Mapping Philanthropic Investments in the North

December 2025

Introduction

**Wherever the term ‘foundations’ is used, it refers to all questionnaire respondents: foundations, federations and private donors

JFNil EXPAND YOUR IMPACT

Northern Foundations Forum

Introduction

The Northern Foundations Forum began operating within the framework of JFN Israel in April 2025 in response to the vast challenges involved in reconstructing Israel's northern region as a result of the "Iron Swords" War ", the ongoing evacuation of communities, and the importance of raising awareness around this issue. The Forum is intended for members of the philanthropic community involved or interested in the recovery and development of the North. Its goal is to create a professional space for members of the philanthropic community to share knowledge, learn from peers and increase cooperation, while raising awareness of the challenges of the North and promoting investments in the region. The forum was initiated and established with the support of: Beyachad - The Carasso Family Foundation, The Russell Berrie Foundation, The Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation, and the Crown Family Philanthropies, which have been operating in the North for a long time and are committed to the recovery and development of the region.

The mapping of philanthropic investments in the North was carried out at the initiative of the Forum, based on a questionnaire distributed in July 2025 among JFN members and Forum members. The aim of the study is to create an up-to-date picture of the scope of philanthropic investment in the North, identifying characteristics and trends, hinting at what to expect in this arena in the coming years, encouraging strategic collaborations between stakeholders and promoting coordination and informed giving.

Thirty-six representatives of philanthropic foundations, federations and private donors participated in the study. These funders and their activities do not fully embody the entire philanthropic arena in the North, but they seem to reflect it to a large extent. The mapping aimed to focus on localities up to nine km from the border, but since many investments ignore this imaginary line and since quite a few investors pay no attention to it for the purpose of their investment, it was decided to recognize the entire northern region as the subject of the study.

For the analysis and processing of the questionnaire and its findings, we engaged social analyst Guy Ravid. During the mapping process, complete discretion was maintained and the names of the participating funders were not revealed at any stage.

Limitations of the study

The research population -
In an important qualification, it must be said that from the outset the study was limited in scope. The researcher was not asked to map all philanthropic investments in the North; neither the full scope of investments nor all beneficiaries. Instead, the study relies on information provided by philanthropic entities that chose to answer the questionnaire. These entities, whose identities are not visible to the public nor to the researcher, do not constitute a distinct research sample, but to a large extent they do reflect the entire research population.

Research method: According to the guidelines of the research initiators, the study focused on a single quantitative tool – an online questionnaire – which was formulated together and in consultation with the research initiators and was distributed in a proactive and targeted manner among JFN members in Israel and abroad, and members of the Northern Foundations Forum.

Response rate –

- Contrary to the norm in this kind of study, a representative sample of the entire research population was not constructed, i.e. all social investors in northern Israel. The research sponsors, in consultation with the researcher and the research participants and stakeholders, determined the research population, and proactively directed the questionnaire to those included in it.
- The researcher did not establish direct contact with the study participants; rather the data was provided to him through the intermediary of JFN Israel. The Forum's director acted proactively to encourage a high response rate, and 36 foundations and federations that JFN Israel contacted indeed responded to the questionnaire.
- The network is aware of a number of philanthropic organizations that do not currently invest in the North but they plan to do so in the near future and on a significant scale. These organizations did not participate in the current study but they have the power to change the picture in the coming years. It is advisable for them to participate in follow-up studies.
- There are additional philanthropic foundations that invest in the North but their representatives did not fill out the questionnaire.

Mapping Summary

Key findings

- All of the foundations that participated in the study are investing in the North in 2025.
- Approximately 75% of the foundations were already investing in the North prior to October 2023, and the war prompted them to increase their level of investment.
- The participating foundations have committed to invest up to a total of $210 million in 2025, with a similar level anticipated for 2026 (approximately $191 million).
- More than half of the foundations do not define a clear exit strategy, indicating a long-term commitment as long as the need persists.

Investment Areas and Beneficiaries

The most common areas of investment are:

- Informal education
- Resilience and mental health
- Leadership development
- Formal education, employment, and regional economic development

In contrast, culture, arts and leisure, as well as environment and sustainability, receive relatively limited investment. In addition, organizations from Arab society were found to receive lower levels of funding.
The mapping identified a broad distribution of investments across 82 different beneficiaries, alongside a significant concentration of resources in several central institutions and within local authorities.

Geographic Focus

The preferred investment areas are Eastern Galilee and Western Galilee, which were the most severely affected during the war. Fewer investments were identified in areas farther from the border (Kinneret–Amakim and Beit HaKerem clusters).

Collaboration

The findings indicate a very high willingness to collaborate:
• Other foundations and federations are the preferred partners for joint investment.
• Local authorities are perceived as key partners for consultation and learning.
• Although the government is perceived as a less preferred partner, nearly half of the foundations collaborate with it in practice.
In practice, collaboration primarily takes the form of consultation and coordination, though joint investments are also carried out.

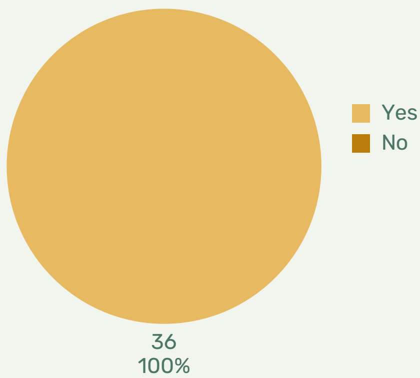
Findings

A. Philanthropic Investments in the North

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to help form a picture of the current state of philanthropic investment in the North this year, in the years preceding it, and in the years to come. In particular, we sought to learn the degree of respondents' interest in philanthropic investment in the North, what are the main areas of interest, what are the preferred geographical areas, what is the scope of investment, who are the leading beneficiaries, and what is the investment horizon for the coming years.

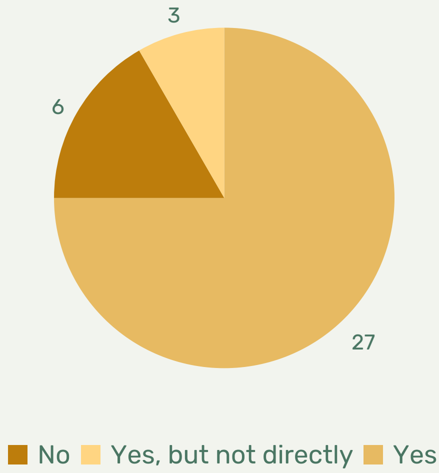
A.1 "Is the Foundation investing in organizations, programs, or projects operating in the North in 2025?"

- All 36 foundations that responded to the questionnaire (100%) are investing in organizations, projects, programs, or local authorities in the North in 2025.
- This figure is not particularly surprising, as the motivation for these foundations to participate in the process, and their willingness to respond to the questionnaire, stemmed from their active participation in philanthropic investment efforts in the North.

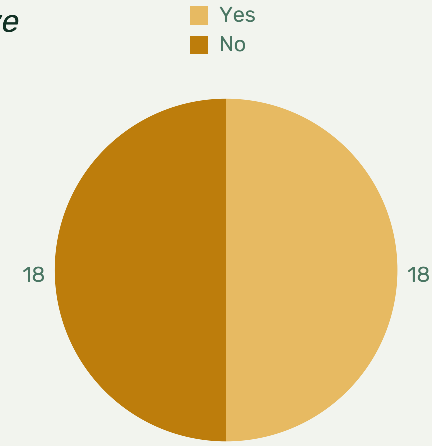


A.2 "Has the foundation invested in organizations, programs, or projects in the North before 2023?"

- The answers indicate that a high proportion of foundations (75%) had invested in the North before 2023. In other words, the events of October 7, 2023 did not significantly influence most respondents to relocate their efforts to the North.
- However, a good proportion of respondents (17%) indicated that their investments were not previously specifically targeted to the North, but that this occurred only following the events of October 7, 2023. In other words, almost a fifth of respondents were influenced by the events and decided to focus their efforts on the North.



A.3 *"Does your Foundation/Federation have a representative or an office in the North"?*



A relatively high percentage (50%) of respondents indicated that their foundation has a representation or office in the North.

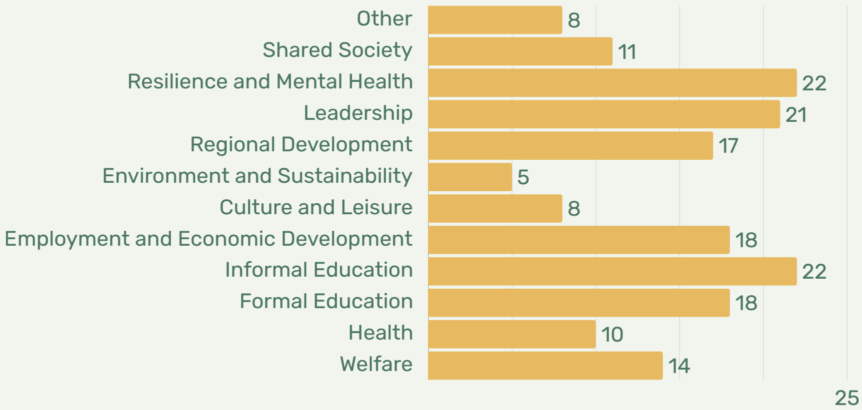
This figure indicates the importance that philanthropic foundations see in having a presence that is in close proximity to their investment targets.

On the other hand, there may be a bias in the data, since those who responded to the questionnaire are already more interested in the North than all the foundations operating in Israel.

Prevalent investment areas

A.4 "What are the foundation's areas of investment or giving in the North?"

The three most preferred areas are informal education (61% of respondents), resilience and mental health (61%), and leadership promotion (58%).



Formal education (50%), economic and employment development (50%), and regional development (47%) also receive widespread support.

The areas at the bottom of the priority scale are environment and sustainability (14%), culture and leisure (22%). In times of crisis, these seem to be perceived as luxuries.

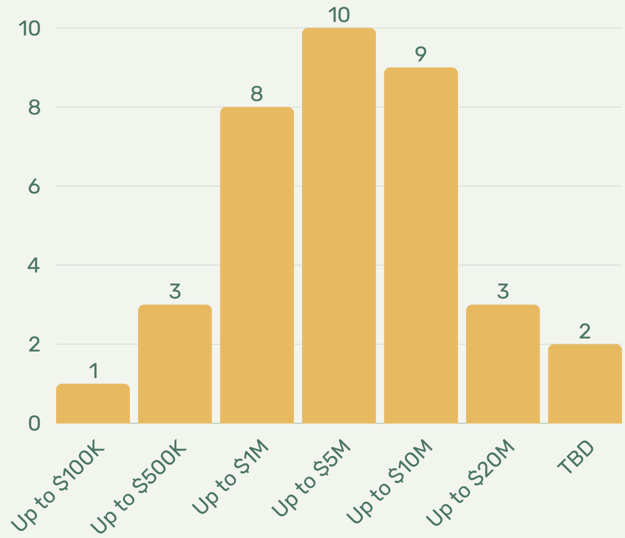
It is difficult to classify the total investments by area. Although respondents detailed the main beneficiaries of their investments in 2025 (see A.7), this partial information does not provide the full picture: (a) First, because respondents were asked to indicate only the main beneficiaries, and not all of them. (b) Some respondents did not indicate the amount of the investment. (c) In many cases, specifying the beneficiary's name does not indicate with certainty the field for which the money is intended, since quite a few beneficiaries are involved in several fields. It is possible that an additional survey, in which respondents are asked to indicate the project or program for which the money is intended, would add this vital piece of information.

The scope of investment in the North

A.5 "What is the total amount the Foundation/Federation is investing in the North in 2025"?

An analysis of the data reveals a normal distribution and three segments can be identified, almost equal in size:

- The proportion of foundations that has committed to investing this year a relatively small amount, up to $1 million, is 33%.
- A similar proportion of foundations (33%) has committed to investing this year a relatively large amount, up to $10 and $20 million.
- Less than a third of the foundations (28%) has committed to investing a substantial amount of up to $5 million, which is also the most prevalent amount.
- Two foundations (6%) have not yet decided on the scope of their investment in the North in 2025, even though the year is about to end.

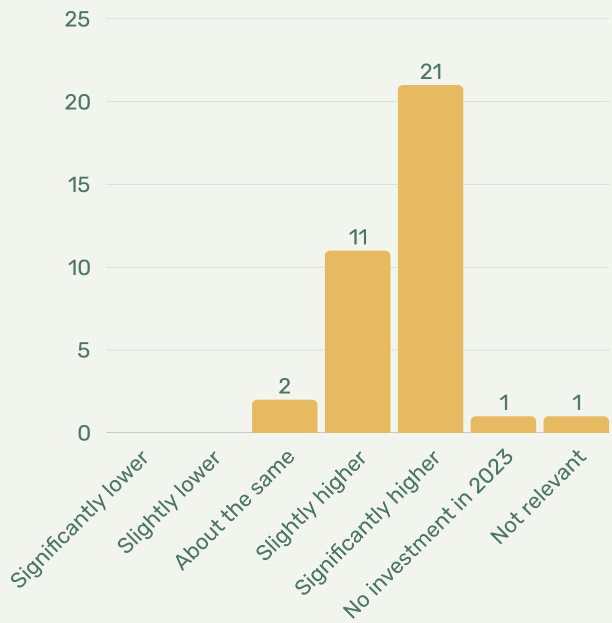


The 36 foundations/federations that participated in the study committed to investing a total of up to $210 million in Northern Israel in 2025

"This amount is not necessarily the amount transferred in 2025, but the amount to which the foundations committed themselves this year. Additionally, respondents were not asked to specify an exact amount, but rather to select from a set of predefined funding ranges.

A6. "Compared to investments made before 2023, the amount invested in the North in 2025 is":

- The data clearly shows that the events of 2023 motivated most respondents to increase their investments in the North by a significant amount (58%) or by a small amount (31%).
- None of the foundations decided to reduce investments in the North following the events of 2023.
- Two foundations continue to invest today at a scale similar to that of before the war.



Beneficiaries and Grantees in the North

A.7 "Please list the names of your three main grant recipients in the North in 2025 along with the amount of annual support provided to each":

We asked respondents to indicate the three main beneficiaries of their investments in the North in 2025. The answers indicate a good spread of investments. 82 different beneficiaries were identified. Twenty respondents (56%) chose to present full answers, including the names of the beneficiaries and the amount the foundation invested in them. Six respondents (17%) presented partial information, meaning that for some of the beneficiaries they chose to detail the amount invested in them and for other beneficiaries they chose not to detail the amount invested in them, while 11 respondents (30%) chose to present partial information, meaning that they detailed the names of the beneficiaries, but did not detail the investment amounts at all.

The most prevalent beneficiaries are Tel Hai -University of Kiryat Shmona (receiving support from 28% of investors), the Kiryat Shmona Municipality (14%), and Joint Israel [Eshel, TEVET, Elka], Habaita/Homeward, MAOZ, and Kiryat Shmona Community Center (11% each). See full details in the appendices.

The beneficiaries that received the highest cumulative investments are: **Tel Hai - University of Kiryat Shmona** ($17.2 million, 8% of total philanthropic investments in the North), **Kiryat Shmona Community Center** ($6.2M), **Habaita/Homeward** ($4.7M), and the **Safed Medical Schoo**l ($5M). Various authorities, including regional councils, received a cumulative investment of at least ($19M)- 9% of total philanthropic investments in the North*. Two quick insights can be drawn from these data: First, there is a clear diversity in investments, and secondly there is no single area of activity that stands out among the activities of the prevalent beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries that received the lowest amount of investment are mainly cultural and artistic organizations, as well as organizations from the Arab society. The scope of investment in them ranges from $25,000-$40,000. While the former reinforces the finding that culture is perceived as a luxury area that does not receive much interest during an emergency, the latter may indicate a difficulty in Arab society, which has also been affected by the current crisis, to establish a sufficient organizational infrastructure or to convince investors of the importance of their involvement in this field as well.

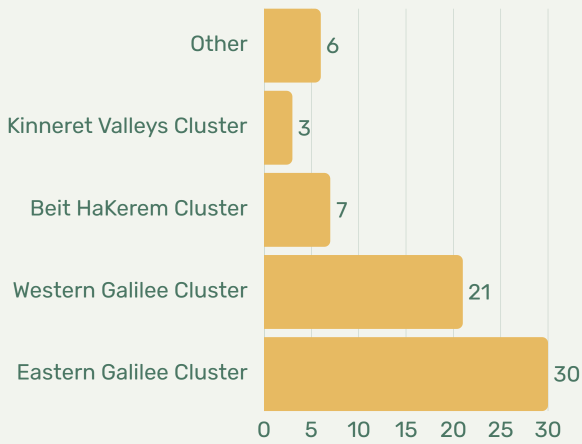
Another interesting finding is the minority of organizations or beneficiaries that deal with resilience and mental health, even though this area is preferred by 57% of respondents. The answer may lie within some of the medical centers in the North, which together received cumulative investments of nearly $7,000,000 this year, or perhaps in the direct operation of programs through local authorities**.**

Disclaimers

These data reflect the situation fairly but not completely, and we therefore present a number of disclaimers: (1) There may be bias, since respondents were asked to list only the three main beneficiaries. (2) There may be bias, since some respondents did not indicate the amount of the investment. (3) Respondents were not asked to indicate whether the money was invested in a project, program, or organization. Sometimes they did specify, most often they did not.

Geographical focus and regional priorities

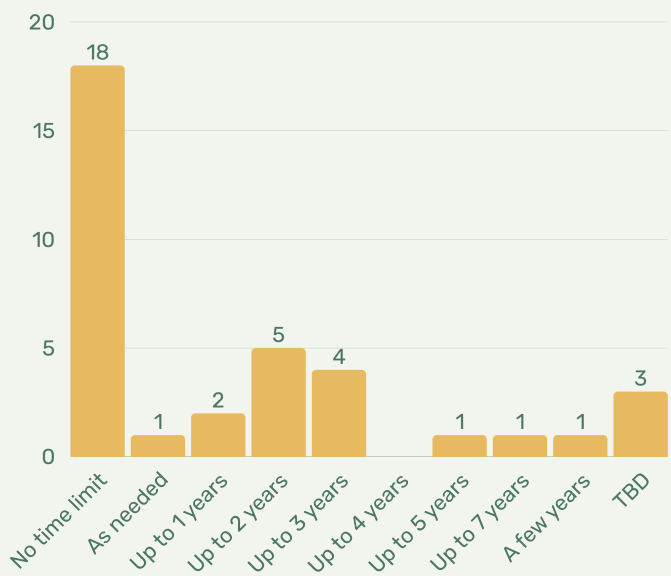
A.8 "Where are your 2025 investments focused in the North?"



- The two clearly preferred regions are Eastern Galilee (83% of all respondents) and Western Galilee (58%). These are also the regions that were hit the hardest by the war and in fact include the entire high-risk range.
- Twenty foundations (56%) invest in both the Eastern Galilee cluster and the Western Galilee cluster.
- Five out of six who answered "other" replied that they have no specific preference, and that they invest throughout the North.
- Ten foundations (28%) that prefer to invest in the Kinneret Valleys and Beit HaKerem clusters meet the definition of investing in the North, although these regions were less affected by the war.

Investment Strategy and Investment Horizon

A.9 "What is the expected duration of your investment in the North"?

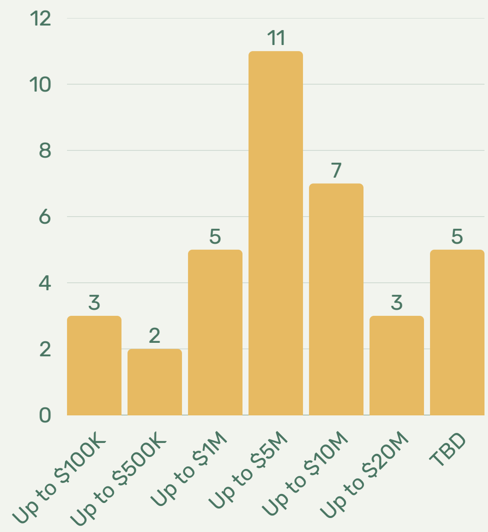


- The data indicates that over half of respondents have not yet defined the duration of their commitment (18 foundations) or have not yet decided (three foundations).
- However, and this is a noteworthy commitment, 53% of respondents are willing to continue investing in the North as long as there is a need and as long as, to the best of their understanding, their contribution is required.

- Approximately a quarter of respondents limited their investment to two or three years, an acceptable and widespread length of time.
- Of respondents, 6% made a prior commitment of five or even seven years, which is an uncommonly long period of time, indicating a high degree of commitment, a willingness to take risks, and a long-term strategic approach.

A.10 "What is the Foundation's/Federation's planned investment in the North for 2026"?

The answers to the questionnaire indicate that all respondents are aware that even two years after the events of October 2023, needs in the North still exist, and not just during times of emergency; and that significant investments are still required.



- As the chart shows, the figures for 2026 are very similar to those for 2025, including the cumulative investment ($191 million).
- Of all the foundations, 28% will invest between $6 million and $20 million, and 30% are committed to investing between $1 million and $5 million. 28% will invest up to $1 million.
- 14% of respondents have not yet decided on their investment strategy in the North in 2026.

B. Collaboration

B.1. The degree of interest in cooperation in the North

B.1 "Are you interested in collaborating on investments in a specific field, organization, or initiative in the North"?

We asked the study participants a series of questions with four aspects: (a) Are they interested in cooperation? (b) Are they interested in cooperating with the government, with local authorities, with other foundations? (c) Are they interested in cooperation just in consulting, just in investment, or in both? (d) Are they interested in investing together with others in a specific project in the North, in a specific organization or in promoting an entire field?

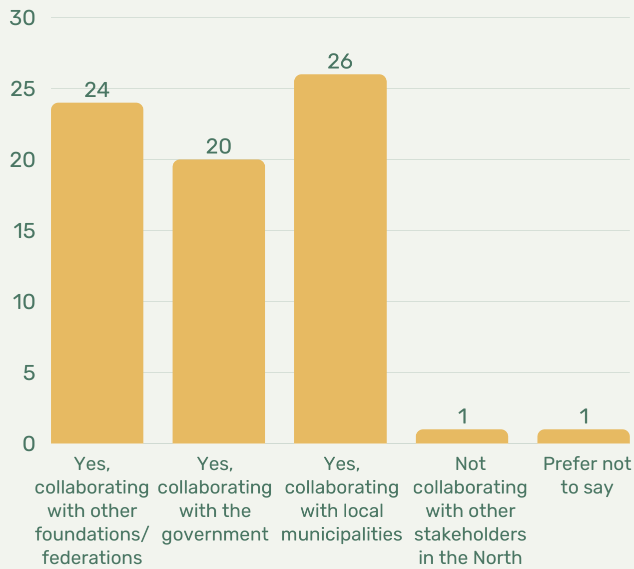
- Fellow foundations and federations are the preferred vehicle for joint investment (92%), but there is also interest in collaborating with branches of government: local authorities (72%), the government (64%), and in fact 53% are willing to collaborate with any stakeholder.
- In general, the degree of interest in collaboration around merely planning and thinking together is very low

Collaboration in the North in practice

Is there a gap between willingness and statements, and collaboration in practice? Does the gap indicate barriers that are invisible at first glance, or perhaps they invite opportunities and a call to action?

B.2 "Are you currently collaborating in the North with other entities"?

- There is a widespread tendency for active cooperation.
- The preferred stakeholder for collaboration in the North is **local authorities** (72% of respondents), but other foundations (67%) and the government (56%) also constitute suitable partners to a large extent.



B.3 "What is the nature of your collaboration with other stakeholders in the North"?

Is collaboration good for consultation only, or investment only? Or perhaps for both?

- Participants' answers show that although the rate of collaboration with other stakeholders is not low (57% on average, with just two foundations reporting no cooperation), the main focus of this cooperation is on consultation, not joint investment. That being said, half or more of respondents indicate cooperation in investments as well.
- While the preferred partner for consultation is local authorities (69%) and foundations (67%), the weight of foundations in this practice is increasing and is equal to that of local authorities (56%) when it comes to joint investment.
- In any case, the government is perceived as the least preferred partner, both for consultation (44%) and joint investment (44%); and yet, nearly half of the foundations also cooperate with the government.

Conclusions, insights & recommendations

- The philanthropic arena in the North is active, committed, and holds significant potential to contribute to the region's recovery in the coming years.
- **Investment scope**: Actual investment levels in 2025 and beyond are likely substantially higher than reported, for several reasons: the Forum is aware of philanthropic organizations that are not currently investing in the North but plan to do so soon at significant scale; these organizations did not participate in the current study but may substantially alter the landscape in coming years and should be included in future research. In addition, other foundations are already investing in the North but did not complete the survey, and some respondents have not yet finalized their 2026 and onwards investment decisions.
- **Flexibility and speed of response**: Philanthropic foundations do not seek to, and are not capable of, competing with the State, whose budget allows for intervention at much larger scales. However, their flexibility and rapid response enable them to shorten processes, identify needs in real time, and act as catalysts for initiatives later joined by the government. This advantage allows pledged philanthropic funds – approximately $210 million in 2025 and a similar amount expected in 2026– to reach the field quickly and flexibly, supporting immediate recovery efforts. By comparison, of the NIS 5.4 billion approved to date by the government under Government Resolution No. 2330, approximately NIS 1 billion has reached the field in practice (in addition to NIS 1.6 billion transferred as direct return and re-settlement grants to residents), while recognizing that some of the approved programs are multi-year in nature(Based on data from the Tnufa Directorate).
- The natural partner for consultation is the local authority. There is clear recognition that much of the relevant knowledge and information resides at the local level, and it is evident that foundation representatives are attentive to local leadership and to residents' needs. In addition, although philanthropy has traditionally worked primarily through civil society organizations, significant resources have also been directed to local authorities, both for the direct implementation of programs and activities and for strengthening municipal capacity.
- It is recommended to leverage the high willingness for **collaboration** to increase effectiveness, avoid duplication, and achieve systemic impact, and to systematically share evidence of the benefits generated by these partnerships.
- **Mechanisms for coordination** between foundations, local authorities, and the government should be strengthened, while also examining the barriers limiting effective collaboration with government entities.

- Investments should be encouraged in underfunded sectors and populations including culture, environment, and Arab society. While the former reflects the perception of culture as a “luxury” during emergencies, the latter may indicate challenges faced by Arab society – also affected by the crisis – in building sufficient organizational infrastructure or convincing funders of the importance of sustained engagement.
- The Eastern and Western Galilee present numerous opportunities for collaboration due to a well-developed philanthropic infrastructure, while the Kinneret–Valleys and Beit HaKerem clusters offer opportunities for distinctive and meaningful impact due to lower investment levels.