



INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON ISRAELI ARAB ISSUES

ARAB PHILANTHROPY IN ISRAEL
Insights into Strategic Giving

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INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen gradual developments in Arab philanthropy in Israel. While most Arab philanthropy remains almost entirely within traditional and religious charitable customs, there are now Arab organizations and leaders who are looking at it as a vehicle for community development and social change. This is a result of a number of factors: the growth and visibility of Israeli Jewish philanthropy, growth of an Arab middle class and business community, increased investment in Arab economic development by the Government of Israel, Jewish Israeli and overseas philanthropic support of Israel's Arab community, and growing interest in social change initiatives in Israel's Arab society.

The vast majority of philanthropy in the Arab community takes the form of charitable giving through religious institutions, particularly the Islamic Movement,² or is conducted informally within family circles and tight-knit Arab communities—which also means it is largely undocumented and absent from public records. In addition, the weak socio-economic status of Arab citizens, by far Israel's most disadvantaged population,³ means that philanthropic capacity on a larger or more strategic scale is quite limited. Nonetheless, more formal, development-oriented philanthropic efforts have taken shape in recent years, particularly in domains such as access to education and employment opportunities, health care quality and accessibility, and infrastructure in Arab localities.

Philanthropic, private sector, and household donations within the Arab community are gradually being seen as potential sources of funding to address these and other societal issues; and more Arab entrepreneurs are assuming leadership roles that set a philanthropic agenda and legitimize social issues. Though still relatively small in scope and scale, limited by weak economic capacity and traditional customs of giving, these philanthropic platforms and practices are becoming more accepted, and are raising awareness about the significance and potential of formal⁴ and strategic philanthropy⁵ in Israel's Arab civil sector.

² The Islamic Movement advances Muslim religious observance and education, but also operates on social and political levels in broader domains. For more on the Islamic Movement in Israel today and its philanthropic activity, see [relevant section below](#).

³ According to the [Annual Poverty Report of Israel's National Insurance Institute](#) for 2015, poverty among Israel's Arab citizens continues to grow. In 2015, 53.3% of Arab families lived below the poverty line compared with 52.6% in 2014 (compared with around 14% poor families in the Jewish Israeli population). Nearly three quarters of Arab localities rank in the bottom three socio-economic clusters (1-10 scale), which have the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the country (for instance, Arab women's employment rate in Israel stands at around 35%, compared to 79% for Jewish women). 96% of all Arab towns are in the bottom four clusters. Arab localities are underserved in terms of public transportation, health services, and industrial zones; they are less budgeted in terms of infrastructure and building; have low and low-quality employment rates, underperforming public schools, and underrepresentation in higher education. For facts & figures see [Condensed Fact Sheet](#) under IATF resources.

⁴ "Formal philanthropy refers to money or work given by the individual to an organization or through an organization such as a hospital, community Amuta, etc. Informal giving is direct, given to another individual or family without any organizational mediation" Elias Zeidan & Assad Ghanam, *Donation and Volunteering in Arab-Palestinian Society in Israel*, February 2000, p. 18

⁵ In this paper, 'Strategic Philanthropy' refers to the use of philanthropy towards creating "significant and lasting change, one that sets an agenda and works purposely and consistently to produce results... It is focused, not on symptoms, but on root causes. It is systemic, not episodic; proactive rather than reactive. In short, the goal of philanthropy is not so much to provide assistance or service; rather, it seeks to permanently alter the conditions that make assistance necessary." This is as opposed to "charity [which] is about help, about meeting urgent needs." Jamie Merisotis, ["The Leadership Model of Philanthropy"](#) *Lumina Foundation*, May 26, 2014.

The giving emphasized in this paper occurs on two levels: first, household donors and funding organizations that give to social causes and initiatives and do so formally, through recognized civil society organizations rather than as direct charity to those in need or through strictly religious institutions; second, wealthy and corporate donors who donate time, expertise, in-kind resources, and money to strengthen community development and a culture of philanthropy in Arab society. In addition, there are municipal leaders who encourage a culture of philanthropy in their localities and draw on community support for special projects and even maintain funding organizations for local projects.

The following paper begins by placing Arab philanthropy in Israel in context since the significance of current developments is most clear when seen as a departure from the dominant traditional practice, rather than an underdeveloped version of western philanthropic practices. It then hones in on strategic philanthropy in Israel's Arab society, and the spheres of activity in which these changes are taking place. In conclusion, the paper returns to the overall status of philanthropy in Arab society and the call among scholars for additional research.

METHODOLOGY

Despite significant interest in Israeli philanthropy in general, Arab philanthropy in Israel is currently under-researched and related data is largely absent from public sources.⁶ The most recent quantitative study on the subject was published in 2005,⁷ and no data has been gathered since on how philanthropic behaviors and structures in Israel's Arab community have changed. Therefore, research for this paper was heavily reliant on key players, donors, fundraisers, academics, civil society professionals, and their records.

The current report is based on dozens of interviews with relevant community members nationwide and philanthropy experts in Israel, conducted between March and October of 2016. Donation amounts referred to throughout the paper are based on these interviews and records provided by the interviewees. The report is not comprehensive and by no means an attempt to accurately quantify Arab philanthropy in Israel, but rather serves as a glimpse of important recent developments, and an indication of the circumstances surrounding them.

STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY IN ISRAEL

Philanthropy is a deeply rooted value in Israel's three major religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity,⁸ with a strong correlation between religious observance and charitable giving.⁹ Strategic Philanthropy,

⁶ "The dearth of published material on Arab philanthropy might lead to the conclusion that the sector is inactive or unimportant in the region. Our data collection efforts over the past year refute that proposition. The pervasiveness of charitable giving at all levels of society renders it a taken-for-granted aspect of life." Elias Zeidan & Assad Ghanam, *Donation and Volunteering in Arab-Palestinian Society in Israel*, February 2000, p. 18

⁷ Elias Zeidan, *Volunteering, Donations, and Attitudes toward Organizations in the Arab-Palestinian Community in Israel: Reconsideration*. Israeli Center for Third Sector Research, Ben-Gurion University, 2005.

⁸ Hagai Katz & Itay Greenspan, "Giving in Israel: From Old Religious Traditions to an Emerging Culture of Philanthropy," in: Pamala Wiepking and Femida Handy (eds.) *the Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy*, Palgrave Macmillan 2015 (p. 323-324).

⁹ Religious-Haredi Jews (80%) donate more than traditional Jews (64%), and far more than secular Jews (55%). Hila Weisberg, "[Who Volunteers More – Haredim, Religious Jews, Traditional Jews, or Secular Jews?](#)" *The Marker Magazine*, January 2013 (Hebrew).

however, is still relatively new and limited in the country overall.¹⁰ Significant societal and economic developments over the past 20-30 years have led to increases in elite and corporate philanthropy, the establishment of philanthropic organizations, and innovative fundraising strategies in the non-profit sector,¹¹ but both the scale and frameworks (legal and cultural) for these practices are less developed than in established philanthropic societies such as North America.

“Until about 20-25 years ago, most of the giving in Israel was done by a small number of wealthy families with a long philanthropic tradition dating back to when they still lived abroad,” writes Avi Naor, co-founder of Amdocs and founder of the Naor Foundation. In the 1990s, as more Israeli entrepreneurs were becoming successful on a global scale, he continues, “a revolutionary change took place in [Israel’s] culture of giving, in philanthropy, in the approach to social investments, and in the feeling of social responsibility.”¹² A young generation of hi-tech entrepreneurs began to direct their newfound wealth and entrepreneurial expertise to addressing problems and making an impact in Israeli society. Today Israelis account for half of all philanthropic activity in Israel,¹³ and many estimate that giving in Israel increases by 10% annually.¹⁴

Still, this kind of philanthropy is less developed in Israel both in scale and ecosystem than its American counterpart. The most recent survey of Israeli philanthropy shows that in 2011, there were NIS 5.7 billion (\$1.5B) in household and company donations to NPOs and NGOs, constituting 0.74% of the GDP in comparison to 2.1% in the U.S.¹⁵ This translates to roughly \$200 philanthropic dollars per capita in Israel compared to \$957 in the U.S.¹⁶ In terms of wealthy donors and major gifts, it is estimated that only 15% of Israelis who are able to donate \$25,000 or more annually actually do so.¹⁷

Some of the challenges limiting Israeli philanthropy, as described by *Committed to Give*, an organization promoting strategic Israeli philanthropy, are that “Israel is a young country that doesn’t have a developed culture of giving, with a tax structure that is unfavorable for doing so¹⁸ and many feeling like

¹⁰ Hanoch Barkat, “[Why there is hardly any Philanthropy in Israel](#)” *The Marker Magazine*, April 2014 (Hebrew).

¹¹ Hagai Katz & Itay Greenspan, “Giving in Israel: From Old Religious Traditions to an Emerging Culture of Philanthropy,” in: Pamala Wiepking and Femida Handy (eds.) the *Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015 (p. 318). Ethan McCoy, “[Q&A: The Emerging Philanthropic Sector in Israel](#),” *The Center for Effective Philanthropy*, November 2015.

¹² Naor, Avi. “[Philanthropy in Israel – 2015](#)” *Ejewishphilanthropy*, December 27, 2015.

¹³ Mozes, Shula “[How to Take Israeli Philanthropy to the Next Level](#).” *Ejewishphilanthropy*, March 1, 2016.

¹⁴ The most recent survey of Israeli philanthropy showed that giving increased by 21% between 2009 and 2011. [Committed to Give](#), and at least two of their member philanthropists, Avi Naor and Shula Mozes, write that Israeli giving grows by 10% annually.

¹⁵ Schmid, Hillel “[Characteristics of the Israeli Philanthropy in the 21st Century: Motives and Barriers for Giving and Future Developments](#)” The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, The Center for the Study of Philanthropy in Israel, May 2011.

¹⁶ In 2011, the total US population was 311.7 million and total US charitable giving was \$298.42 billion for a per capita giving of \$957. The per capita giving in Israel NIS 742, or roughly \$200 according to [Committed to Give](#).

¹⁷ Committed to Give: Promoting Israeli Philanthropy, “[Questions and Answers](#)”

¹⁸ For instance, **Section 46(a)**, the Israeli equivalent of US 501(c)3 status, delineates tax benefits for donations to organizations with this status. While it has been a component of the Income Tax Ordinance for decades, is not widely instituted. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2015) less than one third of operating-registered NGOs or NPOs had 46(a) status (roughly 5,904 of 21,000 operating-registered nonprofits) of which only 45 were Arab organizations. As of 2011, only 22% of Israeli donations were reported for tax purposes based on this status. As of 2016, there are no existing organizations incorporated as philanthropic foundations. Legal status for Public Benefit Foundations (PBFs) was established in 2014, which has yet to delineate the tax benefits traditionally associated with such status. Sources: “[Official Fog Shrouds Granting of Tax Deductions to Israeli NGOs](#),” *Ha’aretz*, December 2015. Efrat Neuman, “[Following the Reveal of Amutot Granted Tax Exemptions: MK Issawi Fridge Demands that Kachlon expose the Amutot that were Rejected](#).” *TheMarker*, December 2015 (Hebrew). [Amendment 18](#),

they have paid their service to their country through the military and high taxes. Furthermore, while recognition and respect is often the outcome that accompanies philanthropic giving in the U.S., in Israel it is viewed with a skepticism and distrust.¹⁹ It is within this context that a core of Israeli philanthropists are working to more deeply establish private giving in Israel as a resource for social change and innovation.

This trend is reflected in Israel's Arab society. However, it is important to note that Arab citizens, with a few key exceptions, did not participate in Israel's economic boom of the 1990s and that Arab society at large is still ranked far lower today on all socio-economic indicators than the Jewish majority. It is only in the recent decade that significant efforts are being made to integrate Israel's Arab society into the advanced economy. As is described more fully in this paper, the philanthropic revolution that is today maturing in Israeli society at large is only just emerging in Arab society, where it contends with additional challenges and a different cultural context.

PHILANTHROPY IN ISRAEL'S ARAB SOCIETY

The recent trend toward formal and strategic philanthropy in Israel's Arab society is a departure from dominant traditional Arab philanthropic culture and practices. To place the emerging practices in context, the following outlines the main characteristics of the traditional Arab philanthropy.

A. TRADITIONAL ARAB PHILANTHROPY

Traditional philanthropy in Israel's Arab communities is predominantly religious, private, informal, and conducted via small household donations. Recent data about the scale of traditional Arab philanthropy is largely unavailable both due to lack of research and the fact that the vast majority of this giving remains undocumented—donors rarely realize any legislative and tax benefits that do exist for formal philanthropy in Israel. The main characteristics and channels of traditional Arab philanthropy in Israel are briefly outlined below with amounts provided where available.

Insular and Informal

Most Arab citizens in Israel live in close-knit, interdependent familial and social networks, ranging in size from several dozen to several hundreds of individuals. Direct, informal donations are regularly made within these circles. This type of inter-communal philanthropy can include in-kind donations of food or furniture, assistance during illness in the family or housing crises, and at times, financial aid for students. Many members of the Arab community refer to such support within family circles as a built-in 'insurance policy,' indicating its consistency and reliability.

Local, Regional and Arab National

The insular nature of Arab philanthropy means that most charitable giving is local and rarely conceived of on a society-wide basis within Israel.²⁰ Philanthropic efforts that do extend beyond family and social circles are, for the most part, local (i.e. Nazareth or Jaffa) or regional (i.e. Northern Region or Negev). The most significant exception is donations collected for Palestinian communities in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and causes in the larger Arab world. Arab citizens' strong identification with

[Public Benefit Foundation](#), Van Leer Third Sector Forum, 2013 (Hebrew). Hanoch Barkat, "[Looking to Donate? Finally, there is a Way.](#)" *TheMarker*, February 2014 (Hebrew).

¹⁹ Committed to Give: Promoting Israeli Philanthropy, "[Questions and Answers](#)"

²⁰ Elias Zeidan, *Volunteering, Donations, and Attitudes toward Organizations in the Arab-Palestinian Community in Israel: Reconsideration*. Israeli Center for Third Sector Research, Ben-Gurion University, 2005 (p.11).

these communities—and the fact that collection for such purposes is highly coordinated, as [explained below](#)—means that most charitable giving beyond the immediate community is directed outside of Israel and toward these regions. This is especially the case in times of crisis, such as the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge in 2014, or the recent Syrian and Iraqi refugee crisis.

Predominantly Religious

Among both Muslims and Christians in Israel (83% and 9% of Arab citizens, respectively), charity is a deeply rooted value and religious custom. As in the larger Arab world, religiously motivated charitable giving is by far the most widely practiced form of philanthropy. Most of this giving is local, anonymous, informal, and importantly, charitable, meaning targeted towards immediate need (i.e. the poor, orphans, widows) rather than toward strategic or long-term societal development or change. It can take place directly between individuals, or through religious organizations, mosques or churches that regularly collect contributions around holidays or for specific charitable causes or services.²¹ In addition, mosques and churches are often the recipients of donations themselves, which reportedly are comparatively large and used mainly for construction and maintenance.

Among Muslim Arabs (in Israel and worldwide), much of this giving is anchored in the practice of *Zakat*,²² or the Islamic form of almsgiving. *Zakat* is conducted primarily during the holiday of Ramadan, as well as *Eid al-Adha* and is most often donated through committees established by the Islamic Movement.²³ For Christian Arabs, almsgiving occurs mainly on Christmas and Easter.

Approximating the scale of religious giving in Israel is difficult, as gifts are often given directly to the needy, are undocumented, and are frequently given in-kind as food or products to help struggling families in the community celebrate religious holidays. According to professionals from the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement (see below), their committees collect approximately **10 million NIS in *Zakat* donations** annually. In rare cases, other local organizations have been able to collect *Zakat* donations in amounts comparable to the local committees of the Islamic Movement during Ramadan (i.e. [Intima Waata](#) and [The Kafa Organization for Social Change in the Negev](#)).

The Islamic Movement

Whether local, regional or nationalist in nature, it is not possible to speak about Arab philanthropy in Israel without noting the defining role of the Islamic Movement culturally, and as a coordinator of charitable funds and services in practice. The Islamic Movement operates as a centralized organization with local committees throughout Israel, and as an umbrella for numerous charitable entities in Israel's Arab Muslim communities.²⁴

Until it was outlawed by Israel's Cabinet in 2015, the Northern Branch was the most active and prevalent collector and distributor of donations in Israel's Arab society. It is widely assumed that many

²¹ Barbara Ibrahim and Dina H. Sherif, [From Charity to Social Change: Trends in Arab Philanthropy](#), p. (4). Thinkers & Doers, [Philanthropy in the Arab World: Study Summary](#), March 2016.

²² Elias Zeidan and Dr. Asad Ghanam, *Donation and Volunteering in the Arab-Palestinian Community in Israel*, Israeli Center for Third Sector Research, Ben-Gurion University, 2000 (p. 6).

²³ *Zakat* collection via established committees is typical among Sunni Muslim, who comprise the majority of Israel's Muslim citizens.

²⁴ The Islamic Movement was established in 1971 as an Islamist advocacy organization, and created an independent network of welfare services for the Muslim community in Israel. The Movement split into two branches—Northern and Southern—after Movement leadership decided to run for the 1996 Knesset elections. Supporters of this participation became the more moderate 'Southern Branch,' while its opponents became the now-outlawed 'Northern Branch.' For more see: Nachman Tal, [The Islamic Movement in Israel](#), Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, Tel-Aviv University, 2000.

of its former organizations are still active under a different status or are working underground.²⁵ With the Northern Branch no longer formally recognized, the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement, which has committees in every Arab locality from the Western Galilee to the Negev, is now the dominant philanthropic entity, collecting and distributing the largest recorded amounts of philanthropic funds in Israel's Arab community—as much as NIS 10 million in *Zakat* donations alone as mentioned above. Much like the former Northern Branch, the Southern Branch collects and distributes donations around religious holidays or significant events and causes. The Branch also runs national campaigns for Palestinian or Arab causes outside of Israeli borders. For instance, the *Aid Association for Orphans and the Needy* under the Southern Branch umbrella collects over **NIS 1½ million (\$390,000)** a year, a significant portion of which is used to aid approximately 4,000 orphans in Gaza and 7,000 in the West Bank. The Association has also recently donated **NIS 3 million (\$780,000)** to support Syrian and Iraqi refugees.²⁶

B. STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY IN ISRAEL'S ARAB SOCIETY

Gradually, in recent decades, there has been a wider acceptance of and interest in social change initiatives in Arab society. This development arises out of a confluence of factors: the growing influence and impact of Jewish, Jewish-Arab, and Arab civil society organizations²⁷; the emergence of a small but significant Arab middle class and successful entrepreneurs²⁸; the investment of overseas and Israeli philanthropy into Arab society and shared society issues; the advancement of strategic philanthropy in Israel at large; the government's efforts to close gaps and prioritize economic development for Arab citizens; and the professionalization of local Arab municipal leadership and their work to develop Arab towns.

In parallel, the culture and practices of Arab philanthropy have begun to expand, with social and community development initiatives becoming more acceptable beneficiaries of philanthropic giving—among household, corporate, and philanthropic funders alike. While overall philanthropic capacity in Arab society remains quite small, many Arab civil society organizations are effectively raising funds from within the community, targeting predominantly household donations. Their efforts raise the awareness and legitimacy of the civil sector in the Arab community as well as provide a small fraction of organizational incomes. In some cases, local leaders have set up funding organizations to direct local philanthropy to scholarships, informal education, and health services among others. These organizations campaign for household donations and seek funding partners from within the community.

In terms of philanthropic leadership, there is now a nucleus of successful Arab entrepreneurs taking on important roles, financial and otherwise, to strengthen interest in strategic social change within the Arab community as well as to support specific initiatives. Both as individuals and through their

²⁵ Though organizations belonging to the Northern Branch have shut down and records of their activity are no longer available, it is widely assumed that many now operate under a different name or status due to the legal ban on the Northern Branch. This belief is partly supported by direct the direct statements of Northern Branch leadership. Three organizations linked to the outlawed Northern Branch were recently shut down. Furat Nasser, "[Rage in the Arab Sector: The Decision to Outlaw the Northern Branch—A Cynical Use of the Paris Attack.](#)" *Mako*, November, 2015. (Hebrew).

²⁶ Not to be confused with the above-mentioned *zakat* donations through the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement, which are exclusively used to aid the Arab community in Israel.

²⁷ Hagai Katz, Benyamin Gidron, Nissan Limor, [The Third Sector in Israel: Its Nature, Structure, and Policy](#). Israel Center for Third Sector Research, Ben-Gurion University, 2008 (p.7) (Hebrew). Youssef Jabareen, [The Non-Government Organization as a Political Alternative—A Critical Perspective](#).

²⁸ Shuki Sadeh, "[A Growing Arab Middle Class Makes a Home in Jewish Cities.](#)" *Ha'aretz*, Dec. 2015. Tali Haruti-Sober, "[The Arab Business Council 2012: 'If We Do Not Limit Ourselves We Will Go Far.'](#)" *The Marker Magazine*, May 2012.

businesses, they are modeling a new kind of philanthropy and social responsibility that aims to enhance opportunity for Arab society at large. Several municipal leaders have recently focused on fostering local Arab philanthropy as well. A few have established local funding organizations, collecting contributions from households and local businesses to improve infrastructure and services, as well as deepening a sense of belonging and civic participation in community development.

The following sections detail and provide examples of each of these spheres of strategic philanthropic activity in Arab society—household giving, funding organizations, philanthropic leadership, and municipal leadership.

Household Giving

While there is no comprehensive research or data about Arab philanthropy in Israel, anecdotal reports and information provided by a number of Arab civil society organizations show that household giving from within Arab society is indeed seen as a source of income. This means that individuals and families who have traditionally given almost exclusively to religious institutions and charity are now also giving to social causes.

Nearly all household giving in Arab society is made in the form of small individual and family donations. Given the weak economic status of Israel's Arab society,²⁹ most towns and villages do not have individuals with major financial capacity. Individuals and families who have attained relative wealth are approached by numerous organizations, multiple times each year, and are no match for the overwhelming need in Arab society. Records show that these donors prefer to give small, diminishing donations in the range of **NIS 1,000 – 5,000 (\$260-\$1300)** to numerous organizations rather than large gifts to any single cause. If they do choose to support and sustain a single cause, it is more often a project they launch and manage on their own.

Unable to rely on sustaining donors within the Arab community, civil society organizations have developed fundraising methods that prioritize small and repeating donations from many sources. Some have had success with established methods, like galas and cultural events. Others have tapped into newer trends, like crowd-funding and employer-matched paycheck deductions. Most have also adopted a high level of transparency and accountability in their financial operations to be seen as a trusted and reliable recipient of contributions. Among the organizations interviewed as a representative sample, the largest sums collected annually usually fell into the range of **NIS 300,000 - 400,000 (\$78,000 - \$105,000)** ([Women Against Violence](#), [The Kafa Organization for Social Change in the Negev](#)). More commonly, sums raised from within the Arab community fell into a range of **NIS 50,000 to NIS 100,000 (\$13,000 - \$26,000)** ([Almanara](#), [the Atta Organizations](#), [Alnuhud](#), [Desert Stars](#)).

Funding Organizations

Several funding organizations³⁰ have been established in recent years in Arab society to fund scholarships, informal education frameworks, health services, and other social causes. Most pool donations from a variety of philanthropic sources: household, business, Arab, Jewish, and International (i.e. [The Masira Fund](#), [Mariam Foundation](#), [The Nazareth Fund](#), [Grandpa's Smile](#)), while a handful are the

²⁹ Nearly three quarters of Arab localities rank in the bottom three socio-economic clusters, on a scale of 1-10, which have the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the country. 96% are in the bottom four clusters.

³⁰ Though some of these organizations use the word 'Fund' or 'Foundation' in their title, legally they are incorporated as private organizations, or NGOs & NPOs, as a legal status for 'Foundations' has only recently been designated and no organizations answer to its legal definition today. Also, these are not usually Private Foundations, but rather more similar to community foundations. See [footnote 18](#).

philanthropic arm of a single donor or entity ([Abulafia](#), [The Christian Orthodox Board of Jaffa](#)). Among the pooled funds in particular, there is a dual mission of coordinating funding towards a particular cause, and leveraging philanthropic leadership to raise awareness and acceptability of a cause in Arab society. Some of the most successful at pooling and raising donations were established by municipalities (i.e. [Intima Waata](#) and [Beautiful Kafr Qasim](#)) and are detailed in the section on [Municipal Leadership](#).

The list below describes prominent Arab funding organizations, most of which pool donations from the community:

- **The Masira (“Journey”) Fund**

The Masira Fund was initially created as a program of [JDC-Israel’s Disabilities and Rehabilitation Division](#)³¹ to develop services and models for advancing the rights of people with disabilities in the Arab community. It [became an independent fund in 2011](#) after five years of operation, backed by an executive board that includes a group of prominent Arab business leaders such as [Julia Zaher](#) of Al Arz Tahini, and [Ghada Zoabi](#) of Bokra.net, among others. This group continues to grow and in the past year expanded to include two former judges and a local council head in addition to several prominent Arab business leaders. Masira board members pay annual member dues and regularly contribute through fundraising events.

Executive board members participate in financial and in-kind support of the Fund. For example, Julia Zaher donates Masira’s overhead and office space, located in her company’s headquarters; and Ghada Zoabi provides free advertising and media coverage through her site Bokra.net. Other board members are involved in raising awareness, public speaking on the issue, and encouraging other business leaders to participate.

Finally, Masira also collects household donations to raise both funds and awareness. It has done so through conventional methods, such as galas and events, which have each raised **NIS 25,000-140,000 (\$6,500 - \$36,000)**. They have also partnered with six local businesses and one local council (*Ka’abiyye-Tabbash-Hajajre*) to implement an innovative employee monthly deduction program. All six of the businesses match a monthly NIS 10 salary deduction committed to by employees, and an average of 30% of employees participate. The local council does not participate in matching employee donations. Two more local councils are pending.³²

- **[The Mariam Foundation](#)**

The Mariam Foundation was established by Mohammad Hamed in 2011.³³ The Foundation is dedicated to the fight against cancer in Israel’s Arab society, raising awareness about the disease and supporting those afflicted by it. Among its various activities, Mariam’s funding programs include annual scholarships of **NIS 3,500 (\$900)** to 7-8 Arab-speaking medical students who work with Arab and Jewish patients in hospitals. Mariam also supports oncology departments and assists individuals with medical costs when possible. For instance, in 2011-2012, the Foundation contributed **NIS 120,000 (\$31,000)** to the oncology department of the Holy Family Hospital in Nazareth. In 2012, Mariam worked with the Friends of the Holy Family Hospital organization to fundraise **NIS 250,000 (\$65,000)** from the community at a gala toward the purchase of a mammography machine (now located in the Holy Family Hospital in Nazareth.)

³¹ With the support of [Yad Ha’nadiv Rothschild Foundation](#).

³² Local councils are some of the largest employers in the community, with several dozen employees per council.

³³ The Foundation is named in commemoration of the founder's sister Mariam.

As one of its ongoing fundraising platforms, the Foundation invites individuals to be ‘Mariam card’ holders. By doing so, they commit to monthly payments to the fund through a credit card and in return can attend all Mariam events free of charge and receive annual reports of the Foundation’s donation records and budget. The Foundation has also conducted two fundraising campaigns for Arab children with cancer that raised upwards of **NIS 700,000 (\$180,000)** in total.

- **[The Nazareth Fund](#)**

Founded in 1999, the Nazareth Fund works on a project-by-project basis to provide and develop services, institutions, and education in Nazareth. The Fund is managed by a group of Arab business and municipal leaders, many of whom contribute to the Fund, develop funding partnerships with local and international organizations, make allocation decisions, and manage projects. Many of the Fund’s projects focus on Nazareth urban development and improvement, with funds going to early childhood education, sports infrastructure, education (including scholarships), and health and fitness, among others. The fund receives significant aid from the local Nazareth community—particularly in the education domain. Its scholarship program raises approximately **\$50,000** from the community annually, nearly half of the scholarship funding. The Nazareth Fund was one of the main supporters of the ultimately unsuccessful effort to launch the [Nazareth Academic Institute](#), in part by raising **one million dollars** at a single community gala.

- **The ‘Grandpa’s Smile’ Project**

In 2014, the family owned dental-implant company [Alfa Gate](#), partnered with local Arab councils and dentists throughout Israel to provide struggling elderly members of the Arab community with permanent dental implants. The Project ran for two years, during which 110 elderly people nationwide received dental implants. Overall, **\$100,000** worth of treatment and products was donated. The family also anonymously funds scholarships for medical students. These scholarships run NIS 3,000 NIS each for 30 medical students annually, or **NIS 90,000 (\$23,500)** total.

- **[Rotary Israel](#)**

Of approximately 60 Rotary clubs across Israel,³⁴ a significant portion are based in Arab localities or mixed towns.³⁵ Their members, ranging from about a dozen to more than forty, pay monthly dues to both Rotary Israel and Rotary International, the sum of which is annually donated toward a variety of social causes through these bodies.³⁶ Arab participation in the Rotary institution has grown in recent decades, though some Rotary clubs have had mixed Jewish and Arab participation since inception, such as Jaffa and Akko, which have always been ‘mixed.’ Others, like Lod and Nazareth Elite, grew into their diversity gradually, and now consciously work to maintain a combination of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian members in their clubs. A notable example of increasing diversity in Rotary Israel is the appointment of Amil Al-Asmar, an Arab member of the Lod Rotary, as Rotary Israel president in 2015 for the designated one-year

³⁴ The first of which was established in Jerusalem as early as 1929.

³⁵ For instance, Akko, Jaffa, Nazareth, Nazareth Elite, Lod, Maj’ar, Rameh, Kfar Yasif, Dalit El Carmel, Haifa, Jerusalem.

³⁶ **Rotary Israel** supports lone IDF soldiers, conducts a nationwide debate competition for youth, a violence-prevention campaign among youth, and allocates a net of NIS 2,500,000 a year in student scholarships. **Rotary international** has invested \$1 billion in fighting polio since 1985 for which it won UN recognition. Its overall causes are promoting peace and conflict resolution, disease prevention, sanitation and water, education, assistance to mothers and children, and promoting entrepreneurship and business development in struggling communities.

term. When Al-Asmar joined the Lod Rotary in 1998, there had never been an Arab member in the club.

Beyond dues payments, members of each Rotary club meet monthly to decide on additional donations and contributions. Local Rotary initiatives include cooperation with and donation to local institutions such as municipalities, schools, hospitals, libraries, and health-care facilities. Donations range from school supplies and backpacks to first-grade classes in local schools;³⁷ to conducting shared-society events and Jewish Arab encounters;³⁸ pooling funds for student scholarships;³⁹ assisting lone IDF soldiers; and providing educational opportunities for adults such as lecture series and reading and writing classes.

- **Bedouin Business Leader Forum in the Negev**

In early 2016, under the government's sustainable development initiative for the Negev (YAHAV)⁴⁰ a forum was created for Bedouin business leaders to create "systemic impact on decision makers in order to enhance the Bedouin business community in the Negev, while generating commitment, involvement and giving to the Bedouin community in the Negev and to the wider Israeli society." The Forum currently includes 28 Bedouin business owners and works primarily to strengthen social business cooperation, support small businesses in the Bedouin community, and encourage the social responsibility of business owners and the advancement of social and community projects. An additional objective of the Forum is the promotion of social projects and philanthropy within the Bedouin community. Forum members, who volunteer their time, are currently devising plan of action to be finalized in 2017, which includes deciding on member dues and completing a mapping of Arab-owned business in the Negev along with the Ministry of the Development of the Negev and Galilee. The Forum has also decided to map existing scholarship programs for Arab youngsters, and invest funds in academic fields in which scholarship allocation is lacking. The Forum became a recognized organization in 2016.

- **The Christian Orthodox Board of Trustees in Jaffa**

A nine-member board of trustees oversees earnings generated by pre-1948 real estate assets of The Orthodox Christian Church. The funds are used to benefit the community in various ways—charitable and strategic. Strategic causes include formal and informal education in the form of private school scholarships and afterschool center for the local scouts (a 1½ million NIS project which is still in progress).⁴¹ On some occasions, the Board funds student scholarships in partnership with the Jaffa Rotary Club.

³⁷ Nazareth Elite, Jaffa, Rameh.

³⁸ December 17, 2016 "All Holiday Festival" including Jews, Muslims, and Christians facilitated and supported by Akko Rotary; school encounter between to Jewish & Arab middle-school classes facilitated and supported by Akko Rotary; Peres Peace Center event facilitated by Jaffa Rotary; Annual 'peace sukkah' facilitated by Haifa Rotary, and more.

³⁹ In Akko, NIS 10,000 annually; in Jaffa NIS 10,000 annually; in Lod NIS 80,000 annually in partnership with local municipality.

⁴⁰ YAHAV was established in 2013 by the Small and Medium Business Agency at the Ministry of Economy, MAOF for Small Business Development, the Ministry of Negev and Galilee Development, the Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab Sector, and additional partners. Part of YAHAV's mission is to ensure that local Negev businesses, including Bedouin businesses, will benefit from the rapid growth the Negev is undergoing through, mainly because the relocation of major IDF bases from the center of the country to the Negev.

⁴¹ The municipality covers NIS 200,000 of the project with the rest being raised by the Board of Trustees.

- **Al Waffa' wa Al Amal ("kinship & hope")**

Al Waffa' wa Al Amal was founded in Baqa al-Gharbiyye by Haja Rukiyye-Alsana in the 1980s, making it one of the earliest civil society organizations in the Arab community. It was established to help unemployed women by providing sewing, baking, reading and writing classes, and delivering food to needy families. Along with these classes and charitable services for approximately 140 struggling families in the area, the organization has also established a scholarship fund for Arab students in higher education institutions nationwide, allocating scholarships ranging between **NIS 2,000-3,000 (\$520-780)** to 50-90 students a year.⁴² In 2016, the organization raised **NIS 260,000 (\$68,000)** for scholarships from household donations and local business people in its region so far.

- **The Abulafia Coexistence Organization**

Based in Jaffa, this organization has been funding higher education scholarships for students of all religions for 10 years. The Organization is supported by Jaffa's Abulafia family, which owns the iconic Abulafia bakery chain along with other local businesses. The scholarship fund distributes **NIS 100,000 (\$26,000)** among 15 Muslim, Christian, and Jewish applicants annually.

Philanthropic Leadership

Over the last several decades, a small but significant Arab middle class has emerged, as well as a handful of successful entrepreneurs that have participated in and been influenced by the development of Israel's advanced economy. In line with the impact of Israel's economic boom on domestic Jewish philanthropy, today several Arab business leaders are focused on bringing their processes and know-how from their business experience to philanthropy in Arab society. A major difference in Arab society, however, is its lag in economic development. Recent studies show that poverty in Arab society continues to rise despite the country's overall growth.⁴³ Most successful Arab entrepreneurs have achieved their status recently, few if any have succeeded on a scale comparable to major Israeli Jewish philanthropists, and there are fewer such leaders per capita. At the same time, needs in Arab society are overwhelming given high poverty rates, lack of infrastructure, barriers to opportunity, and more.⁴⁴ Moreover, most of these successful entrepreneurs do not self-identify as philanthropists or leaders of philanthropy even if involved in philanthropic activities, and those who do identify as such have emerged fairly recently.

Given these realities, today's Arab philanthropic leaders tend to do as much if not more to advance a culture of philanthropy for community development as role models and educators as they do through financial investments. In a sense, this means Arab philanthropic leaders function as de facto lay-leaders, contributing up to 50% of their time to raising awareness locally and nationwide on a range of issues; establishing partnerships between organizations and philanthropists within Israel and abroad; serving on the boards of numerous organizations; and making valuable in-kind donations of space, advertisement, advocacy, products, and professional services. Oftentimes, they also function as representatives of the Arab community vis-à-vis the government, the Jewish business community, and on numerous philanthropic and international bodies and forums.

Among the main causes these leaders support are educational and employment opportunities for the Arab public, access to quality health services, women's rights, public safety, and stronger Jewish-Arab

⁴² Depending on the scope of annual donations to the organization. Yearly, the organization receives 300-400 scholarship applications.

⁴³ [Annual Poverty Report of Israel's National Insurance Institute for 2015](#). See [Footnote 3](#).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

relations toward a shared Israeli society. They also aim to expand and enhance the circle of Arab philanthropists in Israel, and integrate a more strategic and participatory philanthropic approach to social change in the Arab community. They work toward these goals, first and foremost, in their own activities, but also by instilling a sense of social responsibility among their peers, employees, and through their companies.

A unique aspect of these leaders' work is that alongside their advancement of formal philanthropy, they continue to be influenced by and observe traditional and religious giving practices. This means that often, they make anonymous, local contributions and give through religious bodies in addition to their civil society commitments.

Following are details about the activities of a representative group of Arab leaders advancing Arab philanthropy in this manner. It is important to note that this is neither a comprehensive list of wealthy entrepreneurs nor a comprehensive list of philanthropists. It is also interesting to note that some of the Arab philanthropists interviewed for this paper preferred to remain anonymous, while others agreed to be named out of their commitment to serve as role models, encourage expansion of the field, and find funding partners. The list below is ordered geographically, from Israel's north to south:

- **IMAD TELHAMI - Chairman and Co-Founder, [Babcom Centers](#) and Co-founder & Chairman, [Takwin Labs](#)**

After 25 years as a senior manager in the textile industry, culminating in his role as Deputy CEO of Delta Industries, Imad Telhami became an entrepreneur and venture capitalist in order to create gateway opportunities for Arab citizens into Israel's advanced economy, and strengthen Israel as a shared society. Corporate social responsibility is woven into the fabric of both of his enterprises, Babcom Centers and Takwin Labs; he has launched and co-funds several philanthropic initiatives, serves on the boards of civil society organizations, and lectures on Arab citizens, economic integration, and corporate social responsibility throughout Israel and abroad.

In 2008, Telhami founded Babcom Centers with the late Israeli philanthropist and textile industrialist Dov Lautman, to provide improved employment opportunities to minorities in the Galilee region who had lost jobs upon the closure of textile industries. Babcom is a call center and software development services company that currently employs approximately 2,000 people at 8 centers across the country, 70% of whom are Arab citizens. As part of its corporate social responsibility policy, Babcom encourages employees to volunteer in community institutions like hospitals and schools, paying them for their volunteering hours. In order to help candidates overcome personal, educational, and cultural barriers to applying for work at the centers, the Company runs a training program funded by community donations in which candidates receive a month-long training program. Babcom hires 50-80% of the graduates.

Telhami's more recent venture, Takwin Labs, co-founded with venture capitalists Chemi Peres and Dr. Erel Margalit (now an MK), seeks to encourage Arab hi-tech entrepreneurship by making Israel's ecosystem of resources for start-ups (capital, know-how, networks and more) more accessible to Arab citizens. While Takwin Labs invests for profit in Arab-led start-ups with real promise, the hands-on approach of the investors and their outreach to the Arab community have made it a place where young Arab startupists can gain invaluable insights and feedback—even if they do not receive seed capital.

As an individual, Telhami has initiated a project called **3D Arab: Dream, Dare, Deliver**, meant to advance Arab participation in fields that have a 100% employment rate among higher-education graduates, such as engineering. Through this initiative, Telhami is currently taking over [NAM](#) (Hebrew acronym for 'outstanding Arab youth'), a Technion integration program for Arab engineering students created in 2006 that raised the percentage of Arab students at the Technion from 5%-20%.⁴⁵ NAM had funding by Eitan Wertheimer for ten years.⁴⁶ Telhami partnered with the [Lautman Fund](#), Israel's Council for Higher Education, and four other organizations in order to take over funding for this preparatory program, including tuition and housing, for 100 excelling Arab high-school graduates each year towards engineering studies at the Technion. The program is projected to cost NIS 12 million over the course of its first five years, and is currently undergoing an approval process, projected to begin in 2017. Telhami contributes to the project himself and is currently working with the Authority for Economic Development in order to expand to the Inter-Disciplinary Center (IDC) in Hertzeliya.

Telhami sits on the board of multiple civil society organizations working on Arab citizen education and employment including the **Board of Directors at Haifa University**, the **Advisory Committee of [Collective Impact](#)**, the **Board of Trustees of Shenkar University**, the **Israel Democracy Institute Board**, the [Lautman Fund Board](#), the [Alfanar Board](#), and more. Aside from contributing his time and knowledge to these organizations, Telhami also makes financial donations to some. Telhami himself travels throughout Israel lecturing on corporate social vision at least twice a week at businesses such as Israel's Bank Ha'Poalim and Bank Discount, in government ministries, universities, and on panels in Arab schools. Throughout the year, he also speaks frequently at national and international forums on Arab economic integration.

Alongside his formal contribution and work with established organizations, Telhami volunteers and donates informally and locally to educational, religious, and community centers in his home town of Ussafiya.

- **GHADA ZOABI – Founder, [Bokra.net](#)**

As founder and owner of [Bokra.net](#), a popular Arabic online media platform, Ghada Zoabi donates media coverage and content-production to numerous causes including, **The Mariam Foundation** (which [Bokra.net](#) has supported since establishment), [The Masira Fund](#) the [Um El Fahm Gallery](#), the **Abna Una ("Our Children") Children's Safety Forum**, and more—helping raise awareness and support for fundraising initiatives. As it is a private, unaffiliated organization, [Bokra.net](#) is able to address culturally sensitive issues such as breast cancer or women's rights. As a result, the site, which receives 850,000 unique users daily,⁴⁷ is not only a resource for these organizations but a respected awareness-raising vehicle for social issues in Arab society—so much so that The Prime Minister's Office and Finance Ministry publish in [Bokra.net](#) due to its unique access to Arab readership and listeners.

Zoabi is also personally involved in promoting and advancing numerous initiatives in Arab society, serving on boards, founding programs, volunteering, consulting, and contributing money. Zoabi is co-founder and executive board member at the [Masira Fund](#) and has

⁴⁵ Dov Lieber, "[At Israel's MIT, education, not affirmative action, triples Arab enrollment](#)", *The Times of Israel*, December 2016.

⁴⁶ Implemented and funded for 10 years by Eitan Wertheimer in partnership with the 'Yedidei Atidim' organization.

⁴⁷ 56% of [Bokra.net](#)'s readers are Arabs in Israel with the rest from Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and more.

represented the organization in the United States under the auspices of JDC Israel. She is the founder of the **Abna-Una (“Our Children”) Forum for Children’s Safety**,⁴⁸ for which she has enlisted the cooperation of experts, local council heads, and the General Director of the Knesset. Zoabi serves on the board of the **Celiac Disease Organization for the Arab Community**, volunteers for the **Israel Cancer Association** and the [Jasmine](#) organization for women in business. She has consulted for the **Israel Democracy Institute**, the **Lautman Fund Democracy Education Conference**, and the **Authority for the Economic Development of the Minority Sector** under Aiman Saif.

Ghada Zoabi is actively involved in many of these initiatives as a volunteer and donor. For instance, as part of her effort to promote early cancer detection in the community, Zoabi worked with **Klalit Hospital** and the Israeli Health Ministry to place mammography machines in Arab localities, subsequently advertising about their availability through Bokra.net. She represents these organizations, speaks about causes, and presents on philanthropy in Arab society in various international forums, media, and for other philanthropists.⁴⁹

After many years of promoting educational and employment opportunities for the Arab community, Ghada Zoabi has decided to focus on shared society with the belief that it is the necessary basis for any type of social development in Israel. Thus, she recently initiated the first shared society center in Nazareth, [Next Door Neighbor](#), with Jewish and Arab supporters from the region and the educational consultation of [Givat Haviva](#). The launch event for the Center was conducted in November 2016, with full funding by the Center’s board members, and included approximately 150 business owners, community leaders and members, and local council heads from the Northern region and beyond. Bokra.net currently donates space and overhead for meetings and events related to the new Center, which is working toward establishing Arab-Jewish school twinning, adult encounters, and Hebrew and Arabic classes—using educational programming provided by Givat Haviva.

With her husband Bahar, who is an advertising executive, real estate developer, and importer, Zoabi works to engage more community members in donation and volunteering initiatives. The two helped raise, for example, **NIS 200,000** for sick children during Ramadan in 2015, participate in donation campaigns for Syrian refugee children in Turkey and Greece, and conduct visits to children from West Bank families in Israeli hospitals who are without their parents. The Zoabis also donate locally to schools in Nazareth, the Muslim graveyard, student scholarships, and cultural causes such as the local ballet troupe in Nazareth.

- **IMAD & REEM YOUNIS – Co-founders, [Alpha Omega](#)**

Imad and Reem Younis are the co-founders and owners of Nazareth-based **Alpha Omega**, a global hi-tech company for neurotechnology equipment. They are one of only a few Arab companies that donate a percentage of their annual profits to social causes—in this case 2%. In addition, **Alpha Omega** donates employees’ time so they can give educational lectures in Arab schools and volunteer in the community. The company also participates in [The](#) Masira Fund

⁴⁸ 53% of children injured annually in Israel Arab children, which is over 20% of their representation in the population. This includes domestic, traffic, and outdoor accidents, particularly in the Negev. This high rate of injuries is due to a combination of infrastructural issues and a high number of children per family, making education on the issue a vital need. [Report on Children’s Injury in the Arab Community in Israel](#), Beterem, May 2012.

⁴⁹ For instance, see [Arab Philanthropy](#) by Ghada Zoabi, presented in New York in 2014.

monthly employee-donation model, with Alpha Omega matching every donation. Personally, Reem and Imad donate their time and resources to numerous initiatives and organizations in the fields of education, employment, and shared society.

Reem Younis prioritizes involvement in Israeli organizations addressing employment, education, and shared society issues—particularly those organizations lacking Arab representation on their boards. She therefore serves as a board member of the **New Israel Fund**, [Kav Mashve](#), [MEET](#), **Tsofen**, **the Academic College of TLV-Yaffo**, and many more. She has also consulted for the **Authority for Economic Development of the Minority Sector**, participated as a lecturer for the [Committee of 200 Foundation](#) for women’s business leadership, and as a business member for [Collective Impact Employment Initiative](#). Together Imad and Reem jointly support the **3D Arab** initiative at the Technion led by Imad Telhami, and Imad Younis serves as a member of the review committee for [NGT’s Technology Incubator](#) in Nazareth.

Reem Younis travels nationally and internationally to discuss and promote issues of Arab society and shared life in Israel, is frequently present at education and employment-related conferences, fundraises for a variety of civil society organizations, and hosts local and international delegations at Alpha Omega. Alongside their work through formal channels, Imad and Reem contribute to local causes such as churches, schools, and young sports teams, among others.

- **JULIA ZAHER – Owner and CEO, [Al Arz Tahini](#)**

Through her company, Al Arz Tahini, Zaher practices corporate social responsibility and deliberately employs a significant percentage of Arab women, and a professional staff representative of the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian residents of the Jezereh Valley area. Al Arz also donates space and overhead to [The Masira Fund](#) and participates in its employee-donation matching model.

Zaher herself donates and volunteers for a variety of organizations and causes. She has been chair of the board of Masira since its foundation (for 11 years), and lectures at an array of conferences and events on its behalf. She is also on the board of [Next Door Neighbor](#), the shared society initiative co-founded by Ghada Zoabi; a supporter of [The Mariam Foundation](#) a business member of [Collective Impact](#); and a contributing member of the Nazareth Elite [Rotary Israel](#)

As the only Arab female factory owner in Israel, Zaher participates in various national and international conferences and events related to women in the labor market, and to issues of shared society. In November 2016, for example, Zaher addressed an audience of over 500, mainly comprised of religious Jewish women, at the annual conference of the [“Religious Business Women Speak”](#) organization—as an example of a successful woman business owner, and shared a stage with Minister of Education Naftali Bennet among many others. Zaher used the opportunity to promote shared philanthropy and cooperation between the Arab and religious Jewish communities in Israel.

- **MOHAMMED ABDEL LATIF—Owner and Head of Abed Latif Furniture**

The furniture production and import company “Abdel Latif Furniture” is based in Umm al-Fahm with branches across the Northern Region. Owner Mohammed Abdel Latif ensures diversity among his 170 employees who include Jews and Arabs (Christians and Muslims) alike. The company partners with [The International Fellowship for Christians and Jews](#) to provide furniture subsidies for needy families at his store, essentially donating **NIS 3,000-4,000 (\$775-\$1040)** in furniture per family. Partly through his company and partly as a private donor, Latif donates approximately **NIS 200,000 (\$52,000)** a year for student scholarships, both through a civil society organization and directly to individual students. Latif also selects 15-20 students a year whose tuition he funds fully and anonymously. Latif reaches out to additional business owners in his community to pool funds for specific causes. Most recently, he helped raise approximately **NIS 100,000 (\$26,000)** via the Haifa Municipality from over 50 donors for Haifa families whose houses were damaged in the [recent fire crisis](#). Latif also helped raise **NIS 2 million (\$520,000)** for the former soccer team Macabbi Umm al-Fahm of which he was manager, and in which there was an intentional mix of Jewish and Arab players.

- **ROGETTE HINAWII – Owner, Café Bistro Rogette**

Hinawii is the owner of “Café Bistro Rogette” in Jaffa, which employs both Arab and Jewish workers from the Jaffa area. She opened the bistro in 2008, after more than 20 years of expanding her late husband’s local high-end liquor store in Jaffa into the successful Israeli chain, Wine and More. As a philanthropist and volunteer, Hinawii’s work centers on initiatives related to women in business, shared society, education, and charitable giving through formal channels. As a successful business owner, Hinawii contributes and volunteers for the [Jasmine](#) organization for women business owners, the Wolfson Medical Center board, and the Israel Cancer Association board. She is a long-standing member of **Jaffa’s Christian Orthodox Board of Trustees**, and the **Jaffa Rotary club**, of which she has been president several times throughout her 15-year long membership.

In December 2013, as then-president of the Jaffa Rotary Club, Hinawii coordinated the **Conference for Cross-Sectoral Understanding** at the **Peres Center for Peace** in cooperation with the **Haifa Rotary Club**, helping nominate and award the recipient of the National Rotary Governor’s Tolerance Award. In her capacity as a member of **Jaffa’s Board of Trustees**, Hinawii co-coordinates the activity of the Christian Scouts in Jaffa, a group of 300 children 7-18 years of age, who help collect and distribute donations to needy families during holidays with the Board’s support and guidance. The Board also provides space and in-kind resources for the Scouts.

Hinawii’s work at the **Jaffa Rotary Club** emphasizes assistance to Arab pupils as well, with members pooling their money each year to provide backpacks filled with school supplies for dozens of first-graders and assist low-income families with school tuition for their children. Privately, Hinawii contributes to causes such as breakfasts for schoolchildren, and actively seeks more formalized frameworks through which she can make contributions of this nature.

- **IBRAHIM NSASRA – Founding Co-Director of the Tamar Center for Excellence in Science**

Nsasra is a young Bedouin businessman, who, at the end of 2015, co-founded the [Tamar Center](#) for education along with a group of Bedouin educators and community leaders, and one Jewish friend, Eitan Felsenstein, now Tamar’s Co-Director. Nsasra is the founder of “**Lahav**,” one of the biggest transportation companies in the Negev, as well as a catering service in Rahat that employs Bedouin women, a cheese factory, and a number of additional businesses through which he currently employs approximately 70 Bedouin women. He is currently constructing a large factory for the catering company in the Negev Era Industrial Park which will employ 120 Bedouin women. Between 2013 and 2015, Nsasra was also head of education at Lakiya’s municipal council. Nsasra is also a member of the [Bedouin Business Leaders Forum](#).

Toward the end of 2015, Nsasra independently initiated the Tamar Center in order to address what he sees as the major obstacle for advancement of Bedouin society, STEM education for youth. In the first year of Tamar Center's operation, Nsasra invested close to **NIS 1 million (\$260,000)** of his own funds and resources into the new organization – both as in-kind donations of space, catering, transportation, and other operational needs, and funding approximately **NIS 700,000 (\$180,000)** in salaries for teachers, experts for curriculum development, and an evaluation team. Nsasra also secured support from additional Bedouin business owners by raising monetary and in-kind donations toward Tamar events. Nsasra has since secured funding from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture for Tamar, but continues to donate to the initiative.. As a community leader, Nsasra seeks to narrow achievement gaps in the Bedouin community, specifically in math and the sciences, both through bottom-up, independent initiatives, and by partnering with government bodies. His focus is ensuring that Bedouin youth have equal opportunities in accessing high quality education and employment, particularly as 70% of Bedouin society is under 21 years of age.

- **NASOUH ALSANA - Founder, Owner and Executive, D.N. Engineering and Construction**

Nasouh Alsana is a Bedouin business owner in the Negev who runs a successful engineering firm for the planning and construction of public institutions. After realizing most NGOs in the Bedouin community were largely funded by international donors, Alsana resolved to play a greater role in local support for Negev civil society organizations that work in the Bedouin community. In 2011, Alsana began donating a portion of his company's annual profits to Arab civil society organizations working on social causes. Since, his donations have grown from **NIS 10,000 (\$2,600)** a year to **NIS 96,000 (\$25,000)** in 2016. The majority of the 2016 donations went to the Bedouin leadership initiative [Desert Stars \(\\$10,000\)](#) and two NGOs for struggling and single mothers in the Negev. Smaller amounts were given to Negev sports teams and case-by-case gifts in response to welfare agency requests.

In 2016, Alsana decided to do more to encourage business-led philanthropy in the Arab community. First, he transitioned from being an anonymous donor to a public one in order to encourage other business leaders to donate. In addition, he joined a group of Bedouin business men to establish the [Bedouin Business Leaders Forum](#).

Municipal Leadership

Among a new generation of Arab municipal leaders in Israel today, there are some who recognize the value and potential in harnessing philanthropy to engage the wider community and its influential

members for local development. They do this by initiating projects that are meaningful to the community, role-modeling as volunteers, setting up funding organizations for various projects and causes, and personally encouraging people to contribute and participate. As described in the representative examples below, these efforts have established homegrown philanthropic projects and ongoing interest and momentum within the community to do more.

- **MOHAMMAD AL-NABARI - Head of the Hura Local Council**

Mohammad Al-Nabari encourages donations, participation, and volunteerism for a range of existing civil society initiatives, and has launched many initiatives to develop and support the Arab community in the Negev. One of his central objectives is to use his municipal platform to develop a culture of philanthropy among Arab residents of the Negev. Through his leadership, and by partnering with philanthropists around the world, he has successfully transformed the town of Hura, which is today viewed as a model for Bedouin development.⁵⁰

Al-Nabari has brought a philanthropic presence to the Negev region by partnering with external donation sources, and leverages this exposure to encourage potential Arab donors to participate in the same kind of targeted philanthropic giving.

Accordingly, Al-Nabari decided to personally contact business people in the Negev to contribute to the leadership project [Desert Stars](#), for which he serves as board member. He eventually raised approximately NIS 100,000 (\$26,000) from the community, 65% of which came from established entrepreneurs in the Negev. Volunteerism and in-kind donations are an additional aspect of the philanthropic practices Al-Nabari works to encourage in the community. For instance, he is founder and chairman of a local rescue team, and has enlisted 50 local volunteers, including physicians, who contribute their time and skills to this cause as well as in-kind equipment such as GPS systems, binoculars, communications devices, and lighting equipment.

He also sits on the board of approximately 16 different organizations, chairing 9, such as [Project Wadi-Attir](#) (of which he is co-founder), the local Matnas administration, [The Abraham Fund Initiatives](#), [AJEEC-NISPED](#), [Al Sanabel Catering](#) (also as co-founder), and others.

Overall, Al-Nabari states that he has seen a decrease in informal volunteering and charitable giving but greater interest in formal contributions towards projects that lead to material gain for the community and benefit official donors.

- **SAMECH IRAQI – Deputy Mayor of Tira**

In 2009, in response to insolvency of the local authority of Tira, Deputy Mayor Samech Iraqi launched a volunteering campaign to rehabilitate local schools that the municipality was unable to support. Along with volunteered services and in-kind donations,⁵¹ community members began making small monetary contributions—eventually raising a combined **NIS 700,000 (\$180,000)** for two local schools.⁵² Realizing the community’s willingness to contribute, the

⁵⁰ See: Golan, Patricia “[Hope in Hura](#)” *Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2015, and: Dattel, Lior and Lutsky, Dafna “[The Chemistry Ph.D. With the Formula to Save One of Israel's Poorest Communities](#)” *Haaretz*, May 08, 2014.

⁵¹ In-kind donations included building materials and services such as carpentry, painting, repairs, etc.

⁵² Al-Najah and Al-Omaria elementary schools, Tira.

authority institutionalized these efforts by establishing the **Intima Waata (“Belonging and Giving”)** organization, which has continued to facilitate volunteering and donation campaigns to benefit the community and has gained residents’ trust. Today Intima Waata collects **NIS 200,000-300,000 (\$52,000-\$78,000)** annually, approximately the same amount collected by the Islamic Movement in Tira. Funds are used for a student tutoring and scholarships project that gives higher education scholarships to excelling students in exchange for tutoring struggling students in Tira.⁵³

In a different community initiative, Deputy Mayor Iraqi established a local community center whose tuition structure is a sliding scale in which better-off families pay an extra **NIS 50** per month to cover the fees of poorer ones. The center serves 400 children, 25% of whom are subsidized. The parents do not know whom their donation assists, and the community center works in tandem with social services to find which participants require support.

- **MAYOR ADEL BDIR – Kafr Qasim**

In 2014, Mayor Adel Bdir launched a project called **Beautiful Kafr Qasim**, in light of the city’s severe budget deficits. Through this project, he established a volunteer committee and raised funds from local business people and households to rehabilitate and develop the city. The project raised more than **NIS 3,000,000 (\$774,000)** in funds and in-kind donations, including significant donations from a number of Jewish entrepreneurs who have businesses in the adjacent industrial park. The entrance to Kafr Qasim was renovated, one public park was built, and foundations were laid for an additional park planned by the Women’s Council of Kafr Qasim. **The Women’s Council** is one of several organizations established in the city during the campaign, as well as a center for people with disabilities and a soccer club. The latter two received close to **NIS 500,000 (\$130,000)** during the campaign in community donations to renovate buildings and for their operations. Following the campaign, the amount of residents paying municipal property taxes rose from under half to over 80%. Mayor Bdir led by example and donated to the campaign himself, which earned many residents’ trust and participation.⁵⁴

IN CONCLUSION

Research for this paper revealed a number of common priorities shared by philanthropic, municipal, and civil society leaders advancing strategic philanthropy. First, the impact of the poor economic status of Israel’s Arab society cannot be overstated. The fact that Arab citizens have a poverty rate of *over 50%* is not only an indicator of immense need⁵⁵, but of the limited financial expectations that can be placed on relatively wealthy Arab citizens. Therefore, for both wealthier individuals and civil society leaders who seek funding from within the Arab community, developing a culture of philanthropy (versus merely an increase in giving) is commonly recognized as a top priority in order to cultivate a truly robust Arab philanthropic sector in Israel.

Two aspects of cultivating such a ‘culture of philanthropy’ were emphasized by sources for this research. First, finding and fostering philanthropic leadership among additional Arab business leaders to broaden the capacity and reach of Arab philanthropy (both in terms of scale of donations and vision), as well as

⁵³ 30 students receive a \$1,000 scholarship each year and volunteer to tutor for a minimum of 6 weekly hours.

⁵⁴ Cornie Elbaz, “[Adel Bdir: Kafr Qasm Will Not Look Like a Refugee Camp](#)”, *Mynet*, January 2014. (Hebrew).

⁵⁵ See [footnote 3](#).

to increase the number and presence of philanthropic role-models. Second, advancing overall awareness of the benefits, processes and potential of formal philanthropy within Arab society at large, including information on related tax benefits, how to select a cause and assess the reliability of organizations, how to leverage philanthropy to gain corporate prestige and partnerships, and more.

In terms of ‘broadening the circle’ of Arab philanthropists and fostering partnerships, numerous attempts have been made by organizations inside and outside of the Arab community. For instance, the Arab Business Conference⁵⁶ of 2012, which included nearly 1,000 participants and the upper echelon of Arab entrepreneurs in Israel, dealt extensively with the establishment of an Arab investment fund for social causes and potential partnerships between key players, which did not come to fruition.⁵⁷ Outside of the community, organizations such as [Sheatufim](#), [Committed to Give](#), and the new [Institute for Law & Philanthropy at Tel-Aviv University](#) have been actively seeking more Arab presence in their philanthropic forums and discussions. The Arab leaders included in this paper, both in the North and South, continue to attend conferences, conduct lectures, and use their public platforms to draw additional investors and educate the community about methods and advantages of strategic philanthropy.

A primary barrier to both raising awareness about this kind of philanthropy and developing partnerships is that, while some Arab philanthropists see an advantage to role-modeling, many do not wish to identify as wealthy and are therefore reluctant to identify as donors. Another barrier, somewhat related to the former, is the ‘silence’ that engulfs Arab philanthropy in Israel—professionals and philanthropists in the Arab community rarely know about the scope, scale, and target causes of contributors outside of their immediate circle, and certainly those beyond their town or region.

Additional research is an avenue that many say could aid further development, but such initiatives have been hindered in recent years by the costs of quantitative data analysis. The last survey of Israeli philanthropy was completed in 2011, and no research has been conducted specifically on philanthropy in Arab society since 2005, though there is ample interest among academics⁵⁸.

Finally, Israeli society at large is still in the process of developing a legal framework that encourages and facilitates private philanthropy and philanthropic foundations, which is evidenced by the fairly recent legal status given to Public Benefit Foundations, and the initiative of bodies such as the Institute for Law & Philanthropy at Tel-Aviv University, Sheatufim, and Committed to Give, to initiate a roundtable in 2017 on how this status can become a practical vehicle for encouraging Israeli philanthropy.⁵⁹ Participation in these efforts and discussions can provide Arab philanthropists a platform that not only enables partnerships and knowledge-sharing with their Jewish peers, but also one through which they can discuss barriers and opportunities that in turn would inform any future efforts to incentivize more Arab leaders to invest their time, thought, and funds in social progress.

⁵⁶ Established in 2009 by now BALAD MK Basel Ghatas, while he headed “Malcom,” the only economic magazine in the Arab community at the time.

⁵⁷ Basel Ghatas did successfully co-found the [Masira Fund](#), however, garnering the support of multiple business owners. Tali Haruti-Sober, [“The Arab Business Council 2012: ‘If We Do Not Limit Ourselves We Will Go Far.’”](#) *TheMarker Magazine*, May 2012 (Hebrew).

⁵⁸ For instance, an Arab scholar affiliated with the Hebrew University’s Center for the Study of Philanthropy in Israel has been seeking funding for research on Arab philanthropy for the past two years, while Haifa University Research Fellow Dr. Elias Zeidan, who authored the most recent comprehensive research on Arab philanthropy in Israel, has forgone follow-up due to lack of funding

⁵⁹ Titled “Public Benefit Foundations (PBFs)—From Legislation to Implementation.” The event will be held January 2nd, 2017 at the Faculty of Law, Tel-Aviv University, and is open to donors, civil society professionals, government representatives, attorneys, accountants and more.