

# Preface

This book is the fruit of efforts that spanned years, and, in truth, even decades. It is my deep pleasure to now offer the reader a brief sketch of such efforts, and the process by which the volume was birthed.

The proximal roots of ‘Building Peace Through Knowledge: The Israeli-Palestinian Case’ lie in the multi-year USAID project of the same name. This project, which was codirected by the author and the author’s colleague and friend, Dr. Tawfiq Ali Mohammad Salman, emerged from our joint sense that a very particular Israeli–Palestinian collaboration was urgently called for in the region. Such a collaboration—novel in the world of peace work—would have as its main pillar the dissemination of knowledge. Moreover, the collaboration would build upon cutting-edge science, yet extend this knowledge boundary by being constructed as a continuously tuned longitudinal research study, generating and testing data throughout its life-course. We sought to take the best of what scholarship could offer us, implement it in the real world of protracted political violence, and produce new information as well as new attitudes and behaviors.

Our aim was ambitious. Nonetheless, we believed that nothing less would address adequately the desperate need in the region for a peace endeavor that reached across ethnicities, faith communities, and all manner of identity commitments. In this respect, my decades of work in the different Israeli sectors, as well as peace initiatives across the Israeli–Palestinian divide, were put to good use. I can say honestly that every ability I honed in those years, I applied fully in my tenure as director of “Building Peace Through Knowledge.”

In Chapter 2 of the book, we discuss attitudes and ideologies, how they form, how to measure them, and what to do with them once they have formed.

Chapter 3 investigates the concept of intergroup conflict, reviewing how such conflicts have been theorized, and considering some mechanisms for intergroup conflict.

In Chapter 4 we review both theory and practice on reducing such intergroup conflict, focusing on people-to-people interventions (P2Ps).

Chapter 5 considers political violence and its psychosocial consequences. Social-ecological factors are discussed, as well as a broader sense of community resilience.

In Chapter 6 we provide a sampling of studies on the consequences of exposure to terrorism or war for adults and children, both Israeli and Palestinian. We consider posttraumatic stress, on the one hand, and, the development of resilience and coping behaviors on the other.

In Chapter 7 we discuss forgiveness and reconciliation, on meeting “the Other,” with the goal of ‘rehumanizing’ the dehumanized through interpersonal contact.

In Chapter 8 we present a comprehensive analysis of the methodology and findings of the three-and-half years of the implementation of the Building Peace through Knowledge project.

That our goals for the project were achieved, and even surpassed, was thanks to the efforts of many individuals. Too numerous to name here, I am afraid that these dear colleagues and friends will have to suffice with a general but heartfelt word of thanks. The Middle East may indeed be a region of intense and ongoing conflict, but the time, energy, and concern expended by those the reader will meet towards the end of this volume have made this area a better place for all.

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