



Annual Report 2014 **New Israel Fund of Canada**
הקן החדשה לישראל

Board President's Message



Support for the New Israel Fund of Canada is a responsibility and an honour. It is one we proudly share.

Many of our supporters have been dismayed by the approach to civil liberties and issues of equality they have witnessed taking place in Israel. As a leader of NIFC, I am asked again and again if it is worthwhile to continue our efforts to strengthen and safeguard civil and human rights, bridge social and economic gaps, and foster tolerance and religious pluralism.

The leader of one of the organizations whose projects are supported by New Israel Fund of Canada provided clarity and inspiration to our Board earlier this year. That leader, an activist and a Zionist, shared his refusal to be deterred from his mission by proposed legislation. He approached his organizational work with renewed vigor, creativity and passion. Our Board learned from this activist once again that if he can continue, in the face of disappointment and renewed opposition, we have a responsibility to stand with him.

A few months ago I was the victim of an attack by a notorious right wing blogger. As I reflected on the need never to be cowed by hate or pressure, I saw afresh the challenges facing the good people we support in Israel, including the leaders of the New Israel Fund. It is not an easy time to stand proudly for our values. As I wrote in response to the personal attack, it is an honour to be associated with these activists and leaders. I am proud to share even in a small way the burden they carry and the courage they show, in working for a better Israel.

We cannot let these people down. We cannot allow our own ideals to be tarnished, or tired. We must – now more than ever – together shoulder joyfully and generously the responsibility and the honour of supporting the New Israel Fund of Canada.

I want to thank Orit and her staff for their untiring efforts and to honour the Board and staff of the New Israel Fund of Canada for their commitment, wisdom and courage, in partnership with our generous donors and those who will become our supporters. Let us honour together all of you who have maintained and increased your support for the vision of Israel which motivates us all.

A special word here for one of our most inspiring supporters. Shira Herzog z"l passed away this year. We continue to mourn her loss as we strive to be equal to the challenge of her vision and personal commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Garson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joan Garson
President, New Israel Fund of Canada

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Executive Director's Message



I have the honour to address our supporters in this introduction to the 2014 Annual Report. Over the course of a dozen pages or so, the following summary of our activities chronicles the projects in Israel that you as donors have supported. With accompanying stories and powerful images, this report stands witness to the impact on individual lives that your support has had in 2014. More than this testament of accountability, the full picture can be seen on the streets of Israel. From where I am sitting, I can tell you that equality among all Israeli citizens is a goal that is progressively being met, if hard-won and through struggle. Here is some context:

Over the summer of 2014, a war shattered communities, taking lives, infrastructure, and, to a degree, faith in alliances with it. Women defying pressure to dress according to Haredi definitions of modesty on public streets were harassed, bullied, and intimidated. A worrying trend towards censorship, exclusion, and intolerance was reported especially among minorities in Israel.

But, this was a year of achievements, in no small part due to the activists we support in Israel. Long-time partners offered emergency healthcare during war time to Israelis lacking guaranteed first-aid care. Even as Orthodox customs continue to be the default behind many laws in Israel, women's groups successfully challenged enforced modesty customs on public streets with the help of NIFC's funding. Here are other examples of tremendous progress in 2014:

- Following a continued struggle of NIFC-supported Kolech and IRAC, limitations on broadcasting women's voices on the radio were removed.
- The minimum age of marriage has now been raised to 18 thanks to a coalition of NIFC-sponsored women's and human rights organizations.
- In reaction to censorship on campus, NIFC-funded ACRI successfully argued for academic freedom before the Supreme Court.

I attribute the progress in the realm of equality for all Israelis to the many activists we partner with in Israel and to the support here in Canada by contributions at every level.

First, I owe a debt of gratitude to our donors for sharing our vision towards an Israel aligned in practice and belief with its Declaration of Independence, a founding document promoting a Jewish and democratic state. Without you, NIFC would not exist. In the past year our funding of projects in Israel reached a record high, and it's thanks to your continued generosity.

Our committed Board of Directors offers the critical guidance and wisdom behind NIFC's most innovative initiatives. Our members are as diverse as our community of supporters – Canada-wide, across the spectrum in age, affiliations with local communities, and connections with Israel. The combined fruits of their labour have resulted in a unique and effective organization rooted firmly in service to Israel's potential.

I am deeply grateful to our dynamic staff members and volunteers who are passionate about equality in Israel. These determined women and men are guided by a profound belief in Israel's potential as well as the strength that a community of supporters can offer. While NIFC has grown to serve a broad spectrum of Israelis in need, our staff members and volunteers regard every Israeli community – Bedouin tribes, Haredi enclaves, newcomers from Russia, and asylum seekers – in its own context and according to its own need.

Canadian support and Israeli activism together – and only together – propel New Israel Fund of Canada's work forward. This year is no exception – thank you for your partnership, faith, bravery, and strength.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orit Sarfaty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Orit Sarfaty
Executive Director, New Israel Fund of Canada

About New Israel Fund of Canada

For the last 30 years, the New Israel Fund of Canada (NIFC) has been working to foster the development of Israel as envisioned in its Declaration of Independence. NIFC supports Israeli projects and programs that strengthen and safeguard civil and human rights, bridge social and economic gaps, and foster tolerance and religious pluralism for all residents. These efforts promote complete equality of social and political rights for all inhabitants of Israel, without regard to religion, race, gender or national identity.

In collaboration with thousands of Canadians and Israelis, NIFC supports grassroots Israeli organizations through project funding, capacity building, leadership development and coalition building. These efforts are focused on five major impact areas, including Women's Rights, Civil and Human Rights, Religious Pluralism and Tolerance, Social and Economic Justice, and Canadian Outreach and Education.



Women's Rights



Civil and Human Rights



Social and Economic Justice



Religious Pluralism and Tolerance



Canadian Outreach and Education

Women's Rights

Although the Israeli Declaration of Independence guarantees gender equality, women in Israel still face discriminatory practices like segregation and institutionalized wage gaps. Women of ethnic and religious minorities face even greater challenges like disproportionately high rates of unemployment, poverty and health concerns, and difficulty obtaining welfare and accessing legal rights. NIFC works to strengthen the role of Israeli women at work, at home, and in the public sphere. By nurturing new leadership and educating Israelis about women's rights, NIFC has pioneered funding and support for an array of organizations working for gender equality in Israel.



Success Story: Putting a Spotlight on Gender Equality

The Dafna Fund is Israel's only women's foundation and helps women from all walks of life become agents of social change. Established with support from NIFC and directed by Hamutal Gouri, a passionate social justice advocate, the Fund addresses the unique challenges faced by women across Israel. For example, as a result of strong religious laws and the lack of separation between church and state, women often face segregation in public spaces. Many feel pressured into wearing "modest" clothing when they're out in public for fear of being intimidated by Haredi watchdogs.

Thanks to the work supported by the Dafna Fund, the issue of gender equality was recently brought to the forefront with the name of Israel's Committee for the Status of Women officially changing to the Committee for the Status of Women and Gender Equality.

Civil and Human Rights

To promote the full implementation of social and political equality promised in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, NIFC funds and trains organizations to address the unique barriers faced by women, LGBTQ and minority communities in Israel. At any given time, NIFC is: encouraging public support for equality and justice, protecting the legal rights of disadvantaged people in Israel, and advocating for democratic values from the soccer stadium to the classroom.



Success Story: Strengthening Support for Refugees

Shatil is NIFC's initiative for social change and has been actively promoting democracy, tolerance and social justice in Israel for 30 years. NIFC and Shatil are partnering to support refugee organizations in Israel that work to overcome poverty, inequality and injustice in refugee communities.

In 2014, NIFC helped Shatil provide training, consultation and fundraising support to NGOs in Israel dedicated to helping African refugees, including the Aid Organization for African Refugees in Israel, the Kav LaOved (Worker's Hotline), Koach La'Kehila (Power to the Community), and the African Refugee Development Center.

Together with Shatil, Achoti, NIF and the African Refugee Development Center, Congolese asylum-seeker Oscar Olivier is helping refugees living in South Tel Aviv rise above the poverty, racism and violence they often face. He is the founder of Power to the Community, a group comprised of local African and Israeli residents determined to tackle these issues from the ground up. The group organizes neighbourhood patrols and communicates with police on strategies for making the neighbourhood safer. With proceeds from a community market, the group also provides support for residents in need.

Religious Pluralism and Tolerance

Many Israelis are free to practice their chosen spiritual path, but Orthodox Judaism remains the only stream of Judaism formally funded by the state. Others receive no financial support and face exclusion on issues ranging from marriage to conversion to burial. Non-Orthodox Israelis – Jews and non-Jews alike – face difficult circumstances not only when practicing their religion, but also in their everyday lives. Through its programs, NIFC supports a more tolerant and socially cohesive Israel where all are free to conduct their religious, spiritual and cultural lives according to their own choosing.



Success Story: Establishing Israel's First Orthodox Jewish Feminist Organization

Hannah Kehat – a mother of six – grew up in the Mea Shearim neighbourhood of Jerusalem. There, she saw women being denied their human rights; husbands refusing divorces, sexual abuse, and little education. Hannah quickly began to question her own role in her religious community. Seventeen years later, she is a leader in women's rights in Israel and the head of Israel's first Orthodox Jewish feminist organization, Kolech ("Your Voice").

A partner of NIFC, Kolech is at the forefront of the struggle for gender equality in religious society. When the organization was first established, simply saying the word 'feminist' among religious women was forbidden, and they were not permitted to identify themselves as such. Today, the word is no longer taboo, with many young women identifying as feminists, and many more to come.

Kolech is just one example of how NIFC helps grassroots organizations in Israel give voice the voiceless and make positive change for equality and democracy for all Israelis.

Social and Economic Justice

Although Israel has experienced significant economic growth over the past decade, the benefits have not been shared equally amongst the country's rapidly growing population. Almost one in five Israelis lives in poverty, and many groups have great difficulty accessing the services they need. NIFC addresses the root causes of poverty and injustice by building and strengthening social justice organizations that focus on the issues perpetuating the cycle of poverty. From Galil to the Negev, and from urban centers to isolated towns, NIFC helps single parents, disabled and elderly Holocaust survivors, new immigrants and women make their voices heard and receive the support they need.



Success Story: Protecting the Right to Affordable Housing

Housing affordability is a big issue in Israel. Over the last two decades, governments of Israel have stopped regulating the price of housing, leaving it at the mercy of private market forces. The cost of housing has risen dramatically. As a result, more families in Israel are spending an increasing share of their income on housing at the expense of other basic needs, resulting in growing inequality among the population.

Gil Gan-Mor is an attorney who began working with the Association of Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) during his second year of an NIF fellowship. He developed ACRI's Right to Housing Project, which aims to ensure equal access to housing, protect the right to affordable housing, reduce segregation, combat homelessness and protect the rights of homeless people. The program has helped bring the right to affordable housing to the forefront of social protests, garnering support from thousands of Israelis.

Canadian Outreach

NIFC hosts events throughout the year to raise awareness among Canadians about its work in Israel. NIFC events encourage honest discussion and welcome all points of view with an aim of strengthening the connection between Israel and diverse Jewish communities across Canada. NIFC gives people from all walks of life a place to discuss the challenges Israel faces today while giving voice to the issues that are important to them.

2014 Events

Say it Again, Say Something Else featuring Author Ayelet Tsabari, Gabe Gonda, and Tamara Kramer

Trailblazing Women featuring Hamutal Gouri of the Dafna Fund, Israel

Limmud Winnipeg Session featuring Isser Dubinsky, Atarah Derrick and Samara Carroll

Breakthrough featuring Itamar Hamiel of Mahapach-Taghir and Mohammad Darawshe of Givat Haviva

Innovative Activism featuring Itamar Hamiel, Jonah Brotman and Gilli Zemer for New Generations Canada

The Future of Israel Starts Here: The Shira Herzog Annual Symposium featuring Ari Shavit, J.J. Goldberg and Akiva Eldar



More Than Meets the Eye featuring J.J. Goldberg, Lisa Goldman, Yoni Goldstein and Mike Regenstreif

Women as Agents of Change: Maintaining Tradition, Realizing Potential featuring Amal Elsana-Alhjoor, Rania Okby, Kher Elbaz and Ariel Dloomy

Gimme Shelter: Closing the Middle Class Housing Gap in Israel and Canada with Paul Kershaw, Penny Gurtsein and Gil Gan-Mor

Ameer Got His Gun Israeli Movie Night

Social Justice Fellowship

The NIFC Social Justice Fellowship is a post-college program that immerses young Canadians in the movement for social change in Israel. Fellows spend 10 months with an NGO where they can make a meaningful contribution while learning at the same time.

The NIFC Social Justice Fellow (SJF) for 2014-15 is Isaac Kates Rose, a recent graduate of the University of Toronto in Jewish Studies, Near and Middle Eastern Civilization and Cinema Studies. He chose the SJF path because he cares deeply about the past, present and future of Israel. He views the Fellowship as an opportunity to plant himself in Israel's soil and find out how his skills and experience can benefit people who need help and support.

During his time in Israel, Rose is looking forward to the opportunity to do meaningful work while discovering the Jewish root of his activism and education. He is interested in bridging Israel's character as a Jewish and Democratic state and finding sustainable harmony between the two to support solutions to Israel's social challenges.



2014 Projects

2014 Gaza Conflict Emergency Response

- Anti-Racism Education with Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)
- AJEEC on Wheels with the Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation – Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development
- Emergency Response Projects with Shatil

Civil & Human Rights

- Capacity Building for Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Organizations with Shatil
- Public Education for Human Rights with Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)
- Learning Communities in Tamra and Yaffat el-Nassera with Mahapach-Taghir
- Research and Public Education for the Renewal of Israeli Democracy with Molad
- Civil Liberties Law Fellows Program with New Israel Fund

Religious Pluralism & Tolerance

- Mentoring Young Israeli Religious Women with Kolech
- Time for Action – Educational Activities with Ne'emanai Torah V'Avoda
- Nurturing Community Leadership in Common Cause with Shaharit
- Democratic Leadership Training from a Traditional Mizrahi Perspective with Memizrach Shemesh

Social & Economic Justice

- Public Education for Access to Social and Economic Rights with Adva Center
- Outreach to Disadvantaged Citizens in the North and South with Social Economic Academy
- Leadership for a Shared Society with Shatil
- Combating Violence Among Arab Youth with Baladna
- Nurturing Community Leadership in Common Cause with Shaharit
- New Israel Fund of Canada Social Justice Fellow
- Strengthening Israel's Non-Profit Sector with Shatil
- Cooperative Development Center with The Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation – Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development

Women's Rights

- Arab Women's Employment with Women Against Violence
- Women's Community Leadership Training Institute with Dafna Fund and Mahapach-Taghir
- "A House of Our Own"; a Project of the Feminist Forum at Sapir Academic College with Dafna Fund

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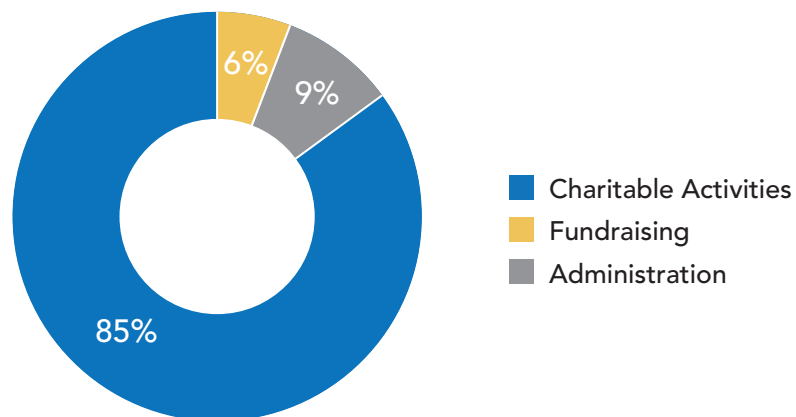
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For more information on all the ways you can leave a legacy gift, call our office at 416-781-4322 or email us at info@nifcan.org. All inquiries are kept confidential.

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Executive Director



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