



FOUNDING DATE
2012

NO. OF MEMBERS
6 circles, 100 members

MEMBER AGE RANGE
28-50

ANNUAL MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS
1,200 - 2,400 NIS (~\$350-\$700)

GRANTS AWARDED
84,000 NIS (~\$25,000), 25 grants

DURATION OF GRANT CYCLE
3,000 NIS (~\$850) grants, every month

ISSUE AREA OF FOCUS
Varies between circles

FINANCIAL SETUP
Hosted
No fee is charged.

NO. OF MEETINGS PER YEAR
Each circle meets every month

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Case Study: Israeli Giving Circles

by Kate Rosenberg, Co-founder

Keren Baktana (the “Little Foundation”) is a network of giving circles of young Israeli professionals. Keren Baktana acts as a hub for the development of Israeli giving circles, by supporting individuals, groups, organizations and workplaces to develop their own giving circles. Using our online tools and our expertise in Israeli giving circles, Keren Baktana works with circle starters to identify their unique giving priorities, recruit trustees and build new giving circles.



Giving circles don't follow a formula: they can be large or small, in-person or virtual, time-intensive or low-key. But they all share a passion for connecting, learning, and giving with greater intent and impact—by giving together. Our Case Study series introduces you to some amazing giving circles, showcasing their unique models. Find more Case Studies at www.AmplifierGiving.org.

Starting Out

Meet Emily, Orly & Kate: three English-speaking Israelis (one born in Israel but raised in Canada, one raised in the U.S. by an Israeli father, and one raised in Australia), each working in the field of non-profits and fundraising in Israel. They met in graduate school at the Hebrew University. Baffled by the lack of young Israeli philanthropy and inspired by wonderful people across the country initiating brilliant social projects in attempt to support those in need, the three initiated Keren Baktana. They discovered this:

Local Israeli philanthropy is a developing field. A 2010 survey found that only 1/3 of the philanthropy supporting Israeli nonprofits came from local Israeli sources. Among Israelis who do participate in philanthropy, it is particularly rare to find active and engaged young professionals. Yet this is a population that is financially able to participate in the world of philanthropy and, we believe, represents the future of this integral form of funding for the third sector in Israel.

At the same time, there is a vibrant community of creative innovators in Israel, filled with ideas for small-scale cultural, artistic, social and scientific projects. These innovators don't often require very much money to launch their ideas, but they have little access to local sources of funding of any size.

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is becoming a movement.
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The Circle Experience

Trustees of our circles love that we give them the tools to do good, in an easy, hassle-free way. These are busy people who have put aside 100-200 NIS a month to do good, instead of or as well as volunteering their own time in various organizations. Each circle has its own culture, which we help it to cultivate and keep in place. Trustees also have access to online tools to ease the process of receiving requests for funding and voting. An element of this voting can be done online through the website as well, but all groups are encouraged to meet for regular face-to-face meetings.

Keren Baktana was created as a means to address both of these issues. Inspired by the Awesome Foundation, a movement of micro philanthropists that started out in the U.S., we invited a group of friends, colleagues and family members to the launch of something new at a local bar in Tel Aviv in August 2012. We ordered a few bottles of wine from the bar and crossed our fingers that people would come. That night, over 50 people showed up, including many people we had never met before. People came because they were interested in getting involved in a new form of Israeli philanthropy: collectively giving micro-grants, especially to help new projects to get off the ground.

Out of that night came the beginning of our first giving circle of 15 people in Tel Aviv. A couple of weeks later, the 15 of us met to put the final touches on our Articles of Association and to select our giving focus: projects connected to the arts, education, the environment or social welfare, that were "awesome," with a preference for projects in Tel Aviv.

Since August 2012, the Tel Aviv circle has granted 3,000 NIS (~\$850) to 16 social projects, including funding for a group of youth-at-risk to produce a film, a play made by African refugees living in Israel, and an online campaign for people to disconnect from their smartphones. (Descriptions of select funded projects are listed towards the end of this document.)

Most importantly, what started with one circle is becoming a movement. Building on our experience with the Tel Aviv circle, Keren Baktana is now a hub for the development of Israeli giving circles. We help individuals, groups, organizations and workplaces to develop their own giving circles. We have already helped to launch 6 new circles, including a circle in partnership with Ruach Hadasha, a Jewish organization, to give to awesome projects in Jerusalem, and a circle in a diamond company in the Ramat Gan Diamond Exchange. In our first two years, Keren Baktana has facilitated the entry of over 150 Israelis into the world of strategic philanthropy, donating over 100,000 NIS to over 30 brilliant social projects. And we are developing new circles every month!

Circle Activities

COACHING & MENTORING

We help each of the groups define their giving priorities and understand the inner workings of philanthropy.

CONNECTIONS & NETWORKS

We shepherd leaders interested in starting their own circle through the process of setting up the most strategic and effective giving circle possible.

Giving & Impact

OUR GRANTMAKING PROCESS

We aim to have our circles on a monthly grant review and selection process. Throughout the year, grant applicants submit applications for funding (3,000 NIS each), and all of the trustees of the circle have access to the online database of these submissions. Toward the end of the month, each circle reads through the applications and selects 3 of their favorite projects. Circle leaders identify the 3 projects that get the most votes, and then the fun begins! Volunteers pick up the phone and speak or meet with leaders of the top three projects from their circle, one volunteer per project. The group then meets for a meeting at someone's house, a bar or a café; the volunteers present the results of their due diligence; and the debates begin. By the end of the night, after everyone has had their say, the group votes and selects one project to receive a grant. Thanks to the proliferation of Keren Baktana circles, we're averaging about 5 grants a month.



Unique Circle Features

Keren Baktana is an exciting and unique project because we are the first network of giving circles in Israel. Israeli philanthropy is a slowly (but surely) growing field, and we offer young professionals a fun and easy way to get involved philanthropically around topics that matter to them. This is very often the first time that anyone has asked our trustees to reflect on the causes that are important to them and then provided a way to donate to those causes in a strategic way.

OUR IMPACT ON THE WORLD

Each of our circles decides on its own giving priorities and grantees. We have supported a wide variety of grantees over the past year and a half, including non-profits, social businesses and social entrepreneurs. Here is a taste of some of our grantees:

BIRTHDAY ANGELS (JUNE 2013)

Birthday Angels provides birthday parties for children whose families cannot afford to do so themselves. This special grant will support the development a party kit that will service special-needs children who don't have the dexterity or communication skills that the organization's other kits require. Our giving circle loved this project because it is bringing special birthday love to people who really need it.

PHOTO EXHIBITION OF CONTRACT WORKERS (JULY 2013)

Thanks to our help, this exhibition of photographs of a variety of contract workers in Israel will travel the country, raising awareness of the issues surrounding contract work in Israel. We love this project because we support direct employment and because the pictures are simply brilliant.

UNDIGITIZE.ME, (AUGUST 2013)

This project is encouraging us to do the unthinkable - step away from our phones and back into the real world. Through clever campaigns and great PR, these guys are helping us to break our digital addictions. We love Undigitize.Me, because we all know we could use a digital diet every now and then.

"ACTING FOR CHANGE"

A SUDANESE THEATRE GROUP (SEPTEMBER 2013)

This theatre group of African Asylum Seekers in Israel is performing for audiences around the country. Through this play, audiences are introduced to the complexities of life for Asylum Seekers in Israel, which triggers discussions around a topic that sorely needs to be discussed in Israel. We love this project because it is dealing with a very serious issue in a sustainable, manageable way.