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Women of Jerusalem
2026 Activity Report

Prepared for the Matanel Foundation

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In 2026, the second year of our partnership with the Matanel Foundation, Women of Jerusalem completed 6 cohorts with 120 unique, first-time participants in East Jerusalem, West Jerusalem and the Haredi community. All 120 participants completed their courses, with the final cohort concluding on 22nd October. Through media training and personal guidance, women have developed their abilities, expressed ideas they had wanted to pursue and explored new possibilities for work and community involvement, encouraged by others learning alongside them.

For women whose opportunities have been limited by family responsibilities, financial pressures or expectations around women's public roles, taking part can be an important step towards a more independent and fulfilling future. Our purpose is to make that step accessible within their own religious and cultural circumstances, combining useful professional skills with the confidence and supportive relationships needed to put them into practice.



Women of Jerusalem within 0202

Through community journalism, skills training and education, 0202 helps Jerusalem's Arab, Haredi, secular and religious Jewish communities encounter perspectives often absent from the media they follow. Women of Jerusalem brings this work into women's everyday lives, supporting their personal and professional development while creating opportunities to meet women from other communities and learn from their experiences.

Developed from the pilot Influencers Program, Women of Jerusalem combines media training with leadership development and intercommunal engagement. A participant may arrive hoping to promote a small business, find a more creative direction in her working life or speak about an experience she has kept to herself, and individual guidance helps her turn that ambition into work she can develop and share on her own terms.

Supporting participants through the 2026 cycles

We delivered 2 courses for each of Jerusalem's 3 main demographic communities, with 20 first-time participants completing each course. Keeping cohorts at this size allows coordinators to know participants and support their projects, with time to practise between sessions, return with questions and revise work with guidance.

Community	**Cohorts**	Participants
East Jerusalem	2	40
West Jerusalem	2	40
Haredi community	2	40
Total first-time participants	6	120
Additional alumni dialogue group Hanns Seidel Foundation	1	8

Teaching in each group's language and cultural setting made space for women to discuss the subjects they wanted to address and how they wished to present themselves. Coordinators and instructors helped them turn these ideas into manageable projects, with assignments and feedback giving them a way to improve their work as the course progressed.

Each participant registered with an individual email address or telephone number as a unique identifier, with West Jerusalem participants generally preferring telephone registration and WhatsApp contact and the other groups using email, enabling coordinators to maintain contact throughout the courses and afterwards.

Note: In addition to the images and project media files included in this report, please find also below a comprehensive image folder for each of the community groups participating in this year's program:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eO33oFbuo8BXvfg8-W-jhTxRIVGQPvFg?usp=sharing

East Jerusalem

In East Jerusalem, women developed photography and filmmaking skills that enabled them to choose their subjects, shape a story and produce work of their own. The first course concluded on 14th February after 12 sessions beginning in November 2025, combining journalism and media production with leadership and identity work, while practical exercises and feedback helped participants improve their films before presenting them.

Average attendance across the full course was 16.25 women per meeting, or 81.3% of the 20 places, reflecting sustained involvement as participants progressed from introductory exercises to completed work.

Photography and filmmaking

Led by photographer and filmmaker Faiz Abu Rmeleh, the second East Jerusalem course ran from 20th June to 29th August across 8 meetings, covering light and composition, scenario development, filming and editing. Its 20 first-time participants developed their own projects with practical guidance and feedback, with average attendance of 18.5 women per meeting.

The course concluded with a screening and certificate presentation attended by 20 women, allowing participants to see their ideas realised in finished films and share that achievement with the group.

Films produced by women in the second East Jerusalem group included Waiting for Myself, Never Lose Hope and Freedom of Movement, alongside an Old City interview and work about travel and family life. Choosing these subjects and making the decisions needed to complete a film gave participants practical experience of directing a creative project from their own perspective.

Select Completed projects - Nermen Abdo · Tahani Abu Khadijha and Saden Abu Kwiek



East Jerusalem second cohort: graduation on 29 August and photography workshop on 27 June 2026.

Photographs from the 2026 program: Women of Jerusalem 2026 Photos

West Jerusalem

Women in the first West Jerusalem cohort began with personal writing and storytelling, exploring the experiences they wanted to share and how to express them clearly to a reader, listener or viewer. These exercises gave the later technical sessions a purpose, as participants applied new skills to stories and projects they had begun to develop themselves.

Over 12 meetings from 3rd May to 26th July, participants learned to edit video and design material in Canva, then considered how they could use this work to promote a service, present a creative project or communicate with a wider audience. Sessions on entrepreneurship, podcasting and social media helped women explore which formats suited their ambitions, including how to choose a podcast subject and structure an episode.

A dedicated creators' session brought these tools together before participants presented their final projects, with attendance averaging around 14 women across the first group's 12 meetings. All 20 first-time participants in the second West Jerusalem cohort completed their course on 22nd October, following the same combination of practical work, individual guidance and presentation.

***Select Completed projects** - Ayelet HaShachar's film · Ayala Sharabi Zamor's visual project*



Participants in the West Jerusalem program in 2026.

Haredi community

For women in the Haredi cohorts, learning to produce media brought practical questions about whom they wanted to reach and how publicly they wished to appear. Photography, editing and public speaking were taught alongside discussion of Haredi filmmaking, helping women communicate their experience and professional knowledge within the religious and cultural boundaries they chose for themselves.

Both Haredi courses comprised 12 sessions, the first running from January to April and the second from May into August, with attendance averaging around 15 women per meeting. Individual guidance helped participants choose a medium for their ideas and develop work they could share with an audience.

Participant projects and the closing event

- Esti Biladi's final presentation described her move from municipal management into independent mental coaching and the women she hopes to reach through her work. Connecting her experience with plans for workshops and other activities gave her material she could use to explain her professional direction and introduce herself to prospective clients.

- Another Haredi participant developed Behind the Heart, a proposed blog about family relationships, self-worth and new beginnings. Defining its readership, subjects and publishing platform, and considering whether to use her own name or a pseudonym, helped her turn a wish to reach other women into a publishing plan she could pursue on her own terms.

- A further Haredi participant drew on personal experience and faith to prepare a road-safety presentation, while exploring how her financial knowledge could support women business owners. Her work reflected a growing willingness to offer knowledge and experience for the benefit of others.

- Presenting their work at the closing event gave women recognition for what they had accomplished and an opportunity to receive feedback and discover one another's interests and abilities.

Completed projects - ***Miraymi Cohen's film*** · ***Rachel Horowitz and Rudi Engel's film*** · ***Esti Biladi's presentation***





A speaker and participants at the Haredi program's closing event in 2026.

Alumni dialogue and continued engagement

As envisaged in our 2025 report, an additional alumni program received support from the Hanns Seidel Foundation specifically allocated to this work. Eight women, 4 Palestinian and 4 Haredi, took part in a small dialogue group over 4 facilitated meetings, alongside 2 community cinema events attended by 55 women. This separately funded activity extended opportunities for graduates beyond the 6 first-time cohorts and their 120 registered participants.

Conversations about home, family, education and women's choices gave participants room to move beyond unfamiliarity and recognise experiences they shared. Organised transport and Arabic–Hebrew interpretation helped women participate more comfortably, while the cinema events opened these conversations to a wider circle. One Palestinian participant described feeling more confident about allowing her daughter to join a mixed Jewish–Arab filmmaking program, illustrating how relationships built through Women of Jerusalem can influence opportunities within participants' families.

Personal development and continued opportunity

Women of Jerusalem helps women pursue greater independence, creative expression and participation in their communities, with the 2026 cohorts giving participants practical experience of completing and presenting work of their own.

- **Confidence and future prospects.** Earlier graduates have moved into video editing and communications, promoted small businesses and established support initiatives for other women. A Haredi graduate described gaining confidence to appear on camera, while a former Haredi participant felt less alone and better equipped to consider her future.

- **Support suited to women's circumstances.** Personal guidance, repeated practice and choices about public visibility help women with limited digital experience develop their abilities while respecting their religious commitments and privacy.

- **Relationships across communities.** Meeting women beyond familiar circles creates opportunities to discover shared concerns around family, work and personal aspirations, with earlier participants maintaining contact beyond facilitated meetings as a basis for continued exchange.

- **Growing recognition and referrals.** Participants and earlier graduates increasingly recommend the courses to other women across the 3 communities. Keeping groups manageable protects the personal attention behind those recommendations and helps women participate alongside family and work responsibilities.

- **Continued learning and alumni involvement.** Further workshops, peer learning and potential mentoring can help graduates build on their progress. The separately funded alumni dialogue program provides a starting point for continued guidance, while interests across all 3 communities can inform future collaboration.

For 2027, the third year envisaged in our partnership with the Matanel Foundation, we propose a continued program of 6 cohorts with capacity for up to 120 women drawn from the 3 major communities, with graduate follow-up helping us understand how women use their skills and where further guidance or professional connections could help.