DEVELOPING YOUNG MISSION-DRIVEN COMMUNITIES WITHIN ARAB SOCIETY

1. **Background & Needs**

    In recent years, the Shahaf Foundation has endeavored to germinate and promote the establishment of young, intentional communities within Arab society. An intentional community consists of a group of 10-20 individuals aged 20-35 who hold regular meetings, seminars, professional training sessions and joint community meetings. The young community constitutes an engine for social activism, for the development of civil society, for enhancing local identity and for implementing an extensive range of projects intended to advance the locality where the community operates. An additional circle of 40 to 80 volunteers exists around each community. These volunteers organize and cooperate with the community to implement its vision for change. Over the last year, we have witnessed a breakthrough in the maturation of the mission-driven community model within Arab society. The evolving model is suitable for the Arab society as it is based on academically-trained youngsters and students. The development process may take the form of inquiries from numerous youngster groups seeking assistance so that they may organize and bring about a change in their own localities. In order to press on with the development process, a program has been developed to empower these communities over the next 3 years.

    Primary Needs Fulfilled by the Model

    The community model fulfills a number of primary needs for academically-trained Arab youngsters:

    a. The need to belong to an identity-affiliation framework other than the "Hamula" (the level of social affiliation between a clan and a tribe in Arab society), a political affiliation or a religious affiliation; a framework that corresponds with the lifestyle of educated youngsters from around the world, from the Arab world and from Israel.

    b. A social framework of youngsters sharing the same phase of life and coping with similar challenges with regard to the academic world and their future careers.

    c. A framework enabling these youngsters to fulfill values of social activism and accountability for the village where they live.

d. A framework for personal empowerment by leading projects and processes intended to advance the village; a framework enabling the youngsters to upgrade their social status and gain recognition and appreciation.

e. Leading a change in the village – in the course of their studies, Arab youngsters get to know other youngsters as well as localities that provide their inhabitants with high-standard services and quality of life. These youngsters return to their villages and realize that the traditional village fails to offer them with the services and quality of life they would have liked for themselves. Organizing in communities enables them to act jointly to change the situation in the village.

2. <u>Rationale</u>

Development of a model of young mission-driven communities adapted to youngsters within the Arab society. The development of a model and a network of communities will make it possible to develop a powerful, innovative model based on a civil society, through which Arab youngsters may improve the quality of life in their villages and bring about a change in Arab society generally. The model will enable activist youngsters in the Arab society to be a part of a social movement that aspires to bring about a change in Israeli society. The community network will enable those youngsters to become a part of a young leadership within Arab society and lead, in cooperation with members of communities from other sectors of Israeli society, toward a change from a position of partnership and recognition of their uniqueness and difference.

The development and consolidation of communities and the establishment of a network of Arab communities will make it possible to obtain government and philanthropic resources allocated to the mission-driven communities but not accessible to Arab youngsters at this time.

3. <u>Target Population</u>

Students and academically-trained youngsters from Arab society interested in operating as a young community to lead a change in the state of the villages and towns where they live.

<u>Location</u>: during the first year, the activity will focus on the following localities: Lod, Tira, Tayibe, Kafr Qassem, Kafr Qara, Kafr Bara, Sakhnin, and other localities selected for the project. As the project develops, additional communities of academically-trained youngsters will be established in other localities.

Age group: the project addresses Arab youngsters aged 18-35, mostly between the ages of 20 and 27.

Marital status: most of the youngsters are single; the older ones have young families.

Education: most community members are students studying for a bachelor's degree or for a master's degree. A small portion consists of academically-trained individuals who had completed their studies or youngsters prior to their university studies.

4. **Primary Goal**

To develop a model of mission-driven communities within Arab society and consolidate a network of communities of young, academically-trained individuals within Arab society. These communities will improve the quality of life in the various localities, develop a civil society and a young leadership that would lead to a change. The communities will cooperate with other communities around the country in a joint effort to advance Israel as an inclusive and egalitarian society that advocates such values as social justice, reduction of gaps and social solidarity.

Goals

1. Establish communities of young, academically-trained individuals within Arab society that would constitute the spearhead of a young Arab leadership and the foundation for the development of an active civil society that would lead toward a change in the quality of life in Arab localities and Arab society.

2. Establish a network of mission-driven communities within the Arab society.

3. Establish partnerships between mission-driven communities from the various segments of Israeli society so as to advance Israeli society.

5. **Objectives**

1. Assist in the establishment of a network of Arab communities consisting of at least 12 communities in three years.

2. Establish a network of at least 500 volunteers (second circle) operating in concert with the communities.

3. Implement social projects by the communities to assist some 3,000 beneficiaries in three years.

4. Consolidate a model of young mission-driven communities within Arab society.

6. **Principles of Operation & Implementation Milestones**

Principles of Operation

a. **Long-term investment & monitoring/supporting the community during the various stages of its development** – the ability to monitor/support the development of communities over the first 3-5 years is of the utmost importance. The monitoring/support and investment are adapted to the development stage of each community. The ability to monitor and support the community over the course of the long-term process is more important than the scope of resources invested in each community.

b. **A "funnel" approach** – it is necessary to begin by spotting a relatively large number of youngster groups attempting to organize. Through our initial spotting, we search for organizing groups possessing the motivation and ability to operate over a period of about 6 months without support. Identifying the organizing groups possessing the most substantial internal powers is the key to success down the road. The basic assumption is that over the years, groups experience desertion and disintegration, mainly during the pre-community stage. Therefore, it is necessary to start out with a relatively large number of communities at this stage, owing to the realization that in the long run, the communities will experience desertion and disintegration.

c. **Investment in the build-up of the community as well as in its mission-oriented activity** – investments in two primary efforts will be required. The first effort involves the consolidation of the group and the build-up of its intra-community structure. Investing in this effort will produce a solid, powerful community capable of coping with the challenges more effectively. At the same time, it will be necessary to invest in the projects implemented by the communities for the purpose of advancing the locality in accordance with the local needs. This investment will help in the build-up of the group, create a sense of success, assist in the absorption of new members and advance the change in the village. The investment policy for each effort will vary according to the development stages and characteristics of the group.

d. **Professional monitoring/support, professional training & colleague coaching** – investing in monitoring/supporting the intra-community and mission-oriented processes will reduce the desertion percentages and

increase the effectiveness of the community in advancing change in the villages. In the long run, this investment will also help the development of the community network and the joint activity with other communities. The monitoring/support will enable intensification of the intra-community processes, as well as allowing the community members to receive advanced training and become more adept and professional at implementing projects in the village. The monitoring/support system includes on-going professional monitoring, normally at the rate of one 3-4 hour session per month, by an external coach.

e. **Establishing networks of young activists in the locality** – beyond the establishment of the mission-driven community, it is important to invest in the establishment of a network of 40-80 young activist volunteers around the community, who would cooperate with the community. Additionally, it is necessary to invest in the establishment of a network of 300-500 "followers" in the third circle, who appreciate the activity of the community and assist it through financial support or other forms of valuable support, occasional volunteer work, etc.

f. **Establishing a network of Arab communities** – the network will lead the implementation of joint projects, colleague coaching, mutual support, creating a sense of belong common to all groups and development of philanthropic and/or government resources. In order to advance the establishment of the network, it is necessary to invest in the establishment of a forum of Arab communities, which constitutes a preliminary stage for the establishment of the network. Following the stage of introduction and trust building between the different communities, it will be possible to work on the development of common goals, consolidation and networking, joint learning and implementation of joint projects. As the network develops, it will become necessary to finance a network coordinator/administrator and invest in the development of a vision, goals, shared community contents, social adhesion, seminars and joint projects.

g. **Partnership in the development of philanthropic and government resources for the effort** – the Arab communities are just starting out, and it is therefore necessary to assist them in the development of resources and partnerships so that they may continue to develop. The partnership with the

Edmond de Rothschild Foundation will undertake an active role in the development of resources and partnerships for the communities during their initial development stages, and in helping the communities gain recognition in the philanthropic and government arena.

Courses of Action

In order to bring about the development of communities, it is necessary to support the development processes of the community. In the context of the program, the Foundation will support and monitor the communities through a long-term process. The objective of this process is to help the communities undergo a developmental process that begins with the pre-community stage and continues until the community becomes a mature community.

Community Characteristics at the Various Stages of Development over the Years

Organizing Stage	Duration	Number of Members	Internal Consolidation & Organization	Mission-Driven Activity
Youngster organizing initiative	0-6 months	7-10 members in the active nucleus	Without an orderly structure	1-2 peak days, normally on a small scale
Pre-Community	6-12 months	10-15 members in the active nucleus; 10-14 members in the second circle	1-3 leading members, unofficial leadership - No consolidation activity	1-2 peak days/ one-day projects organized sporadically 50-250 service recipients
New Community	1 year	10-15 members in the active nucleus; 20-40 members in the second circle; 50-100 followers	Executive committee made up of 10-15 members - Orderly work meetings - Irregular monitoring/support meetings - Internal consolidation activity – 2-3 meetings per year	5-6 peak days/ one-day projects per year; Development of an annual work plan; Budget scope around 10,000 ILS; 250-500 service recipients
Existing Community	2-4	10-20 members in the active nucleus; 40-80 members in the second circle; 300-500 followers	Executive committee made up of 10-15 members, elected democratically, holds orderly work meetings - Active community work teams - A need for monitoring/support & on-going colleague coaching at the mission level as well as at the group build-up level - A need to know additional communities in the area	7-10 peak days; 1-2 year-long, on-going projects - Development of an annual work plan - Better organized partnership development & resource raising setup on the scope of 10,000-50,000 ILS - Increasing openness to cooperation with local organizations - 500-3,500 service recipients - Willingness to operate at the regional level while cooperating with additional organizations & communities in the implementation of projects

- <u>Active nucleus</u> – the hard core of the community membership, individuals demonstrating a high level of commitment (weekly), leading the effort.

- <u>Second circle</u> – activists and volunteers providing assistance to specific missions; may be recruited "on call", once-per-month/two-months involvement; sharing a sense of belonging to the community and solidarity with the ideas it advocates.
- <u>Followers</u> – a third circle of individuals who regularly follow the group's activities, consume information associated with the group's activity, actively involved in 1-2 events per year, participating according to their availability and will, partial sense of belonging.
- <u>Service recipients</u> – partners in the activity as recipients of service: high-school students, university students and youngsters, adults who consume cultural activities.

Description of Activities by Stages of Development

Youngster Organizing Initiatives – spotting groups of youngsters that are just starting out, normally organizing pursuant to a specific event, an aspiration to change generally, etc. We are interested in identifying six (6) such organizing groups and meet them once or twice during that period. In these meetings, we will introduce them to the community movement generally and within Arab society in particular. During that period, we will review their progress and the level of internal motivation, and present them with a horizon for development and for the establishment of connections with other communities. The spotting process is normally done through the network of existing communities and by word of mouth.

The Pre-Community Stage – this stage includes 2-3 monitoring/support meetings on behalf of the Shahaf Foundation, drafting of a work plan with regard to consolidation as well as with regard to the actual activities in the locality. If the group is interested, it will be provided with professional monitoring/support by a professional coach or by a member of one of the established communities. During this stage, we review the seriousness of the group, its capabilities and level of internal motivation. During this stage, it is important to invest in the consolidation of the group and in strengthening the connections between its members, as well as in its initial success in its mission-oriented activities. This stage constitutes a preliminary stage to a more substantial investment by the Shahaf Foundation.

The New Community Stage – once the group has successfully passed the preliminary stages, it will embark on a long-term community build-up process. This process includes monitoring/support through 3-4 meetings a year by the

Shahaf Foundation, drafting of a work plan, professional monitoring/support by an external coach, support for the community's projects (mainly one-day projects) and intra-community build-up, which includes a basic organizational structure. This stage is characterized by a gradual expansion of the second and third circles around the community. Additionally, the new community will join the community forum and hold introductory visits with members of the established communities.

The Existing Community Stage – a stage of consolidation that includes 3-4 meetings with representatives of the Shahaf Foundation and drafting of a work plan. During this stage, the community undergoes a developmental process lasting 2-3 additional years. This stage is characterized by development along the various axes of activity:

The mission axis – expansion of the scope of mission activity and a gradual transition to projects implemented over the course of the year.

The intra-community axis – establishment of intra-community teams, consolidation of an organizational structure and a decision-making methodology.

The professional monitoring/support axis – intensifying the monitoring/support process and expanding it to include professional training sessions and the use of various types of monitoring/support for diversified purposes. Additionally, a process of establishing partnerships with local organizations begins, followed by careful overtures vis-à-vis the local authority. During this stage, the connections with other communities and organizations in the area grow stronger.

Establishment of a Network of Communities – the process of building the network includes a gradual developmental process. In order to establish a network, the communities must undergo a process of maturing and developing at the mission level, at the intra-community level and at the level of the vision and goals they would like to set for themselves on the way to the change. The community development process includes a number of stages:

Local focus – communities prefer to maintain a local focus, namely – to consolidate and operate inside their locality. This stage is a characteristic of communities during years 1-3.

Establishment of initial connections with colleague communities – establishment of local, mostly one-off cooperative alliances. The initial connection may start from an association established between community leaders as a result of encouragement on the part of the community coach, from a desire to learn from

a colleague community that had assisted the younger community at the outset, and so forth. These connections are established mainly at the mission level. This stage is a characteristic of communities during years 2-4. Additionally, during this stage the community joins a community forum.

Enhancing familiarity & partnership – based on a community decision or on the motivation of the community leaders, who are interested in developing and advancing change at the regional level. This stage will include the establishment of joint one-day projects, as well as reciprocal visits and meetings with various communities. During this stage, the infrastructure for the establishment of a network is created and a decision is made to launch the network establishment process. This stage is a characteristic of communities during years 3-6.

The stage we are in today is the community forum stage. The forum assembles once every two months and has so far held some 5 meetings. The forum includes representatives from 6 communities with 8-10 community members, on average, showing up for each meeting. The forum enhances the familiarity between the communities while engaging in a discourse regarding the common aspects of the various communities and the differences between them.