

# *MATANEL FOUNDATION*

## *ACTIVITY REPORT*

**Program: *Creating Space (Yotzrim Makom)***  
**Year: 2025**

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole rapport will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

**Name of the Program:** "Creating a Space"

**Year of activity:** 2025

**Name of the report's writer:** Shir Levi

**Function of the report's writer:** Partnerships Manager

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**Number of active participants in the program:** 12 participants. Originally, 14 artists enrolled in the program, but two male participants were called up for military reserve duty and therefore could not complete the process. The final group consisted of 12 women – artists and creators from the Negev region, representing diverse disciplines, backgrounds, and ages, who completed the full cycle of study and creation.

**Estimated number of impacted participant:** At its peak, the program impacted a circle of approximately **350 people** through its study sessions, artistic collaborations, and public exhibition. The program's influence extended beyond the direct participants to include community members, local partners, and audiences who engaged with the project's outcomes and visibility in the region.

**Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):** As of this report, the *Creating Space* program has successfully completed its second annual cycle. Twelve multidisciplinary artists participated in ten study and creation sessions, a two-day seminar, and a final exhibition titled "*Between the Sunsets*," held in collaboration with the Shafir Regional Council. This year focused on the theme of "*Memory and Independence*," inviting artists to explore the connection between personal and collective memory through Jewish learning and art. The program offered a creative and supportive space for southern artists to recover after a challenging national year. **Participants reported** significant personal growth, renewed artistic inspiration, and lasting professional connections. **Following the success of this cycle**, preparations are already underway for the next cohort, expanding collaborations and strengthening community impact across the region.

**The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):**

During the year, *Creating Space* completed its second cycle with the participation of **12 multidisciplinary artists** from the southern region of Israel.

The program included **10 Beit Midrash-style learning and creation sessions** and a

**final public exhibition** held in collaboration with the **Shafir Regional Council**. Approximately **350 people** were directly or indirectly impacted through learning sessions, community engagement, and the “*Between the Sunsets*” exhibition. Over **85% of participants** reported that the program strengthened their artistic confidence and motivation to continue creating within their local communities.

Several artists shared during the final event that, after October 7, returning to artistic creation had felt impossible, yet the program helped them open their hearts again and reconnect with their art. Over **85% of participants** reported that the experience strengthened their artistic confidence and motivation to continue creating within their local communities. **The partnership with the Shafir Regional Council was renewed for another year, and planning for the next cycle is already underway.**

### **Key Achievements:**

- **Strengthening the Southern Artists Network** - Consolidating a growing community of artists in the southern region who engage in dialogue between Jewish identity, creativity, and social resilience.
- **Expansion of Women’s Artistic Leadership** - Forming a cohort of 12 women creators who became a supportive circle of artistic, emotional, and professional empowerment.
- **Integration of Jewish Learning and Art** - Conducting 10 Beit Midrash-style study sessions that connected traditional Jewish sources to contemporary artistic expression.
- **Artistic Recovery** - Providing a meaningful framework for artists to overcome creative stagnation following the events of October 7, and to transform personal and collective memory into creation.
- **Regional Collaboration** - Establishing a strong partnership with the Shafir Regional Council, enhancing local cultural life and setting the ground for long-term cooperation.
- **Successful exhibition Production** - Producing the “*Between the Sunsets*” exhibition, presenting original works inspired by the theme of *Memory and Independence* and attracting hundreds of community members and leaders.
- **Sustainability and Growth** - Building the foundation for the program’s third cycle, with increased interest from new artists and regional partners.

### **The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):**

The program’s evaluation combined participant surveys, personal interviews, and staff reflection meetings, focusing on both the artistic and educational aspects of the process. **The findings highlight significant growth compared to the first year:** participants demonstrated deeper engagement with Jewish learning, greater artistic confidence, and stronger group cohesion.

Unlike the first cycle, which focused primarily on re-establishing cultural activity after a national crisis, the 2025 cycle emphasized continuity, recovery, and building a sustainable community of creators.

Participants described the Beit Midrash sessions as a transformative experience that reconnected them to creativity, spirituality, and mutual support.

This cohort allowed intimate dialogue, trust, and shared artistic exploration. This model proved especially effective for fostering resilience and a sense of belonging. The partnership with the Shafir Regional Council was evaluated as a major success, strengthening local recognition and establishing a foundation for long-term collaboration.

In conclusion, the evaluation indicates that Creating Space is evolving from a one-time cultural initiative into an ongoing regional framework for Jewish-inspired artistic creation. Future evaluation efforts will include broader community feedback and tools for measuring the program's cumulative social and cultural impact.

**The program has now entered its third cycle and has gained significant recognition in the Negev region.** Due to growing awareness and demand, *Creating Space* now operates with a waiting list: more than 50 applicants have applied for only 15 available spots. If the grant amount can be increased, the program will be able to expand its capacity and open additional places to meet the high demand and deepen its community impact.

### **List of Attachments**

1. **Article about “Creating Space” in “Shabbaton”** - Attached is a recent article about the *Creating Space* program, published in *Shabbaton*. It highlights the program's unique approach to combining Jewish learning and art, and features testimonies from participants who describe how the experience helped them reconnect to creativity and community after a difficult year.
2. **Project Photos** - Attached are several photos documenting the learning sessions and the final “*Between the Sunsets*” exhibition..  
**Please note:** We do not have a video presentation this year, as the production budget was fully dedicated to program implementation and the creation of the exhibition itself. The attached photos effectively reflect the spirit and impact of the program.
3. **Evaluation Report (PDF)** - A detailed statement summarizing the project's income and expenses for the 2024–2025 activity year.
4. **List of Participants** - A full list of the 12 artists from the Negev region who took part in the 2024–2025 cycle.