



Press Release

Shimon Peres Prize awarded to *PowHer* and *Link Bridge*

The Federal Foreign Office, in cooperation with the German-Israeli Future Forum, is awarding the 2024 Shimon Peres Prize to the projects **PowHer** and **Link Bridge**. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock is patron of the prize. The prize will be awarded by State Minister Dr. Tobias Lindner, on October 31, 2024.

PowHer is a German-Israeli cooperation project between Ludwig Wolker e.V. and Tzofim Olami. *Link Bridge* was initiated by capito Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania / Lebenshilfewerk Hagenow and Lotem.

In addition to the regular Shimon Peres Prize, this year only, a Special Prize will be awarded to the Israeli project **SAHI**, which supports evacuated teenagers. The jury also gives honorable mentions to the three initiatives **The Daily Postcard**, **Sunflowers** and **Shomrim**, which support Israeli civil society.

“Projects like *PowHer* and *Link Bridge* are of immense importance for our democratic future. They focus on the link between Germany and Israel, build bridges and advocate equal rights and social participation. Through their committed work, *PowHer* has laid the foundation for a network of young, committed women who are engaged in a joint dialog for social change in both countries. The inclusion project *Link Bridge* strengthens the friendship and participation of people with disabilities in Germany and Israel. The resulting artworks, which bear witness to the trauma of October 7, will be exhibited in both countries, in the fall of 2024. The winning project of the Shimon Peres Special Prize and the three initiatives on the short list impressively demonstrate the commitment and resilience with which Israelis and Israeli civil society stood together and supported each other, after October 7 – through artistic projects on the war, support for journalists affected by violence or aid for orphaned Bedouin children. We are delighted to be able to present these initiatives and their work to a wider audience”, says PD Dr. Tamara Or, Director of the Future Forum.

Since 2017, the Shimon Peres Prize has been awarded annually by the Federal Foreign Office in cooperation with the German-Israeli Future Forum Foundation to two cooperation projects. It is endowed with 10,000 euros for each of the prize-winning projects. The prize is awarded in memory of former Israeli President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres. It recognizes initiatives and projects by young people who are particularly committed to shaping German-Israeli society in a democratic and joint way. This year, a Shimon Peres Special Prize, also endowed with 10,000 euros, will be awarded to an Israeli civil initiative that organized and offered support to Israeli society in an outstanding manner, following the brutal attacks by Hamas, on October 7, 2023.



The jury includes Daniel Donskoy (actor and musician), Kerstin Griese (Member of Parliament, Parliamentary State Secretary and politician for social policies for the SPD), Tamar Hay-Sagiv (Deputy Head of the Education Department at the Peres Center for Peace & Innovation), Andrea Kiewel (presenter, columnist and author), Igor Levit (pianist and activist), Pola Sarah Nathusius, (distribution and social media strategist at ARD) and Brigitte Zypries (former Federal Minister and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the German-Israeli Future Forum Foundation).

The award ceremony, hosted by Andrea Kiewel, will take place in Berlin on October 31 in the presence of the award winners, Prof. Tsvia Walden, Shimon Peres' daughter and professor of linguistics, and Mayor Stefan Evers. The evening will be accompanied by the Revolution Orchestra from Israel with songs in Hebrew and Arabic.

Information on previous award-winning projects can be found at:

<https://www.dizf.de/english/shimon-peres-prize/prizewinners/current-prizewinners.html>

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Background information:

PowHer

Cooperation partners:

- Ludwig Wolker e.V. (Germany)
- Tzofim Olami (Israel)

The German-Israeli cooperation project ***PowHer*** brought together young women and their voices in Berlin, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Deir al-Asad in the Galilee to create spaces for exchange and empowerment. As part of their travels, the 24 participants met with women's rights activists and entrepreneurs, discussed social change, took part in workshops on topics such as everyday sexism and discrimination and undertook various cultural activities together. Whether Muslim, Druze, Christian, Jewish, Israeli, German or refugee women: each participant brought her own biography and experience to the group.

PowHer has thus laid the foundation for a network of young, committed women who work together across ethnic, religious and cultural boundaries to promote social change in both countries. The project created a framework in which the participants could raise their voices and were encouraged to stand up for equality, fight against sexism and strengthen their leadership skills.

Link Bridge

Cooperation partners:

- Capito Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania / Lebenshilfe Hagenow gGmbH (Germany)
- Lotem – Making nature accessible (Israel)

In cooperation with different art and educational facilities for people with disabilities in both countries

October 7 and the subsequent war have left Israeli society traumatized, stunned and wounded. In Germany, the effects can be felt in polarized debates and a rapid rise in antisemitism. These experiences are difficult to put into words for anyone, but much harder to grasp for people who face additional barriers.

The Israeli-German cooperation project ***Link Bridge*** attempted to address this by helping people with disabilities to understand the frightening situation. First, the current news from Israel were produced



in plain language and made available to the public on YouTube. The participants then let their feelings and thoughts flow into works of art in a guided process.

As a transnational inclusion project, Link Bridge strengthens the friendship, inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in Germany and Israel. The artworks – a testimony and reminder of the trauma of October 7 – will be presented to the public for the first time in fall 2024, as part of an accessible traveling exhibition in Germany and Israel.

SAHI for Evacuated Youth

- Nochach e.V. – Giving as a way of life

Young people have been particularly affected by the consequences of October 7. Many were exposed to brutal atrocities and lost relatives and friends. In the first weeks after the Hamas attacks, many young people were evacuated to temporary accommodation for an indefinite period. The young people were torn away from their familiar surroundings and routines, leaving many feeling lonely and hopeless.

In response to the urgent needs of young people, the Special Hessed (Grace) Unit for Evacuated Youth, **SAHI** for short, launched a program with evacuated young people in various Israeli cities, in November 2023. Under the slogan “We are not here to help you, we need your help to help others”, the young people meet once a week in the evening, pack aid packages and distribute them together to families and elderly people in need.

SAHI offers the affected evacuated young people a support framework in which they can regain their self-efficacy and process what they have experienced. Thus, the young people regain a sense of belonging and purpose, strengthening not only their own resilience but also that of their community.

The Daily Postcard

Every day, Israeli artist Zeev Engelmayer posts a new postcard on his social media channels. His colorful pictures focus on the fate of the hostages. They furthermore reflect the pain of the relatives and are often created at their request, distributed and exhibited in many cities. Through the daily reminder of the suffering of the kidnapped, the artist mobilizes support for the hostages within Israeli society. The Daily Postcards call on us all to keep the memory of the people held hostage alive and give encouragement, comfort and hope to their families and many other people in Israel and around the world.



Sunflowers

Since the beginning of the war, Sunflowers has been looking after 800 children who lost relatives on October 7 and has set up aid centers in the affected southern areas of the country. The organization offers psychological support from experienced trauma therapists as well as coaching and support with everyday problems such as kindergarten, school and housing. A counseling center has also been set up for surviving parents. Sunflowers not only looks after those affected, but also researches the psychological risk factors of orphans together with Tel Aviv University. The organization is thus making a significant contribution to the future development of psycho-social care services.

Shomrim – Emergency Resilience Fund for Israel’s Frontline Journalists

Two weeks after October 7, the organization **Shomrim –The Center for Media and Democracy** set up an emergency fund for journalists. The independent media organization recognized an urgent psychological need for help and provided hundreds of journalists with funding for therapy. This psychological support is crucial to give journalists who were on assignment in southern Israel the support they need to continue their work and better cope with professional, personal and psychological stress. This also helps to preserve the diversity of voices in Israeli reporting.