

SOUTHERN ISRAEL RELIEF FUNDS

A U I A C Summary

Background

- Before noon on Saturday, December 27, 2008, the IDF launched Operation *Cast Lead* in response to the war of attrition Hamas-ruled Gaza has waged over the last eight years against Israeli civilians living in the Sderot region.
- Two weeks before the operation was launched, Hamas rejected Israel's offer to extend the ceasefire agreement that both sides had signed six months before.
- Following Hamas' rejection to continue the ceasefire, a barrage of rockets were fired, and for the first time in Israel's history, rockets hit Beer Sheva and dozens of other towns within a 40 km range of Gaza.

During the first week of the war, while the UIAC staff was in the field assessing the situation and the needs of the residents of the region, there was general agreement that in the communities under fire there was a strong sense of order and control. Israel's southern communities were well organized and coordinated with the IDF, the Home Front Command (HFC) and other governmental agencies, resulting in the general public's needs being met effectively. This fact is crucial to understanding the role philanthropic organizations played in this crisis as opposed to the Second Lebanon War in 2006 when, in many cases, philanthropy provided for Israeli civilians' basic needs including meals, medication and other necessities. In 2009, the role of the philanthropic sector was to alleviate burdens and enable citizens to endure the ongoing war situation's impact on children, teenagers, families and vulnerable populations.



2009

2009 which Communities Were Our Focus?

As a philanthropic organization, our resources are limited. Thus, there is a need to focus our efforts on specific communities, with strategic investments that generate a long-term impact on the communities. This approach proved to be effective in investing the 2006 IEC funds.

During Operation Cast Lead, three communities were chosen:

- **Beer Sheva** and **Bnei Shimon** were natural choices as Federation CJA Montreal has a long and extremely close P2K partnership with these communities.
- **Sderot** was chosen since Canadian Federations are all invested in this community through the 2006 IEC funding framework. In 2006, Canadian Federations made a strategic decision to allocate a small but meaningful portion of the IEC funds raised for the north to Sderot and the region. The Sderot region was identified as the arena for a war of attrition, which Israel's citizens are fighting daily.

A Return on Our Investment

The Canadian 2006 IEC Has Increased Resilience among Israel's Peripheral Communities

2006

In 2006, the Canadian IEC allocations strategy was innovative and bold through implementing several strategies:

- Long-term investments
- A Focusing on specific cities
- A tailor-made list of projects addressing each community's challenges
- A specific aim to foster long-term and profound changes in these communities



2006
2009

The following examples demonstrate the strategic nature of the Canadian 2006 IEC operation and specific steps implemented during Operation *Cast Lead* to make Israel's home front more resilient:

- **2006** – The Canadian IEC invested in the development of services for **vulnerable populations**, and programs have been successfully implemented in northern communities.
- **2009** – During states of emergency, every group suffers. However, again and again, we see that disabled individuals and the elderly experience severe distress. They are lonely and alienated and, at times, they are physically unable to reach bomb shelters in time. Through the 2006 IEC and a partnership with the JDC, funds were allocated to developing an effective network for **vulnerable populations** to operate during states of emergency as well as regular times. The valuable knowledge and practical experience that was developed through this initiative allowed the JDC, with Canadian support, to replicate these models, reaching out and connecting with hundreds of disabled and elderly individuals in the southern region within days of the start of the war.
- **2006** – The Canadian IEC supported and encouraged the social work **young communities** carry out in their communities while **demonstrating volunteerism and leadership**.
- **2009** – Young Communities proved to be valuable agents of change. Most of the Canadian support to the youth of Sderot is operated through local NGOs that were established by two groups of young, idealistic Israelis who settled in the town over a decade ago. These young families moved into Sderot to raise their children, work and volunteer. They are the most efficient agents of change in any peripheral community, and by choosing to work with local NGOs, we empower them and allow them to lead, create and assume full responsibility for their own lives and their community. For a community that has endured eight years of suffering and trauma, the Canadian method has been to provide people with hope, strength and the means to rely upon themselves rather than engaging in massive interventions without empowering local leadership.
- **2006** – The Canadian IEC invested our limited resources strategically to create long-lasting change and increase the resilience of the communities under fire.

2006
2009

2006

2009

➤ **2009** – The roundtable in Sderot proved to be an effective tool to create synergy between Canadian and non-Canadian funded services. Our partners, the local community centre and the Gvanim and Reut NGOs assumed responsibility for the situation and carried out dozens of activities for various age groups, reaching out to immigrant communities and religious and secular populations. The key was maximum coordination and cooperation among the service providers together with the recently appointed staff of the new mayor. For the first time, Sderot as a community served as a role model for other communities in the region. Young families had the option to go on daily outings out of the region, during which parents and children could regain their strength. In many cases, participants in youth programs organized activities for younger children in neighborhood bomb shelters. Canadians should feel a sense of ownership and immense pride regarding the profound changes that “donor dollars” have generated, allowing for the development of an efficient platform to manage the difficult situation versus simply surviving it.

Live Feed from Beer Sheva - A National Rally for Israel Taking Place Simultaneously Across Canada

The Israel office of UIAC arranged for a live feed from the Beer Sheva classroom that was directly hit by a Grad rocket. Rubik Danilovitz, the newly elected mayor of Beer Sheva, and Yehudit Recanati, the Israeli philanthropist and the founder of NATAL, addressed the crowd in Canada. The highlights of the broadcast were Julie Koschitzky’s discussion with the mother of Raz, an Israeli combat soldier fighting in Gaza, and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s message to Canadian Jewry.

Allocations

All together, Canada has invested a total of **CAD 282,703** in the southern relief efforts, according to the table that follows. Funds were matched by the State of Israel and other philanthropic agencies such as the Jewish Agency and the JDC.

Operation Cast Lead

Allocations by Canadian Federation

Canadian Community	City	Activity	Allocation in CAD
Toronto	Sderot	Outings for families	21,203
Toronto	Sderot	Hospitality for families from the South	3,500
Toronto	Sderot	Educational and interactive equipment for 5 youth clubs	25,000
Toronto Total			49,703
Montreal	Beer Sheva	Outing Beer Sheva	25,000
Montreal	Bnei Shimon RC	Outing Bnei Shimon	25,000
Montreal	Beer Sheva	On-line schooling - 250 computers	75,000
Montreal	Beer Sheva	Toys, games and first aid kits in bomb shelters	10,000
Montreal Total			135,000
Vancouver	Beer Sheva	Developing and implementing services for the disabled	40,000
Vancouver	Sderot	Psychological therapy sessions in schools	35,000
Vancouver Total			75,000
Calgary	Beer Sheva and Sderot	Toys, games and first aid kits in bomb shelters	23,000
Small communities	Beer Sheva and Sderot	Toys, games and first aid kits in bomb shelters	10,000
Calgary and Others Total			33,000



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