



Jewish Federation
of Ocean County

Israel

iMPACT



LONE SOLDIER CENTER

IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL LEVIN

Lone Soldier In Memory of Michael Levin

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Our major impact has been; providing living scholarships helping with the financial burden our soldiers were facing outside of their reserves, one on one meetings with psychologists, "go bags" filled with all the essentials that any soldier would need so when they come home they don't need to worry, laundry services, prepared meals for soldiers coming home, base visits bringing anything a soldier is missing, buying tactical gear, helping injured soldiers with their new difficulties facing their new disabilities and more.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Since the "hype" of the war has dwindled we have seen a huge decline in donations which means we have had to cut down on the financial aid we give and cut down on the amount of gear to buy on behalf of our soldiers. We try to provide as much as possible for our brave soldiers.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

The biggest need for recovery is the "living scholarships" and covering costs of mental health we try to offer. Every soldier who was in reserves and was released has not gotten all of their monetary compensation from the army. The IDF has said that these soldiers will receive the rest of the funds (around 30%) once the war is over, this leaves them financially vulnerable. We cover the cost of all of the first 20 meetings between our soldiers and released reservists with psychologists.



Counseling Center for Women

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since October 7th, our psychotherapists have been working with a wide spectrum of women in need of our services: women whose close family members were killed at the Nova music festival or in the south during the Hamas attack, those with family on active/reserve duty, a woman whose close family members were abducted to Gaza, and evacuees from the south and north. Among our clients are also women struggling with re-traumatization from past war experiences, sexual abuse and violence on October 7th and other related emotional challenges. The grant from the Jewish Federation of Ocean County allowed us to subsidize individual psychotherapy hours and support groups for women. Since the beginning of war, our psychotherapists have organized 9 support groups and served around 300 women.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Currently, Israel is fighting one of its longest wars and new fronts have opened since October 7th. Coping with the difficulties of war and trauma is a daily reality for many Israelis, especially women on the home front. There is high demand for our services and our biggest challenge is to find the necessary financial funds for subsidizing individual psychotherapy hours and support groups for women who suffer from war trauma and other emotional difficulties connected to war. Also, the economic conditions have deteriorated due to war. Many women cannot pay the subsidized fees for various reasons: family members are on reserve duty, many workplaces have closed down and a significant number have been placed on unpaid leave. Therefore, we are pursuing funding for deeper subsidies for our clients.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

As a veteran organization providing subsidized psychotherapy to women for over 35 years, we know women are impacted differently by war trauma, especially women of low socio-economic status, from marginalized communities, single mothers, and others who are in similarly vulnerable situations. We are fully aware that post-war trauma will continue to affect Israeli society for many years if not generations to come. The rehabilitation process will be long and challenging. During this extremely difficult time, the need for mental health services in Israel has grown exponentially and there is a need to provide these services tailored to women's emerging needs during war.



Derech Eretz

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since October 7th we managed to continue our work - providing for the needs of our participating youth and alumni while strengthening the homefront and volunteering to help throughout the country. Giving them a sense of purpose had a positive impact on their wellbeing and resilience as 210 youth completed the program prior to being drafted to the IDF.

We had added expenses to our budget which were unforeseen. One example of many was the need to add a social worker who could help our participants and guide our staff in knowing how to identify youth that need additional help. We had participants who lost close family members, 15 participants who had to evacuate their homes, and additional difficult situations, and we stood by them all.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Knowing that this year Israeli youth could greatly benefit from our gap-year program now more than ever, and due to the already large demand for our programs, in September 2024 we increased capacity and now have 260 youth on 6 campuses across southern Israel, including our new location in Ashkelon.

We chose Ashkelon in order to help the city and its inhabitants while cultivating our youth. Each Derech Eretz participant performs 100 hours of community service, and now we will be bringing this critical mass of volunteering to Ashkelon as well.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

Our biggest challenge this year is our budget. We have overcome moving our Ashalim campus to help a displaced community. We have lost 2 alumni in the war and are providing a supportive community to 1,500 Derech Eretz graduates. We have stepped up to help additional youth at this time of need and to help the city of Ashkelon after realizing that this is the greatest impact we can provide as an educational nonprofit organization - but all of this, along with rises in the cost of living, add to an increased budget.



Koby Mandell Foundation

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since October 7, The Koby Mandell Foundation has been deeply impacted by the increased needs of our community, prompting significant growth and adaptation in our programs and services. Our rapid response to the heightened demand involved expanding our team from 5 to 17 members—a 240% increase—enabling us to serve a growing number of bereaved families. Family participation in our programs rose by 71%, from 700 to 1,200 families, and camp attendance increased by 28.5%, with 560 children now benefiting from healing and support in a community of peers who share similar experiences.

Our commitment to mental health and healing led us to expand our therapeutic healing retreats from 4 to 21 per year, a remarkable 425% growth. Additionally, our home visits surged from 120 at the start of the war to 1,070 today, an increase of over 790%, ensuring that more families receive personalized support. These expansions reflect our dedication to providing critical resources during a time when they are needed most.

Our program outcomes highlight the impact of our work: 90% of participants return for further programming, demonstrating their trust in our services; a 98% satisfaction rate underscores the value families find in their healing journey with us; and high referral rates indicate that participants are inspired to recommend our programs to others. This growth and the positive feedback from our community underscore the foundation's commitment to fostering resilience and unity among bereaved families in Israel, making a profound difference when it is most needed.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Our biggest challenge currently and in the immediate future lies in managing the rapid expansion of our staff and operations to meet the intense, rising demand for our services. Scaling up so quickly required detailed planning to ensure that our programs could continue to deliver effective, meaningful support to every participant. As we grow, we must keep focusing on the quality of care, which requires continuous investment in training and resources.

Finding suitable venues for our Therapeutic Healing Retreats has also been a significant challenge. These retreats are essential for the mental health and well-being of our participants, but securing appropriate spaces that provide the needed atmosphere and facilities has been difficult. To overcome this, we have begun partnering with multiple venues to ensure we have the best options available.

Additionally, recruiting those who needed our services most during the chaotic early weeks of the war was challenging, as obtaining verified information was difficult. We leveraged our established relationships with Welfare Departments and Resilience Centers across the country, forming new partnerships where needed, to identify and reach potential participants.

Finally, funding is a critical factor in meeting our goals. The accelerated growth of our programs and the increased needs of our participants demand sustained financial support. Funding enables us to continue expanding our outreach, enhance our therapeutic programs, and provide resources to ensure each individual receives the support they need. Without adequate funding, it would be challenging to sustain this level of impact over the long term.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

The biggest need for recovery after October 7 involves both immediate support and long-term healing for those affected by the trauma. Mental health care and trauma recovery are essential, as many individuals and families are experiencing intense grief and shock. Ongoing therapeutic support, safe spaces to process emotions, and opportunities for people to reconnect within their communities are critical.

Additionally, outreach and relationship-building are key in this recovery process. Support must be handled in a grassroots way, ensuring that those in need are reached personally and compassionately. Building resilience within communities is essential, and this requires collaboration across organizations to make sure people can easily access resources like counseling and emotional support. By taking a united, grassroots approach, different groups can create a strong support network, addressing immediate needs while helping individuals and communities rebuild for the future.



Leket

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since October 7, Leket has seen a significant increase in demand for our services, with food insecurity spiking across Israel. Our work has expanded to serve 330,000 people weekly—a 41% rise in demand from before the conflict. In response, we've increased the volume of both rescued meals and purchased produce, despite the diminished surplus due to the ongoing disruptions to Israel's food supply chain. A key focus has been supporting Israeli farmers. Many farmers, particularly in the north and south, face heightened challenges, including labor shortages and disrupted distribution channels. We've provided essential assistance by hiring additional labor to help with harvesting, ensuring their crops do not go to waste. Purchasing produce directly from these farmers has also created a reliable revenue stream during this uncertain time, helping them sustain their livelihoods. Our support for farmers is strengthening local food production and keeping fresh produce accessible for vulnerable communities across Israel during this crisis.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Our biggest challenge right now—and looking forward—is the combination of rising costs and an unprecedented increase in demand for food assistance. Since October 7, demand for Leket Israel's services has grown by 41%, with 330,000 people now relying on us weekly. At the same time, the cost of procuring fresh produce has surged, driven by disruptions in the supply chain and a decrease in surplus donations from farmers who are facing their own financial pressures. To meet this demand, Leket must actively purchase more produce, which puts a significant strain on our financial resources. Balancing the urgent need to serve a growing population with these rising costs is a considerable challenge. In the immediate future, we anticipate that maintaining this level of assistance, while keeping fresh produce accessible, will continue to be financially and logistically demanding.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

The biggest need for recovery following October 7 is supporting Israeli farmers who have been severely impacted by the crisis. Many farmers, especially those near conflict zones, are struggling with labor shortages, disrupted harvests, and limited market access, which threaten their livelihoods and reduce the amount of fresh produce available for distribution. For Leket, helping farmers stabilize and recover is essential to maintaining a reliable food supply for vulnerable communities. This includes providing financial support to cover labor costs for harvesting, purchasing produce that would otherwise go unsold, and helping farmers access the resources needed to continue operations. These efforts not only keep fresh produce in the supply chain but also offer farmers a lifeline during a time of intense financial and logistical strain. Broadly, supporting Israel's agricultural sector is crucial for the nation's food security and for sustaining the communities that rely on these farmers. Collaborating with organizations focused on agricultural recovery will be vital to ensuring farmers can rebuild and continue to play a central role in feeding Israel's population during and after the crisis.



JAFI

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since October 7, the emergency grants from the Jewish Federation of Ocean County have significantly supported The Jewish Agency's Fund for Victims of Terror, providing critical aid to those affected. The funds enabled immediate emergency grants of 4,000 ILS (approximately \$1,100) for victims, long-term rehabilitation grants of up to 25,000 ILS (approximately \$6,700) for therapeutic and job retraining needs, and needs-based grants for at-risk families. Additionally, the fund has expanded respite camps for children from 250 to 1,000 attendees, launched **Campers2Gether**, sending over 1,000 teens to camps abroad, and provided 20 million ILS in emergency aid to communities in the North and South. These efforts have been vital in offering relief and support to those impacted by terror.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

The biggest challenge we face now and in the immediate future is the scale of trauma caused by the events of October 7 and the ongoing Swords of Iron War. The impact has been far-reaching, and the road to recovery for many victims will take years. As new needs emerge daily, the number of beneficiaries continues to grow, outpacing the original scope of our Classic Fund, which was designed for specific criteria such as loss of first-degree relatives, physical injury requiring hospitalization, and direct house damage. We have had to expand the Fund's work to support a broader range of victims, including those who have acute needs due to the current situation. Additionally, we have established an emergency roundtable to maximize the services provided and coordinate group interventions. The ongoing challenge is meeting the rapidly increasing demand for support while addressing the long-term needs of individuals and communities affected by terror.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges? The biggest need for recovery after October 7 is addressing the **long-term trauma** and fostering **resilience**, especially for children and families. The psychological impact is profound, and continued mental health support is critical. To meet this need, we've partnered with organizations like the **Israel Trauma Coalition**, **NATAL**, and **Amcha** (Israel's Center for Psychological and Social Support for Holocaust Survivors), and established an **emergency roundtable** with key civil and governmental bodies. Additionally, representatives from the Hostages and Missing Families Forum also participated in the roundtable, presenting the numerous challenges involved in caring for the families of hostages and returned hostages. These collaborations have been crucial in providing comprehensive support and addressing the diverse needs of those affected by trauma and conflict in Israel. Special initiatives, such as programs for children returning from captivity and for children from hostage families, provide essential respite and support. For example, over Sukkot, more than 150 children from southern cities like Sderot, Ashkelon, and Netivot participated in a variety of engaging activities, including visits to the Children's Museum in Holon, sports events at the Kedma Youth Village, and animal interactions at the new 'Midbarium' Zoo in Be'er Sheva. However, the growing demand highlights the need for expanded trauma care and resilience-building efforts to help individuals and communities recover over the long term.



Pitchon-Lev

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since the beginning of the War Pitchon-Lev has been providing humanitarian aid to those in need across Israel. Much of our work has been to assist the vulnerable populations of the North that have not been officially evacuated by providing food parcels and emergency humanitarian supplies. One of Pitchon-Lev's most successful efforts has been in the utilization of social welfare rights by those facing hurdles. Between November 2023 and March 2024, we were able to assist more than 25,000 requests to receive over 63.5 million shekels in social welfare benefits that had been unclaimed.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

In a crisis, especially a war, the most vulnerable among us feel the effects first and hardest. Pitchon-Lev always looks to assist these vulnerable populations such as: families with small children/babies, homebound elderly, holocaust survivors, the physically disabled, and at-risk youth. Reaching these populations to assist is always a difficult effort but made even more so with the war. In addition to the most vulnerable populations we are seeing that over 45% of the new requests for aid come from working families across Israel.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

No one really knows the scope of the assistance that will be needed for communities like Kyriat Shmona or Shlomi once the population return, but a large amount of assistance will be needed. We do know that the future will require the Government's intervention through the social welfare system. One of Pitchon-Lev's most successful efforts in the past is assisting residents in understanding their rights and navigating the bureaucracy to actually receive them. Since the war started, we have received more than 25,000 requests, for social welfare rights utilization, to ultimately receive over 60 million shekels in benefits.

The Lev Otef Foundation

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Since receiving the award in July 2024, the grant has critically helped with the development and delivery of a tailored support package for released hostages up to age 24. Key impacts include: 1. Individualized rehabilitation plans: We are initiating personalized rehabilitation programs, so far for 6 families (9 by the age of 24), in collaboration with formal agencies. Our program provides practical resources, addressing the specific needs of both returnees and their families as they navigate recovery. 2. Adaptable model: Our flexible support package is designed for scalability, making it suitable for future groups facing similar crises. Overall, the grant is allowing us to create a holistic, adaptable support system across several metrics: 1. Trust and cooperation - We work in close cooperation with official support bodies, including volunteers from the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Welfare social workers. This approach builds trust and enables seamless support without overwhelming families. 2. Refined services: • Proactive rehabilitation counseling: Our proactive guidance is crucial, as many children are not ready for traditional therapy. We provide customized, actionable guidance, with up to 15 sessions funded by the National Insurance Institute. • Network of rehabilitation providers: We created a diverse unique provider database, including professionals like climbing, diving, and ceramics, selected for each returnee based on location and needs. • Long-term engagement: We engage providers for one-time sessions or year-long commitments, typically aligning with the school year to ensure consistency and trust in the rehabilitation process. Providers are paid directly by us; in some cases, families contribute a small amount to demonstrate commitment. Our activities to date include: • Rehabilitative 3-day retreats with dolphin therapy for 6 families at Dolphin Reef in Eilat, July 2023. • Year-long educational support for three children (ages 5, 7 and 10) to aid in school reintegration • Ongoing creative therapy courses in art, documentary writing, and story therapy for three mothers, extending to June 2025 • Mentorship for two individuals (ages 17 and 23) • English coaching for two individuals to prepare for media interviews • Watsu, water surfing and martial arts courses for three children (ages 10, 13, and 17) • Driving theory courses for two individuals and completion of a driving license for one individual • Starting soon: Ceramics and acro-balance courses for three individuals • Coming up: another retreat with dolphin therapy in Eilat during Hanukkah.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Each family's situation is unique, but we have identified several common challenges: 1. Incomplete rehabilitation: Freed hostages and their families struggle to fully engage in rehabilitation, as 101 hostages remain in Gaza. Many are involved in demonstrations and media efforts to support the return of other family or community members. 2. Ongoing trauma and instability: The war, temporary housing, and trauma of captivity, particularly for parents who were hostages or who campaigned for their children's return, make it difficult for them to fully address their children's specific needs. 3. The grant's funding limitations: State social workers try to follow our rehabilitation recommendations, and the National Insurance Institute (Bituach Leumi) supports activities for freed children. However, other family members, including parents and siblings involved in the process, are not eligible for this support—nor does UJA funding currently cover them. Conclusions: The complex trauma and trust issues require our program - Ma'atefet – to be a long-term program, supported by both patience and resources. And although the grant was designated for freed children and teens, we must also address the needs of their immediate families and caregivers. Supporting them is both urgent and essential to providing effective rehabilitative tools for the children. This, we request permission to allocate part of the current grant to support caregivers, with each case reviewed by our advisory committee.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

With the Israeli mental health system overwhelmed, and many survivors unable to express trauma verbally, we believe our rehabilitative approach—focused on group body work, nature, and creativity—can make a unique impact. By addressing trauma, fear, and anxiety through physical and creative expression, we help process emotions that are often stored physically. Our next goal is to expand from supporting individual families to entire communities in the Gaza envelope, establishing sustainable, local rehabilitation solutions. Conclusion: Drawing on our experience since 2013, especially recent months, we aim to extend our impact to these communities. This will be achieved by building locally rooted rehabilitation programs, to enhance the resilience of communities through group-based activities rooted in bodily movement.



The Leading Global Jewish Humanitarian Organization

JDC

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

Immediately following October 7th, JDC activated a range of emergency services that to-date have directly assisted over 450,000 Israelis struggling with trauma, displacement, and the loss of livelihoods. Today, JDC is still at the forefront, leading efforts to heal in a way that empowers Israel's vulnerable communities. Your community's support for JDC's work enables a response that meets the urgent needs of today and builds for the future. Our strategic interventions help Israelis get their lives back on track.

Please see the attached one-pager for more details.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

The ongoing war in Israel has created unprecedented challenges, intensifying economic strain, disrupting daily life, and placing tremendous demands on health and welfare systems. As the war stretches on the needs keep growing and the support and resources available are limited. While JDC is committed to addressing these challenges by strengthening resilience, expanding support for vulnerable populations, and providing critical emergency assistance we must make difficult choices about how best to prioritize the services that we can provide.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

JDC's work with vulnerable Israelis addresses a broad range of current needs in Israel but two of the most pressing needs include:

1. Addressing Israel's mental health crisis - With Many Israelis facing anxiety and fear there is a wave of mental health problems across the country. 55% of Israelis are experiencing clinical anxiety and 84% of children report suffering emotional distress. JDC is creating new solutions for the thousands who need treatment besides conventional one-on-one therapy.
2. Returning to routine – As the war impacts thousands of Israelis, it threatens to harm their outlook for a bright future. JDC is stepping in now to ensure that people get back on track. For example, we are helping young people who survived the Nova Festival massacre return to routine and JDC is providing employment services for evacuees, reservists, and the newly disabled.

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7? Since October 7, the impact of ORT's work, bolstered by your grant, has been focused on building resilience and stability for students and families affected by the crisis. In Israel broadly, ORT's efforts have brought essential educational and emotional support to evacuee students through programs in animation, science, robotics, and more, reaching over 7,700 students across 71 centers which provided both learning continuity and emotional relief, creating a supportive environment during a time of intense upheaval. At Kfar Silver Youth Village, the grant has allowed ORT to intensify therapeutic support and reinforce security, ensuring a safe, stable, and healing space for the village's 1,085 students and staff.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact? The biggest challenge ORT currently faces is addressing the heightened mental health and security needs of students and staff while ensuring the continuity of high-quality educational programming in an environment of ongoing instability. For students, particularly at Kfar Silver, the psychological toll of displacement, trauma from recent events, and heightened security concerns are enormous. The increased need for mental health services is challenging our capacity and resources, as we aim to provide both immediate and longterm therapeutic support to help students process and heal from trauma.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges? The biggest need for recovery after October 7 is comprehensive, long-term mental health support and emotional resilience building, especially for young people who have experienced trauma and instability. This need spans beyond ORT's work and includes broader community-level support, as countless students, families, and educators across Israel are facing deep psychological impacts that require sustained intervention. For ORT specifically—and Kfar Silver in particular—there's a need to expand mental health resources significantly to provide continuous therapy, trauma-informed care, and wellness activities that help students process their experiences. At a community and national level, creating safe spaces for students and families affected by the conflict is essential, including both physical safe spaces (through reinforced facilities and security measures) and emotional safe spaces, where people can connect, share, and heal together.

Ethiopian National Project

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הפרויקט הלאומי לקהילה האתיופית בישראל

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7?

A crucial support mechanism, ENP SPACE offers Ethiopian-Israeli, Amharic-speaking and other staff who serve as mentors, confidantes and counselors to children during their time of greatest need. ENP SPACE provides emotional, social, nutritional and scholastic support to Ethiopian-Israeli 7th through 12th graders: especially today when Israel is at war, the emotional component of SPACE is irrefutably critical, and provides a desperately-needed service to Ethiopian-Israeli youth. The Jewish Federation of Ocean County's emergency grant entitled ENP to a corresponding Government of Israel match and supported the inclusion of six children in ENP's SPACE program.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact?

Many teachers, staff and participant family members have been called up to the reserves, which impacts every element of ENP's work. Multitudes of Ethiopian-Israeli families have family members who are actively serving in Gaza or Lebanon at this time. Many households with children also have parents, older siblings and other family members who have been called up to the reserves, thereby further placing an emotional and economic toll on the families which impacts children's ability to function. ENP works tirelessly to provide comfort and support to participants, and to identify solutions to absences due to wartime needs.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges?

The emotional support and personal connections forged by the dedicated staff of ENP are often literally, life-saving and transformative. ENP staff forge connections, build trust, identify red flags, serve as role models, counsel, refer, advise, and more. Specifically, the role of the ENP SPACE Social and Community Facilitator is the "first line" to provide emotional and social support to SPACE participants. This facilitator conducts one-on-one conversations with each student to build trust, uncover obstacles and concerns, and develop a strategy to ensure their needs (far more than scholastic) are being met. Especially now, ENP programs can prevent despair and encourage hope along with the knowledge that someone cares.



Brothers & Sisters in Arms

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7? Brothers and Sisters for Israel (BSI) has impacted tens of thousands of lives through a spectrum of emergency efforts. Selected highlights include rescuing over 12,000 people, connecting 2,500 evacuees to initial mental health support, providing food, clothing and other aid and logistical support to 60,000 evacuees, creating kindergartens and enrichment centers to provide 8,000 displaced children with vital structure and social support and giving 60,000 volunteer days to more than 300 farmers helping preserve their livelihoods. The Federation's grant facilitated the rapid mobilization of Israeli civil society, showcasing the country's resilience and solidarity during a crisis.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact? Our main challenge in recent months has been in shifting our focus from emergency aid to rehabilitating Israel's communities, ensuring affected regions build back better. Intense fires and increased terror activity in the north, followed by mass reservist call up with the outbreak of war in Lebanon, have made it difficult to focus solely on long-term recovery. Thus while we have begun rehabilitation efforts in the Gaza border region, we have also kept in touch with local authorities and national agencies to assess urgent needs in Northern Israel and identify where we can help. For example, we provided more than 275 communities with life saving fire fighting equipment.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges? BSI views the successful return home of Israel's displaced residents – restoring normalcy to their lives and the affected regions – as a crucial component of the country's recovery. This will not be simple, especially in the north where residents are still displaced and incumbent residents are contending with reduced services, safety concerns and financial difficulties. Based on our experience in the last year we have identified three key principles for such efforts:

1. **Establish Pull Factors:** Develop strong incentives to encourage hesitant evacuees, especially young families, to return by addressing their immediate needs and offering a promising future.
2. **Target Everyone:** Address the needs of all individuals and communities, not just evacuees. Interventions should promote cohesion as displaced individuals return and residents recover.
3. **Build Back Better:** Aim to enhance the region beyond its pre-war state by improving essential services and quality of life, while also fostering resilience and a sense of identity among residents.

DROR

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7? Since the outbreak of the war, Dror Israel was at the forefront with educational and community programs at nearly all of Israel's evacuee centers and hotels for some 40,000 evacuees in 60 locations. Dror Israel is providing day cares and youth programming for evacuees from the north and south, including those still living presently at evacuee hotels and other temporary housing. In terms of the communities who have returned home to the Gaza border area, Dror is providing youth programming, community leadership programs, counseling and training for schools and educators, and expanding our educators' communities in the region. Simultaneously Dror is providing communities presently under threat in Israel's north with youth programming, counseling and training for youth and adults especially for Arab and Druze communities and expanding our educators' communities. These programs serve all ages: children from preschool to high school, young adults, parents, adult community leaders and senior citizens.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact? Tens of thousands of Israeli citizens remain evacuated from their homes, living in temporary housing or evacuee hotels and often, separated from their home communities. Providing these evacuated families with the necessary support, with an emphasis on dynamic and consistent activities for their children and teenage family members, remains a focus of Dror Israel's large scale resilience building programming. Additionally, nondisplaced communities in the north of Israel are under constant rocket/drone attack from Hezbollah. These communities suffer from daily rocket/drone attacks and many residents live in homes without saferooms or access to a relevant neighborhood shelter. Additionally, daycares and schools are constantly opening and closing, causing additional stress and chaos to an already unimaginable reality.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges? As the war rages on, more communities are suffering, and new needs are constantly arising due to the changing reality. While continuing to work with evacuated communities and those communities recently returned home, we understand a great need to be building resilience in non-displaced communities, such as communities in the north under constant rocket/drone attacks. The resilience building programming needs to be dynamic, offering creative solutions to new challenges, like training teenagers to run emergency programming in public bomb shelters or offering restorative trips to safer areas for families in non-displaced communities who do not have access to a saferoom.



Shutaf

What has been the impact of your work (and our grant) so far since October 7? We are very grateful to the Jewish Federation of Ocean County for your increased support this past year which has been one of uncertainty, fear and loss for so many here in Israel. For Shutaf's participants with disabilities and their families, knowing they could count on us to be there for them during the long month of August and during the year was a ray of light during dark times. The federation's support helped us increase security at camp this past summer, adding a second guard and many more hours including from the time the Shutaf staff arrived until they left. Usually we only had security during the hours that the campers were on site. The location of the school is adjacent to an Arab village next to the north Jerusalem French Hill neighborhood and the added security helped the staff feel safe so they could focus completely on their work with the children. Additionally, we realized the need to add more programming hours during the year to give our participants more opportunities to be at Shutaf where they feel safe and seen. We added a second day of programming which means some participants come twice a week and others are able to come the second day, working Shutaf into their schedule now. With so much uncertainty all around us, the teens and young adults know that Shutaf is a safe haven, where they can socialize, get a hot meal, be with friends and relax.

What is the biggest challenge you are finding now and in the immediate future, in terms of your work and addressing the population/challenges you are trying to impact? Shutaf's most pressing challenge since COVID that has greatly increased during the war is staffing. We hire post-army adults, usually university students, to work in our programs and in our year-round staff. This age group has been very deeply affected by the events of October 7th as well as the challenges of serving months on end in army reserve duty. This directly impacts all aspects of our programming - instead of working in small groups to meet the diverse needs of our participants, with less staff we had to switch to bigger groups, understanding that this meant we would be less able to reach each person. Also some participants are intimidated by bigger groups and won't speak freely when there are too many people. The staff and counselors themselves feel tremendous insecurity, not always knowing when they, or family members and friends, will be called up for army reserve duty again, or when other changes in their lives will happen. At Shutaf we prioritize supporting our staff and the counselors we have hired have proven to be dedicated and committed to learning. They understand that we're shorthanded and that they are an integral part of the program's success and the participants' sense of security and enjoyment.

What do you see as the biggest need for recovery at this point after October 7 - which could relate to your work or be related to other needs/organizations/challenges? The biggest need for recovery is a return to some sense of normalcy which can only happen if the war ends and the hostages are returned. This would allow specifically young people in their twenties to settle down and not feel that their lives are in flux. We pray for this to happen soon. On an organizational level, the additional day of programming at Shutaf has tremendous benefits for the participants but also means we are offering a more robust job opportunity for counselor staff. We have also raised the hourly wage in order to remain competitive and to attract people to work in the program. It is important to note as well that the staff benefits on a personal level from being at Shutaf. Since phone usage is not allowed during program time, it's a wonderful opportunity to shut out the world for a few hours, be in the moment with the people around them. During these unstable times, this is an opportunity to be present, productive, engage with peers and participants and do meaningful work.