

Mapping Philanthropic Investments in the North

December 2025

Summary

The Northern Foundations Forum began operating in 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 " and the ongoing evacuation of communities. The Forum's goal is to create a professional space for the philanthropic community to share knowledge, engage in peer learning, and deepen collaboration, while raising awareness of the North's unique challenges and promoting effective investment 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.

As part of the Forum's activities, a mapping of philanthropic investments in the North was conducted in July 2025 through an online questionnaire distributed to JFN members and Forum participants. Thirty-six foundations, federations, and private donors took part in the study. While this is not a fully representative sample of the entire philanthropic landscape in the North, the findings provide a broad and reflective snapshot of key trends in philanthropic investment in the region, even if actual giving volumes are higher. The processing and analysis of the questionnaire and its findings were carried out with the assistance of social analyst Guy Ravid, with full confidentiality maintained throughout.

Key findings point to an active and committed philanthropic arena: all foundations that participated in the study are investing in the North in 2025, and approximately 75% were active in the region even before October 2023, having increased their investments following the war. Total investment commitments for **2025** amount to up to approximately **USD 210 million**, with a similar outlook for **2026 (around USD 191 million)**. More than half of the foundations do not define a clear exit strategy and indicate long-term commitment for as long as the need persists

The primary investment areas 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 within Arab society receive lower levels of funding, indicating underinvestment in this population. Investments are spread across 82 beneficiaries, alongside a significant concentration of resources in several key institutions and within local government.

- ❖ **Geographically**, most investments are concentrated in the Eastern and Western Galilee, which were most severely affected during the war. Fewer investments were recorded in the Kinneret Valleys and Beit HaKerem clusters; however, these areas present an opportunity for distinctive and meaningful impact due to the relatively small number of investors.

The study highlights a high level of willingness to **collaborate**: fellow foundations and federations are the preferred partners for joint investment, while local authorities are viewed 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. Collaboration is reflected primarily in consultation and coordination, but also in joint investments.

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.

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