

Fostering a grassroots movement of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Israelis and Palestinians: The Roots Project.



Why We Meet

Despite living so close to each other, Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank exist in almost complete separation, and both sides have little knowledge of each other's lives or humanity. Stereotypes are generally reinforced by exposure to only the aggression of the other; whether through media or personal experience of violence and trauma. At a time when both sides are convinced "there is no partner for peace," we have found otherwise.

Through our projects and workshops, we create trust and partnership — the societal foundations upon which future political agreements can be built.

Our story begins in 2014 at a meeting between students of Rabbi Menachem Froman, of blessed memory, and members of the politically-prominent Abu Awwad family. This grew into a series of encounters between Palestinians and Israelis: meetings between families, a women's group, workshops, and a joint response to violence. Sensing the transformative power of this work, we committed to a long-term project and called it Roots.

We are a unique network of local Palestinians and Israelis who have come to see each other as the partners we both need to make changes to end our conflict. Based on a mutual recognition of each People's connection to the Land, we are developing understanding and solidarity despite our ideological differences. Roots is a place where local peoples can take responsibility. Our work is aimed at challenging the assumptions our communities hold about each other, building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict in our respective societies. This is a grassroots and local model for making change — from the bottom up.

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These are some of the values upon which Roots was founded and the praxis of our work. We firmly believe in and are obligated to:

Core Values

Mutual recognition of Jewish and Palestinian 'belonging' to the Land: honouring, respecting and including our national and religious identities in the process of peace-building.

Openness to change and growth; critical examination of our collective identities, and seeking new paths to peace.

Agency and responsibility of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians and civil society's role in peace-building.

Involving those segments of society most alienated by the peace process to date.

Understanding, empathy and trust.

Opposition to violence.

Israeli and Palestinian relationship and partnership: both sides working together and supporting each other.

Freedom, security and mutual flourishing for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Equality: civil, political and national rights for Palestinians and Israelis.

Roots does not officially endorse any particular political model

Praxis

Working within a broken reality without accepting it.

Taking responsibility to improve the situation.

Working on a local level to address systemic problems; community engagements.

Inclusivity and engaging of different opinions and approaches.

Deeply engaging religion and religious leaders – Judaism, Islam and Christianity- in our search for commonality, understanding and the path to a solution to our conflict.

Reducing hatred and healing trauma.

What We Do

Initiatives: Roots is extremely active and carries out groundbreaking grassroots projects within and between our two communities. Our projects include a wide range of formal and informal activities and action, from interreligious discussion groups to a summer camp for children to community-wide meals.

Speaking: A large part of our work is bringing our experience and personal stories to new groups. We speak with various groups at the Roots Field and internationally with the aim to open and change the conversation around the conflict. To access media from past events or to find out about upcoming speaking tours in the US or Europe please look to our 'Speaking Tours' pages.

Dialogue: Roots runs dialogue groups at least once a week between members of local communities. We know that there is great disagreement over many issues - over the facts of the past and the reality of the present; but we have found that effective dialogue is the secure place for argument, and leads to deeper understanding. It is in this space that solutions can be built and actions can be developed.

To donate to Roots, go to:

<https://www.friendsofroots.net/donate>

Your contribution will help us:

- Support Palestinian and Israeli peace-makers and their families whose sources of income have dried up as a result of the war and who have little or no social safety net. Roots is working to ensure that they have basic foodstuffs and essential medicines.
- Support Israelis from the Gaza border area who have been uprooted and are now temporarily living in the Gush Etzion area where Roots operates.

But first, the recording from the above-mentioned zoom event which we called Peace-makers at a Time of War. Many, many people have reached out to tell us how powerful and insightful they found it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC1sH-4H53U>

Roots' website: <https://www.friendsofroots.net>