**Purpose of the grant: Ongoing operation of the Beit Berl College Center for the Advancement of Shared Society**

**Background**

Beit Berl College is a leading educational institution in all issues related to the advancement of a shared society. The college president is Yuli Tamir, and the vice president is a Palestinian Israeli. Over 40% of the students and about 18% of the faculty are Palestinian Israelis. The Center for the Advancement of Shared Society at Berl College was founded a decade ago to promote the shared society concept at the college. The Center engages in research in the field of shared society, offers courses for college students and training for faculty members, and advises the various college departments on issues related to a shared society.

Following the attack on October 7, the Center played a central role in preventing an escalation of tensions between Jews and Israeli Palestinians at the college. The actions initiated by the Center during this period included: a tour of Kibbutz Be’eri for Palestinian-Israeli faculty members, separate meetings for Jewish students and Palestinian-Israeli students, workshops for college faculty that dealt with the challenges of teaching during a tense period, and creating a document defining the limits of freedom of expression that was sent to all faculty members and students at the college.

Until recently, the Center received $100,000 annually in support from the state. Following general cuts in state support for universities and colleges, this was reduced by 30% for the current academic year (2023/2024) and will be completely eliminated for the next academic year (2024/2025).

Against the background of this budget cut, the college is appealing to the foundation for emergency assistance.

**Work Plan**

The Center’s work plan for the 2024-2025 academic year includes: courses for students on issues related to a shared society, workshops for the college faculty, work with various college departments, and research on the subject of a shared society.

The Center will work in a focused manner with two college departments whose student populations are half Jewish and half Palestinian Israelis: the science department and the art department. Activities with the science department will include a joint three-day study tour in the Judean desert that will integrate elements of a shared life. The activity with the art department will include two full days of workshops for the faculty.

The following additional actions are planned, among others:

* Group leadership training for 20 faculty members
* Spoken Hebrew courses for Arab students, led by Jewish students
* In cooperation with AJEEC (Arab-Jewish Center for Empowerment, Equality, and Cooperation), activities have been planned for a group of Palestinian Israeli high school graduates as part of a “gap year” program to prepare them for college studies to earn a bachelor’s degree in non-formal education and a science teaching certificate.

**Budget**

The Center’s current budget is $315,000. So far, the college has raised $60,000 from donors to offset the cuts in state support for the current academic year and the next academic year. The college has appealed to foundations that have previously given it support with a request to increase their support against the backdrop of the reduction in state support.

**Metrics**

*Outputs*

• Work with the science department and the art department

• Activity with high school graduates during their gap year in collaboration with AJEEC

• Training 20 faculty members in group leadership

*Outcomes*

* Admission of gap year program alumni to college studies
* Preventing escalation of tensions between Jewish and Arab students at the college in general and specifically in the art and science departments
* Reinforcing that the college is a space for a shared society