



2025

ANNUAL REPORT


ROSSING CENTER
FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE
מרכז רוסינג
לחינוך ולדיאלוג
מרכז רוסינג
לلتربية وللحوار

Contents

Letter from the Executive Director	4
Mission & Impact	5
Education Department	7
Dialogue Department	12
Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR)	16
International Engagement	19
Team	21
Financial Summary	22





Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The year 2025 unfolded in a reality that none of us could ignore. Across Israel and the wider region, the war that began in October 2023 continued to shape daily life. Many of the communities we work with live under extraordinary strain and face heightened vulnerability. In such an atmosphere, the Rossing Center's work was more difficult and more necessary than ever. Throughout this challenging year, our team remained committed to creating spaces where thousands of teachers, principals, tour guides, young leaders, and other practitioners could meet across difference with honesty, dignity, and courage.

At the same time, the emotional reality of the ongoing conflict required us to adapt our methodologies. Our participants often arrived carrying grief, anger, and exhaustion. Our trauma-informed **Healing Hatred** methodology proved vital in helping them process these experiences while still engaging one another with empathy and accountability. Even amid these local challenges, our work resonated internationally. The Rossing Center continued to share insights from our experience on the ground in the Holy Land—including by invitation to address hundreds of leaders at the Vatican marking the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate. These moments remind us that the work of building shared societies here carries lessons and responsibilities far beyond our borders.

Yet behind every program and public milestone stands something even more essential: the dedication of our

team and the support of our global community. Our staff—Jewish, Muslim, and Christian colleagues working side by side—navigated the same challenges affecting the broader society while continuing to implement our programs all in uncertain and rapidly changing circumstances. Their perseverance is a daily reminder that partnership across difference is not an abstract ideal; it is a lived commitment.

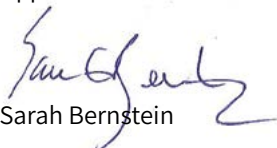
None of this would be possible without you.

Whether you support the Rossing Center as a donor, partner organization, participant, advocate, or friend, your involvement is inseparable from the work we do. Every dialogue circle, training seminar, and research report, exists because a global community believes that a different future is still possible.

In times like these, hope is not a feeling—it is a choice, and often a difficult one. Our participants choose it when they sit down together to listen honestly. Our staff choose it when they continue to facilitate dialogue even in moments of deep tension. And you choose it when you stand with us in this work.

For that, I offer my deepest gratitude.

With appreciation and determination,



Dr. Sarah Bernstein
Executive Director



Mission & Impact



Since 2006, the Rosing Center for Education and Dialogue has been a leading interreligious organization in the peacebuilding field. Our mission is to build the desire and capacity of Israelis and Palestinians to create truly shared societies for all religious, ethnic and national groups. We aim to achieve this by teaching values of inclusivity within the Israeli education system, and by giving Arabs and Jews the tools to make mixed spaces more equitable.

Academic research in social-psychology conducted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's aChord Center produced the four guiding principles of effective shared-society education:

- Development of open, pluralistic identities
- Sensitivity to inequality and injustice
- Tolerance of difference
- Preparedness to live side-by-side in an atmosphere of inclusivity

In order to achieve systemic change, we partner with a wide

range of institutions across the public sector and civil society who subsequently embed our methodologies in their own curricula. All our work is designed to challenge the status quo and transform the power imbalances currently embedded in Israeli society. Because religious tropes are frequently used to fuel nationalist violence, we believe religion has a crucial role to play in reversing this dynamic and contributing instead to understanding the 'other' as a whole – composed of their religious, cultural, and national narratives and identities, as well as their traditions, beliefs and practices.

Across classrooms, campuses, mixed cities, houses of worship, and international forums, our work created rare spaces for truth-telling, encounter, empathy, and principled leadership. In 2025, 4,800 educators, students, community leaders, activists, and clergy took part in Rosing Center programs – altogether, we estimate these 'multipliers' reached more than 140,000 individuals this year alone, and will reach thousands more over the course of their careers.





187

Partner institutions - schools, colleges, universities, civil society organizations, and more



4,800

School principals, teachers, tour guides, and other professionals directly engaged in Rossing Center programs

142,000

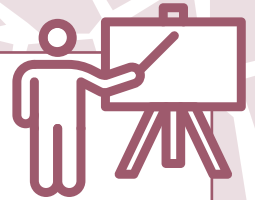
Individuals indirectly impacted through educators' wider circles of influence



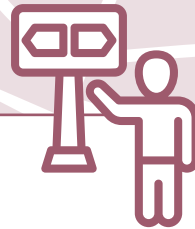
150,000

Online users from around the world engaged via our digital content

208



Educators equipped with tools to counter racism, promote critical thinking, foster sensitivity to inequality and injustice, and facilitate dialogue across difference in and beyond the classroom



622

Tour guides-in-training learned about the complexity of Jewish-Christian relations and the multi-layered issues facing Christian communities in the Holy Land



The Rossing Center's Director of Education, Vivian Rabia was awarded the Abraham Initiatives' Annual Prize in recognition of her work advancing inter-community encounter, empowering the voice of Arab women, and shaping policy to protect shared society in the city of Ramle





Education Department

For our Education Department programming, 2025 was an exciting and challenging year of transition. Drawing on our many years of experience with elementary school teachers and high school teachers in our Foundations for Partnership (formerly Dialogue and Identity) and Educating for Change programs in Israel's largely segregated school system, we concluded that holistic systemic change—the embedding of shared society and peacebuilding values and education in schools—requires intensive, ongoing engagement of school principals, as well as systematic work with teachers. In the past, principals of schools where our programs operated were enthusiastic and supportive of their staff and students' participation. Now, however, principals themselves are taking on crucial proactive leadership roles: in their first year, each designs a work plan suited to their specific school and community's needs, with the goal of educating students with the motivation, values, and skills to live in an inclusive, democratic, and multicultural society of equals, and to contribute to such a shared society as graduates. In their second year, our in-school training programs equip teachers

with the tools and capacities they need in order to educate their students accordingly, and by the third year schools are implementing a more comprehensive approach to peace and shared society education, mentored by our staff.

Adopting this holistic systemic perspective led to the merger of the two programs into Foundations for Change [F4C]. In January 2025, 8 Palestinian and 5 Jewish principals gathered for a two-day Healing Hatred seminar, launching the 'Principals' Forum'. This quickly became a space for sharing, reflection, and professional consultation, exploring pedagogical models for shared-society education with guest lectures and peer presentations. The principals met, for example, with educational innovation consultant Yael Schwartzberg, who shared practical strategies for leading systemic change, navigating resistance, and embedding values-driven leadership. They also visited the Open House in Ramle, where Director Vivian Rabia presented the site's complex Palestinian and Israeli history and its role as a community hub for Palestinian-Jewish engagement.





Plans for a culminating overseas seminar at the Swiss Coexistences Association (which supports Israeli-Palestinian dialogue) were canceled in June due to the Iran-Israel war. While the principals were understandably disappointed, we enabled participation of those wishing to continue in follow-up workshops during the 2025–2026 academic year and to join the new cohort of 14 Jewish and Palestinian principals for the end-of-year overseas seminar in July 2026.

“The tours changed me personally. Now I can help my students reflect on identity in ways that feel authentic to them.”

– Teacher from the Mariam Baouardy School, I’billin

Meanwhile, we adapted and enriched teachers’ programming content and methodologies to meet

changing needs—particularly around resilience and stress management—given the societal impact of escalating violence, political polarization, and pervasive fear. In this atmosphere, educators, both Palestinian and Jewish, are often hesitant, or outright afraid, to engage in open discussions about identity and the Israeli-Palestinian reality. At the Eitan School in Ramat Gan, for example, staff described the need for space to express themselves, noting that the war had silenced difficult conversations within their team. We facilitated an introductory session equipping them with tools to reintroduce dialogue even in emotionally charged environments. This was followed by a notable increase in teachers’ recognition of the value of SEL (social-emotional learning) tools in creating safe spaces for themselves and their students. Other adaptations included integrating core Healing Hatred components into educational tours and group meetings throughout the year, rather than in the classic two-day concentrated experience.





“I used to think equality means everyone gets the same. Now I understand that sometimes different people need different things to be treated fairly.”

- Student at the Terra Sancta School, Nazareth

We also reached teacher training institutions, working with bi-national groups of education students at the Hebrew University and with Palestinian first-year teachers at Bet Berl College. A new F4C arena in 2025 involved cooperation with the Jerusalem Municipality’s Education Authority, bringing our work to East Jerusalem teachers and social education coordinators from several Palestinian schools. Rossing Center staff trained a facilitator from East Jerusalem and developed program content to support her effective work with the group in addressing political and emotional complexities they face in their communities and within the education system.

In their work with students, participating teachers conducted successful experiential and interactive activities, including simulations, small-group dialogue, and personal storytelling around themes of justice versus equality, human dignity, and the importance of cultural identity. Teachers reported increased openness among students, along with stronger critical thinking, empathy, and moral reasoning. Students became more willing to address difficult topics and see difference as a resource rather than a threat, with many expressing a desire to continue such discussions in the future.

While teacher training in the new structure will generally take place in a uni-national format, we will evaluate opportunities to bring teachers together for bi-national cooperative learning and experiential study tours. Similarly, while the new structure will not involve our direct programming input for students, we look forward to teachers’ reporting on the impact of the shared society and peacebuilding educational programming integrated across their curricula and daily school life.





Dr. Vered Zioni Koren *Institutional Partner*

For the past twelve years I have taught at the Hebrew University as a faculty member in teacher education. Four years ago, the Rossing Center helped me design a new course called, ‘Educators for Change: Managing Conflictual and Racist Discussions in the Classroom.’ This course was developed by the Rossing Center’s team, and brings together Arab and Jewish student teachers. It is deeply developmental in nature. Students move through two processes at once: a personal one, asking who they are as individuals and future educators, and a group one, asking how they exist within a collective marked by difference, tension, and inequality.

I came to this work out of a sense of mission. I believe education can change the reality around us. Even before October 7, 2023, the situation here was painfully difficult. Since then, and especially through the second year of the war, it has become even easier to avoid the hardest issues. But the Rossing Center’s course does the opposite: it insists on entering those painful spaces. It asks how we conduct a

class that is a microcosm of society. How do we speak about racism when it is explicit, not hidden? How do we stay in the room when the room itself feels fractured?

Last year was one of the hardest periods I have known as an educator. There was anger, resentment, and statements that stayed with me long after class ended. At times, I felt there was no progress at all. What helped me continue was the Rossing Center’s close accompaniment. I spoke with the Rossing program coordinator, Reut, every week and received both emotional and pedagogical support. Our monthly facilitators’ meetings gave me tools, language, and strength. What stays with me most is this: even when I cannot see change in real time, something is moving. In their final reflections, students wrote that the course made them think differently, and that conversations continued after class between Arab and Jewish students. For me, that is the work. We are here together, and no one is going anywhere. The Rossing Center gave me not only hope, but practical tools to help the next generation of teachers live that truth.





Haitam Melhem

Program Facilitator

My name is Haitam Melhem. I am 32 years old, from Nazareth, and I work in youth education. I serve as the coordinator of the Bitna movement in Nazareth, and my academic background is in Health Systems Management from the University of Haifa. This year, alongside my work in informal education, I also oversaw the Rossing Center's teacher training program at a school in I'billin.

Education in Arab society has always been close to my heart. I work every day with Arab students in high schools and in post-secondary settings, so I know their questions, their pressures, and the reality they carry with them. What drew me to the Rossing Center was the way it connects meaningful social action with educational work. It was not only about teaching tools or professional development. It was about creating the conditions for connection between people who often live close to one another, but do not always truly meet.

This was not my first experience in a shared space. Over the years, I took part in mixed-group programs at Neve Shalom, worked at the Histadrut, and joined other trainings that

brought together people from different communities. Still, this program challenged me in a different way. One of the deepest challenges in education is learning to stay present in the face of many narratives, many identities, and many truths. In I'billin, I worked with a school community of Christians, Muslims, and Druze. Even within what may look like one community from the outside, there is so much diversity in perspective and experience.

For me, that challenge became the real source of learning. The program strengthened me as a facilitator and as an educator. It taught me how to lead complex group processes, how to hold emotional and sensitive conversations with care, and how to remain attentive to what is happening beneath the surface.

What I carry with me now is more than professional experience. I leave with practical tools, but also with a deeper sense of mission: to keep creating spaces for dialogue, trust, and honest human connection. This experience reminded me that real connection is not simple, but it is powerful—and it is necessary.



Dialogue Department

Meeting Place & Dialogue Circles

Through the Meeting Place and Dialogue Circles programs, the Rossing Center brings Jewish and Palestinian students together on university campuses in Jerusalem for sustained dialogue, experiential learning, and collaborative initiatives. Central to this work is the Rossing Center's trauma-informed Healing Hatred methodology, which helps participants process issues connected to identity, conflict, gender, stereotypes, and national narratives, while maintaining meaningful dialogue.

In 2025, the Rossing Center implemented Meeting Place & Dialogue Circles across three Hebrew University of Jerusalem campuses and at Azrieli College of Engineering, adapting program content to Jewish and Palestinian students' evolving resilience needs amid heightened socio-political tension.

At Hebrew University's Ein Karem campus, healthcare students explored identity, inclusion, and belonging through dialogue, campus tours, and a jointly initiated public event, "Medicine and Health in the Three Religions". Reflections emphasized perseverance in connection despite challenges.

“The group felt like a desert island for me, away from the madness happening outside. I felt that we were influenced by the outside world, but on the inside, I felt protected and safe.” -Givat Ram, Meeting Place student

At the Givat Ram campus, students learned from guest speakers who addressed issues of free speech, social cohesion, and

Jewish-Arab relations on campus. A mid-semester campus tour examined identity through the lens of national holidays. Jewish and Palestinian participants shared their divergent perspectives on Independence Day and Memorial Day, highlighting differing experiences of belonging. Despite the ongoing war, students described the group as a rare space of safety, learning, and mutual care. Closing sessions, held online, emphasized sustained commitment to one another amid uncertainty.

Meeting Place also convened alumni and participants for shared Iftar meals and dialogue around growth during crisis, strengthening the alumni community as a space for healing and hope. Staff further facilitated targeted identity-based sessions with additional student groups across the university, such as the Theater Workshop and the Women's Circle.

Dialogue Circles, operating year-round at the Mount Scopus campus, provided students with 60 hours of facilitator training in interfaith dialogue and intercultural communication. Participants went on to lead campus-wide dialogue sessions addressing polarization, identity, and the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on student life, succeeding as 'agents of change' in engaging peers new to interfaith programming. A new cohort of 14 Jewish and Palestinian students began training in late 2025.

At Azrieli College, the Rossing Center expanded dialogue initiatives within the Pharmaceutical Engineering and Software & Electrical Engineering departments. Through targeted workshops and facilitated discussions with Jewish and Palestinian students and faculty, the program produced immediate and visible results: reduced friction between students and increased cooperation and joint work in the classroom, even amid the pressures of wartime.



The Rossing Center at the Open House in Ramle

In the mixed city of Ramle, Rossing Center programs at the Open House created opportunities for Jewish and Palestinian students to build relationships through dialogue, shared learning, and community initiatives. Throughout 2025, despite the tensions of the wider conflict, the program continued to nurture trust, empathy, and civic engagement among students committed to strengthening shared life in their city.

Alongside the dialogue processes grounded in Healing Hatred methodology, experiential learning was central to building students' capacity to design and lead community initiatives. Study tours throughout Ramle exposed students to the city's socio-economic diversity and inequalities, deepening their understanding of how neglect and disenfranchisement intersect with communal struggles. For many, this marked a first visit to one another's neighborhoods and houses of worship, challenging long-held assumptions and reducing fear. These experiences equipped students to later guide visitors through Ramle using a respectful dual-narrative lens.

Creative learning also played a key role. Women participants took part in an intensive photography workshop series, articulating their perspectives on Ramle and their hopes for its future through a feminist lens. This process fostered empathy and trust. Open House continued its tradition of hosting Ramadan Iftar meals, bringing together Jews, Muslims, and Christians around shared tables for dialogue and relationship-building. Another annual highlight was the Hanukkah-Christmas celebration, organized by the new 2025–26 cohort of Jewish and Palestinian women students, which brought children and families together in a spirit of shared joy.

Additional public events included film screenings and discussions, such as "A Place of Her Own", held in partnership with the Noor Center and Omnia. The film's focus on women's resilience resonated strongly with the audience, sparking conversations about solidarity, gender, and social challenges in Ramle. Despite a decline in tourism due to the war, the Open House continued to welcome visiting groups, extending its shared-society message.

"I use a camera in my daily life, but I've never looked at a photo and seen things the way I did today. Conveying emotion through an image is completely new to me."

Participant in the Open House students' taskforce

The Open House also served as a hub for civil society engagement. In partnership with the Abraham Initiatives, Director Vivian Rabia convened a coalition of 18 local leaders from 10 Arab civil society organizations to address urgent community needs. Nationally, she represented Ramle in a coalition of leaders from Israel's mixed cities, working to reduce tensions, prevent renewed violence, and confront the sharp rise in violent crime in Arab and mixed cities.





Dr. Tali Tavor Re'em

Institutional Partner

I have been the head of the Pharmaceutical Engineering Department at Azrieli College of Engineering in Jerusalem for the past four years. My background is in biotechnology engineering, with a specialization in tissue engineering and biomaterials. Since joining the faculty in 2012, I've come to see our college as a reflection of Jerusalem itself — diverse, complex, and full of potential. Our students come from many communities, and our faculty is diverse as well. We always believed that if students are to succeed in such a demanding degree, they must feel that the classroom is a place where they can learn together.

October 7 changed everything.

Before the war, we had already experienced tensions — around Ramadan fasting, around standing for the Holocaust memorial siren. But after October 7, we understood that reacting to incidents would no longer be enough. We were genuinely afraid of what would happen when students returned to campus: reservists coming back from intense fighting; Palestinian students feeling suspicion directed at them; everyone carrying fear, anger, and grief.

We knew we had to do something before the first day of class. Through the Dean of Students, we connected with the

Rossing Center. Together we decided to begin with uni-national conversations — spaces where Jewish-Israeli and Arab/Palestinian students could speak openly with people who shared their background. I remember worrying that Palestinian students might find it difficult to open up, given the hostile atmosphere and widespread silencing they faced. I was wrong. The new tools the Rossing Center brought to our campus transformed our entire approach — the students spoke honestly, raising concerns and emotions that had never surfaced before under our previous frameworks.

One of the most important lessons I learned was that not every difficult issue has a solution. Sometimes leadership means simply making space to listen.

When we returned to campus in January, there was a sense of relief. We had already processed some of the tension, and students came back with more understanding of one another. Since then, the work has continued — especially with first-year students. What began as crisis response has become something deeper: a commitment to actively cultivate the human connections that allow our classrooms to function. In a city like Jerusalem, and in times like these, that is not an extra. It is essential.





Josephine Alkalak *Program Participant*

I grew up in Jaffa, but Ramle has been my home for the past seventeen years. I married someone from here, and this is where we are raising our three children. I work as a teacher at St. Joseph Elementary School, and like many working mothers, my life is full—balancing school, family, and everything in between.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided it was time to invest in myself. I completed my first degree in social sciences at the age of thirty, and today I am studying for a second degree in education. While searching for a scholarship to help continue my studies, a friend told me about the Rossing Center’s Open House program in Ramle. Before joining the program, most of my life was within my own community. Meaningful interaction with people from other groups was rare. I was also hesitant to join—especially after October 7. Everything felt very sensitive, and I worried the conversations might be tense or uncomfortable.

But what I found surprised me.

The group brought together women from many sectors—Jewish, Muslim, and Christian. From the beginning, the

atmosphere was respectful. People listened carefully to one another and genuinely wanted to understand. As the meetings continued, my fear slowly faded.

One of the most challenging parts of the program was the Healing Hatred seminar. We were invited to share painful personal experiences. It was not easy for me to speak so openly, but what stayed with me was the way everyone listened. No one interrupted or dismissed what I shared. That kind of listening builds trust.

We also visited each other’s communities. Walking together through neighborhoods, markets, and places of worship helped us see each other’s lives more clearly.

Something happened that I never expected: I made Jewish friends in my personal life. Many of us are working mothers dealing with the same challenges, and we support each other beyond the program.

For me, the biggest lesson is that peace begins in small spaces—when people sit together, listen honestly, and build real relationships. What started here in Ramle may seem small, but I believe these connections can grow and spread far beyond our city.



Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR)

Throughout 2025, JCJCR continued to build knowledge and sensitivity within Israeli Jewish society regarding Christianity and the Christian communities in the Holy Land, while working to reduce harassment of clergy and attacks on church property. Participants in JCJCR courses, lectures, study tours, and consultations included educators and students, tour guides, community leaders, and decision-makers. A key achievement was the growing emergence of JCJCR alumni as “multipliers,” returning as counselors and coordinators in gap-year programs, bringing new cohorts of students, and thus extending JCJCR’s long-term impact.

Teacher Training: JCJCR maintained partnerships with leading teacher-training colleges—Kibbutzim College (Seminar HaKibbutzim), the Kerem Institute, and Levinsky College—offering courses and modules for trainees and experienced teachers. Programs addressed Christian history, heritage, and traditions, alongside state–church relations and political challenges, and increasingly employed experiential methods that promote reflection, dialogue, and critical thinking.

Tour Guide Training: Licensed guides and trainees participated in lectures and study tours, meeting with clergy, exploring religious diversity and contested space issues. These courses are taught in coordination with 13 partner institutions, including private tour-guide training programs, academic colleges, research institutes, museums, and other forums in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa.

Religious Leadership Programming: The Haifa ‘Lab’: JCJCR completed its first year of collaboration with the Haifa Laboratory for Religious Studies (HLRS) at Haifa University, bringing together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders for monthly dialogue workshops led by JCJCR’s Hana Bendcowsky and Hussam Elias. Participants explored identity, sacrifice, and the role of religious leadership in interfaith dialogue, and acquired Healing Hatred methodological tools. A study tour to Ramle examined shared living in mixed cities through encounters with Jewish, Muslim, and Christian civic and religious figures, and a meeting at the Open House. Over the year, the cohort developed into a highly collaborative group, with participants describing it as a rare space for honest engagement during a difficult period.

“Although I’ve been a guide for over 40 years..., I learned new things from you. You connected different aspects that I’ve studied separately over the years. And the connection gives a comprehensive picture, sharpening so many meanings.”

-Veteran Tour Guide





The new 2025–26 cohort comprises 12 leaders from diverse backgrounds, including ultra-Orthodox and national-religious Jews; Muslims, including a mosque imam; Christians, including a Greek Catholic cleric; and Druze women in education.

JCJCR Director Hana Bendcowsky also taught a course at Hebrew Union College and lectured at the Amiel Institute, preparing future Jewish religious leaders and educators for pluralistic multi-religious discourse and engagement with Christian communities.

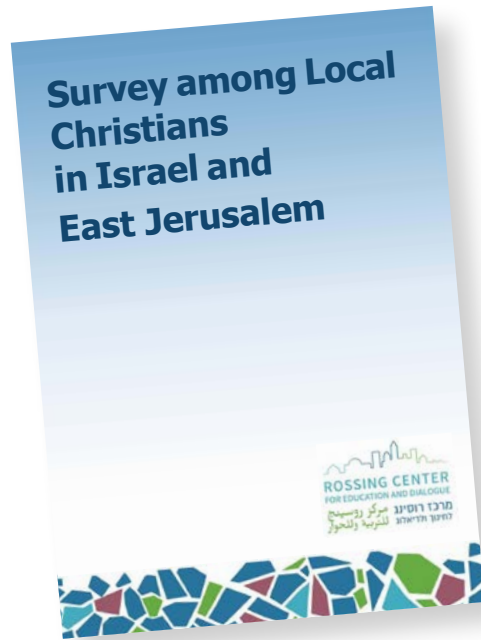
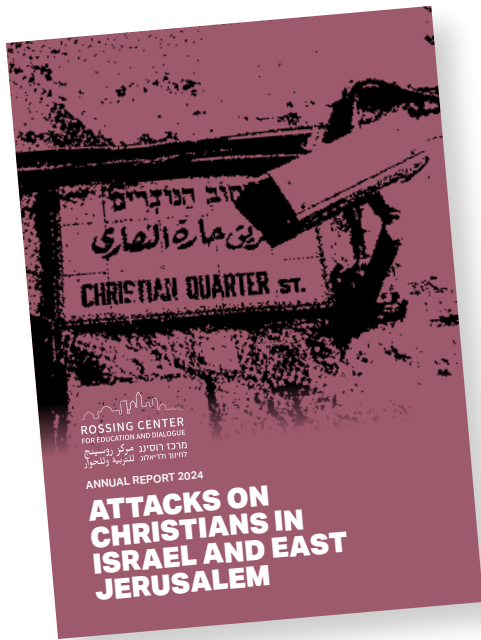
Gap-Year, Youth, and Leadership Programs: JCJCR ran programs for young people with leadership potential in education, community service, and other public life spheres. Themes addressed shared roots, interreligious dialogue, and the lived realities of Palestinian Christians. Pre- and post-national service participants came from Midreshet Ein Prat, the Secular Yeshivah, Tshali, as well as excelling school students in Van Leer Institute and Hebrew University programs, and Pelech and Bet Yerach high school students. Activities included visits to the Old City and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, meetings with clergy, and engagement with EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) peace activist volunteers –

for whom JCJCR provides regular training in monitoring and observation.

Research, Consulting, and Public Engagement: JCJCR continued its regular engagement with stakeholders on the status and safety of Christian communities, including collaboration with the ‘Window to Mount Zion’ (WMZ) program and consultation to Jerusalem Municipality bodies on Christian tourism and relations with local communities. JCJCR also facilitated communication between clergy and municipal authorities on issues such as the planned expansion of a national park on church-owned land, and worked with the Ministry of Tourism, providing intensive training to its personnel to support their efforts in promoting Christian religious tourism in the wake of the war.

JCJCR expanded its online educational resources in 2025, including Hebrew lectures on basic concepts in Christianity and a new video production, Jewish-Christian Relations in the Holy Land, featuring interviews with Dr. Karma Ben Johanan (Department of Comparative Religion, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Father Alberto Joan Pari (General Secretary of the Franciscan Mission’s Custody of the Holy Land).





The Advocacy and Education Initiative (AEI)- Enhancing Christian Security in the Holy Land

Now in its third year, AEI continued to document incidents of harassment and violence, publicize findings, and strengthen advocacy and accountability with local authorities and international audiences. Major milestones included participation in a Knesset committee hearing in May 2025, convened by MK Rabbi Gilad Kariv, and briefings to officials from the Ministries of Interior, Education, and Tourism, as well as the Police.

In March 2025, JCJCR published "Attacks on Christians in Israel and East Jerusalem", analyzing the continued rise in incidents and offering recommendations. While attacks have not yet declined, the report noted increased awareness, improved reporting by Christian communities, and greater police readiness to intervene in key hotspots, including the Old City. Also in 2025, JCJCR published its Survey among Local Christians in Israel and East Jerusalem, examining needs, aspirations, attitudes toward Israeli society and Christian institutions, and perspectives on issues such as emigration, status concerns and freedom of expression. The survey highlighted how geographical distribution of Christians in Israel and East

Jerusalem shapes perceptions of equality and concerns for community futures.

JCJCR presented the report and survey findings through a press conference at the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center as well as via briefings and tours for diplomatic stakeholders, including the French Consulate, EU Delegation, German Commissioner on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and Swedish Consulate. The report and survey were covered widely in Israeli and international media, supporting advocacy by overseas churches and use as an information resource in UN reporting. Hana Bendcowsky was invited to write a bi-monthly column for the Italian Terra Santa magazine.

JCJCR partnered with the the Israel Religious Action Center [IRAC] to support security-related training workshops for Palestinian Christian communities. Hana also presented the findings in a July 2025 webinar hosted by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research and gave multiple Israeli and foreign media interviews, expanding Jewish audiences' understanding of Christian life in the Holy Land and current challenges, including reduced pilgrimage.



International Engagement

Through 2025, the Rossing Center significantly expanded its international presence and efforts in advancing global understanding of interfaith relations in the Holy Land. A particularly memorable occasion was Executive Director Dr. Sarah Bernstein's invitation to speak at the Vatican, in late October on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate – the landmark 1965 declaration that transformed the Catholic Church's relationship with other religions, particularly Judaism. As the sole non-church speaker at the main event, Sarah delivered a powerful message of hope, truth, and responsibility to a live audience of thousands of people, with millions more tuning in around the world. She addressed the ongoing challenges in the Holy Land, emphasizing the urgent need for dialogue and called for concrete action. Her presence was a testament to the wider work of the Rossing Center, whilst celebrating six decades of interfaith engagement and understanding by the Catholic Church. Afterwards, she had the opportunity to meet Pope Leo XIV and present to him the Advocacy and Education Initiative report published by JCJCR (for more detail, see previous section).

The invitation to the Vatican event came in the wake of Sarah's lecture "Beyond Despair: Hope as an Act of Resistance" earlier in the year at the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas in Rome. Speaking on a panel with colleague representatives from the Holy Land, Safa Younes and Rev. Dr. David Neuhaus, Sarah touched on themes deeply connected to our work at the Rossing Center – the daily striving for peace, justice and equality, even amidst division and pain – and the vital role of hope in this context.

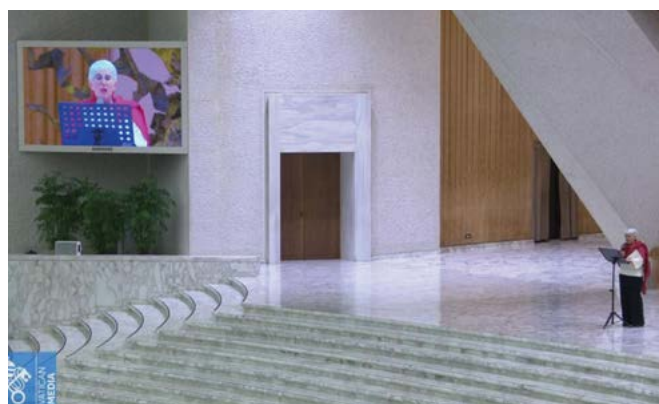
Sarah and Vivian Rabia (Rossing Center Education Department and Open House Director) took part in the June international conference: "**Paris Call for the Two-State Solution, Peace and Regional Security**". The event, hosted by the Paris Peace

Forum, brought together leading Israeli and Palestinian civil society voices alongside international partners to advocate for a renewed commitment to a peaceful two-state solution. Civil society groups drafted 'The Paris Call for the Two-State Solution', a powerful statement addressed to global leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, urging international action to end the war, recognize Palestinian statehood, ensure Israeli security, invest in civil society, and build a lasting peace grounded in justice and mutual recognition.

In July 2025, Rossing Center Communications Coordinator Adi Marer spoke at the **Annual Conference of the European Academy of Religion (EuARe2025)** in Vienna – addressing challenging questions as whether and how it might be possible to create significant change in Jewish-Christian and Israeli-Palestinian relations. As Adi noted: "The reality on the ground is complex, but there is a future and there is hope, and we cannot give up, especially in a space like the Holy Land, which despite the many conflicts, has the potential to be a significant and key space."

At its 2025 annual meeting in June in Genoa, Italy, the **Lutheran European Commission on the Church and Judaism (LEKKJ)** awarded its annual prize to the Rossing Center. Accepting the prize on our behalf, Ophir Yarden participated in deliberations on the theme: "As divisions grow, we must work again on what holds us together." The ceremony took place in the presence of Genoa Jewish and Christian leaders and invited guests. Ophir also conducted a workshop on spiritual conflict in the context of interreligious relations in the shadow of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since October 2023.





In October, the Rossing Center’s JCJCR Director Hana Bendcowsky and International Engagement Director John Munayer conducted a **speaking tour across the USA**. The visit began in Dallas, hosted with great warmth by Faith Commons, founded by Rabbi Nancy Kasten and Dr. George Mason. At Brite Divinity School, Hana and John presented the Healing Hatred methodology, exploring how trauma shapes the ways individuals and communities interpret the world around them. At Northway Christian Church, they addressed the impact of October 7 and the war in Gaza on Jewish-Christian relations, the challenges of sustaining dialogue in such painful times and new paths for communication and understanding. They joined Pastor George Mason in a podcast on personal perspectives on

continuing interfaith dialogue and advancing peacebuilding efforts. Ultimately, the visit allowed for an elaborate discussion of Rossing Center activities amongst communities deeply invested in peace in the region.

Four Rossing Center webinars were conducted in 2025 addressing wide-ranging topics: Freedom of Speech; Women’s Religious Leadership (once the exclusive domain of men!); The AEI Report and Survey Findings; and Questions on Religion and Nationalism – can they coexist in a healthy way, or do they inevitably undermine democracy and pluralism? How does religious rhetoric move from words to real danger and violence?





Team

2025 was another intense year of teamwork in a broader environment of violent conflict, tragedy, insecurity and societal polarization. Work plans often had to be changed at the last minute, and mutual support among our highly diverse staff simply could not have been more crucial and constructive than it was throughout the year.

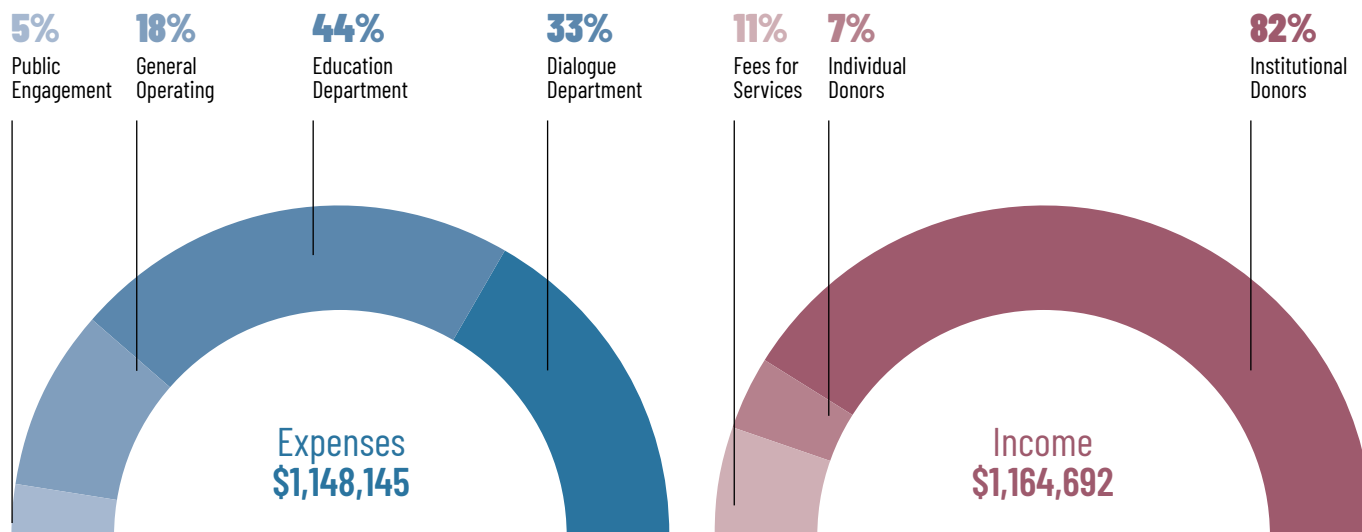
In addition to our monthly staff meetings, another opportunity for us to gather not only to share and discuss challenges, programmatic adaptations and so forth, but to actually work physically together came in the move to our new and very welcoming office space in Jerusalem. As evident in the pictures here, some of us acquired basic carpentry skills while others refined their ceramic art skills in re-creating our beloved tree of peace. An additional plus of our new space is that we can host workshops and group meetings for visitors and participants from our various programs, thus bringing them closer to the organization behind the name.

Another bonding experience, postponed from June because of the Israel-Iran conflict, took place in December in a visit to Nazareth, where a local social activist took us on a tour, explaining the socio-economic challenges faced by businesses and families due to the dearth of tourism, both international and local – and the not unconnected rise in crime. She highlighted the achievements and progress of her activist colleagues in stepping up where local authorities failed to renew the city’s capacities to attract tourism. It was an inspiring experience for our team – and an opportunity to see the surroundings of schools with which we have worked and continue to work in our educational programming.

Finally, in 2025, Hamutal Gouri joined the Rossing Center team as Foundations for Change Co-Director, bringing her rich experience in group facilitation, organizational consulting and training in general, and specifically in women’s leadership development. Another new team member is Tal Cohen who started out as an intern and is now our Media and Communications Coordinator.



Financial Summary



In November 2025, the Rossing Center ran its largest crowdfunding campaign to date. Thanks to the generosity of **241 donors** and the dedication of **26 ambassadors** from across the globe, together we reached **130%** of our original goal of \$80,000 – ultimately raising **\$105,252!**

The work of the Rossing Center would not be possible without the generous support of our partners in Israel and around the world.

Institutional Donors

- | | |
|---|---|
| Anonymous Foundation | Finn Church Aid |
| B8 of Hope | French Embassy in Israel |
| Church of Hessen and Nassau (EKHN) | Gimprich Family Foundation |
| Church of Rhineland | Goldman Sachs |
| Church of Rottenburg-Stuttgart | Kerk in Actie (Protestante Kerk in Nederland) |
| Act Church of Sweden | Kindermissionswerk “Die Sternsinger” |
| DVHL (Deutsche Verein vom Heiligen Lande) | Kirche in Not (ACN International Aid to the Church in Need) |
| ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) | Misereor |
| Embrace the Middle East | Missio Aachen |
| Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland e.V | Nitzan Foundation |
| Felm | P.E.F. Israel Endowment Funds, Inc. |





Donate



✉ info@rossingcenter.org

☎ Tel: +972-2-676-4103



ROSSING CENTER
FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

מרכז רוסינג
לلتربية وللحوار

