

Co.Lab

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Co.Lab was established by UJA-Federation of New York in order to promote social cohesion in Israel through collaborative work.

In the **laboratory for collaborations**, social influencers from diverse backgrounds, get to know each other, explore identities, deepen relationships, advance collaborative work and develop shared initiatives.

Co.Lab seeks to establish a reality in which diversity among people, communities and perspectives is a source for growth, collaboration and social resilience.



Alina Milkin-Kazakevich

Director of the Family Wing at the National Insurance Institute (NII). In this role she manages and oversees the national family benefits scheme (maternity allowance, child allowance, Savings Plan for Each Child, and alimony payments). Alina is also involved in formulating legislative policy for populations eligible for stipends and is instrumental in heading processes to improve services, reduce bureaucracy, and actualize the rights of these populations. Before holding her current position she was responsible for disability allowances, mobility stipends, and vehicles for people with disabilities. Alina holds a BA from Haifa University and an MA in interdisciplinary democracy studies from the Open University, majoring in government and public policy. Born in Belarus, immigrated to Israel at age 17. Married, mother of four children. Lives in Modi'in.



Basmat Hazan

Theater director, playwright, curator, author, and facilitator of religious text studies (LIMUD). Cultural entrepreneur and founder of LABA - a Jewish house of study and cultural hothouse for artists located in New York City, and co-founder and artistic director of Here and Now ("B'Zman Emet") a program for artists in Jerusalem. Basmat hosted the Leshem Shinui television program on Beit Midrash Elul's community channel and curated the exhibit, Siblings.Create.Life, at the Ben Zvi Institute. Directed and taught in various settings in New York and Israel, serves as artistic guide in various creative projects, and moderates multidisciplinary programs for artists and the general public. Graduate of Jewish thought and theater studies from The Hebrew University and the School of Visual Theater in Jerusalem. Lives in Jerusalem with her four children.



Efrat Frish

Director of Gesher's haredi department that promotes connections among the Jewish community in Israel and the Diaspora. Previously Efrat worked at Bat Melech shelters for women suffering from domestic violence, directing the department for women leaving the shelter. Her role involved creating circles of support for the women before they left the shelter and activating volunteers to guide the women. Efrat directed projects and tutorials at BDO Maof accounting and consulting firm for entrepreneurs and business owners. She holds a BA in logistics and economics, and an MA in public policy, both from Bar Ilan University. Social involvement is a focal value in her life. A married mother of four, she lives in Bnei Brak.



Ehab Jabareen

The Head of the grant fund for Arab students at Al-Ma'ali Association. Ehab is a commentator on Israel affairs for Al Jazeera, and a commentator on Arab affairs for Channel 14. He is also a member of the Ministry of Science's Council for the Advancement of Women in Science and Technology; a board member of the Tech2Peace NGO; and a guest lecturer on Arab society. Ehab served as director of Strategy and PR at Al-Qasemi Academy. Ehab has extensive experience initiating, leading, and directing projects; he is also proficient in conflict management and PR; promoting Arab society as an integral part of Israeli society; and volunteering. He holds a BA in management, politics, and government from Ben Gurion University in the Negev. He is the father of Misk, and was born and resides in Foureidis.



Ephraim Attali

Principal of the Ateret Shlomo school in Jerusalem and CEO of the Netzah David NGO for educational entrepreneurship and engages in the fields of Aliya and community education. Ephraim holds a B.Ed. in teaching and literature from the Jerusalem College of Technology and an MA in public policy from The Hebrew University. Ephraim's vision is to head an initiative in education in the field of the immigrant community in Israel. Born in France. Married and the father of six. Lives in Givat Zeev



Irit Zviely Efrat

CEO of the Adler Institute in Israel and formerly the CEO of Hoshen - the LGBT community's Education and Information Center. Irit served as Deputy Director of Hillel - the Right to Change, and Deputy Director of Olim Beyahad. She holds a BA in theater from Kibbutzim College and an LLM from Bar Ilan University. Irit believes that social organizations must generate activities and opportunities that will impact on Israeli society and eradicate racism and discrimination against minority populations. As a gay mother of four, Irit considers her work not only a public mission but also a private and parental mission to create a better society for her children and family. Raised in Haifa, she now lives in Raanana.



Itzik Pashkus

Director of Zion, a community in Jerusalem that focuses on Jewish and Israeli community and culture. Previously he served as CEO of Landmarks, an NGO that brings together students from diverse backgrounds and groups within Israeli society to get to know each other and to work together. Itzik is the COO of the New Spirit NGO that strives to strengthen Jerusalem as a social, cultural, and economic center. He was instrumental in establishing many social initiatives such as Hasalon - community and guidance centers for people who have left the haredi community; Runners Without Borders that brings Jews and Arabs together through running; and has served on the board of several social organizations. Itzik holds a BA in history from the Hebrew University, and an MBA from the College of Management. He is a graduate of the haredi education system and of haredi yeshivas, and currently defines himself as traditional. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Renana and their children Hallel, Noam, and Oriel.



Lilach Shefer

Director of Community Investments and of Management Skills Development at Matan - United Way. Among her roles is heading the managerial excellence track for senior social organization directors and running the program's alumni community. In the past she managed the Department of Social Responsibility at the Fishman Group. She holds a BA in humanities and social sciences and has a teaching certificate from Tel Aviv University's School of Education. Mother of three boys. Lives in Ramat Gan.



Lior Benisty

Social entrepreneur and Director of the Shaked Luza project, a business initiative for young people in mixed cities. He is now in the process of establishing a traditional youth movement that will operate in Israel's social periphery. Lior has helped found several social initiatives and organizations: he served as Chair of the Young Adult Centers NGO; established and ran the Young Adult Center in Lod; founded the Jindas NGO for Urban Renewal in Lod, where he is now a board member; and helped create student communities in Lod. Prior to that he was a student activist and served as Student Association Chair at Oranim College; a board member of the National Union of Israeli Students; and a member of the professional panel of the European Student Union (ESU). He also founded and runs the Dove Wings initiative that documents the heritage of Ethiopian Jewry. Lior holds a BA in history and education from Oranim College. Lives in Lod.



Mohammad Kadah

Director of the violence prevention and treatment unit and a social worker at the Zvulun Regional Council's welfare department. Mohammad is also a group facilitator, heading workshops in the fields of conflict resolution, empowerment, and parental guidance. Previously he served as a counselor for the Mifgashim project in Givat Haviva and liaison of the Kafr Manda Community Center's Department of Disability and Special Populations. He holds a BSW from Haifa University and an MA in organizational consulting and development from Yezreel Valley College. Mohammed lives with his family in Kafr Manda.



Mordechai Porat

Head of the youth department at Bnei-Brak's mayor's office and a social worker in the field of youth addiction for the Bnei Brak municipality. Previously Mordechai founded and directed an Ultra-Orthodox student community at Totzeret Haaretz - the Israeli movement of young adult communities. Mordechai holds BA and MA degrees in social work, specializing in clinical work, from the University of Haifa, and mentors social work students. Lives in Bnei Brak with his wife and five children.



Dr. Noha Jaber Bader

Vice Mayor of Maghar and Council member of the Maghar City Council, she serves as Chair of the Women's Status and Welfare Committee, and serves as a member of several other committees including: tenders; planning and construction; environment; and education. Noha is an educator, a social activist, and an entrepreneur. She served as director of Tel Hai College, a member of its board of trustees, lecturer, Ministry of Education employee, project manager, and group moderator. Noha holds a Ph.D. and a post-doctorate in Education from Haifa University. She received the 2008 Prime Minister's Award for her work with people with special needs, and an outstanding lecturer award from Oranim College. Widow of Nassif Bader, mother of three. Lives in Maghar.



Dr. Nour Abed Elhadi Shahbari

Director of implementation of the health program in Arab society at the Ministry of Health. Previously, she was part of the Ministry of Health's Magen Israel initiative, representing the Arab Society Desk and responsible for planning and leading interventions in East Jerusalem and in unregistered villages in the Negev. She also worked at Ma'oz as the knowledge and strategy leader of the Inbar project, as well as manager of Arab society issues. Nur holds a BA in medical laboratory science from the Technion, an MA in health systems management, and a Ph.D. in public health from the University of Haifa. Her dream is to spearhead change in Israeli society, particularly in Arab society. Mother of two. Lives in Nazareth.



Omer El Ad

CEO of the Gila Project for Trans Empowerment, an NGO that acts to improve the lives of trans community members through individual empowerment, community building, and advocacy. Before that, Omer founded and directed Ma'avaram's Trans Social Work Team, the only social work solution in Israel for transgender people (funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security). Omer is a social worker and social activist, holding a BFA in the visual arts from the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, and an MSW, with honors, from Simmons University in Boston. For over a decade Omer worked with the homeless in the USA, focusing on the connection between homelessness and mental health, before moving up into management roles and becoming involved with equity and diversity processes in various NPOs. Omer also makes a point of volunteering, helping in a range of projects including fundraising for social justice NGOs, running an extensive mutual aid initiative during COVID, and volunteering at animal shelters. Lives in Tel Aviv.



Ravit Zitzer

Director of the Shomron Regional Council's network of public libraries, and director of fundraising for the Council's community center. She is on the board of the Managers Association of Public Libraries that acts to broaden their range of services for the general public, cultivate reading and literacy, and spread knowledge and information. The Association also strives to establish public libraries as a focal point for local creativity and community initiatives and to serve as a home for diverse sectors of society, stemming from an approach that views public libraries as the community's cultural home, especially in rural areas. Ravit has much experience in guidance, organizational development, and managing projects in the private sector. Ravit holds a B.Sc. in biology from Bar Ilan University and is certified in mediation, library science, training development, and more. She is an active volunteer in communities in the Shomron, taking part in both formal and informal education community initiatives. She grew up in Kiryat Atta, and now lives with her husband and four children in Havot Ya'ir in the Shomron.



Rivka Yom Tov

Director of Economic Development at the Ministry for the Development of the Periphery, the Negev and the Galilee. She led the Klika project of forty workspaces for entrepreneurs and business owners in the social and geographic periphery, as well as diverse economic ventures in several municipalities. Rivka worked at the JDC and collaborated in running the Maftach centers - vocational guidance centers for the ultra-Orthodox. She was also a partner in establishing the Cellcom Volume music school for the ultra-Orthodox in Ramat Shlomo, Jerusalem. In addition to her work Rivka volunteers as an emergency medic at the Ihud Hatzala organization, coordinating the volunteers for the Respect the Elderly project serving older adults in Givat Zeev, and coordinates the project of volunteer medics in delivery rooms. Rivka holds a BA in education and an MA in management and public policy from Ben Gurion University in the Negev, and an additional MA in economics from the College of Management. Married and mother of five children. Lives in Givat Zeev.



Sagi Wasserman

Community facilitator for the Gush Etzion Regional Council, Sagi also heads the sustainability center and serves as accessibility liaison. Before that he founded Tzameret, a nationwide youth movement that strove to create a shared society of people with diverse identities; headed a community drive to establish a public school for both religious and secular children based on socio-environmental principles and innovative tools; spearheaded a venture to train physical education teachers, both Jews and Arab, to empower children and youth through sports; and helped establish Israel's National Service program.

Sagi is a hands-on entrepreneur and social leader, focusing on the rural community sphere and acting to strengthen a diverse and united society in Israel that draws its strength from connecting between different cultures and identities. He serves as a board member for the Friends of Joha NGO and is involved in other social initiatives. Sagi is also an active environmentalist, a farmer, and a beekeeper. He holds a BA, with honors, in management and economics from the Open University, and an MA in Jewish studies from Ono Academic College. He lives with his wife Galit and their three children in Sde Boaz in Gush Etzion.



Udi Cohen

Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at the Amal group. He is the former director of Kids4Peace Jerusalem and of the Haim Early Childhood Centers, and established the first kindergarten for children of foreign workers and asylum seekers in Jerusalem. Udi is a volunteer and board member of the NATAN Worldwide Disaster Relief NPO, and has twice headed aid missions for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. He is also an active volunteer in Etgarim's running group for people with disabilities. Udi holds an MA in NPO management from The Hebrew University, an MA in Jewish education from The University of Sydney, and an early childhood teaching certificate from the David Yellin College of Education. He lives in Jerusalem with his family.



Yitzhak Lev

CEO of the Young Adult Centers network – the umbrella organization for managers of Young Adult Centers that strives to promote policy, strategies, and collaboration with central and local government. He is also the founder and CEO of the municipal unit that deals with consulting and managing projects in local authorities. Yitzhak previously served as director of the local authority cadet program. He was the COO of ConsulTeam; and volunteered on the Pardes Hanna – Karkur municipal council. Yitzhak studies, lectures, and blogs on topics related to local authorities. He has a BA in the politics of Israel and the Middle East from the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Ariel University, and holds an MA in government from the Reichman University in Herzliya. He is also certified in management, including directing and managing youth and young adult departments. He is a senior medic and a sports therapist. Yitzhak lives with his wife Tami and two children, Adar and Koren, in Harish.



Adv. Yonatan Dubov

CEO of the Yaacov Herzog Center. Founder and artistic director of the Gula – the Center for Jewish Culture. Media person and publicist, Yonatan has a radio talk show on Galei Israel and writes a column in the Matzav Haru'ach synagogue weekly. He holds an LL.B from Ono Academic College and an MA in Public Policy from Bar Ilan University. Former chairman of the Jewish Home political party and one of the party's candidates for Knesset. One of the founders of the One Million Lobby for the advancement of the needs of Russian-speaking Israelis, and active in the field of Jewish-Russian identity. Married to Tzila, lives in Leshem.