

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program:
Year: 2025-2026

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

Name of the Program: Learning for Leaders (Matanel Fellows) 2025-2026 – Community Leaders

Year of activity: 2025-2026

Name of the report's writer: Rakefet Sholder

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Number of active participants in the program: 16

Estimated number of impacted participants: The program trained 16 community change-agents and leaders from across Israel. The program's full impact is expected to mature upon its completion, as participants return to their communities and implement the knowledge, skills, and tools they acquired throughout the program. We estimate that the program will indirectly reach approximately 3,000–4,000 people through participants' community initiatives and ongoing leadership activities.

Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines): The program was completed on **May 26, 2026**, following 8 learning sessions and a two-day retreat in Jerusalem. Throughout the program, participants explored the connection between Jewish-Israeli identity, community building, and social entrepreneurship, while developing tools for creating and leading community initiatives.

The sessions covered topics such as Jewish-Israeli identity, community needs assessment, social entrepreneurship models, impact, storytelling, branding, and venture development. During the Jerusalem seminar, participants strengthened group connections through personal reflection, community experiences, and meetings with social entrepreneurs and initiatives.

At the end of the program, the participants presented their initiatives and received feedback, preparing them for the Investment Committee's final selection process. Several projects were selected for further development and support.

A collection of articles, written by program participants, is currently being edited and designed and is due in **August 2026**.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.): The program addressed three key challenges in the field of Jewish-Israeli identity:

1. **Growing distance from Judaism** among parts of Israeli society, often resulting from limited exposure, experiences of exclusion, or poor representation within mainstream Jewish discourse.
2. **The need for a contemporary identity language** that connects tradition with modern life, while enabling personal, relevant, and critical expressions of Jewish-Israeli identity.
3. **The search for new community models**, inspired by Jewish values and adapted to contemporary Israeli life, strengthening a sense of belonging, responsibility, and collective creation.

The program focuses on Jewish-Israeli social entrepreneurship. It is designed for individuals seeking to create an impact in community and identity-based spaces, particularly in rural Israel. It provides a full entrepreneurial process, from identifying challenges and developing ideas to branding, pitching, and presenting initiatives to an investment committee.

The first stages focus on building relationships, creating a shared language, and strengthening group identity. The final stages guide participants through structured venture development, from defining a challenge and creating a pilot to presenting a sustainable initiative.

The learning process combines entrepreneurship tools with Jewish-Israeli social content. It emphasizes belonging, inspiration, and practical implementation, to support the creation of meaningful and sustainable initiatives in the field of Jewish-Israeli identity.

The participants came from 16 communities across Israel, representing a wide range of community types, including kibbutzim, moshavim, community villages, cities, and rural communities. These included Gesher HaZiv, Katzir, Dovrat, Dan, Binyamina, Reihan, Hatzeva, Mesilat Zion, Kfar Vradim, Amikam, Gal'ed, Kiryat Shalom (Tel Aviv), Elrom, Alonim, and Acre.

The geographic and community diversity enriched the shared learning experience and created a space for a meaningful exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences among the various communities.

The participants not only developed a local vision for Israel 2048, but also presented social initiatives designed to advance their vision. Among the initiatives presented were:

1. **Community Musical Kabbalat Shabbat** – Community-based Shabbat gatherings combining music, singing, and storytelling, to strengthen belonging and Jewish-Israeli identity.
2. **The Dream Trail** – A community tourism initiative connecting biblical stories, local landscapes, and community building.
3. **Ivriq – The Jewish Story Is Also Yours** – A digital platform creating meaningful Jewish-Israeli dialogue around shared identity.
4. **Rural Chavruta** – A project strengthening rural communities through culture, learning, holidays, and local connections.

- 5. The Open Heart Journey** – A group process designed to enhance relationships, dialogue, and community building across differences.
- 6. Founding Generation – A New Israeli Culture** – A cultural residency project in Sha'ar HaNegev connecting professional art, community, and regional resilience.
- 7. Jewish Culture Network – Upper Galilee Region** – A regional network connecting organizations and initiatives to promote Jewish-Israeli culture in the Galilee.
- 8. Do Not Stand Aside – Youth Leading Change** – An educational initiative empowering youth to promote social responsibility and mutual care.
- 9. The Studios – A Cultural Factory in Northern Golan** – A regional cultural center combining creativity, local identity, and community resilience.
- 10. Mutual Responsibility in the Arava** – A community framework supporting elders with cognitive challenges, enabling them to age with dignity at home.
- 11. Community Leaders Forum** – A local leadership initiative strengthening community action and Jewish cultural identity projects.
- 12. “The School of Social Entrepreneurship” Podcast** – A digital platform sharing knowledge, inspiration, and tools for social action.
- 13. Threads of Connection** – A personal and community support initiative for people in early stages of dementia and their families.

Six initiatives were selected for funding, and a seventh one is expected to move forward through a connection between BINA and **“The Social Space”**, an initiative that transforms abandoned buildings into hubs for social action and community activity.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...): At the end of each session, participants provided verbal feedback, and a comprehensive program evaluation was conducted during the final meeting. The feedback collected indicated that the program was highly meaningful for participants, both in terms of deepening their knowledge and understanding of Israeli Judaism, community engagement, and leadership, and in terms of acquiring practical tools for developing and leading social initiatives.

Participants highlighted the value of the diverse backgrounds and communities represented within the cohort, the peer learning process that took place throughout the program, and the professional and personal network they developed as a result of their participation.

Following the completion of the program, individual follow-up meetings were held with some participants in order to further explore topics that emerged during the process and provide tailored support based on their specific needs. These included guidance on developing social initiatives, and identifying opportunities for resource development and fundraising.

BINA continues to accompany the program's alumni, supporting them in advancing their initiatives and facilitating connections with relevant organizations and partners who can contribute to strengthening and expanding their community-based work.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year: At this stage of the year, we are in the early phases of planning the next cohort of the program. Building on the experience and lessons learned from this year's implementation, we intend to continue integrating theoretical learning on Israeli Judaism, community, and identity with practical tools for developing and advancing social initiatives in the field of Jewish identity.

Drawing on our experience with two program cohorts, we have come to recognize the importance of supporting each participant in articulating a personal vision for Israel in 2048. We have found that bringing these individual visions together fosters a shared national vision, while encouraging participants to see themselves as active contributors to shaping Israel's future.

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents): Attached is the list of program participants.

The financial report will be submitted later this month, following the completion of the production of the collection of participants' articles.

Please join photos – as JPG files – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as PDF document. Attached are 5 photographs documenting the program activities.

Please join a 5 minutes movie which presents your institution and the particular project supported by the Matanel Foundation. The movie should be accessible to the philanthropic world and to other potential donors. [A link to a short video.](#)