**Purpose of the Grant: Ongoing Operation of the Beit Berl College Center for the Advancement of Shared Society**

**Background**

Beit Berl College is a preeminent educational institution in all aspects concerning the advancement of a shared society. The college president is Yuli Tamir, and the vice president is a Palestinian Israeli. More than 40% of the students and approximately 18% of the faculty are Palestinian Israelis. The Center for the Advancement of Shared Society at Berl College was established a decade ago with the objective of promoting the concept of a shared society within the college. The Center conducts research in the field of a shared society, providing courses for college students, training for faculty members, and consulting with various college departments on matters related to a shared society.

Following the attack on October 7, the Center played a crucial role in mitigating any potential escalation of tensions between Jewish and Israeli Palestinians within 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, in addition to 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 had been allocated an annual support of $100,000 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 subsequent 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 topics 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 and art departments. 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 collaborative effort with the art department will involve conducting two complete days of workshops for the faculty.

The following additional actions are planned, among various 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), a set of activities has been formulated for a group of Palestinian Israeli high school graduates. This initiative forms part of a “gap year” program aimed at preparing them for college studies to earn a bachelor’s degree in non-formal education and a science teaching certificate.

**Budget**

The current budget of the Center amounts to $315,000. So far, the college has raised $60,000 from donors to offset the cuts in state support for both the current and upcoming academic year. The college has appealed to foundations that have previously provided the Centre with support, accompanied by a request to increase this support in light of the reduction in state contributions.

**Metrics**

*Outputs*

• Work with the science and art departments

• Activities 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 the perspective that the college is a space for a shared society