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The Bruce & Ruth Rappaport Foundation



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## Emergency Funding for Women in War

**A call for philanthropic action to address the vast gender dimensions of the crisis**

15 November 2023

The *JFN Israel Gender Giving Steering Committee* is a collective of philanthropic partners whose goal is to leverage resources to advance gender equity in Israel. At this time of crisis, we call on partners in the philanthropic community to join us in strategic collaboration to address the vast gender dimensions of the war in Israel. This can be achieved by shoring up capacities of Israeli women's organizations to lead responses that are crucial to our nation's recovery. This paper outlines the urgency of directing resources to address the needs of women and girls, defines key areas for immediate intervention, and invites partners to **pledge a commitment that will enable strategic allocations at scale to collaborative initiatives** within the ecosystem of women's organizations

### **Gender Dimensions of the Crisis: Urgent Priorities for the Philanthropic Sector**

The crisis in Israel has multiple dimensions which only come into focus when we apply a gender lens. These dimensions have been mapped, analyzed and presented to stakeholders over the past weeks through convenings and collaborations within the ecosystem of actors concerned with women's rights, status and wellbeing, including [roundtables convened](#) by the Ministry for the Advancement of the Status of Women and convenings of nonprofits led by the Israel Women's Network. This resulted in [a letter](#) from women's organizations submitted to Prime Minister Netanyahu outlining the impact of the war on women and demanding inclusion of women at decisionmaking tables.

On the basis of the data shared at all these fora, we consider the following to be urgent priorities for the philanthropic community to address:

1. **Lack of Women's representation in decisionmaking.** Women in Israel are drastically underrepresented in decisionmaking and policy setting and we are already seeing the impact of this in multiple failures in management of the crisis. Lobbying efforts to ensure women's voices are heard at decisionmaking tables regarding the war, hostage negotiation, exit strategy and national recovery must be shored up by the philanthropic sector.
2. **Gender-based war crimes.** The gender-based dimensions of atrocities perpetrated by Hamas on October 7 and against women and girls being held hostage must be a distinct focus of international advocacy. Organizations with expertise in legal and psychosocial aspects of dealing with gender based crimes must lead and guide this effort.
3. **Impact of trauma and displacement on women and children.** The uprooting of families on a vast scale is disproportionately impacting women as primary caregivers and in terms of damage to their income and careers. In addition, there is a need for safeguarding of children and teenagers residing in temporary accommodation centers. Organizations serving at-risk women and youth, or promoting women's empowerment and labor rights are important partners to this.
4. **Gender-based violence ripple effect:** Secondary trauma of gender-based violence perpetrated on October 7, the vast mobilization for the war and the relaxing of gun controls are leading to new waves of gender-based violence (GBV) in all its forms. Organizations dealing with GBV must be equipped now to address this, through both advocacy and service-based strategies.
5. **Risks for professions considered "women's work" in recovery effort.** The weight of healing and recovery lies with professions dominated by women, which are perceived as "women's work". Social workers, nurses, therapists, educators and community support teams are already overworked, underpopulated and underpaid in the public sector. They are now vulnerable to exploitation, burnout and collapse. Organizations which lobby for women's labor rights need to be equipped to address this challenge at scale.

6. **Enhanced support for marginalized women.** Women at the margins of society, including single mothers, Arab, Haredi, elderly, Trans and more need additional support. With the State hard-pressed to help the general population, marginalized populations that have unique and changing needs risk sliding into desperate situations. We advise a broad allocation to bodies which can distribute funds quickly to field organizations.

**Failure to address these issues will dramatically impede our nation's recovery.**

### **Call to Action: philanthropic partnership for strategic allocations**

Since October 7th, we have witnessed a generous outpouring of financial support for Israel, much of which is already being distributed to vital recovery efforts. It is now time to focus attention on the enormous repercussions for women in war and support the key civil society actors that are addressing them. We propose the following steps:

1. **We call upon the national appeal campaigns (JFNA, JNF, FIDF and others) to safeguard the wellbeing of women and girls and advance gender equity by committing an ongoing allocation of resources to women's organizations.** The JFN Israel Gender Giving Steering Committee is committed to monitoring allocations and its members can serve as a resource to guide you in this process.
2. **We urge the donor community to invest strategically to support coordinated initiatives within the ecosystem of women's organizations with large grants.** This will ensure that the acute and immediate concerns outlined above can be addressed at scale, and will also build the capacity of the ecosystem of women's organizations for collective impact to advance gender justice and equity in Israel. Members of the JFN Gender Giving Steering Committee are working in the field to nurture such coordinated initiatives and will be happy to recommend viable programs for strategic investment.

### **JFN Israel Gender Giving Steering Committee**

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