

# INTERFAITH ENCOUNTER ASSOCIATION



Over 80% of the Israeli & Palestinian population identify themselves as affiliated to a community of faith within an Abrahamic tradition. This makes affinity to religion the greatest common denominator between peoples of the Holy Land.

This commonality of faith serves as a bridge upon which individuals and communities can find mutual respect, understanding and ultimately, peace.



## A Bridge To Peace

The IEA was founded during the height of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada. It's operational concept is simple and effective, to bring together people of faith estranged by sectarian divides and engage them in direct interpersonal encounters. Under the facilitatory support of the IEA, this model of encounter has become a leading means of interfaith & intergroup dialogue in the region.

The IEA's methods have become the subject of research from academic institutes including Harvard, Bar Ilan and DePaul Universities. Multi-year studies from these institutes have affirmed with veracity the efficacy of the IEA's encounter model for transformative positive change.

**2001**

Year  
Founded

**126**

Groups  
Formed

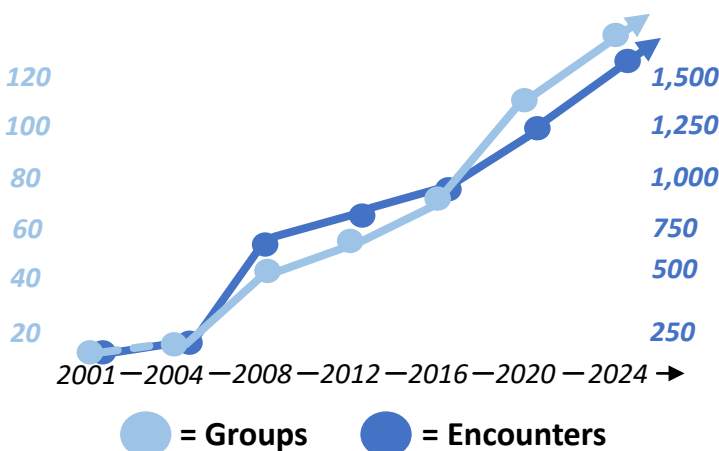
**4,600**

Annual  
Participations

**20,000+**

Total Participants  
Since Founding

### Growth



### Reach



Encounter groups are formed throughout the binational region, engaging a plurality of communities.

*On this map is marked the locality of IEA groups.*

# Advancing Despite Adversity

Over its 23 years of operation, the IEA has persevered and thrived amidst every challenge the region has faced, growing each year despite & in light of adversities.

Since October 2023, the IEA has redoubled its efforts to galvanise public awareness and engagement in encounter activities. Through a series of social media campaigns and by word-of-mouth, 2024 has become a **record year** for new public engagement, registrations and group formations - exemplifying the thirst amongst people of the region for coming to understand and encounter 'the other'.

**This year** the IEA has received **>300** new participant registrations, leading to a capacity overhaul of many existing encounter groups and the founding of **6 new**.

## Encounter Group Types

When forming a new encounter group, the IEA team works with local communities to determine the need and desire for encounter opportunities and enables for a plurality of group types that best serve each context. The range of encounter groups formed include:

- 10 Youth Groups
- 14 Women's Groups
- 6 Religious Leaders Groups
- 16 Professions Groups
- 27 Student Groups
- 3 Topical Learning Groups

## Growing Support

The IEA has been recognised by multiple organizations including: UNESCO recognition status, **Women's Peace Initiative Award** (Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding,) Immortal Chaplains Foundation's **Prize for Humanity**, IIE Victor J. Goldberg **Prize for Peace in the Middle East, 2022** Israel's **Presidential Award for Volunteerism**.



Some supporting partners include: USAID (MEPPA,) The German Embassy, The Center for Israel Studies & The Church of Sweden.



## 2025 - Request for Support

With a newly established MEPPA partnership providing a pillar of support for the upcoming years, our 2025 initiative is to develop a new rate of growth in encounter groups, opportunities and awareness. Building on the established momentum of engagement across the region to catalyse an exponential growth in new encounters.

The IEA would welcome the support of people and organizations interested in developing and founding encounter groups in the Holy Land. Each new group requires \$6,800 to form and support for its first year of activities. Over the course of a groups lifetime, dozens to hundreds of participants can be involved. Discretion of support for specific group types, regions or expenditures can be facilitated.

Donations to the IEA can be registered as tax-deductible transactions and made via our website or through direct contact. For any questions - **please contact us:**



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[www.interfaith-encounter.org](http://www.interfaith-encounter.org)