Written evidence submitted by the Jerusalem Foundation

Executive Summary

- The Jerusalem Foundation was established in 1966 by then-mayor Teddy Kollek to work for an open and pluralistic Jerusalem. Since then the Foundation has invested over $1 billion in over 4,000 projects. All projects are intended to help all who call Jerusalem home – Jews and Arabs alike – make the city a pleasant, peaceful place to live. Over the years the Foundation has initiated and supported a wide range of projects – from schools to community centres to health centres and training programmes.

- The Jerusalem Foundation is an independent, apolitical organization that sees the comprehensive picture, and can quickly identify needs and challenges and work to answer real needs relatively quickly, regardless of politics of the region.

- Full peace cannot be achieved without looking toward Jerusalem, and research shows that civil society organizations can lead the way in preparing the ground for peace. Research also demonstrates that it is essential to work on a grassroots level in order to garner the broadest support for a democratic, civic-minded society. Indeed, all the work we do is to benefit those who inhabit Jerusalem, without regard to the political future of the city.

- We endeavour to create an open, equitable and modern society. We seek to advance peaceful relations in the city on two levels: 1) Strengthening human and physical infrastructures for Jerusalem’s Palestinian Arab population to strive toward equal opportunity; 2) Cultivating tolerance and acceptance of the ‘other’, trying to break down stereotypes. In working toward these two overall goals, we recommend a comprehensive approach, with the broad vision of improving everyday lives of all the city’s residents.

- Our projects fall into 4 key areas: Education, Community Development for the Palestinian Community, Developing Agents of Change; Rights Advocacy. Over nearly 50 years and innumerable project, we have seen that little by little, we have the ability to effect lasting change. With additional long-term support from veteran and new partners from around the world, we can do much, much more to advance peace in Jerusalem.
The Jerusalem Foundation

1. The Jerusalem Foundation was established in 1966 by then newly-elected Mayor, Teddy Kollek as an apolitical organisation intended to help all residents of Jerusalem. Since then, the Foundation has invested over $1 billion (adjusted for inflation) in over 4,000 projects, leaving our imprint on nearly every corner of the city. The Foundation has established the city’s most well-known landmarks: hundreds of parks, aid to schools, libraries; support for the elderly, community centres, cultural institutions, and much, much more. These include a wide array of projects to help the city’s Palestinian residents and advance peaceful relations: the Sheikh Jarrah Medical Centre, the football pitch and community centre in Beit Safafa, community centres in Wadi Joz and the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, the Central Arab Library, the MICHHA facility, the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School for Bilingual Education, the Erna D. Leir Peace Kindergarten at the Jerusalem International YMCA, and more.

2. Our agenda is Jerusalem – endeavouring to help everyone who calls him or herself a Jerusalemite, including the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. There is no other entity that seeks to fill different niches left open by other factors (other funders and private enterprise, organizations, service providers). In addition, we have a rare, birds-eye view of all the different actors and interests in the city. Because we are independent we can identify needs, challenges, and opportunities, and advance on to a stage of implementation relatively quickly. Thus, we act as an impartial arbitrator and broker in prioritizing needs and designing and supporting plans of action.

3. All our actions are guided by our apolitical approach and dedication to the people of Jerusalem. Programmes and projects seek to provide services and empowerment for the long-term benefit of all residents - Palestinian and Jewish, across the diverse spectrum of religious observance and ethnicity - regardless of politics in the region.

The vital necessity to work toward peace in Jerusalem

4. Jerusalem – a city revered and cherished around the world. The Jerusalem Foundation, understanding the universality of Jerusalem and its importance to millions around the globe, is at the forefront of efforts to ensure that Jerusalem will remain an open and vibrant city to all who call it home.

5. Today Jerusalem has 804,000 residents – 293,000 Arab Palestinians and 511,000 Jews (including some 200,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews), the largest city in Israel. It is also the poorest city in Israel, with 37% of all families living under the poverty line. Among the Palestinian population, the number is twice that – 73% of the general population, and 85% of Palestinian children - live below the poverty line. According to most recent statistics, all Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem were classified as having a low socio-economic status.1

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1. According to most recent statistics.
6. Jerusalem contains within it all the complexities of the conflict in this region, and it is generally accepted that full peace cannot be obtained without looking to Jerusalem. However, agreements made without resolving how residents will get along on a day to day basis will not be longstanding. This crucial and urgent ingredient for peace can only be created by developing a critical mass of grassroots support for civil society and mutual understanding and cooperation.

7. Researchers have divided the road from war to peace into three stages: peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping. While the political leaders make peace agreements, NGOs change public atmosphere into one that accepts and promotes the peace. It is the NGO’s that transform the peace from a “peace between leaders to a peace between peoples.” (p.8) Civil society and NGOs help to bring about peace from the ground up.

The Jerusalem Foundation’s Approach

8. We work toward creating an open, equitable and modern society by responding to the needs of residents and improving their quality of life. Our actions are based on four basic assumptions:

- Regardless of politics, Jews and Arabs will always share this region in a number of possible configurations.
- Both Jews and Arabs feel a deep-seated connection to Jerusalem.
- Building a strong city will benefit all its inhabitants.
- Peace is made between equals.

9. Underlying our actions is the basic notion that a pluralistic and open society in Jerusalem can be achieved only by emphasizing respect for all human beings, regardless of race, religion or politics, in all our activities.

10. Currently, Jerusalem's Palestinian and Jewish sectors lead lives with worldviews that are on different sides of the spectrum, sometimes directly in opposition. Everyday routines, each in its own circle, leave little opportunity for meaningful encounters in bridging gaps and learning about the 'other.' As recommended in The Evaluation of Cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli NGOs: An Assessment, “Special focus should be given to...building non-violent grassroots and social movements that promote voluntarism for the sake of peace.” In working along these lines, the Jerusalem Foundation seeks to advance
peace in Jerusalem on two levels: 1) **Strengthening human and physical infrastructures for Jerusalem’s Palestinian Arab population** to strive toward equal opportunity; 2) **Advancing tolerance and acceptance of the ‘other’**, trying to break down stereotypes.

11. In designing a plan of action, the Jerusalem Foundation recommends a comprehensive approach, with the broad vision of improving everyday lives of all the city’s residents. Our projects fall in 4 different concentrations of activity:

**A. Education.** We believe strongly in the importance of improving educational opportunities to improve the future for Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. Thus, the Foundation supports numerous initiatives such as learning centres, professional development for teachers and educators, and more. The Evaluation report noted that it is key to expand the target population of those involved in peace-building activities to include the mainstream in order to broaden its support. For this reason the Foundation is also involved in projects such as *Language as a Cultural Bridge*, the *Living in Jerusalem Advanced Civics Course*, the *Erna D. Leir Peace Kindergarten* and the *Max Rayne Hand in Hand School for Bilingual Education*. Projects such as MICA and the *Hattie Friedland School for the Deaf* provide vital services for both Jews and Arabs, and are able to bridge cultural gaps through this service provision.

**B. Community Development in Palestinian Community.** We recognise the importance of services for the Palestinian community in everyday life, especially given its dire socio-economic situation. The Foundation has been instrumental in establishing and supporting community centres and facilities throughout the city, most significantly in *Wadi Joz, Beit Safafa* and the *Muslim Quarter of the Old City*. We have also aided health and welfare service providers in delivering necessary care, such as in the construction and expansion of the *Sheikh Jarrach Medical Centre*, and in ongoing support for the *Elderly Services Centre in the Old City*.

**C. Developing Agents of Change.** In order to systematically advance peace on the ground it is critical to develop agents of change. Two of the Jerusalem Foundation’s major projects in this area are the *Jerusalem Intercultural Centre (JICC)* and the *Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace*.

**D. Rights Advocacy.** Enabling Palestinian residents to access their legal and social rights is of utmost importance in paving the way for a peaceful future in the region. Two examples of important projects, initiated by the Jerusalem Foundation together with its partners, are the *Atta’a Assistance Centre for the Rights of East Jerusalem Residents* and *Grey Action (Council for the Rights of the Elderly)*.

The appendix attached describes examples of our work, together with a large number of partners, over the past 48 years. We have seen that little by little, we have the ability to effect lasting change. With additional long-term support from veteran and new partners from around the world, we can do much, much more to advance peace in Jerusalem.
A. Education

12. The Jerusalem Foundation believes strongly in the importance of improving educational opportunities to improve the future for Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. Thus, the Foundation supports numerous initiatives within the schools to improve education, such as learning centres, professional development for teachers and educators, and more. An example of this work is the network of Comprehensive Learning Centres, which is currently being developed in Sur Baher, together with the Halon organization, a local resident organization, and the Jerusalem Municipality. In the first 6 months of operation alone, grades nearly quadrupled. Through these activities the Centres seek to reduce social and academic gaps, provide an informal framework for academic and emotional support, involve parents in their children's learning process, and improve education for the children.

13. The Jerusalem Foundation has also been heavily involved in the East Jerusalem Central Library, which it established in 1992. It houses a comprehensive collection of Arab literature and poetry, Arabic-language academic volumes, Arab-oriented history books and other such manuscripts that illustrate and preserve Arab identity and heritage. Today, the library offers books from all over the Arab world. In the fall of 2010 the Jerusalem Foundation, together with a local computer education organization, a university-student mentoring programme and the municipal library department, opened an Enrichment and Learning Centre that breathed new life into the library.

14. The Jerusalem Foundation has also extensively supported the efforts of the Kesher organization and the Centre for Arab Hearing Impaired Children in Jerusalem, helping Palestinian children and their parents with a variety of special needs. The Kesher organization has been performing wide-spread group work to provide individual and group assistance in obtaining their legal rights. The families learned Hebrew in order to communicate better with the relevant agencies. They also developed a relevant social network, which also had a significant influence for the professional bodies. At the Centre for Arab Hearing Impaired Children, the Foundation was a driving force in establishing the Centre in 2005. Today it provides individual therapy in speech and hearing, individual and group assistance in homework, music and art therapies, social and enrichment activities, and workshops for parents.

15. The Evaluation report noted that it is key to expand the target population of those involved in peace-building activities to include the mainstream in order to broaden its support. The school system is one avenue to widening the scope of such activities. One example is the Language as a Cultural Bridge programme that has Palestinian teachers teaching Arabic to 5th and 6th grade students in Jewish schools throughout Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Foundation has supported this national programme’s implementation in
Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Abraham Fund Initiatives, since it was introduced some 10 years ago, and is currently in the process of widening its scope. The Jerusalem Foundation also initiated the Living in Jerusalem Advanced Civics course nearly 10 years ago, which is the first course ever, accredited by the Israel Ministry of Education, to engage secular and religious Jewish, and Arab high school students in the same classroom.

16. Two special education frameworks, MICA and the Hattie Friedland School for the Deaf, also exemplify projects that are high priority for the Jerusalem Foundation, in that they provide vital services for both Jews and Arabs, and are able to bridge cultural gaps through quality service provision. MICA, founded in 1969, provides holistic treatment for very young deaf and hearing-impaired children and their families, assisting them in appropriate educational and rehabilitation support. The Jerusalem Foundation is currently building a multi-million-dollar facility. Both Jewish and Arab children aged 6 months – 4 years are welcomed in MICA’s preschool; however, because screening, diagnosis and treatment usually take place much later in the Palestinian Arab community, most children are Arab. For this same reason, some 2/3 of the students at the Hattie Friedland School for the Deaf are Arab as well, which was founded by the Jerusalem Foundation and continues to receive ongoing support. The school accepts children aged 6 – 21 who cannot be mainstreamed in other frameworks due to other disabilities. A school with a superior educational reputation, the Jewish and Arab staff primarily focus on providing high-quality professional services to the children, each in his or her own native language.

17. The Erna D. Leir Peace Kindergarten at the Jerusalem International YMCA and the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School for Bilingual Education are two unique flagship programmes of the Jerusalem Foundation that bring together Jewish and Arab children on a daily basis, to teach them, on the most basic level, how to get along on a day-to-day basis. Erna D. Leir Peace Kindergarten at the Jerusalem International YMCA became the first multicultural, bilingual preschool in Jerusalem in 1992, and today the preschool has 7 classes teaching 110 children aged from 1-5 year olds. The children come from all over the city and are Jewish, Muslim and Christian, and learn to respect one another’s faiths and cultures by becoming familiar with them. During holidays, family members are invited to joint celebrations including the introduction of each family’s traditional dress and cuisine. Children at the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School for Bilingual Education come from all ethnicities and backgrounds as well. Founded in 1998, today the school includes the only integrated Arab-Jewish high school in Israel. Some 580 Arabs and Jews study together from kindergarten until 12th grade, working with and learning about the ‘other’ in every part of their studies. The Jerusalem Foundation has supported the school since its establishment, supporting a wide range of programmes as well as raising the millions of dollars of funds from friends throughout the world to build the Jerusalem campus, which opened in 2007.
B. Community Development in the Palestinian Community

18. The Jerusalem Foundation recognises the importance of services for the Palestinian community in everyday life, especially given its dire socio-economic situation. The Foundation has been instrumental in establishing and supporting community centres and facilities throughout the city, most significantly in Wadi Joz, Beit Safafa and the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. The Jerusalem Foundation founded the Community Centre in Wadi Joz, the first community centre in East Jerusalem in 1969, and on continues to support key programmes there, affecting thousands of local residents. In 2008 the Jerusalem Foundation invested over $1 million in renovating the Community Centre’s Sports Hall. The Jerusalem Foundation also established the Beit Safafa Community Centre in 1987, and in 2010 – 2011 raised over $1 million to construct a synthetic football pitch in Beit Safafa, one of only a few synthetic football pitches in the city. The field serves hundreds of local Palestinian residents, from all southern neighbourhoods.

19. For many years the Abna Al-Quds Community Centre in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City operated under the aegis of the Wadi Joz Community Centre. About 7 years ago the Jerusalem Foundation led a process of independence in order to empower the 30,000 residents of the Muslim Quarter and increase services. Today it is open six days a week and offers education, enrichment, cultural, sports and social activities for some 800 women, elderly, children and youth, special needs populations and other residents, for which the Jerusalem Foundation provides ongoing support. In 2012, the Foundation, together with the Jerusalem Development Authority, renovated the garden area to create the first community garden in the Old City of Jerusalem.

20. The Jerusalem Foundation has also been instrumental in assisting health and welfare service providers to deliver necessary care. In 1991 the Jerusalem Foundation completed construction of the Sheikh Jarrach Medical Centre, which today serves 50,000 who are covered by the Clalit Health Fund, most of them Palestinian. Since then, the Centre has continued to grow and the Jerusalem Foundation has supported many improvement projects. These include: the addition of an operating theatre in 1995; renovations to the day surgery clinic that serves approximately 4,500 patients per year in 1997; renovations to the pharmacy in 1998; creation of paediatric centre in 1999, and establishment of a women’s health centre in 2001.

21. For the past several years the Jerusalem Foundation has also supplemented activities at the Elderly Services Centre in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Centre provides social and educational programming to 160 elderly each month. As a result of the programme, many participants left their homes for the first time in years, and they have begun to read books and newspapers again. Their emotional well-being and physical health has visibly improved as well.
C. Developing Agents of Change

22. In order to systematically advance peace on the ground it is critical to develop agents of change. Two of the Jerusalem Foundation’s flagship projects in this area are the Jerusalem Intercultural Centre (JICC) and the Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace.

23. The Jerusalem Intercultural Centre (JICC) was established in 1999, with the Jerusalem Foundation as a major partner. Since then the Jerusalem Foundation has provided ongoing programmatic support, as well as renovated its current facility on Mt. Zion in 2010. The JICC has developed a number of programmes that cultivate grassroots leadership on a number of community and service-providing planes. For example, since 2008 the Cultural Competency in Health Care project, and later the Paramedical Professionals Training courses, have led a revolution in health care in Jerusalem and throughout Israel, in providing care that is sensitive to the needs of the Palestinian population. Since 2009 the Palestinian Lay Leader Forums, Emergency Response Networks and later MiniActive programmes have built up human and physical infrastructures for a better East Jerusalem, regardless of future political constellations of Jerusalem. These programmes provide participants with capacity-building tools that improve inter- and intra-community understanding and communication, that allow change to take place, on the ground.

24. The Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace, founded in 1986, develops and implements over 20 educational programmes through a unique approach of active-experiential workshops whose guiding principle is the equal right of all to liberty. The Institute has won prestigious awards, including the former deputy Prime Minister, Yigal Alon Prize, and the Speaker of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) Prize. Programmes largely target teaching staff and community activists - Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, new immigrants and veteran residents - who then pass on lessons learned in various activities. The Jerusalem Foundation funds much of the programming taking place in Jerusalem, which affect some 5,000 children, youth and adults each year, about 1/3 of its annual total of 15,000.

D. Rights Advocacy

25. Enabling Palestinian residents to access their legal and social rights is of utmost importance in paving the way for a peaceful future in the region. Two examples of important projects, initiated by the Jerusalem Foundation together with its partners, are the Atta’a Assistance Centre for the Rights of East Jerusalem Residents and Gray Action (Council for the Rights of the Elderly). Atta’a was founded by the Jerusalem Foundation in 2004, together with the Forum for Citizens Accord. Residents receive: Information and advice regarding health rights and coverage, National Insurance Institute (NII), Ministry of the Interior and municipal property taxes; Assistance in completing the various requests and forms, and guidance regarding which documents must be attached to which requests; Assistance in submitting requests to the Ministry of the Interior via Internet; Assistance in
writing and translating letters to municipal and national agencies; Completing affidavits to lawyers and follow-up regarding cases, until they reach court. In the first part of 2013 Atta’a dealt with over 1,000 problems.

26. **Gray Action (Council for the Rights of the Elderly)** was established in 2004, and has been supported by the Jerusalem Foundation since its inception. This senior citizen’s advocacy organization seeks to assist and guide senior citizens in accessing their rights in such areas as: health, welfare, housing, national insurance, Holocaust claims, and the employment of foreign workers. The Council also takes up legal action when appropriate, and lobbies for seniors’ rights. In 2012 efforts began to include Arabic-speaking elderly as well. In 2012 the Council dealt with 3,800 cases in Hebrew, Russian and Arabic.