal and the late Gavriel Salomon, after years of research on conflict psychology and peace education, conclude that Israeli and Palestinian dialogue participants are equally able to “humanise the other,” but exhibit asymmetrical responses in terms of narrative legitimation: “Accepting the humanity of Israelis is clearly a far easier task for Palestinians than legitimising the basic tenets of the Zionist narrative” (2006, p. 38).

At the organisational level, multiple studies cited asymmetry as affecting dynamics between staff, with Israelis taking on dominant roles and greater responsibility. This often occurs by default, due to structurally-derived gaps in English fluency, international experience, and training, culturally-derived gaps in assertiveness and confidence, and politically-derived gaps in freedom of movement and access to resources. As an Israeli peacebuilder explained, “Work with [our] Palestinian partner, it wasn’t equal. We don’t live under occupation, their movements are limited, they don’t have educational opportunities” (CMM Field Study, 2014,

23. These trends do not apply to all individual Israelis and Palestinians, but have been described by scholars of intergroup contact as collective tendencies. At the same time, Israelis of particular sociopolitical backgrounds may exhibit responses more akin to Palestinians in terms of seeking acknowledgment from the other side as a prerequisite to exhibiting empathy.

p. 152). Scholars and activists have cited international donor policies as inadvertently reinforcing these dynamics due to their implicit cultural assumptions, location of offices primarily in Israel, and language and reporting requirements (Gawerc & Lazarus, 2015).

Asymmetry is thus a genuine and profound challenge, inherent to any cross-conflict endeavor – joint peacebuilding initiatives cannot miraculously “transcend” the social contexts in which

they are embedded (Posner, 2006).<sup>24</sup> The good news is that this is not “news” to veterans of civil society peacebuilding. After two decades of crises, critiques and much accumulated experience, initiatives that have endured are those that have revised programme methodology and organisational structure to address the different motivations, needs and sociopolitical contexts of both communities (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). Dialogue programmes have evolved to place ever-greater emphasis on the “internal” or uni-national component, deliberately sequencing between intra-group and inter-group phases, in order to address different perceptions and needs. As one facilitator explained, “Both Palestinian and Israeli societies are fragmenting. They each need to address internal divisions while concurrently tackling the Palestinian-Israeli divide” (CMM Field Study, 2014, p.135). The major evaluative studies of Seeds of Peace cited earlier identify attitudinal and experiential differences between Israeli and Palestinian participants – but, crucially, find consistently positive outcomes and assessments of encounter participation among majorities of both groups (Schroeder & Risen, 2014).

Directors of veteran initiatives typically articulate keen awareness of asymmetry, and have designed approaches to mitigate its effects on staff relations – strategies that scholars have highlighted as contributing to resilience and sustainability (Gawerc, 2012). The Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF), for example, has reformed organisational structure and practice to enhance equality. In 2006, the Forum officially established parallel Israeli and Palestinian offices and internal governing bodies – “two signatures on every check” (Lazarus, 2015, B, p. 23). Co-Director Mazen Faraj illustrated the subsequent evolution of the meaning of partnership in terms of organisational practice:

All the reports were [previously] written in the Israeli office ... In 2013, for the first time, that the Palestinian office wrote the mid-year report for the donors on six months of activities. When I said we will do the report, some people laughed – but in two weeks, it was done by the Palestinians, in English ... Since that time, we are in full partnership in writing the reports, in management, in proposals, in budgeting, and in the joint board. There is respect, and most important, understanding what does it mean to live under the occupation. I don’t want to be a victim – but the needs are totally different. We made steps forward, from each side, in the Parents Circle (Faraj, 2016).

In response to constituent feedback and evaluation reports, international donors have likewise taken steps to address asymmetry. The EU has repeatedly revised its grant-making criteria to allow an expanding role for internal/uni-national initiatives, and recently re-branded its funding instrument as the “EU Peacebuilding Initiative,” emphasising parallel civil society and development work rather than the previous “partnership for peace” – while continuing to

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24. Divergent majority-minority dynamics are not unique to the Middle East – similar phenomena have been observed in inter-racial encounters in the US and UK, among others (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

fund joint work (European External Action Service (EEAS), 2016). A 2014 evaluation of USAID's CMM/APS grant programme found not a single Palestinian organisation serving as a "prime" grantee responsible for accountability and interface with the donor (Gawerc & Lazarus, 2016). In response, local USAID staff engaged in substantial outreach and training efforts, that have led Palestinian NGOs to sign on as prime grantees on four of ten 2016 grants (USAID/CMM, 2016).

"Different starting points led people to a similar place... They might have had different issues, but there was value for everyone."

– Charles Benjamin,  
Director of the Near East  
Foundation (NEF)

In the practical sphere, the concrete, shared benefits of cooperation can ultimately outweigh different underlying motivations for participation. Near East Foundation (NEF) Director Charles Benjamin describes the asymmetric points of entry for participants in the Olive Oil Without Borders project:

Palestinians, their starting point is economic – creating a business, starting a job. For the Israelis, you know, you can go about your life without even thinking about Palestinians. So the Israelis who participate, they've got a conviction and a motivation about building these relationships. The motivations are different – on the one hand, it's economic realities, and the other side, it's a moral preoccupation that's driving them (Benjamin, 2016).

Nonetheless, the project – which generated a trade agreement, increased production capacity and opened up new markets for sale of surplus harvest – received enthusiastic evaluations from all sides (Near East Foundation, 2014). As Benjamin explained, "Different starting points led people to a similar place ... They might have had different issues, but there was value for everyone."

The challenge of asymmetry is often illuminated through variations on the classic "bridge" metaphor of peacebuilding, explaining that a stable bridge must be established on solid foundations, or that a level bridge cannot be established between pillars of drastically unequal height. The empirical record of recent years illustrates that in current circumstances, asymmetry remains a formidable, but surmountable, obstacle; a narrow bridge that can – and must – be crossed.

### 5.3 Obstacle: "legitimacy deficit disorder"

Literature on "intergroup encounters" classically identified the degree of societal legitimacy accorded to peacebuilding projects as one of a number of necessary conditions for productive cross-conflict contact (Allport, 1954).<sup>25</sup> And yet such support is often elusive in the very situations of identity-based conflict which necessitate intergroup interventions.

*In the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian context, robust support is elusive at both official and communal levels, on both sides.*

Militant elements escalate campaigns of de-legitimation against peacebuilding activists and initiatives, exploiting the apathy of "silent majorities" that have lost hope for peace (Yaar & Hermann, 2016). Among Palestinians, an emboldened "anti-normalisation" campaign caricatures most or all cooperative engagement with Israeli Jews as acquiescence to

25. A 2006 meta-study conducted by prominent scholars in the field found consistently positive attitudinal effects of intergroup contact even in the absence of what are recognised as ideal – and were previously considered necessary – conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Israel. Among Israelis, Right wing elements harass “Leftists,” while some ministers of the current government use their bully pulpits and legislative prerogatives to incite against human rights organisations and classic P2P work is portrayed as outside the mainstream. In the face of these pressures, societal support has been uneven and unreliable.

This challenge is new in degree rather than kind – a perennial problem has been exacerbated by the deterioration of official relations and conditions on the ground (Mi’ari 1999; AWRAD 2014). All meta-studies of the field describe “legitimacy deficit disorder” as a condition endemic to the field (Hai and Herzog 2005). Herbert Kelman explained the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic as a situation of “negative identity interdependence” – a zero-sum equation in which the validation of one side’s identity or humanity is perceived

as inherently de-legitimising the other side (1999). In such a situation, initiatives seeking to “humanise” the other or to treat the “enemy” as a legitimate interlocutor, are especially vulnerable to stigmatisation. The mutually exclusive framing of legitimacy generates a catch-22 situation, a “seesaw” effect in which building legitimacy on one side of the conflict undermines legitimacy on the other side. In practice, any steps that peacebuilding initiatives take to strengthen their reputation among Palestinians are exploited by critics to undermine their legitimacy among Israelis, and vice versa.

Palestinian peacebuilders routinely face the charge of “normalisation” with Israel, an epithet located somewhere on a spectrum between disloyalty and treason, which can have social and economic repercussions for individuals and organisations (Nerenberg, 2016). For years the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) organisation has published a blacklist of groups it accuses of “normalising relations” with Israelis (PACBI, 2010). Mirroring its international branch – the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement – the anti-normalisation campaign officially purports to use subtle criteria to distinguish its targets: institutions rather than individuals, and only those initiatives that fail to acknowledge the asymmetry of power or oppose the occupation. In practice, anti-normalisation advocates have attacked

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the most resolute critics of Israeli policy – Israeli individuals such as *Haaretz* journalist Amira Hass, and joint initiatives such as the Parents Circle or Combatants for Peace – stigmatising any and all associations with Israelis or Jews on the basis of identity (Hass, 2014). On numerous occasions, anti-normalisation activists have physically disrupted meetings in public venues between Israelis and Palestinians.

Many Palestinian peacebuilding advocates remain equally resolute, not to say courageous, in continuing to stand for cross-conflict engagement in the face of these threats. The reflections of a Palestinian director of one encounter programme echo the testimonies of many Palestinian peace activists:

I got the occasional phone call threat, things won’t be good for you if you [continue]... but after a couple of encounters with people who threatened me

personally, I realised that most of this is intimidation; fear is what they play on. The main thing that kept me going is, if I don't work with [my organisation], I don't feel like I'm doing anything to move the Palestinian situation forward – when I work, I am doing something better than some [anti-normalisation advocate] sitting at home, who is doing nothing but criticising me.

We try to be smart about where we meet ... We're careful about what we announce on Facebook – we are sensitive, but we are not hiding what we do or who we are from people ... Two years ago, one of our meetings was leaked to the Hamas news agency in Gaza, and they wrote the headline, 'Palestinian normalisers meet with Jewish Zionists in Jerusalem,' and this spread on social media ... some of the kids got death threats ... We had an emergency meeting with the kids, and we said, they are just trying to intimidate you – and [the kids] got stronger from that. Every kid and every parent deals with it differently, and we always tell them we are there to support them ... I do understand people opposing us, or debating us [on principle] – but I don't accept harming people.

Cross-border projects endure due to the courage and determination displayed by Palestinian peacebuilders. The impact of the anti-normalisation campaign is palpable, nonetheless, in the low public profiles maintained by many Palestinians active in joint peacebuilding (with notable exceptions such as Huda Abu Arqoub of ALLMEP). It is equally evident in the much higher number of Israeli or Israeli-led organisations currently active in the peacebuilding field. While criticising asymmetry in rhetoric, the anti-normalisation campaign has entrenched it in practice.

A 2015 survey of Palestinian activism asserts that while the BDS movement has had scant success in motivating Palestinians to boycott Israeli products, its impact “has been somewhat pronounced in pressure against grassroots peace activists who work on joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives – a tactic that appears counterproductive, as it has mainly harmed activists who advocate against the occupation” (Jaraba & Ben Shitrit, 2016, p. 36).

Above all, it is political realities on the ground that have led Palestinians to question the value of anything associated with “peace.” As Elias Zananiri of the PLO's Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society explains, “What can you say to the average Palestinian when the [number of] settlers grew exponentially under the umbrella of peace?” (Zananiri, 2016)

The issue of Palestinian public legitimacy is illustrated by Chart 8, displaying the findings of a 2014 public opinion poll, in which Palestinian respondents were asked whether they approved of six different types of joint Israeli-Palestinian activity.

“I got the occasional phone call threat, things won't be good for you if you [continue]... but after a couple of encounters with people who threatened me personally, I realised that most of this is intimidation; fear is what they play on.”

- Palestinian director of an encounter peacebuilding programme

Between four possible responses expressing partial or complete approval or disapproval, “unacceptable” won a plurality of respondents in every category. No form of joint interaction achieved majority support, but 43-49 per cent of respondents did express partial or complete approval of all but one category (culture and sport) (AWRAD, 2014). This constitutes a sufficient critical mass to continue cross-conflict engagement, as has been the case – but never unopposed.

Chart 8. Palestinian public opinion regarding joint activities with Israelis (AWRAD, 2014)<sup>26</sup>

26. Poll of 1,200 Palestinian respondents, conducted March 9-11, 2014; margin of error is ± 3 per cent.

“How acceptable is it for Palestinians to engage in the following [joint] activities?”	West Bank (approve/disapprove)	Gaza Strip (approve/disapprove)	Overall territories (approve/disapprove)
<b>Dialogue</b> Political discussions with Israelis on the full range of mutual issues	50%/48% 24% Approve 26% Somewhat approve 19% Somewhat disapprove 29% <i>Unacceptable</i>	40%/59% 23% Approve 17% Somewhat approve 12% Somewhat disapprove 47% <i>Unacceptable</i>	47%/52% 24% Approve 23% Somewhat approve 16% Somewhat disapprove 36% <i>Unacceptable</i>
<b>Informational tour</b> Welcoming Israelis to the Palestinian territories to show them local realities	45%/52% 19% Approve 26% Somewhat approve 20% Somewhat disapprove 32% <i>Unacceptable</i>	37%/63% 20% Approve 17% Somewhat approve 11% Somewhat disapprove 52% <i>Unacceptable</i>	43%/57% 20% Approve 23% Somewhat approve 17% Somewhat disapprove 40% <i>Unacceptable</i>
<b>Media</b> Allowing Israeli journalists to the territories to report on the local situation	46%/51% 23% Approve 23% Somewhat approve 19% Somewhat disapprove 32% <i>Unacceptable</i>	52%/48% 33% Approve 19% Somewhat approve 9% Somewhat disapprove 39% <i>Unacceptable</i>	49%/51% 27% Approve 22% Somewhat approve 16% Somewhat disapprove 35% <i>Unacceptable</i>
<b>Development</b> Working on scientific/ environmental/ health projects of practical interest to both sides	45%/53% 20% Approve 25% Somewhat approve 18% Somewhat disapprove 35% <i>Unacceptable</i>	43%/56% 27% Approve 16% Somewhat approve 14% Somewhat disapprove 42% <i>Unacceptable</i>	43%/55% 22% Approve 21% Somewhat approve 17% Somewhat disapprove 38% <i>Unacceptable</i>
<b>Trade</b> Building the economy through improved trade relations with Israelis	44%/53% 19% Approve 25% Somewhat approve 17% Somewhat disapprove 36% <i>Unacceptable</i>	47%/52% 31% Approve 16% Somewhat approve 12% Somewhat disapprove 40% <i>Unacceptable</i>	46%/53% 24% Approve 22% Somewhat approve 15% Somewhat disapprove 38% <i>Unacceptable</i>
<b>Culture/sport</b> Engaging in cultural/ sports activities with Israelis	32%/66% 13% Approve 19% Somewhat approve 18% Somewhat disapprove 48% <i>Unacceptable</i>	23%/77% 13% Approve 10% Somewhat approve 16% Somewhat disapprove 61% <i>Unacceptable</i>	28%/70% 13% Approve 15% Somewhat approve 17% Somewhat disapprove 53% <i>Unacceptable</i>

It is clear that certain types of projects (political dialogue, media coverage, development) enjoy wider legitimacy in Palestinian society than others. The relative lack of legitimacy in the culture and sport category has taken a toll in recent years. While “shared society” Arab-Jewish culture and sport programmes are thriving in Israel and steadily growing in Jerusalem, “cross border” sports and culture initiatives are struggling and operating “under the radar” in the West Bank (Stone, 2016).

In recent years, the organised Palestinian peacebuilding community has taken significant steps to shore up legitimacy. The PLO established an official Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society, under the leadership of Executive Committee member Mohammed Madani, to highlight the view of the Palestinian leadership that substantive engagement with Israeli society is a Palestinian national interest (Zananiri, 2016). In turn, the Palestinian NGOs withdrew from the former bi-national umbrella organisation for the field. As Mazen Faraj explains, “To gather with a lot of people, we need to do it in a separate way. The Palestinian (NGOs) they have to do it alone, also the Israelis, to go back to their communities, to understand the needs, the culture ... Without to going back to our community, it will never happen” (Faraj 2016).

While “shared society” Arab-Jewish culture and sport programmes are thriving in Israel and steadily growing in Jerusalem, “cross border” sports and culture initiatives are struggling and operating “under the radar” in the West Bank.

### 5.4 Obstacle: broadening legitimacy in Israeli society

Asymmetry notwithstanding, echoes of the sentiments voiced by Palestinian peacebuilders have emerged among leaders in Israeli civil society. As longtime activist Yuval Rahamim explains: “In the Israeli peace movement, for many years we focused on our partnerships with the Palestinian organisations, but neglected to develop partnerships in Israeli society. The Peace Camp gave up on leadership ... we’re [now] so small and weak, we don’t even believe in our ability to lead” (Rahamim, 2016). A longtime activist in the Parents Circle-Families Forum, Rahamim is today spearheading a transformation of the Peace NGOs Forum, which has undergone significant changes in the wake of founding Director Ron Pundak’s death from cancer in 2014.

“Protest against the occupation speaks to a small and shrinking group of Israelis, who read *Haaretz*, secular, Tel Aviv ... This is not a strategy for change. I will not compromise my values, but I have to check my strategy.”  
– Peacemaking activist Yuval Rahamim

The Peace NGOs Forum worked for years as a joint umbrella for nearly 100 Palestinian and Israeli member organisations, until the 2015 withdrawal of Palestinian CSOs (Salem, 2016). Rahamim, in parallel, sought to lead a uni-national Israeli Forum with a vision of building coalitions and broadening legitimacy in Israeli society, while meeting regularly with the Palestinians through the Madani Committee.

Rahamim is cognisant of insufficient diversity within the Israeli “peace camp,” and critical of what he sees as a culture of protest for its own sake on the Left:

“Protest against the occupation speaks to a small and shrinking group of Israelis, who read *Haaretz*, secular, Tel Aviv ... This is not a strategy for change. I will not compromise my values, but I have to check my strategy.”

The new Peace NGOs Forum’s flagship initiative has been a seminar series on engagement with diverse sectors of Israeli society, the first of which included a group of young, female advocates of peace from the Haredi community. “The Haredi activists were the attraction,” Rahamim recounts, “because no one had seen anything like that before. They said hard things – but something new started – and we hadn’t even known they existed” (Rahamim, 2016). One of those Haredi activists, Pnina Pfeuffer, is co-founder of a new initiative entitled *Haredim La-Shalom* (Haredim for Peace). As she explains, “If you’re trying to create a more pro-peace orientation in Israel, the parties are not what’s important – as a Haredi, I want to try and influence the Haredi sector, which is going to be 20 per cent of the population” (Pfeuffer, 2016).

“There’s been a conscious reticence regarding the Israeli public. There hasn’t been grassroots meetings, they’re not in dialogue conceptually with the Israeli public, the Israeli discourse. You have to acknowledge and take seriously security, and the Israeli critiques.”  
– Dahlia Scheindlin,  
Mitvim Institute

#### *A moderate majority: Darkeinu*

Pfeuffer is simultaneously working with another veteran two-state advocacy CSO that has placed a new emphasis on broadening engagement with Israeli society. The 2015 elections led the OneVoice movement, which traversed the country over a decade building parallel Palestinian and Israeli grassroots networks advocating two states, to focus their efforts on consolidating a demographically diverse “moderate” majority rather than playing into the Left/Right binary. Director Polly Bronstein explains the rationale of the new initiative, called *Darkeinu* – “Our Way”:

Israelis on the sensible, moderate right-wing have much more in common with the centre-left than they do with people on the radical right wing fringes, and the equation also works the other way around. There is an Israeli moderate majority [and] if its members can unite as a ‘civil society bloc’ they can profoundly affect the direction the country takes at this critical moment.

Darkeinu is continuing OneVoice’s traditional work of grassroots organising, but in diverse communities, especially on the front-line communities of the Gaza border. As Bronstein writes, “We are going to knock on doors, hundreds of thousands of them, across the whole country ... in the places where people may have traditionally voted for the Right, or been sceptical of the ‘peace camp’ but who now recognise that something is going wrong in Israel” (Bronstein, 2016).<sup>27</sup>

Opinion researcher Dahlia Scheindlin of the Mitvim institute notes the fallout of what she calls an “international turn” on Israel’s radical Left in recent years. As she explains, “There was an evolving decision on the part of [some in] civil society to go international, to speak internationally, to write in English ... and advocate for international pressure in the belief that change would not come from within.” This occurred not in a vacuum, of course, but amid a rising chorus of sometimes hyperbolic international condemnation of Israel, embodied by the Durban

27. In parallel, OneVoice supports a Palestinian grassroots organising initiative, Zimam.

To mobilize the “silent majority” in Israel, peace must not be the trademark of a demographically identifiable “peace camp,” but a cross-cutting agenda championed by a coalition of “peace camps,” rooted in multiple constituencies.

convention, the BDS movement, the Goldstone Report, the 2011 Flotilla incident among other controversies. According to Scheindlin, this has eroded legitimacy among mainstream Israelis, who she describes as “allergic to moralising from the international community”.<sup>28</sup> This has eroded peace advocates’ effectiveness in communicating with Israeli society, precisely when the integrity of their advocacy is under relentless attack: “There’s been a conscious reticence regarding the Israeli public. There hasn’t been *khugei bayit* [grassroots meetings], they’re not in dialogue conceptually with the Israeli public, the Israeli discourse. You have to acknowledge and take seriously security, and the Israeli critiques” (Scheindlin, 2016).<sup>29</sup>

Promising work is already happening along these lines, as evidenced by the socioeconomically diverse group of Arab and Jewish Israeli women leading the WWP “Marches of Hope” and the “Track Two” work involving rabbinic and political leaders in the Ultra-Orthodox and religious Zionist communities, who have engaged in sustained dialogue processes with secular left leaders and Palestinian citizens of Israel (Citizens Accord Forum , 2017). These efforts are still nascent, but they embody the types of engagement that can motivate a broader cross-section of Israelis to take responsibility for a democratic future. To mobilize the “silent majority” in Israel, peace must not be the trademark of a demographically identifiable “peace camp,” but a cross-cutting agenda championed by a coalition of “peace camps,” rooted in multiple constituencies.

28. A June 2016 “Peace Index” poll illustrates this: While 43 per cent of Israeli Jewish respondents support Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders in the context of a peace agreement, only 12 per cent prefer that “the international community forces Israel to withdraw” (Peace Index 2016).

29. Such sentiments are not, of course, unanimously shared in the (broadly defined) peacebuilding community. Hagai El-Ad, Director of the prominent Human Rights NGO B’tselem, made headlines recently with a highly publicised speech to the UN Human Rights Committee. The controversial Breaking the Silence IDF whistleblowers organisation has expanded its international work in recent years; and the Israeli government has now passed a law banning the organisation from Israeli schools. As Yuval Rahamim explains, dialogue is necessary within civil society: “One of the things that must happen within the peace camp is tolerance of other organisations – that we aren’t in possession of the sole truth ... We need and to sit together and find out how we can work together to create social change, strategically.”

## Recommendations

The following recommendations should guide practitioners and funders who wish to support peacebuilding projects in order to build the conditions for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

### Recommendations for practitioners

#### 1. Enhance the legitimacy and broaden the appeal of peacebuilding

There is growing recognition among veteran leaders in the Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding community, exemplified by the Peace NGOs Forum, that *building broader societal legitimacy is an urgent strategic priority*.

To do so will demand leveraging energy, resources and strategic thinking towards *building “peace camps,” i.e. effective advocacy networks, among influential constituencies in Israeli society – particularly those politically and religiously conservative constituencies opposed to the “two-state” agenda*.

As detailed in this report, effective models of peacebuilding exist – yet they have not been implemented in any significant scope in much of society. In designing campaigns, activists and organisations should have the primary strategic objective of reaching audiences, influencing discourse, raising awareness and building advocacy networks beyond the classic “peace camp” demographic. Where promising leaders models and/or networks exist, they must be amplified; where not, efforts must be directed toward identifying leaders, and building models and networks.

#### 2. Address the security dimension

Within Israeli society, advocacy campaigns should *effectively address the security risks of withdrawing from the West Bank*. Peacebuilding advocates must answer the genuine and legitimate security concerns triggered by the Lebanon and Gaza precedents, in which territories became strongholds of Hezbollah and Hamas, leading to increased insecurity and multiple wars. To that effect, peace advocates should become familiar with recently published “two-state security” blueprints. The goal of ending Israeli military rule and establishing a Palestinian state should be explained within a framework of realistic policy steps appropriate to the current regional environment. Where possible, it will be crucial to establish or continue dialogue with religious-Zionist and pro-settlement constituencies, to mitigate the dynamics of demonisation and polarisation in both directions. In Israeli political forums, there must be continued emphasis that the Palestinian issue is the key to securing “regional” alliances with the Sunni states and the larger Muslim world.

#### 3. Deliver practical benefits

In both societies, but particularly in Palestinian society, advocates should *emphasise the growing body of peacebuilding work that is producing concrete practical benefits on issues of shared interest or common concern* – economic development, environment, health, medicine, technology – including advocacy for practical policy changes. These modes of peacebuilding are a complement to (and do not come at the expense of) the crucial work of dialogue, education, and advocacy for human rights.

## Recommendations

### 4. Use the research record, share successful strategies and best practices

Civil society and governmental forums relevant to the field, e.g. ALLMEP, the Peace NGOs Forum, the Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society, SHATIL and others, should *study the existing empirical research record and disseminate key findings regarding successful strategies, best practices* and approaches to the inherent dilemmas of “intergroup encounters” and joint Arab-Jewish or Israeli-Palestinian initiatives.

Knowledge about the following should be applied across the peacebuilding community

- the profound long-term influence of intergroup encounters documented among significant numbers of adult alumni of youth programmes
- best practices for enhancing the impact of dialogue, education and encounter programmes, including:
  - Combination of meaningful *uni-national and bi-national* elements;
  - Opportunities for meaningful *follow-up activity and sustained engagement*, including through longer-term frameworks available in the wider field;
  - *“Mixed” approaches* combining interpersonal trust-building with focus on collective identities and conflict content;
  - Embedding *dialogue within larger action/social change* strategies; offering project or action options stemming from dialogue;
  - *Acknowledgement of asymmetry*, and designing programmes to meet needs of all participants and/or to address issues of *shared interest or common concern*.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

 <p>Enhance legitimacy</p>	 <p>Security dimension</p>	 <p>Practical benefits</p>	 <p>Share success</p>
Practitioners must build "peace camps," particularly in politically and religiously conservative camps opposed to the two-state solution.	Peacebuilding advocates must answer the genuine and legitimate security concerns triggered by the Lebanon and Gaza precedents.	Emphasise the practical benefits of peacebuilding work on economic development, environment, health, medicine and technology.	Study the existing empirical research record and disseminate key findings regarding successful strategies, best practices and approaches.

### Recommendations for funders

The most recent Middle East Quartet report, acknowledging the intractability of the present political context, recommended “increasing [Israeli-Palestinian] interaction and cooperation in a variety of fields ... that strengthen the foundations for peace and countering extremism.” The following recommendations are offered to funders seeking to operationalise the spirit of that injunction:

## Recommendations

1. Support peacebuilding projects that (i) further aims that are already broadly supported (ii) meet clear needs, and (iii) enjoy some degree of official support by the Israeli and/or Palestinian governments.

These projects can include:

- “Education for partnership” projects within Israel. At present, demand significantly exceeds capacity. Examples include:
  1. establishing bilingual schools in all mixed regions where there is unmet demand for such frameworks
  2. expansion of existing bilingual facilities to allow greater enrollment where there is unmet demand
  3. study of potential adaptation of “shared education” frameworks for contact between students in single-identity schools as in Northern Ireland
  4. supporting effective Arabic language teaching for Israeli Jews and Hebrew for Arab citizens and Palestinian Jerusalemites across the school system – and with the potential inclusion of schools in the territories;
- Civil society and governmental initiatives aimed at expansion of tolerance, multi-culturalism, acceptance of “the other” and countering incitement in Israeli society;
- Projects focused on practical cooperation in environmental protection, water, health, and information technology, which can produce concrete benefits in areas of shared interest or common concern for both Israelis and Palestinians;
- Economic development projects in areas understood to be a shared interest – i.e. integration of Arab citizens into the Israeli workforce, particularly the technology sector, and expansion of Palestinian economic opportunities and trade;

### 2. Expand peacebuilding constituencies

Allocate significant resources to the diversification of civil society peacebuilding networks and programmes among potentially influential constituencies that are traditionally at the margins of the peacebuilding sectors in either society, including:

- Politically and religiously conservative sectors, including frameworks for both “internal” or uni-national and cross-conflict/bi-national engagement;
- Residents of Jerusalem, mixed cities in Israel and “seam” areas of Israeli-Palestinian interface;
- Women in positions of communal, local and national leadership;
- Young adults (20-35) through providing educational and training opportunities in cross-conflict settings, that enhance professional qualifications and career prospects and integrate dialogical or interactive components;

### 3. Support effective “umbrella” peacebuilding forums

“Umbrella” forums enhance the capacity and impact of peacebuilding by:

- fostering field-wide dialogue
- allowing for collective responses to changing context

## Recommendations

- encouraging recognition of diverse approaches as complementary rather than competitive
- expanding advocacy networks on issues of common concern
- disseminating best practices
- engaging with shared dilemmas
- representing the interests of the peacebuilding community to local government and international actors.

### 4. Support the establishment of an international fund to “scale up” Israeli-Palestinian civil society peacebuilding

Following the successful precedent of the International Fund for Ireland, this new Fund would:

- provide a consistent, sustainable and transparent funding source equipped to bring to scale successful models and best practices, and achieve broader impact and influence in Israeli and Palestinian societies.
- improve conditions for peacebuilding over the medium and long-term through economic development, societal capacity-building and civil society peacebuilding.

The need for such a fund can be raised in all major international frameworks related to the peace process, i.e. the Middle East Quartet, the French Initiative, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and others.

Funds designated by developed nations should count towards their development targets as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Fund should act with a coordinating function alongside other multilateral entities’, such as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and the Office of the Quartet Representative to provide a complementary civil society strategy to go alongside large-scale humanitarian and economic development projects.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS

<p>Choose projects carefully</p>  <p>Support peacebuilding projects that further broadly supported aims, meet clear needs, and enjoy some degree of governmental support.</p>	<p>Expand peacebuilding constituencies</p>  <p>Diversify peacebuilding networks and programmes among constituencies that are traditionally at the margins of the peacebuilding sector.</p>	<p>Support "umbrella" peacebuilding</p>  <p>Aim to foster a field-wide dialogue and encourage diverse approaches as complementary rather than competitive.</p>	<p>Support an International fund</p>  <p>Support the establishment of an international fund to "scale up" Israeli-Palestinian civil society peacebuilding.</p>
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## Annex: Methodology

Data was gathered for the report primarily between June and December 2016, through interviews and conversations with scholars, practitioners and participants in civil society initiatives, document review, and participation in peacebuilding events and forums. This included six weeks of field work in Israel and East Jerusalem/West Bank in June-July and October-November, as well as numerous interviews conducted via Skype and informal correspondence. Chart I details the gender and national identities of 74 informants consulted through semi-structured interviews (40) or direct correspondence and conversation, recorded in field notes.

Direct consultation	Male	Female	Total
Israeli	21	16	37
Palestinian	11	6	17
Palestinian citizens of Israel	4	5	9
International	4	7	11
Total	40	34	74

The author participated in 15 expert discussion forums on peacebuilding, civil society, human rights, social movements and Track One negotiations in the Israeli/Palestinian context, including academic conference sessions and roundtable discussions convened by research centres connected to the field, as well as relevant remarks from at least 60 additional informants. The author additionally conducted participant observation of public peacebuilding actions including protest marches, two Knesset sessions sponsored by peacebuilding initiatives and two Israeli-Palestinian youth programmes in session.

For document review, the author relied on dozens of sources, including previous meta-studies of the field noted above, relevant scholarship, programme evaluations, public opinion indexes, annual reports published online by CSOs, financial reports submitted by CSOs to US (Form 990) and Israeli authorities (Registrar of Non-Profit Organisations/*rasham ha-amutot*) and available online through the Guidestar portal. The author additionally drew upon data gathered through four previous evaluative research assignments in the region: Lazarus, Kadayifci-Orellana, Kahanoff, & Halloun, 2014; Lazarus, 2015; Dammers, Atamneh, Lazarus, & Said, 2015; Lazarus, 2016.

### Caveats and Limitations

There is an inadvertent asymmetry in terms of sources – my interviewees are more often Israeli Jews (50 per cent) than Palestinians (35 per cent), which reflects a disparity in terms of organisational leadership in the field. It should be emphasised, nonetheless, that substantial input was incorporated from all perspectives.

A significant and regrettable lacuna is the absence of direct information – whether through site visits or primary sources – from the Gaza Strip. The report therefore cannot be assumed to reflect contemporary living or political conditions in Gaza or the perspectives of Gaza's Palestinian population – an omission that must be addressed in future research.

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