



THE JERUSALEM FOUNDATION, INC.

Jerusalem Foundation U.S. Announces First Round of Grants Launching Its \$1.25-Million Innovation Fund

45 Community and Cultural Organizations across Jerusalem Awarded Grants of \$10,000 to \$50,000 to Promote Civic Vitality after COVID-19

New York and Jerusalem – February 10, 2021 – The Jerusalem Foundation, Inc. (JFI), announced today the awarding of 45 grants, totaling \$1.25 million, to culture and community initiatives throughout Jerusalem as part of the new Jerusalem Foundation Community and Culture Innovation Fund. The Fund was established in the fall of 2020 to preserve Jerusalem’s vitality by encouraging institutions and organizations across the city to create innovative models for navigating these unprecedented times and flourishing afterward.

The Foundation’s first Call for Proposals in November 2020 generated nearly 200 submissions, and this first funding cycle includes grants to recipients with long-standing ties to the Foundation as well as first-time support to emerging organizations to advance their contributions to the city’s future. In so doing, the Foundation also affirms its mandate to unify Jerusalemites across the breadth of the city’s social, cultural, religious, and economic landscapes, now and for generations to come. Grant awards range between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

Among the culture and community projects recognized in this first round for their innovative stature are:

- **New Spirit:** Adapting a center-city historic site as the home for New Spirit, a hub for nurturing cultural and creative-class non-profit NGO’s and start-ups.
- **Muslala:** Supporting the new Jerusalem Rooftops Festival to celebrate the greening of urban rooftops across east and west Jerusalem as newly discovered real estate for outdoor social and cultural engagement.
- **Mekudeshet:** Celebrating one of Jerusalem’s unique on-the-seam landscapes for dissolving boundaries between Palestinian and Israeli cultures and communities through “Jerusalem in the Cloud,” a series of digital art installations by local artists that can be experienced both on-site and virtually.
- **Bloomfield Science Museum:** Launching a Mobile Laboratory to bring practical experiences in environmental education to neighborhoods throughout the city, notably targeting vulnerable and fringe communities.
- **Beit Hanina Community Council:** Empowering disenfranchised women in east Jerusalem through training in cultural competency, language skills, and basic business practices to reinforce economic sufficiency and success.
- **Psik Theater:** Collaborating with the Municipality, the Israel Police, and the Office of the President to train local law enforcement officers through experiential street theater to support and protect community members with cognitive challenges.

Each of these projects demonstrates the Innovation Fund’s central goals – to support initiatives that foster synergy and collaboration throughout the city and serve the broader community in ways that will also revive essential urban and economic strength after COVID-19. The Fund also aspires to support projects that can

serve as models for other organizations – in Jerusalem, across Israel, and around the world. A full list of first-round grantees and projects can be found [here](#).

JFI Chairman of the Board Alan Hassenfeld states, “We have been truly gratified to see how individuals and foundations across the U.S. have risen to the occasion to support Jerusalem by preserving and strengthening its social fabric and cultural vitality, and especially during this time when philanthropy everywhere must focus on urgent needs closer to home.”

“The world continues to change in rapid and unexpected ways, calling for us to re-evaluate assumptions we may have held previously. The definition of shared cultural experience has shifted and broadened as new ways to experience the arts have emerged, and new ways to understand and engage with communal space and social networks are also surfacing,” says James Snyder, JFI Executive Chairman. “Necessity is the mother of invention, and this is our opportunity to foster that phenomenon.”

“Given the Foundation’s commitment to building strategies for future strength and especially in the face of the challenges presented today by COVID-19, we see this year’s process as an opportunity not only to expand the scope and impact of the Foundation’s grant-making, but also to promote critical learning opportunities for the future,” says Shai Doron, President of the Jerusalem Foundation in Jerusalem. “For this, we are hugely grateful for the generosity of friends in the U.S. who have made this initiative possible.”

Ruth Diskin, Director of Projects for the Jerusalem Foundation with responsibility for overseeing its grant-making activities, adds, “The Innovation Fund has transformed our grant-making capacity for the audiences we serve throughout the city. We look forward to extending this impact in meaningful ways.”

Through both its new Innovation Fund and its earlier COVID-19 relief efforts – which touched the lives of more than 200,000 Jerusalemites throughout 2020 – the Foundation has been able to catalyze matching support from individual, foundation, municipal, and corporate sources, creating an immediate multiplier effect and providing another model for the power of public-private partnerships on all fronts. Examples like these take on that much more meaning today, given the mounting demands on philanthropy worldwide during this time of crisis.

About The Jerusalem Foundation

Founded by Mayor Teddy Kollek in 1966, the Jerusalem Foundation has worked on behalf of the city of Jerusalem and its people for more than 50 years to shape an open, vibrant, and resilient community that serves as a global destination for the arts, culture, science and technology, and industry and supports the daily needs and aspirations of its residents. Since its establishment, the Jerusalem Foundation has invested in more than 4,000 projects throughout the city, ranging from the physical, developing parks and cultural centers, neighborhood community and sports facilities, health centers and synagogues; to the programmatic, delivering education and literacy, cultural competency, and economic vitality; to the spiritual and artistic, restoring and preserving heritage sites including the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and the Via Dolorosa; and to social and cultural programming.

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