

Bridge the Divide Anniversary Report - July 2022

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The Situation

The events of May 2021 were a low point in Jewish-Palestinian relations in Israel. The violence that erupted, especially in the 'mixed Jewish-Arab cities,' increased intercommunal tensions nation-wide and threatened to undermine the possibility of a shared society based on the values of partnership, equality, and justice. Many Jewish and Palestinian citizens were injured. Places of worship, stores, cars, and other private property were vandalised. The police's response was "Operation Law and Order," in which more than 2,000 people—90% of them Palestinian were arrested.

New Israel Funds Response

Our response to the unrest and deterioration in Jewish-Arab relations, was rapid and multi-faceted. To ease tensions, rebuild trust, and further strengthen our work toward a more equitable and just Israel we:

1. Distributed over \$100,000 in **rapid response grants** to bolster existing and new shared society, human rights, and Palestinian society partners.
2. Provided an **essential crisis response: coordinating efforts** of diverse organisations and groups to call for an end to the violence, expose and curb police and mob violence, express Jewish-Arab solidarity, and offer an alternative voice and vision to the inflammatory statements widely expressed by the media and country's leadership through Shatil (our action arm).
3. Our global community raised over \$300,000 (with UK and Israeli donors being the biggest contributors) to Bridge the Divide, encouraging tolerance and cooperation between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel through **new initiatives** and our wider response.
4. **Increased support for core grantees** to whose workload increased as a result of the situation, including pro-bono legal support to individuals.

This was all thanks to the generosity of supporters such as yourself.

Campaign Successes

Global Response

NIF has always been a partnership between Israeli and diaspora Jews working towards a more equitable Israel. This campaign marked the first time Israeli and UK donors were the majority contributors to a global fundraising campaign, demonstrating our supporters belief in the work of NIF as an integral part in the creation of a truly shared society.

Agility

Over the pandemic we streamlined processes and enhanced our capabilities to respond in real time on the ground with emergency grants. We utilised these learnings last May 2021 with real success. Some highlights¹ include:

- Funding campaigns amplifying Arab-Jewish partnership. The phrase “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies” went viral across Israel and around the world thanks to grassroots movement Omdim Beyachad (Standing Together) and Have You Seen the Horizon.
- Assisting Givat Haviva in providing families in Ashkelon with refuge during the violence between Israel and Gaza.
- Running dozens joint vigils for Arabs and Jews across the country run by established shared society organisations.
- Mossawa providing 250 Arab citizens whose rights were infringed with legal representation.
- The Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education provided teachers, parents, and schools in mixed cities with tools to address the crisis and to rebuild a sense of security for students.

This has since been integrated into our wider strategy where we have prioritised allocating a minimum of 10% of our income to respond to urgent needs and catalysing innovation.

Call for Proposals

In July we issued an open call for proposals for initiatives that would promote Israel as a shared society and help to restore relations between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. The call elicited over 600 requests from various joint initiatives led by Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. This was a 70% increase from a previous call in 2019, illustrating organisations’ increasing desire and willingness to pursue work in this space.

These calls are incredibly important for catalysing creativity, innovation and collaboration for existing organisations and providing an opportunity for creation that would not otherwise happen amongst the grassroots community. The nature of this means that the fund is a higher risk approach to grant making and we know that within this there will be projects that flourish and others that do not achieve the full scale of their impact.

Observations and trends from the proposals:

- Geography: Proposals were diverse from across the entirety of the country, with roughly 1/3 from ‘mixed cities’ which saw the most dramatic outbursts of violence.
- Beneficiaries: 2/5 of the proposal focused on children and young people.
- Strategies: The most dominant strategy was educational; offering training and leadership development. Other strategies included influencing and engaging

¹ You can find more information about our emergency response grants online at:
<https://newisraelfund.org.uk/emergency-response/>

entrepreneurs, using culture, sports and tourism, environmentalism and utilising existing activists and religious leaders.

- Politics: Despite the political nature of the events, only 10% of the applications proposed increasing Arab-Jewish political cooperation or defending civil rights.

New Initiatives

In October 2021, following a careful screening process, NIF's Board of Directors distributed grants to 20 initiatives. Selected projects were offered a one-time grant to be disbursed in up to two installments, contingent on grantee performance. They were also invited to take part in Shatil trainings and offered bespoke consulting.

Spotlight on Awarded Initiatives - October 2021- June 2022:

Education:

- Breaking the Borders (NIS 50,000) is a project bringing together educators from the neighbouring areas of Bat Yam and Jaffa. These educators have a unique role in humanising the "other" and preventing future violence. Sessions so far have taught violence and racism prevention to teachers, informal educators, senior officials (including the Tel Aviv district of the Ministry of Education and the Tel Aviv Municipality) and head-teachers.
- The Centre for Educational Technology's Learning Together project (NIS 50,000) cultivates educational partnerships between Hebrew and Arabic-language schools. Working with the Ramle municipality, the project brought 4 pairs of schools in together to engage in joint learning. The project also provided extensive training to principals and teachers on the importance of a shared society, thereby potentially impacting thousands of young Israelis.
- System Ali Creative Workshops (NIS 62,000) binational, Jaffa-based hip-hop collective System Ali ran a series of rap and poetry workshops to Arab and Jewish high school students. The first five sessions were mono-national, and the rest brought the students together. This helped the pupils express themselves, confront their emotions, and articulate the change they wish to effect in their communities.

Professional:

- Bayit la-Ruah (The Association for Spiritual Care in Israel – NIS 36,000) developed a bilingual, intercultural course co-led by 2 facilitators (one Jewish, one Palestinian) for medical professionals in Israel's North to help them deal with the suffering and loss that they are regularly exposed to in their jobs. The three-session course has been run for nursing homes, Internal Medicine departments, and hospices.
- Veteran Negev organisation *Atid Bamidbar* (NIS 50,000) provided training for Bedouin interested in working in tourism. Over the course of Spring 2022, the cohort organised a

series of events for thousands of Jewish visitors, with one event reaching 5,000 participants.

- Ofek (NIS 70,000) is a new joint project of the *Forum for Regional Thinking* and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute that trains experts who are Palestinian citizens of Israel to amplify their voices in media and academia.

Culture:

- *Achoti (Sister) for Women in Israel* (NIS 60,000) and Arous al-Bahar for Women in Jaffa teamed up and brought a cohort of Palestinian and Jewish women together to create a play about their experiences in the mixed city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. The show will be staged for a local audience.
- *Givat Haviva* (NIS 50,000) funded a new Joint Residential Programme for Jewish and Arab Graduates of Art Institutes. This provided the renovation of a space on its campus to offer 12 Jewish and Palestinian art school graduates 3-month residencies including accommodation, studio space, and guidance from instructors and peers to help ease their transition into the competitive art world. This joint experience will provide a unique framework for Arabs and Jews to better understand one another, and to develop a cadre of young artists who can help encourage the Israeli art world to become more multicultural.

Innovation in Mixed Cities:

A Bridge the Divide grant allowed *Hashomer Hatzair* (youth movement organisation) to create the Social Justice Tzedek Centre (NIS 70,000) in Ramle in partnership with Ajyal (an Arab youth movement). The Centre was based on a model successfully implemented in six other Israeli cities, but with a focus on providing a shared space for Arab and Jewish citizens to come together to deescalate tensions and offers a framework in which to build mutual understanding and solidarity.

The Centre's organise community training and form action groups to create change in their cities. These beneficiaries have gone on to set up more than 50 municipal action groups, leading campaigns such as an increasing voter turnout and working toward national policy change.

The Ramle Centre and its first cohort of trainees have already set up one action group to date and hope to address the most urgent issues affecting the resident's day-to-day lives, including crime, education, integration, and infrastructure.

Evaluation and Lessons Learnt

- From a previous shared-society funding initiative NIF learnt grants needed to be larger to have an impact, which is why these grants were \$10,000+. However, each grant was not typically large enough to fund an entire project. Accordingly, grantees were obliged

to seek additional funding elsewhere to get projects off the ground. This encouraged organisations to secure additional partners and increased the sustainability of the project but could be damaging to those unable to secure additional funding.

- A call for proposals of this nature can be effective in spurring both new and veteran organisations to go outside their immediate comfort zone and develop initiatives that build on their strengths but apply them to a new area or require new partnerships.
- Projects launched thanks to the Bridge the Divide fund can secure sustainable funding from NIF or other institutional backers. At the same time, other projects, in particular grass-roots initiatives in their infancy often emerge as one-offs, or never materialise as they were proposed. This is in keeping with the more speculative nature of the fund.

Looking Ahead

Shared Society Programmes

As part of NIF's new strategy we will be moving away from individual projects and grantees, towards supporting multiple grantees collaborating on an area of expertise with joint objectives that maximise impact. These "programmes" are long-term (3+ years) and work to provide a solution to a significant need or problem in Israeli life; have clear and measurable outcomes and includes grants to several organisations, as well as Shatil² interventions. We have two large scale Shared Society Programmes we are seeking investment for in 2022 and beyond. Outside of these we are supporting the work of particular grantees we feel have the capacity to scale significantly through increased funding

1. Promoting Inclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel in Decision Making

- This programme works with several grantees with expertise in different sectors to ensure appropriate representation for Palestinian citizens of Israel in influential sectors at all levels of seniority including: the Civil Service, professional bodies (specifically Planning and Social), Media and Politics (local authorities, ministries and national government).
- Creating infrastructure, spaces, and opportunities for increased collaboration in Mixed Cities i.e. Lod.
- Increase public legitimacy for the inclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel in decision centre's as part of a truly Share Society.

Grantees:

Have You seen the Horizon Lately, Neve Shalom, Alliance for Israeli's Future, Givat Haviva, Ilan Media Centre, Sikkuy:Aufoq, Abraham Initiatives

Shatil input:

² Shatil is NIF's action arm that trains and nurtures inspiring leaders, develops organisations defending democracy, and builds coalitions to strengthen Israel's marginalised communities.

Shatil will create and run two forums for grantees and the wider Shared Society sector:

(1) Shared society Forum: facilitate increased coordination and cooperation between a broad group of Shared Society organisations, build capacity of shared society professionals and organisations through focused learning and sharing of best practise and organise forum wide public education initiatives increasing their visibility, strength and impact.

(2) Representation Forum: a smaller forum in cooperation with the aChord Centre³ working to increase Palestinian-Israeli representation in decision-making centre's.

Their two offices also serve as community hubs accessible to these organisations in strategic locations: (1) Haifa (2) Beer Sheva.

2. Strengthening Palestinian Civil Society

- This programme develops individuals and organisations (small and established) through Shatil to create strong, dynamic, and influential, Palestinian partners who will play a greater role in national, regional, and local decision making, this will allow them to better serve their communities and ultimately strengthen Israeli democracy.
- Supporting veteran grantees (The Follow-up Committee for Arab Education, The National Committee of Heads of Arab Local Authorities, Tishreen) working to adapt, monitor and implement Government Resolution 550 (£7billion) over the next 5 years to reduce gaps to education, health, housing, and essential services.

The Need:

An NIF study demonstrated that Palestinian-Israeli civil society organisations are significantly underdeveloped when compared to their Jewish counterparts. In particular, organisations were found to lack a voice in public debates, to be insufficiently networked with one another, and to be lacking in human and financial resources. The study also pointed to a narrowing influence of Palestinian civil society and a shrinkage of its activity and public presence in the last decade. As this presence has weakened, crime, violence, police brutality and negligence has flourished.

- 250-300 Palestinian-Israeli social change groups (charities, grassroots movements...) are established annually, but only a handful survive beyond 2 years.
- There are less than 20 Palestinian charities equipped to pursue policy change locally or nationally.
- Recruitment is becoming increasingly difficult with young people choosing private over non-profit sector roles due to their limited reach and impact.
- Only 40% of Palestinian-Israeli women are employed (up from 22% a decade ago) compared to 70% of Jewish women. Over 60% of Palestinian-Israeli women earn below minimum wage.

Shatil input:

³The aChord Centre specialise in research within the field of inter-communal relations in Israel and shared society.

To address this, Shatil has developed Al-Bab (The Door), a five-year three-tiered project focused on growing the power, capital, and capacities of Palestinian activists and organisations at every stage of development:

1. Investing in students and young professionals (aged 20-35) interested in social change through a 6-month leadership course in Arabic in partnership with charities working on a diverse array of issues, a month-long leadership retreat and providing access to an innovation incubator for start-ups.
2. Supporting small charities (>3 staff) with professional resources and consultation for effective management and organisational development and pairing with mentors of veteran organisations.
3. Equipping established organisations (>3 staff) with the tools to become influential players on the national stage in terms of policy change, media and public awareness, as well as creating a forum for collaboration.

1/3 of the organisations and leaders developed through this programme will be female.

Tzedek Centre's

We are seeking funds to increase our investment in the Tzedek Centre's (mentioned above) so they can continue to expand and develop their work in Ramle and other mixed cities. They already have plans to open a new Shared Centre in Akko this Autumn, utilising the learnings from the Ramle Centre. In 2022 their plans also include:

Ramle Centre:

- 200 Arab-Jewish graduates taking part in a mixed training programme (weekly sessions for 2 ½ months and concluding in a communal event). The number of courses and graduates will increase year on year until in line with established centre's.
- Setting up 2 municipal action groups chosen by the participants – currently 1 around equalising informal summer education opportunities for young Arab-Jewish people.
- Hosting 5 public events bringing Arabs and Jews together for shared experiences, meaningful dialogue and ultimately creating a multi-cultural alliance.

Nationwide:

- Evaluating the Centre's and the effectiveness of their training programmes in igniting social activism in partnership with the aChord Centre.
- Opportunities for graduates to take part in National Movement Seminar and work with other centre's on national projects.

We would love your continued support for this vital and impactful work building a truly Shared Society in Israel. To discuss this further please do respond to this email or reach out Sarah-Jayne at sj@uknif.org