

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



ROSSING CENTER
FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

מרכז רוסינג
לחינוך ולדיאלוג
מركز روسينج
للتربية وللحوار



Letter from Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we reflect upon the events of the past year, it is with a mixture of grief and resilience that we present the annual report of the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue. In the first nine months of the year, we tirelessly pursued our mission to promote a society built on principles of inclusivity and equality, making significant progress in reshaping the educational approach for hundreds of teachers and dialogically engaging students with the ‘other’. Little did we anticipate the profound challenges that would unfold in the subsequent three months, as war and devastation cast a shadow over the region we serve. Yet, even in the face of adversity, our commitment to fostering change remains unshaken.

The initial three quarters of the year witnessed the continuation of our ongoing projects and the introduction of innovative initiatives aimed at cultivating a shared and equal society, continuing to work both top-down and bottom-up. We engaged with educators, students, and communities, implementing programs designed to break down barriers and build bridges of understanding. The dedication of our team, coupled with the enthusiasm of those we work with, yielded tangible results in increasing the desire and capacity of Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, Christians and non-religious people to live in an inclusive, shared, democratic and multiculturally diverse society of equals. These value-driven goals characterize all our programs – as reflected in the three projects featured in this report: Open House, JCJCR (Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations) and Foundations for Partnership (formerly Dialogue and Identity).

In the first nine months of 2023, we took the opportunity to reassess and redesign some of our projects, ensuring their relevance and impact in an ever-evolving landscape. Our focus on professional development for teachers remained steadfast, with tailored programs that not only enhanced their pedagogical skills but also fostered a sense of shared responsibility for shaping the minds of the next generation. Simultaneously, our student-focused initiatives encouraged open dialogue and mutual respect, laying the foundation among the young generation we work with.





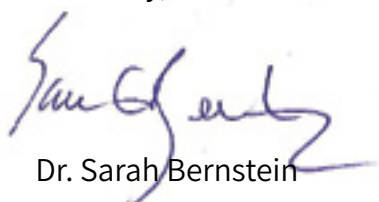
However, as the world watched with heavy hearts, the Holy Land faced renewed armed conflict in the final three months of the year. The devastating impact of these events rippled through communities, affecting lives, infrastructure, and the very fabric of societies. The education sector, already grappling with challenges, found itself further strained, as schools struggled to meet the psycho-social needs of their pupils.

In the midst of this turmoil, the Rossing Center stood resilient. While the conflict disrupted our routine operations, it did not extinguish our determination to contribute to positive change. Instead, we adapted our strategies and refocused our efforts to address the pressing needs arising from the crisis. Emergency support was provided to educators and students affected by the conflict, emphasizing the importance of education as a stabilizing force even in the most challenging times. Likewise, we helped organize and distribute over 1,200 food parcels to marginalized families in East Jerusalem between October and December. (See Gal and Mahmoud's story in this report)

Looking ahead to the coming years, we recognize that the road to a shared and equal society is fraught with challenges, but our commitment to this cause has only deepened. The lessons learned from the events of the past year have informed our strategic planning, guiding us towards creative approaches to working with our target audiences.

As we embark on the next phase of our journey, we extend our gratitude to our supporters, partners, and the communities that inspire our work. Together, we can build bridges of understanding, promote inclusivity, and foster a diverse and democratic society where equality thrives. The journey may be arduous, but with your continued partnership and support, we are confident that positive change is not only possible but inevitable.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sarah Bernstein



Our Goals and Theory of Change

The name of our organization, **the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue**, reflects the two spheres of action we see as crucial to the societal change we seek – a shared, inclusive society of equals. In this context, these spheres are not isolated one from the other, but interdependent. **‘Education’** is not merely the delivery of chunks of knowledge or information to a passive audience. **‘Dialogue’** is not merely the back-and-forth expression of opinions by two people or parties to each other. For education and dialogue to be effective and authentic, they have in common certain attributes and capabilities: attentive and empathetic listening; the capacities to reflect, process information about the other, think critically, consider and experience issues from different perspectives; to discuss, and, not infrequently as a result – to re-think and reframe one’s attitudes and behaviour. These capabilities comprise the tools for change and lie at the heart of our work. All of our work – both education and dialogue – is designed to create change – to challenge the status quo and transform the power imbalances currently so embedded in Israeli society.

With these goals in mind, we created in 2022 three Rossing Center departments:

- **Education Department** – home to three of our programs: Educating for Change, Dialogue and Identity, and JCJCR [Jerusalem Center for Jewish Christian Relations]
- **Dialogue Department** – home to Meeting Place, Ramle Open House and Healing Hatred;
- **International Engagement** – home to our international activities (speaking engagements, participation in conferences etc.; our digital communication platforms; webinars, and our ADAShA program).



Holistic change in the education system, instilling values and practice of shared society

Change in the 'top-down' and 'grassroots bottom-up' relationship increasing their cooperation in shared society development

Dynamic of change in mixed spaces from exclusive to shared and inclusive



Desire and Capacity to Build an Inclusive Society



Inclusive Society



Gal and Mahmoud: Personal Journeys in the Wake of the War

Gal and Mahmoud, tell us a little about yourselves.

Gal: I serve as the director of the Rossing Center's program, 'Meeting Place' which brings Israeli and Palestinian Hebrew University students together in dialogue and in designing inclusive campus initiatives. I live in the Kiryat Yuval neighborhood of West Jerusalem.

Mahmoud: I serve as co-director of Kulna Jerusalem and work in youth development in the Jerusalem Municipality. I grew up in the Shuafat Refugee Camp in East Jerusalem, and today I live in the Beit Hanina neighborhood.

How did your collaboration start? How did you decide on this particular project?

Gal: In the first week of the war, I came to volunteer at the Civil Society Situation Room in Jerusalem, which was established to respond to the needs of the communities that were primarily affected by the war – victims of the October 7th events, evacuees from the south and north, and families of soldiers and reservists. I thought





about how to reach the Palestinian population – I wanted to understand the hardships they were facing following the outbreak of war and brainstorm potential solutions. I connected with other people who care about these issues and who know that space well. That’s where my partnership with Mahmoud Shehadeh began. The two of us, along with Erez Wagner from the Ma’an Workers’ Organization focused on labor rights, and determined that the immediate impact Palestinians felt was the loss of livelihood and freedom of movement. This affected the supply of goods to stores and consequently the increase in prices, causing a surge in the need for basic food security.

We understood that any emergency response benefiting East Jerusalem residents would need to be carried out independently, not through the existing Civil Society Situation Room. We therefore created a partnership between our organizations.

Mahmoud: At the beginning of the war, I came to the Situation Room as a municipal worker

to help prepare the public bomb shelters. I was deeply moved by the mass mobilization of civil society and inspired by the spirit of volunteering. I wanted to create something similar that would give personal attention to the needs of the city’s Palestinian residents. That’s when I connected with Gal and Erez. During Covid-19, I distributed food baskets to families severely affected by the restrictions on movement. Once I started receiving inquiries from many of those same families, it became clear that Palestinian residents needed a solution for obtaining basic necessities during the current crisis. At first, we started managing a few small donations for those families who had turned to me, but we quickly realized the need was so great that the response required a more systematic approach. Thanks to my experience in the pandemic, I already had a network of contacts in place who could support this kind of undertaking, so we got the project off the ground pretty swiftly. After fundraising, collecting items, and recruiting Jewish and Arab



volunteers, we started handing out food baskets and continued receiving more and more inquiries. We simultaneously offered the beneficiaries additional services including sessions on how to cope with the situation and ‘exercising your rights’ workshops.

Why was this project important and why was it so important to you?

Mahmoud: The authorities neglect most of the Palestinian population’s needs, so any assistance to the families is crucial at this time. I care deeply about equal treatment of all Jerusalem’s residents, giving each person individual attention, and informing them about their rights so they can independently gain a dignified livelihood.

Gal: No less important for us was the opportunity to invest in the volunteers themselves, especially the Arab volunteers. In the initial weeks of the war, the residents of East Jerusalem remained at home without any educational frameworks. On top of this, most were afraid to even leave their house due to the war, and for fear of confrontations with

security forces in the city. For a significant portion of our volunteers, the project gave them something to do and a reason to leave their home. It gave them an opportunity to socialize and feel a sense of belonging and meaning during an extremely difficult time.

Mahmoud: For the young Arab volunteers who usually do not interact with Israelis, this positive encounter with Jews provided an opportunity to make connections and experience a model of mutually beneficial cooperation. When families came to receive the food baskets, the presence of Jewish partners and volunteers conveyed the message that even in the bitterest of times, there are still examples of cooperation.

Gal: Even though almost all dialogue work was frozen during the first months of the war, the knowledge, abilities, and networking from my regular work in that field brought added value to this wartime relief project. Since I was previously unfamiliar with this kind of emergency effort, I felt great satisfaction contributing in this way and at this time.



Four of Our Emergency Response Initiatives:

1 Aid Distribution in East Jerusalem

By December 2023, with 20 volunteers, we distributed some 1,220 food baskets across East Jerusalem neighborhoods. Workshops on rights advocacy held with Ma'an saw enthusiastic participation.

2 Jerusalem Dialogue Group

With Ir Amim and We Make Change NGOs, we facilitated a six-member activist group from neighboring Pisgat Ze'ev and Shuafat Refugee Camp, brainstorming initiatives to ease war- exacerbated tensions.

3 Emergency Psychosocial Support for Teachers

Providing tools and consultation to Arab and Jewish teachers in order to navigate and alleviate the fear and trauma experienced by children in schools.

4 'Returning to a Shared Campus'

At Hebrew University, we facilitated a one-day seminar: students, faculty, and staff discussed war impacts on the upcoming semester, and initiatives re shared space challenges in university settings.



Impact by the Numbers

6,687

people engaged across ALL programs

4,089

participants

Through
119

one-off events

1,310

educators including
teachers, principals, and
tour guides

Through
48

multi-session courses, trainings, and seminars

1,288

students and
participants

at **123**

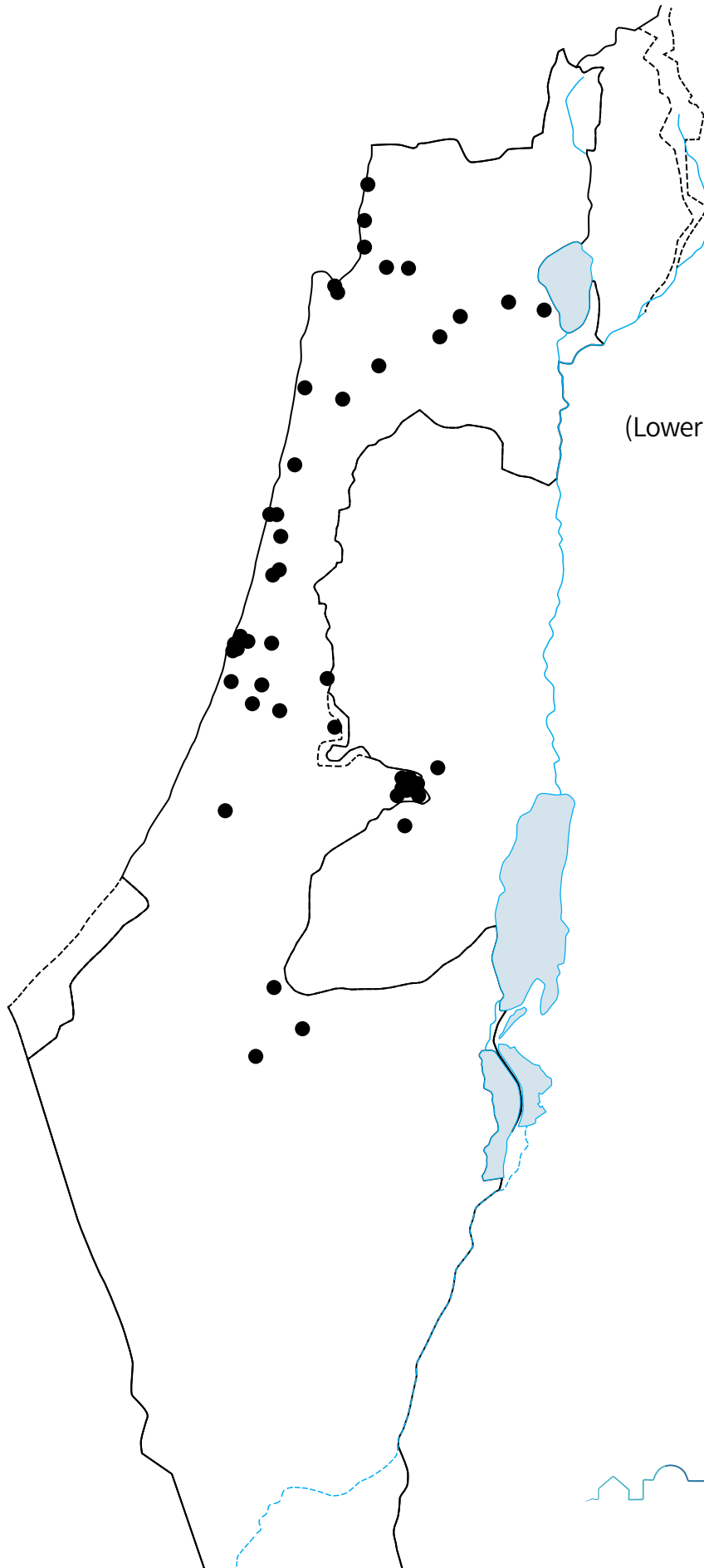
schools, universities, colleges, and other institutes

And our content has reached **142,500** viewers
from over **50** countries across all our digital platforms.



In 2023 the Rossing Center's EDUCATION DEPARTMENT operated in:

Moshav Regba
 Acco
 Kiryat Motzkin
 Kiryat Yam
 Kiryat Ata
 Kiryat Bialik
 Haifa
 Yokneam Illit
 Shfaram
 Zichron Yaacov
 Hadera
 Netanya
 Raanana
 Herzliya
 Hod Hasharon
 Tel Aviv - Jaffa
 Holon
 Rishon L'Tzion
 Rehovot



Ibillin
 Shfaram
 (Lower Galilee (Kedourie)
 Nazareth
 Yafia
 Yokneam
 Moshav Amikim
 Even Yehuda
 Petach Tikva
 Kiryat Ono
 Shoham
 Ramle
 Modi'in
 Jerusalem
 Kfar Adomim
 Lakia
 Kseifah
 Ein Tzurim
 Tel Sheva
 Kfar Ezion

From Dialogue and Identity to Foundations for Partnership



Since 2006, our Dialogue and Identity school-twinning program has challenged the norm of separation between Arabs and Jews by pairing dozens of Jewish and Arab schools – training their teachers to facilitate bi-national encounters between their 10-13 year-old students. In these encounters, they visit each other’s schools, and houses of worship, sharing stories, festivals, and life-cycle traditions, with a view to nurturing interest and mutual respect. Amidst their reality of separation and estrangement from one another, Jewish and Arab children are often unfamiliar with spaces belonging to the other identity-group. A visit to a mosque, or church, or synagogue was for many of the children, a ‘first’.

In 2023, our staff ran 5 courses for 128 educators, engaging 1,200 students in 4 bi-national encounters in 36 Jewish and Arab schools across the country.

Towards the end of the school year, over 1,000 Jewish, Muslim, and Christian students came together for a special performance marking 17 years of Dialogue & Identity. This spectacular event instilled hope for a better future.

Researchers who conducted an external evaluation assessed that 96% of teachers felt highly confident in their ability to implement the program in their schools thanks to our capacity-building sessions. Moreover, 70% of participating teachers shared their experiences from the program with non-participating colleagues. The program’s bi-national forum of school principals expressed their enthusiasm for the program’s continuation in their schools in future years.

Nevertheless, our learning from our own observation over the years and from the extensive evaluation process has led us to develop a basically new program, focused on nurturing the development of:

- strong individual and collective identities;
- respect for the other;
- sensitivity to inequality;
- readiness for social closeness

These values are the anchors of our new program, ‘Foundations for Partnership’ and will be acquired in a deeper and longer two-year process of uni-national work in Year 1 moving gradually to bi-national encounter in Year 2. The





more intensive work to be conducted with the principals and teachers is designed to better embed and sustain the program approach in the schools beyond our involvement, and achieve long-term, meaningful impact. The stronger each child's individual and collective identity, the more ready they will be to meet each other on an equal footing. We had hoped to launch the new program in the autumn of 2023, but the massive disruption to the school system in the wake of the war forced us to postpone the full transition to Foundations for Partnership to the 2024-2025 school year. Meanwhile, we have managed to introduce the uni-national component into a number of Christian schools serving Christian and Muslim students, and we look forward to reporting on the full pilot launch also across Jewish schools next year. As various research studies indicate, with students exposed to an increasingly polarized social context and intolerant messaging since October 7th, programs like Foundations for Partnership – which support the educators' increasingly complex and crucial role in fostering equality and diversity – are more vital than ever.

What they said:

Students: "...the discourse about houses of worship – it's something we never talk about, but today opened something up for us – a space that allowed us to listen and identify with the feelings of others."

Students: "It was great to make new friends who study in other schools and are of different religions"

Participant: "I realised how important the meetings are between us [Arab and Jews]"



Rossing Center at the Open House (in cooperation with the Friends of Open House)

The reputation of the Open House as a grassroots hub of intercultural leadership and community-building in the mixed city of Ramle has grown in strength.

Once again Ramle-based Jewish, Christian and Muslim students were recipients of grants enabling them to form two taskforces: one of young women whose role it was to explore and give exposure to the societal role and contribution of Ramle women; the other, an intercultural taskforce of young women and men, who would design and implement activities for all ages among the city's diverse communities.

To build the capacities of the members of each taskforce to work cohesively and productively together, each group participated in our signature 'Healing Hatred' seminar. In which a process of conscious listening to each other and sharing how each is affected by the

What they said:

Teachers: "I like that there is honesty and courage here when sharing. People put their hearts on the table here!"

Students: "Before the encounter I was a little scared – but once it started, I was happy, and I'm coming away happy and excited – it was such fun for me to play with you and to show you around our school."

historical and ongoing conflict builds, in turn, mutual understanding and commitment to joint action. They also learned and discussed the highly charged history of the city using the story of the Open House itself as an example and shared their thoughts on the city's significance to each as an individual.

This experience formed the basis for the new women's taskforce main project which differed from previous ones in that they would focus on discovering themselves and revealing their own unique stories, illustrating how the city of Ramle plays a significant role in their identities. Meanwhile, they also assisted the previous year's women's taskforce in setting up the March 2023 exhibition, "Stories Beyond the Arches: Women's Voices from Ramle". This moving and meaningful exhibition showcased the stories of some 15 exceptional women, who despite the societal challenges they





faced, overcame these obstacles and remain proud residents of the city of Ramle – as well as role models for young women and girls in their communities.

Several of Open House's programs were, in fact, infused with a gender angle, such as district training for pedagogical counselors on gender-based violence prevention, and a course -- in partnership with WePower, Abraham Initiatives, and the German Embassy - on empowering women to become politically engaged.

We continued to partner with the Municipality of Ramle in the design and implementation of projects contributing to an inclusive society of equals in the city and were pleased to host Mayor of Ramle, Mr. Michael Vidal, along with the municipality's Advisor for the Promotion of the Status of Women, Nirit Tanenbaum, for an official visit to the Open House. We also enjoyed

local partnerships with Keshet 360 Ramle Youth Center, the Ramle Center for Contemporary Art, and other Ramle institutions.

The third Intercultural Taskforce comprising 11 students explored socio-political issues present in their lives as residents of Ramle, and charted a course for how they could make a positive impact in their communities. They planned and implemented fun activities for children and families in local parks, providing rare opportunities for Ramle's Jewish and Arab children to play together, and for their parents to socialize, despite the city's ever-present Arab-Jewish tensions. They also organized an Iftar (break-fast) evening at the Open House during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan hosting Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The students, along with previous taskforce alumni, city council members, and other guests shared the traditional festive meal along with speeches,





blessings, and explanations about Ramadan in an authentic evening of joy, celebration, and partnership.

Other cultural activities included the screening, followed by a discussion, at the Open House of the award-winning film “Cinema Sabaya,” the story of eight Arab and Jewish women who participate in a series of film workshops at a local community center. Another activity took the Intercultural Taskforce into the city center to film a video about the Jewish holiday of Shavuot and the corresponding Christian holiday of Ansara (Pentecost) – with the aim of acquainting the different religious communities in the city with the holidays of others.

Both taskforces also assisted in Open House activities including the hosting of a delegation of students and staff from the Hand-in-Hand

network of bilingual (Hebrew and Arabic) schools in June; organizing volunteers to hold weekly sports activities and board games over several months through which the participating Jewish and Arab children got to know each other well.

The Rossing Center launched a new partnership bringing the valuable work of the Teacher’s Lounge into the Ramle ecosystem – and hosted by the Open House. The Teacher’s Lounge, a Jerusalem-based, year-round program, recognized by the Ministry of Education, runs activities throughout the country, training teachers and educators from shared Jewish-Arab spaces in multicultural competence.

The Open House also continues its role as home to our partner organization, Sadaka-Reut, which educates and empowers Jewish





and Palestinian youth in Ramle and other mixed cities, such as Jaffa and Lod to act for change in their communities.

At the end of 2023, amidst the devastating atrocities and war, we made sure to approach our work at the Open House with utmost sensitivity to the potentially volatile situation in the city. While we were relieved that violence did not break out in the streets between the populations as it did in May 2021, we nevertheless focused on working with our new groups of Palestinian and Jewish students separately as their needs were so different, and tensions were running so high. In the beginning of 2024, we successfully brought them together for initial bi-national meetings in accordance with our 'traditional' women's and intercultural taskforce models.

What the students' taskforces had to say:

"This is the best thing I've done..."

"It was such fun running activities that make children happy!"

"It amazed me to discover that there are special places with a rich history right under my nose, where I pass by all the time."

"The scholarship at the Open House gave me the opportunity to look at the Arab sector from a different perspective and to learn broadly about myself and others in society."



JCJCR - Jerusalem Center for Jewish- Christian Relations

As the majority population, many Jewish Israelis seldom interact with the state's minority populations. JCJCR raises awareness and educates about the Holy Land's Christian communities and the complex challenges they face as a minority within a minority. It does so with wide-ranging audiences, many of whom include teachers and teachers-to-be, tour guides and trainee tour guides, younger generation actors in gap year community leadership and education programs. Since, in all these categories, there are those who will reach hundreds, if not thousands of people, they play a pivotal role in shaping political and social discourse. In addition to its work in these specific fields and with the public at large (including high school students and student groups from both local and overseas institutions), JCJCR, directed by Hana Bendcowsky, works with government





authorities, including for example, the Ministries of Tourism and Foreign Affairs, to help build knowledge of their local and overseas personnel around the history, belonging and challenges of the local Christian communities.

JCJCR's programs thus impact society beyond measure, at both the grassroots and institutional levels. Through its courses, seminars, lectures and tours in 2023, JCJCR reached over 3,000 people, just over 1,000 of whom were qualified tour guides or trainee tour guides, studying at institutions across the country, including the Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Wingate Schools of tourism, as well as the Yad Ben Zvi Institute, Kinneret College Haifa and Kinneret.

To teachers and those training to be teachers, for example at Tel Aviv's **Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts**

(Seminar HaKibbutzim) and the Kerem Institute for Teacher Training in Jerusalem, the JCJCR director brings innovative approaches each year in the courses she teaches. A 2023 example involved the experience of each student in interviewing a Christian member of the clergy and then sharing what they had learnt with the class. Ms. Bendcowsky noted that "some are meticulous in sticking to the questions prepared in advance and some continue the conversation spontaneously; some of the conversations are short and to the point, and some continue the conversation for hours! In all cases, the interviews led to fascinating discussions in the training sessions."

Participants in the tour guide and teacher training courses and other JCJCR educational activities are made aware of how our conceptions of people, places, and events



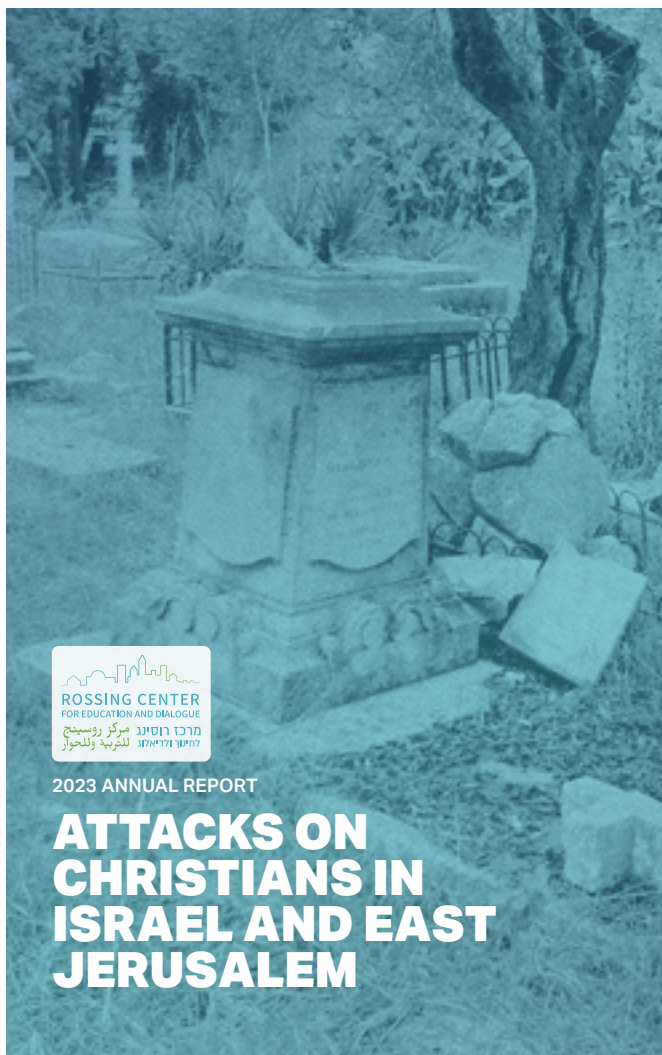


are shaped by the words used to describe them. For example, referring to “Palestinian Christian citizens of Israel or residents of East Jerusalem,” instead of “Arab Christians.” Using the term ‘Palestinian’ affirms their historical connection to the Holy Land and honors their cultural heritage which is distinct from Arabs of other lands. Emphasizing their citizenship and residency calls attention to their rootedness and their deserving of equal protection under the law. Acknowledging that all narratives are inherently political (and all the more so in the Israeli-Palestinian context), and, given that tour guiding in the school system tends to be conducted mainly by those from the nationalist-religious sector, the Rossing Center and JCJCR are playing a crucial role in contributing a more pluralist presentation. multiple narratives reflecting the belonging of three faiths in the Holy Land

and Jerusalem specifically.

With the polarization of Israeli society during 2023, further exacerbated since the outbreak of the war, JCJCR has thus been taking care to bring to its audiences’ attention issues affecting Jerusalem’s Christian communities, such as geopolitical factors vis-à-vis borders, East and West Jerusalem, the Separation Barrier, planning and building problems and so forth. While such issues are not given extensive attention in the country’s tour guide training schools, JCJCR does its utmost to address these issues in the more experiential context of its Old City study tours and lectures. An example, arising in the last few months of 2023, the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem’s Old City became a focal point of tension. Many outsiders were confused and curious about alleged property deals with settler-connected entities. By educating the public about the





predicament facing the Armenian community and taking groups of visitors to the compound to witness the struggle, the community felt they are not alone and that others care about their situation.

At the broader level, increasing radicalization and rise in far-right sentiments in Israeli society have significantly impacted the lives of Christians in the region and in East Jerusalem in particular – as indicated by Ms Bendcowsky in the media, in April 2023 and discussed in a webinar in July 2023, held by Hana Bendcowsky with Wadie Abu Nassar, co-founder of the Forum of Holy Christians, on “The Increasing Hostility towards Christians in the Holy Land: Voices from the Field”. (More on the webinar in our International Engagement and Social Media section in this report). This situation has also prompted the following new direction for JCJCR:

Advocacy and Education Initiative: Enhancing Christian Security in the Holy Land

During 2023, Church leaders reported increasing harassment and attacks against Christians by extremist (nationalist-religious) Jews, with at least seven cases of vandalism of church properties just in the first two months alone of 2023. Despite the increasing violence, Christian leaders maintain that most incidents are never thoroughly investigated, and, knowing this to be the case some of those impacted do not even bother to report such incidents. Given the significant lack of standardized and centralized documentation mechanisms and criteria to accurately reflect the gravity of the situation – and advocate on an informed basis with the appropriate authorities, the Rossing Center developed a new initiative under the umbrella of JCJCR. This began with the creation of a comprehensive database of attacks on Christian communities through monitoring and gathering of information regarding their sense of security. The longstanding, excellent relations of trust between JCJCR and the Christian leaders and their communities enabled the launching of the data-gathering process, led by the Rossing Center’s Federica Sasso and conducted in coordination with Yisca Harani (Religious Freedom Data Center). This, in turn, yielded the highly informative and analytical Rossing Center publication: [Attacks on Christians in Israel and East Jerusalem: 2023 Annual Report](#) which, as indicated in its Executive Summary, presents the urgent need “for a comprehensive approach involving condemnation by state and religious authorities, law enforcement, education, community involvement, media engagement and international awareness.” We look forward to reporting on the reach and contribution of this new JCJCR initiative to diminishing the presence of this ugly phenomenon in the Holy Land.



Public and International Engagement

JCJCR held the Daniel Rossing Memorial Symposium on January 26, 2023 on the subject of “Christian Communities of Jerusalem – What has Changed? Current Situation and Future Prospects.” JCJCR Director Hana Bendcowsky chaired the event which was held at the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (JIPR). Speakers included the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa; JIPR CEO, Dr. David Koren, and Senior Researcher, Dr. Amnon Ramon; Marah Saji, Tel Aviv University; and the Rossing Center’s Director of International Engagement, John Munayer. The symposium was attended by some 100 people.

On July 17th, 2023 the Rossing Center and JCJCR held a webinar on “The Increasing Hostility towards Christians in the Holy Land: Voices from the Field.” The two speakers were Wadie Abu Nassar, Co-founder of the Forum of Holy Land Christians and JCJCR Director Hana Bendcowsky. The Rossing Center’s Coordinator of the Advocacy and Education Initiative, Federica Sasso chaired the event which was attended by nearly 100 viewers. You can watch the recording on our digital platforms.

Many organizations and individuals also visited us at the Open House in Ramle, including groups of educators, youth programs, municipal authorities and other civil society initiatives that see the Open House as an example of Arab-Jewish mutual cooperation. Among them was a delegation of students and staff from the Hand-in-Hand network of bilingual schools, who visited us in June as a way of strengthening each other’s work in the field of shared-society education.

Throughout 2023, Rossing Center Executive Director, Dr. Sarah Bernstein and Director of International Engagement, John Munayer delivered several lectures to nearly 200 people about Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and shared-society education. They were invited to present on these subjects both online and in person, locally and abroad, by universities, visiting delegations, and partner civil society organizations.

1,000s of views from 50 countries

What content, old stuff still accessible, rewatch

Our high-quality video content has allowed us to showcase our work in a visually engaging way, inspiring our audience. You can watch our video content on our YouTube channel.

After consulting with communications experts, we adapted our social media strategy for 2023 to prioritize quality over quantity. This approach has allowed us to create content with more depth and quality, which resonates with our identified target audiences. Each post is meticulously crafted to provide insights into our activities, extend holiday greetings, and more – always with an educational twist. For instance, when updating about our activities, we’ve made it a point to explain the methods and tools used, offering practical insights that others can apply, rather than merely recounting events. Similarly, our holiday posts are designed to educate, shedding light on the traditions and significance of the celebrations, which has proven to be particularly engaging for those interested in the interfaith aspect of our work. We now have more than 1,700 followers on





our English-language Facebook page, nearly 500 on our Arabic-Hebrew page, and close to 4,000 on the page of our Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations. Our Instagram pages also have over 500 followers.

This detailed approach to our communication has not only enriched the content we offer but has also fostered a stronger connection with our community, as we continue to share our journey and learn from one another.

Internationally, we have engaged individuals interested in peace initiatives in the Holy Land, while locally, we have connected with Israelis and Palestinians who are invested in a shared society. This local audience includes a significant number of educators, as well as potential and past participants in our programs.

We had planned a speaking tour in the United States for the end of 2023. Of course, we needed to postpone this in the wake of the current violence, but we are pleased to announce that the tour indeed took place in April 2024. The purpose of this tour is to build and expand our community of support around the world. Through speaking engagements at synagogues, churches, and other institutions, we aim to build partnerships and tap into networks of individual donors to supplement the institutional support we already receive. We also hope to establish new relationships with a variety of potential funders in the US, to diversify our sources of funding.

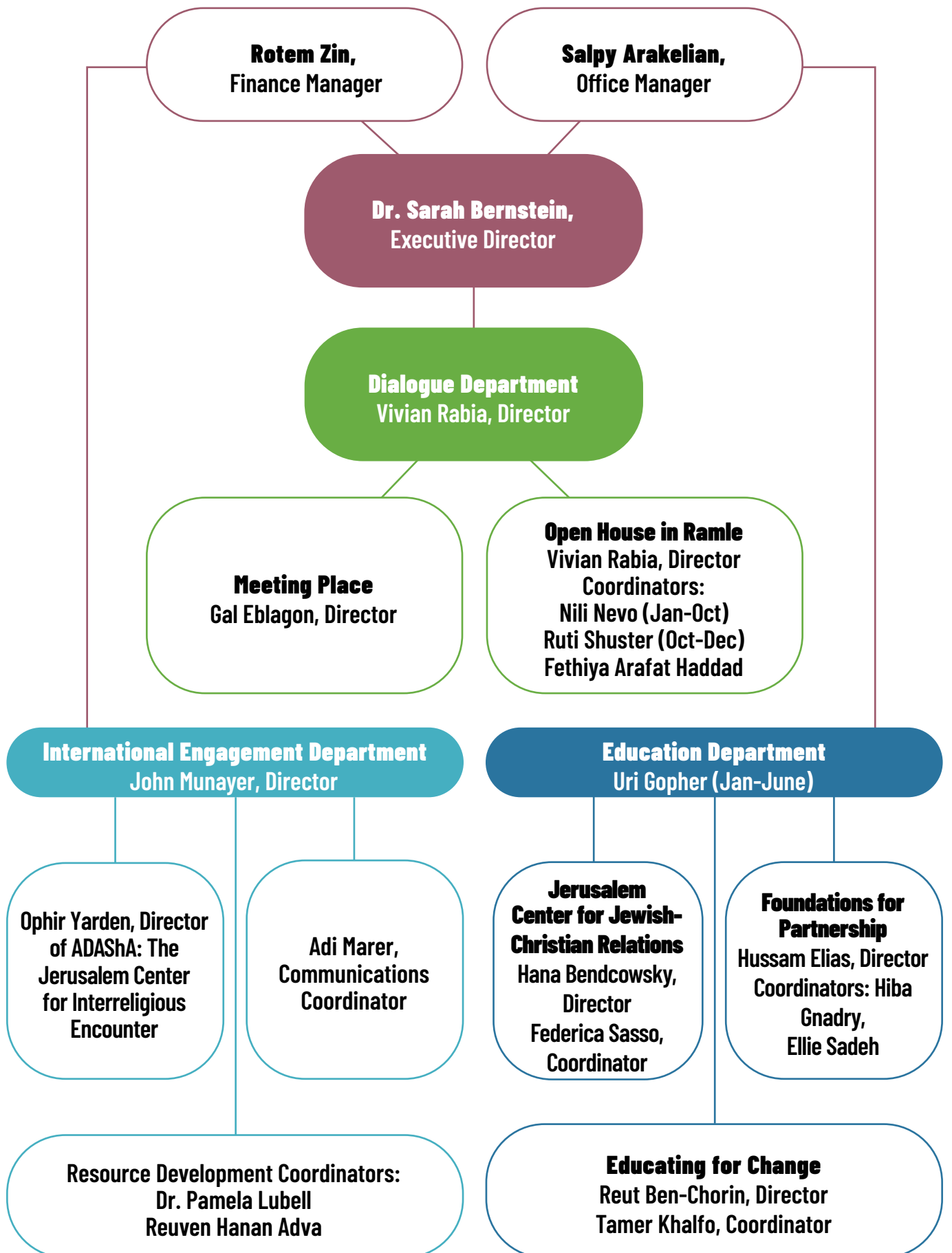
In 2023, we engaged over 50,000 online viewers and users through our social media accounts,

video and web content, and our online ‘Know Your Neighbor’ platform. We are continuing our robust digital presence into 2024, always sharpening and updating our media strategy. Specifically, we are looking to amplify the voices of our staff members by publishing more blog posts highlighting their areas of expertise. We also expect to increase the number of live webinars we facilitate for the public, both locally and internationally.

We organized a speaking tour, which was instrumental in raising our profile and connecting us with potential donors and partners. Originally the tour was supposed to take place in 2023, but due to the war, got postponed to April 2024. The tour allowed us to share our mission and work with a wider audience, thereby increasing our impact. We have been able to engage with community leaders, philanthropists, and other stakeholders, sharing our vision and the impact of our work. These interactions have not only raised awareness about our organization but have also resulted in new partnerships and collaborations, further enhancing our capacity to serve our community. In April 2024, our Executive Director and Director of International Engagement had 30 speaking engagements across the major population centers on the east coast of the United States. These events and meetings included synagogues, churches, interfaith communities, as well as private philanthropists. In total, 200 people participated in these events and meetings, learning about the Rossing Center and our work.



Our Team



Budget Breakdown

40%

Education Department

32%

Dialogue Department

4%

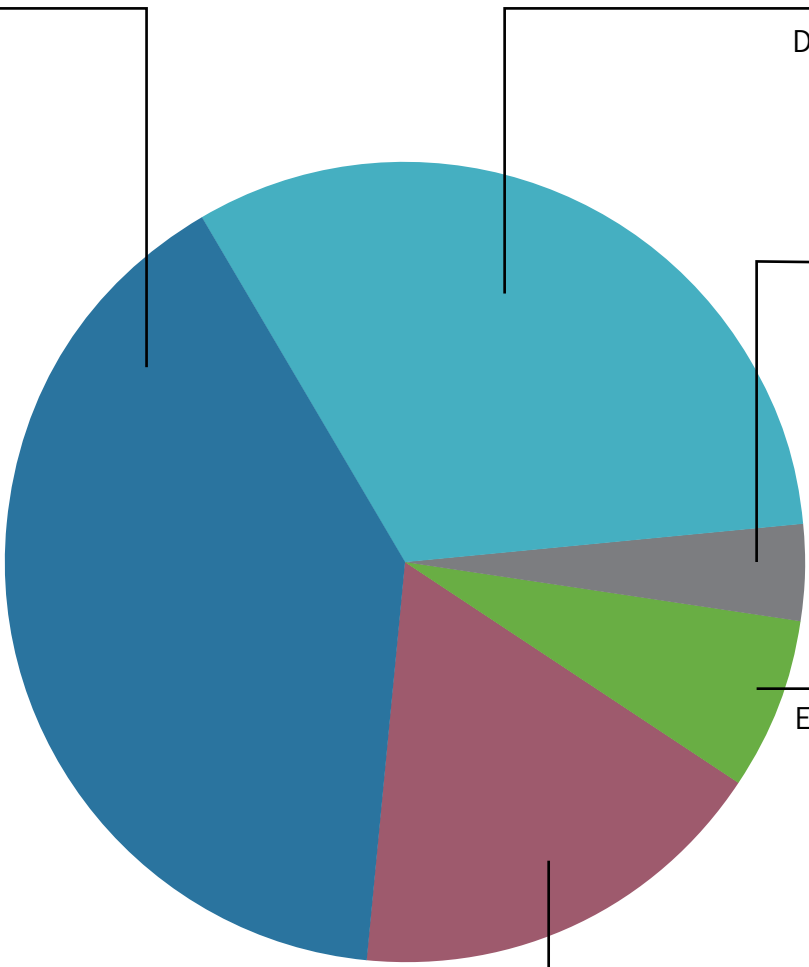
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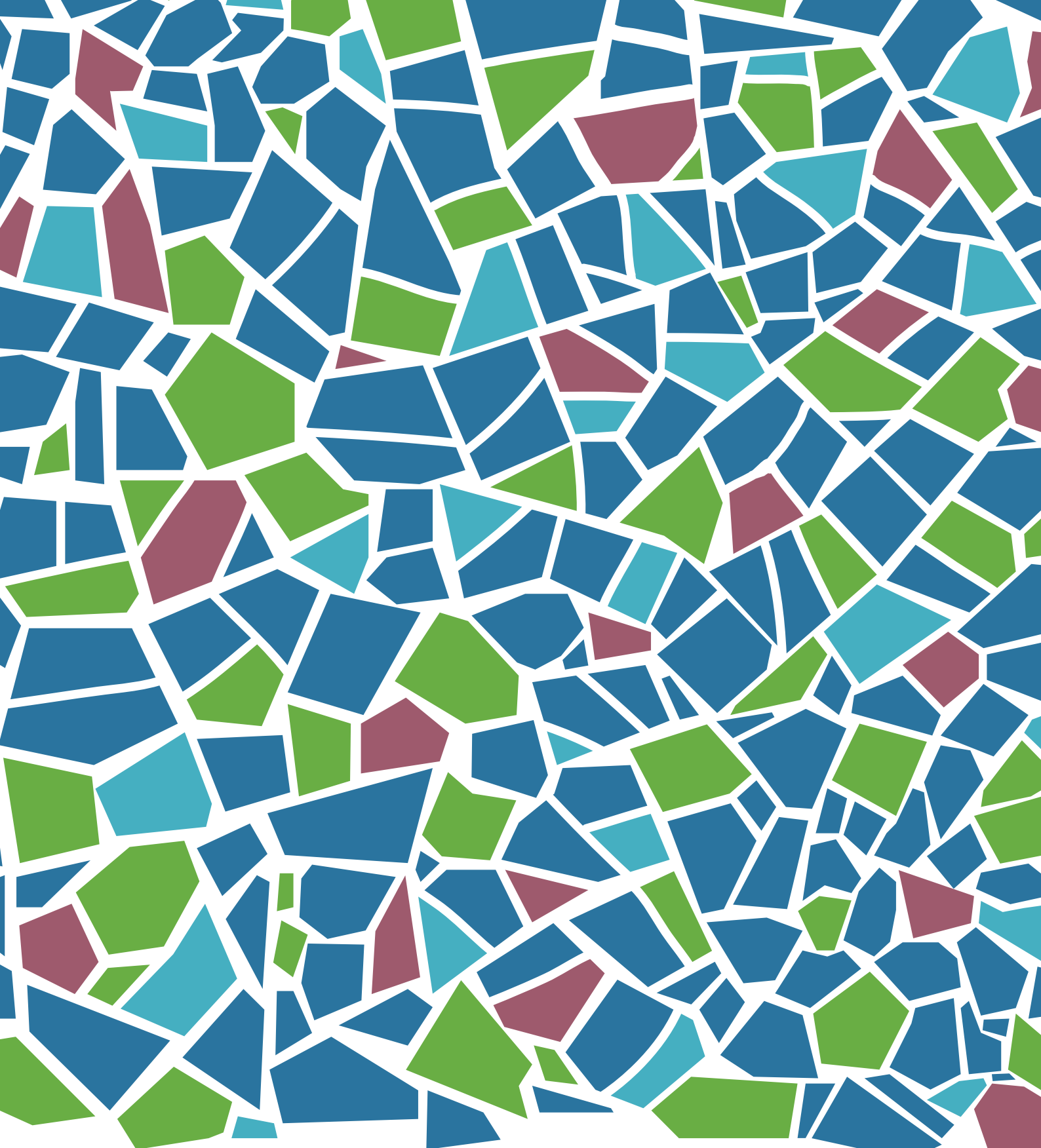
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