**MOLAD—THE CENTER FOR THE RENEWAL OF DEMOCRACY**

**Brief Description of Organization**:

*Molad* is a liberal think tank founded in 2012 by Avner Inbar and Assaf Sharon, academics who were active in the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity organization. Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity organization aimed to combat the expulsion of Sheikh Jarrah residents and was a grantee of the foundation. The main goal of *Molad* is defined as developing ideas and a political narrative for the democratic movement in Israel. *Molad* focuses on specific issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, promoting full equality for Palestinian Israelis within Israel, and developing a Hebrew identity within the state education system.

In 2014, when NIF developed the infrastructures for the pro-democratic movement (then called NIFD), *Molad* was a key partner in establishing the concept of the field and its strategies and was also a crucial NIF grantee in this respect. However, the collaboration between the NIF team and *Molad*’s leadership did not run smoothly. As a result, *Molad* decided not to apply to renew its grant in 2017 due to disagreements regarding the nature of the relationship between NIF and the organization. It should be noted that the termination of the relationship between NIF and *Molad* occurred in a way that left a negative impression on NIF staff members and management.

In the years since 2017, the NIF team has been in contact with the CEO of *Molad* on an intermittent basis, and meetings have occasionally been held for mutual updates.

New staff members have joined *Molad* in recent years, and as part of an organizational process that took place in 2024, a new organizational structure was decided upon. This new structure includes a management model of three staff members who share leadership of the research area, the public activity area, and the organization’s headquarters. At the same time, Avner Inbar still functions as head of the institute.

*Molad’s* main project is a fellowship program that includes 18 participants comprised of young Israeli academics studying at universities in Israel and abroad. The goal of the program is to provide young Israeli academics with a supportive community and mutual enrichment in order to encourage them to translate their expertise into a significant contribution to the public debate. Fellows receive a scholarship and financial support for research and teaching projects. Over the past three years, the group’s members have published hundreds of articles, given lectures across the country, and launched projects, including a podcast and a series of seminars intended for the Israeli public. It is important to note that, over the past year, some of the fellows who studied at universities abroad have returned to Israel and stated that the support and security from the group were important considerations in their decision to return.

About three weeks after October 7th, *Molad* launched the project “The Collapse of Concepts—The Road to the October 23 Failure”—a comprehensive, fact-based study that responded to the Netanyahu government’s attempts to evade responsibility for the October 7th failure—in collaboration with the *Berl Katznelson Foundation*, another grantee of the foundation. As early as December 2023, the project’s Hebrew website had recorded over 75,000 visits. The study was printed as a booklet, with thousands of copies being distributed during demonstrations as part of the protest against the Mamluk. Following the publication of the study, there was a significant increase in public use of terms such as “conflict management” and “strengthening Hamas.” More than a year after the study was published, the defense establishment’s investigations into October 7th have reached conclusions similar to those presented in the study.

Since the beginning of the protest against the current government, *Molad* has been involved in assisting the protest in various ways:

* Writing position papers and policy documents (for example, the document “The Liberal Outline for the Israeli Judicial System” and the document “The Red Lines,” published at the start of talks between opposition leaders and the government, under the auspices of the President, with the aim of reaching a compromise regarding the structure of the judicial system).
* The research fellows participated in more than 60 lectures and events related to the protest and appeared in the media about 100 times.

Over the past year, *Molad* has been running a message distribution project in which message sheets based on the narrative of the democratic camp and related to current events are distributed on a weekly basis (to politicians, media figures, leaders in protests against the government, and influencers).

**DA Support (in 2024):** $10,000

**Rapid Response Support (in 2024/25):** None

**Link to Organizational Website:** https://www.molad.org/about/molad/

**Link to Proposal:** https://nif.my.site.com/Portal/a0NSb000004l3RZ?srPos=3&srKp=a0N

**Expected Progress**

**Overall Expected (1-2 Years) Impact:**

The expected impact over the next two years is the strengthening of the democratic movement’s political narrative in Israel through the publication of books and research and the dissemination of messages that translate the narrative into tangible, topical issues for political leaders and influencers.

**Expected Strategic Activities (and Outputs):**

* Publication of three books by colleagues in the research group: 1. a book on the political context of the integration of Ethiopian Jews in Israel; 2. a book that offers a philosophical interpretation of the idea of ​​the Jewish state; and 3. a book that deals with the connection between nationalism and liberalism.
* A series of videos about the Oslo Accords and the disengagement are planned in collaboration with Moshe Redman’s digital platforms (one of the leaders of the protest against the government).
* As part of *Molad*’s messages project, continued distribution of message sheets on a weekly basis.

**Expected Measurable Outcomes:**

* Introducing concepts into public discourse that the organization formulates as part of building the narrative for the democratic camp
* Deepening the existing relationship with politicians and influencers within the pro-democracy movement and creating working relationships with other politicians and influencers
* Expanding cooperation with organizations within the pro-democracy movement

**2024 Organizational Income:** $708,000

**2025 Expected Organizational Budget:** $876,000

2025 **Staff Recommendation:** $70,000

**% of NIF Grant out of Total Project Budget**: **8%**

**Staff Analysis of Risk vs. Opportunity:** Medium Risk, High Opportunity

*Molad* is a professional think tank that has proven its ability to create a political narrative for the pro-democracy movement and translate it into position papers and message sheets that respond to current developments on the ground in Israel. *Molad* collaborates with a variety of organizations within the pro-democracy movement. At the same time, *Molad’s* history with the foundation includes problematic conduct by the people who founded and led the institute, one of whom, Avner Inbar, still plays a central role as the institute’s head. Following a restructuring process, it is currently led by three young staff members who were not at the institute during the period when there was problematic conduct with NIF and with whom the NIF team has had a positive experience. Based on this, it can be assumed that a new partnership with *Molad* will not involve problematic conduct by the organization of the type that existed in the past. However, in light of the fact that, as mentioned, Avner Inbar still plays a central role in the organization, it is impossible to unequivocally state that such conduct will not be repeated.

**Explain Staff Recommendation:**

As part of the strategic thinking process regarding infrastructure for the pro-democracy movement, the team identified that there is insufficient work being done on idea development within the building blocks of ideological infrastructure and infrastructure for designing and promoting policies.

One of the team’s recommendations, therefore, is to increase investment in think tanks that deal with idea development. *Molad* plays a unique role in this field, both in developing a political narrative for the pro-democracy movement and in translating this narrative into position papers and message sheets that are distributed to political leaders, media figures, protest leaders, and influencers within the pro-democracy camp. *Molad’s* research fellows are a young and impressive cohort that has already proven its ability to produce research that builds the narrative for the pro-democracy movement and to serve as public spokespeople for this narrative. In contrast to the anti-collaboration approach that characterized *Molad* in its early days, in more recent years, the organization has partnered with other organizations within the ecosystem of the pro-democracy movement. Against this backdrop, the team recommends a grant that will be specifically earmarked for funding the organization’s peer group. The grant is for one year only, and the grant approval letter will indicate that renewal of the grant next year will depend on the nature of the relationship and collaboration between NIF and the organization, in addition to indicators related to the organization’s impact.