



THE 10TH ANNUAL MUSLIM JEWISH CONFERENCE

December 2019, Vienna, Austria

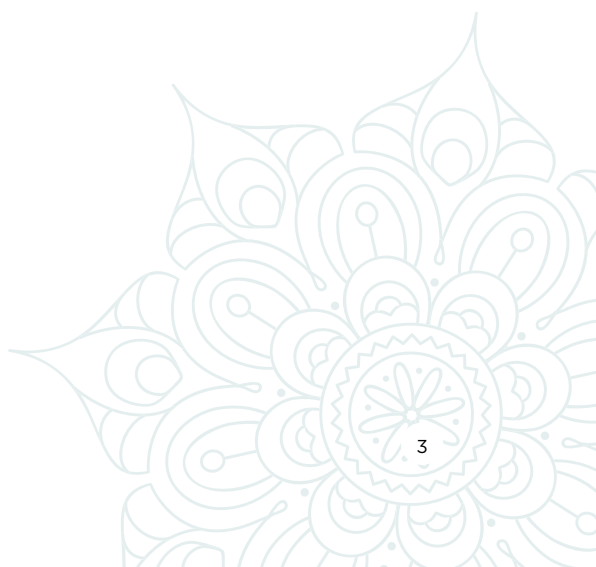
**WE TALK
TO EACH
OTHER,
NOT ABOUT
EACH
OTHER.**



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OVERVIEW

The Muslim Jewish Conference is a grassroots dialogue and leadership organization focusing on building sustainable networks between Muslim and Jewish leaders from around the world.

The annual conference brings together students and young professionals and invites them to step beyond the boundaries of ignorance and stereotyping in order to build a new global political movement of young Muslim and Jewish leaders, activists, and experts who are committed to mutual respect. Conference participants, who belong to all faiths and affiliations, work together to develop and implement projects focused on promoting interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue.

Since our first conference in 2010, we have gathered more than 1,500 young Jewish and Muslim changemakers for dialogue, grassroots coalition building, and most importantly, friendship. Participants have hailed from all corners of the globe: Europe, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, North and South America, and North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Over 65 countries have been represented.

Though young, our participants have been at the forefront of addressing major issues of their generation. They are directors of local and national NGOs; civil, human and women's rights activists; academics; emerging business leaders; government policy-makers; humanitarian aid workers; spiritual leaders; journalists and community leaders.



■ represented country MJC 2009 - 2019



10
CONFERENCES

65
COUNTRIES

> 1500
PARTICIPANTS

PREVIOUS CONFERENCES

1ST ANNUAL MJC

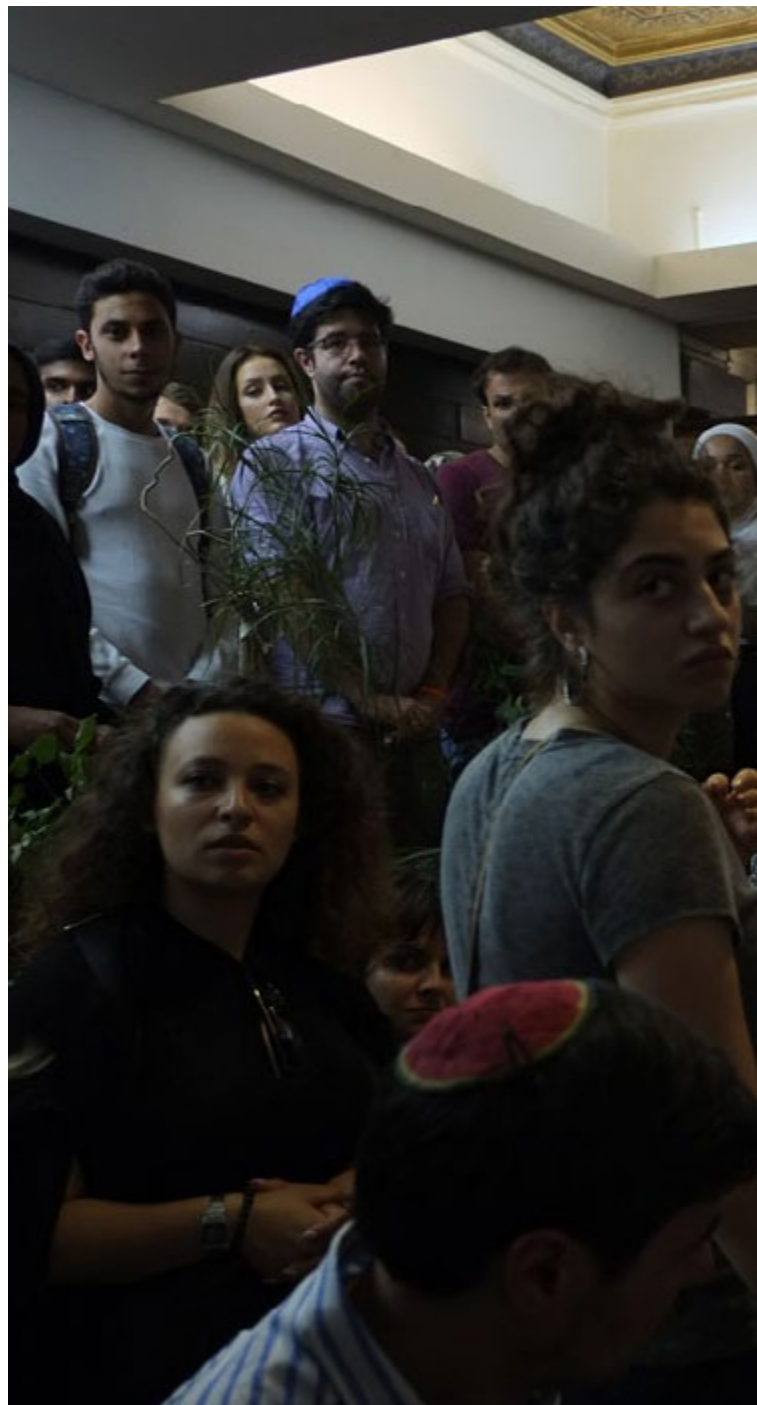
AUGUST 1 - 6, 2010
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

The first MJC was held in Vienna in 2010, under the official patronage of Austrian President Dr. Heinz Fischer. For five days, 65 participants from around the world worked together in thematic committees and conclusively produced an official declaration addressing two main social issues: combating anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred, and the roles of education and media in Muslim-Jewish relations.

2ND ANNUAL MJC

JULY 3 - 8, 2011
KIEV, UKRAINE

The second MJC was a call to action, where 70 participants developed concrete projects to implement in their home communities. The conference included visits to houses of worship of both faiths and to the site of the Nazi massacre of Jews, Babi Yar. Over the five-day conference, the committees addressed anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred, sustainable dialogue, and historical narratives. MJC 2011 took place under the patronage of Russell Simmons. Nine projects were created.





3RD ANNUAL MJC

JULY 9-13, 2012

BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

In 2012, 80 participants were divided into four committees and developed more than ten projects. In addition to the working committees, a separate business venture track and an arts track encouraged Muslim and Jewish participants to collaborate on specific projects throughout the week. Site visits to houses of worship of both faiths in Bratislava were complemented by meetings with politicians in Vienna.

4TH ANNUAL MJC

JUNE 30 - JULY 5, 2013

SARAJEVO, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

The fourth conference was held for the first time in a predominantly Muslim country. Under the patronage of the Bosniak member of the Presidency Bakir Izetbegovic, 100 young delegates from 39 countries worked on joint projects to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred, practiced tools of conflict transformation, discussed hate speech and education and their effects on historical narratives and media, and analyzed the relationship between gender and religion. The young leaders also shared each other's pain when they stood together at the memorial site of the Srebrenica massacre and recited Muslim and Jewish prayers for the departed souls.

5TH ANNUAL MJC

AUGUST 10 - 17, 2014
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

For its 5th anniversary, the conference returned to Vienna, where it all started, and gathered 120 leaders of the next generation under the patronage of the President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer. In the midst of a summer full of hostility and hate, the conflict in Israel and Palestine was discussed passionately but respectfully. Anti-Muslim racism and anti-Semitism in the Media, Rights of Religious Minorities, Historical Narratives and Identity, Gender and Religion, Art and Culture, and Conflict Transformation were all subjects of intense workshops, helping to incubate dozens of local project ideas. Together, the participants visited a synagogue and a mosque and traveled to the former Nazi death camp of Mauthausen to commemorate the Jews and Muslims alike who were killed there.

6TH ANNUAL MJC

AUGUST 16 - 23, 2015
BERLIN, GERMANY

In 2015, the Muslim Jewish Conference received 340 applications – the highest number of applications since the conference began in 2010. We welcomed 140 participants and 30 team members from 45 countries.

7TH ANNUAL MJC

AUGUST 7 - 14, 2016
BERLIN, GERMANY

For the second time in a row, the Muslim Jewish Conference took place in Berlin, a city that shows continuing support for our mission. We innovated a committee dedicated to project incubation and set the stage for ongoing support for coalitions amongst Jewish and Muslim participants. We visited the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen near Berlin, where we held a joint prayer, which was very transformative for all participants. In 2016, the MJC welcomed 150 participants from 33 countries. That edition of the conference was particularly powerful, given it was the beginning of the international Syrian refugee crisis.

8TH ANNUAL MJC

AUGUST 6 - 12, 2017
SARAJEVO, BOSNIA
& HERZEGOVINA

Coming back to Sarajevo for the second time, a city symbolizing the hopes and struggles of our mission, was a very special experience for the MJC team. “We feel at home here,” said MJC Founder Ilja Sichrovsky. Participants were comprised of approximately equal numbers of women and men and Muslims and Jews, in addition to a small group of participants identifying as « allies » (neither Jewish nor Muslim, approximately 10%). The conference was attended by 122 participants and volunteers, representing 38 countries. It was officially opened by the member of the Presidency, Bakir Izetbegovic, and supported by the Jewish and Muslim Community in Sarajevo as well as the OSCE. The committees covered topics such as “Muslim-Jewish Religious and Intellectual Exchange,” “Gender and Religion: Intersectionality and Prejudice,” “Power, Religion and Human Rights,” and “Antisemitism, Anti-Muslim racism and Hate Speech.”



9TH MJC - CONNECTING ACTIONS

DECEMBER 12 - 16, 2018
PARIS, FRANCE

In 2018, the Muslim Jewish Conference partnered with Connecting Actions and community activist Sharon Avraham to create a unique hub for interfaith collaboration. Through an immersive, innovative structure, combining the 9th annual Muslim Jewish Conference and the 4th Connecting Actions Symposium, a unique opportunity was created for young Muslim and Jewish multipliers to co-create initiatives. They interacted not only with each other, but also with experts in their respective fields, as well as industry leaders, using their skills and resources to support collaborative action. The gathering focused on 4 tracks: Interfaith Projects, MJC Local Chapters, Dialogue Experts in the Connecting Actions Network, and Community and Coalition Building for artists, innovators, entrepreneurs and other free-thinkers. Participants discussed dialogue strategies, interfaith work, activism and community building.

MJC-CA 2018 incorporated many participatory principles and activities. All the content was inspired, created and led by the participants and staff before or at the conference itself, building on the outstanding work of the individuals and organizations already involved. This fostered collective intelligence, deepened community building, and created a more intimate environment.



Here were key figures of participants' evaluation:

80%

of participants agreed that the Muslim Jewish Conference motivated them to engage more with people from other faiths and beliefs.

80%

agreed it improved their perceptions and knowledge of people from other faiths and beliefs.

60%

agreed it helped them improve their knowledge of their own culture and religion.

90%

agreed that it motivated them to challenge someone about stereotypes they hold about people from other religions and beliefs.

95%

are glad they participated and would recommend others in their respective communities to participate as well.





In Judaism, it is said that in every generation, there are to be 36 righteous ones walking among us on this planet Earth. In my humble opinion, it's about time we organize them some help.

ILJA SICHROVSKY

MESSAGE FROM ILJA SICHROVSKY

For the last ten years, the Muslim Jewish Conference (MJC) has organized ten annual life-changing editions of our signature event, bringing together over 1,500 young Muslims and Jews from over 65 countries with the help of approximately 120 volunteers from over 20 countries, who have transformed a dream into reality.

We have provoked meaningful connections and opened communication on our generation's most relevant topics. We are proud to have sparked such discussions and interactions of the highest quality, and to have incubated some of the most original and impactful interfaith projects.

In 2020 we will launch the Muslim Jewish Alliance (MJA), which combines our experience and expertise from ten years of work. The MJA will provide a dynamic mixture of creating safe spaces for activists, entrepreneurs and experts to share their combined expertise and to work in innovative networks of cooperation to support highly skilled ambassadors, professional communities, local chapters and international initiatives. We have proven that we can mobilize young multipliers and drivers of change on a European, local and international level.

I would like to thank our dear and hardworking team; without their sincere and committed efforts, none of this would have ever been possible. I would also like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Patricia and Arthur Kahane, who believed in us when no one else did, who made our dream become a reality, who gave us the means to help save lives and change countless others. Last but not least, I'd like to thank Daniel Pincus for being with us in the trenches each and every year, dedicating himself and investing his and his family's resources to keep our dream alive.

In Judaism, it is said that in every generation, there are to be 36 righteous ones walking among us on this planet Earth. In my humble opinion, it's about time we organize them some help.

ILJA SICHROVSKY
MJC Founder & Co-Director



To paraphrase the great Muhammed Ali, “Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they have been given than to explore the power they have to change it.”

MOHAMED ABUBAKR

MESSAGE FROM MOHAMED ABUBAKR

I still remember my first MJC experience vividly. I won't lie, the first time I applied to attend the conference, I was extremely skeptical. Not for the obvious reasons, at that point I was already knee-deep in issues pertaining to Israelis and Jews from all over the world so that was not really my concern. Faith, in the traditional sense, did not really play any significant role in my life at that point: not a positive one, at least. The very idea of interfaith dialogue as a peacebuilding tool seemed quite far-fetched to me.

Coming from the human rights field and mostly working in ultra-conservative regions, I couldn't help but wonder if such a conference would be filled with problematic persons who utter problematic statements. That wasn't the case at the MJC. The encounters and experiences designed by the MJC team were nothing short of genius: compelling respect without any censorship, and asserting values without preaching. I was pleasantly surprised.

I talked to Ilja quite a bit about how this tradition started 10 years ago. He described how skeptical everyone was when he spoke about bringing Jews and Muslims together from all over the world. It is a reaction I certainly could relate to very well. "Impossible!" they told him. "Impossible" is certainly a word I have heard a lot myself in the space of Arab-Israeli peacebuilding efforts, which has been my playground for the past 12 years. It's "impossible" that Jews and Muslims will fly from all corners of the world to meet each other in Europe. Or that young people from Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia or Iran would risk getting into so much trouble just to meet their Israeli peers in Jordan or Europe.

To paraphrase the great Muhammed Ali, "Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they have been given than to explore the power they have to change it."

MOHAMED ABUBAKR
MJC Co-Director



**A conference
where we change
the narrative of
intercommunal
relationships, from
confrontation
to dialogue and
cooperation.**

RAFAEL TYSZBLAT

MESSAGE FROM RAFAEL TYSZBLAT

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What an incredible adventure to have pulled off such a great concept of a conference for 10 years. A conference where we change the narrative of intercommunal relationships, from confrontation to dialogue and cooperation. A conference proving that it is possible to ensure that the expression and even the affirmation of certain identities is no longer perceived as a threat to the identities of others. A conference that is in my view, the best, most powerful, most sustainable antidote to hatred, radicalization, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in society, as well as to identity politics and the multiple acts of provocation in our public discourses. Over the years, we have managed to create a unique space where people who identify as Jews or Muslims can come together and talk about all the things that they need to talk about, but with both authenticity and respect. These spaces are still, today, too few and far-between. There is too little real dialogue happening – not just any conversation, but a precise and thoroughly thought-out process to engage constructively over the things that divide us most.

Yet, there is progress. This idea of changing the way we relate and communicate with each other is slowly making its way out of the realm of so called “irresponsible dreamers” and “naïve idealists.” And I believe that the MJC and its partner organization, Connecting Actions – which I have the honor of leading – has made a significant contribution towards that progress. Connecting Actions was launched 3 years ago by Ilja Sichrovsky

and myself, to try and help connect those who take action, through inter-belief or intercultural dialogue and cooperation. And in 2018, together with 11 other European local and international NGOs, including the MJC, we have founded the European Institute for Dialogue to share information, networks and resources as well as to show how serious we are about what we do.

One of our main purposes is to insert dialogue into the real economy because it is, in my opinion, the process that adds most value to our society. Knowing how to deal with our differences constructively and solve common problems collectively is not just good for tackling intercommunal tensions or racism. The same cooperative methods are needed to address democratic inefficiencies, economic inequalities as well as environmental challenges.

Those are all things that will not get solved if we don't find better ways to talk to each other. Dialogue is too little valued or trusted. We are all volunteers here, and I would like to thank all those who have accompanied the MJC in the last 10 years, as well as our guests for their trust and companionship. They are a testament to the fact that this idea of connecting communities and helping them collaborate across differences is not in vain.

RAFAEL TYSZBLAT

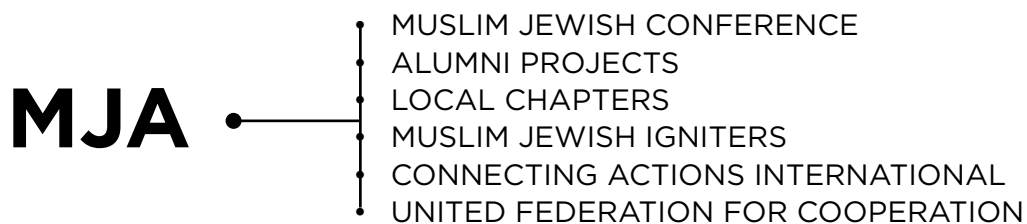
MJC Director of Programming
President of Connecting Actions



Photo by Andreas Danzer

THE VISION OF THE MUSLIM JEWISH ALLIANCE

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Not long ago, our vision of bringing together hundreds of young Muslim and Jewish leaders from around the world to learn from each other, build long-lasting relationships and challenge the long held misconceptions, stereotypes and fears that have plagued our peoples was just that: a vision. Yet through the help of our generous supporters and our dynamic team of volunteers, we are proud to report that this vision has now become a reality for the tenth time.

As the years passed, we have expanded our focus and have become a project incubator, working with our alumni to develop grassroots initiatives in their home communities, building peace, improving interfaith relations, and addressing other issues of mutual concern. Our dual model as a dialogue platform and a project incubator has allowed us to spark transformative change extending far beyond a single week and affecting many more individuals than those who attend our conference.

As we move into our next three years, we continue to identify new ways to mobilize young Jewish and Muslim leaders to maximize our impact in communities around the world. The MJC will continue to host its annual interfaith gathering, strengthening its role as a respected center of expertise and a main platform for Muslim-Jewish international and innovative networks of cooperation and conflict resolution.

We have always been a grassroots organization driven by the next generation of leaders, activists and entrepreneurs. The Muslim Jewish Conference now aims to grow into the Muslim Jewish Alliance (MJA), organizing several conferences and meetings throughout the year for communities and experts, serving as a convener and nexus for other interfaith institutions, creating long lasting impact on the ground, and changing the world as we know it.

THE 10TH ANNUAL MUSLIM JEWISH CONFERENCE

For the past 10 years, the Muslim Jewish Conference has gathered more than 1,500 young change-makers from over 65 countries to engage in dialogue and collaborate in reinforcing Muslim-Jewish relations. Through annual, week-long conferences that provide a safe space for participants to break down barriers and restore trust, our team has provoked meaningful communication on relevant topics including: confronting stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice, inter-faith and intra-faith relations, gender relations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, arts and culture, genocide awareness, and many more.

We are proud to have provoked discussions and interactions of the highest quality, as well as to have incubated some of the most original and impactful interfaith projects. Through its initiative, and now independent partner, Connecting Actions, the MJC also managed to create an ecosystem of interfaith actors to learn from each other and build effective coalitions. With a decade of experience based on a network of deeply committed international volunteers, the Muslim Jewish Conference has become a trusted partner in the field of citizen and interfaith dialogue.

In 2019, the MJC hosted its 10th annual conference with a specific purpose: to gather the main actors of this movement and to

reflect on how far we have come and how far we can go together. The objective was to set up the stage for another successful 10 years with a consolidated team, vision and resources. Exceptionally, this year's attendees were selected even more carefully, handpicking the most active and inspiring allies and experts in the field, as well as alumni of past Muslim Jewish Conferences.

Following the MJC's 10th Anniversary Gala in Vienna, where the extended community and supporters of the MJC were invited to witness our accomplishments of the past decade and celebrate them together, 60 participating entrepreneurs and leaders in their fields held a strategic symposium outside of Vienna for five days. They conceptualized and co-created the infrastructure and ecosystem that will set the right conditions to transform our work from a grassroots initiative into a hub for knowledge and experience, as well as the development of mutual and professionally guided action and impact.

This was a critical chance for the MJC to set the stage for a successful launch of the MJA in 2020. The participants we gathered proved to be invaluable for setting the stage for a successful launch, and at the same time, the participants benefited greatly from the exchange regarding their own respective work and projects.



Two main objectives of the 2019 MJC Conference

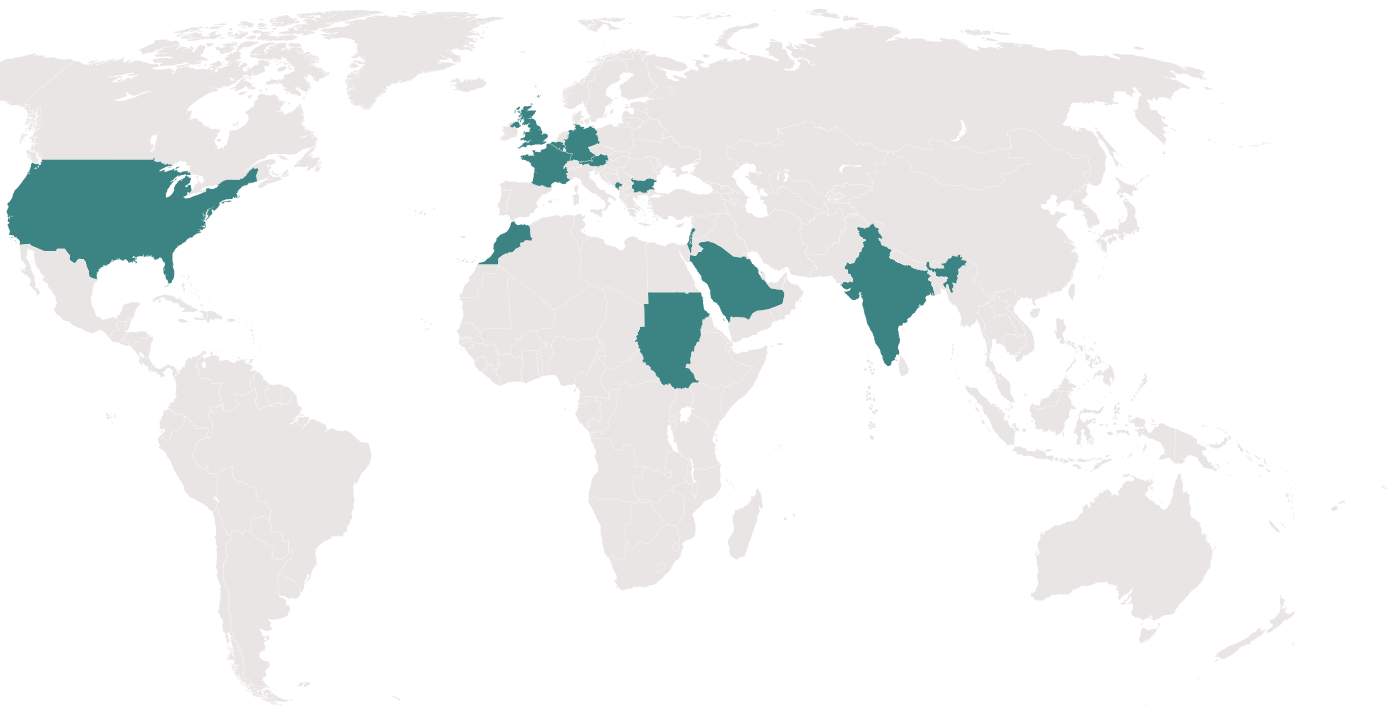
1. Prepare for the launch of the MJA in 2020 by offering connections, funding, manpower and the necessary support.
2. Provide value individually to the participants for their work and projects.

MJA CONNECTIONS



Kicking off the conference with a round of introductions and icebreakers, participants got the chance to introduce themselves and where they came from.

Participants were from a variety of countries including France, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United States, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belgium, Israel, Austria, India and the United Kingdom.





PROJECTS INCUBATED BY OR UNDER DEVELOPMENT WITH THE MJC

During the 5 days of the conference, a number of participants had the opportunity to present their projects and initiatives to the group and respond to questions. Many of those projects were either initiated, shaped or reinforced by their leaders' experience with MJC.

THE INTEGRATION WORKSHOP

ZACHARY LAPIN GALLANT

The idea of the Integration Workshop in Germany came from a conversation between Zachary and a German who didn't know much about Jews. The conversation stemmed from the context of a rise of anti-Semitic attacks in Germany and in Bonn, in particular.

Had it not been for Zachary's experience with the MJC, this project could not have gone on for long. At his first MJC, Zachary was teaching a course to refugees on survival but he felt alone; the MJC presented him with a supportive community.

A big project of the Integration Workshop was to acquire a piece of land of 80,000 square meters to create a safe space for people from different communities to meet, namely refugees, migrants and host communities.

During Zachary's second MJC in 2017, Daniel Pincus, a member of the MJC Board of Directors, donated \$3,000 to kick-start this project. Since then, Zachary has been trying to raise funds and he has relied in large part on the MJC's network.

The European Institute for Dialogue, launched by Connecting Actions, a partner of the MJC, connected Zachary with people internationally to continue promoting this project in Unkel, Germany.

The MJC Network also helped him translate his book, "War, A Children's Book," into four languages. He is currently finalizing a book which gives an extensive account of his journey, including the MJC experience.

“COSMIC CAMELS AND THE LIGHTHOUSE”

SHARON AVRAHAM
AND JUSTIN KORDA

People coming from the MJC network and the ROI network are involved in several collaborative initiatives. The MJC has allowed different worlds of social change to come together. Many of them have been tired of the same people occupying the public discourse and wanted to launch initiatives in a diverse group. Cosmic Camels, an inter-faith camp at Burning Man, is one of them, hosting a desert retreat for people from the Middle East with a focus on group bonding, personal development and group therapy.

Another initiative is “The Lighthouse,” a community house for MENA activists and creators, to examine, research and catalyze regenerative social change within their communities and the region as a whole. It offers a model for a mixed community in the region based on permaculture, community living, environmental awareness and studies, sustainability, art, and cultural heritage. It also offers the opportunity to experience first hand direct democracy, open decision-making processes, group talk and therapy, which are necessary for maintaining social frameworks in diverse and often fragile environments. It is a community space for cross-border relationships around the Middle East, challenging the status quo of the reality in the MENA region and prototyping new approaches and solutions to the pressing issues within local communities in a safe environment. Each member will have a role to play at running “The Lighthouse” and will have the opportunity to develop various professional skills through their work in the project.



MISSION STATEMENT OF THE LIGHTHOUSE:

1. Offer a safe meeting place for people from the MENA region who are seeking to be engaged in social change.
2. Host year-round programs for peace-building, community development, leadership skills and sustainability training.
3. Maintain a living lab for direct democracy and civil participation in mixed environments where residents of The Lighthouse will take part in facilitating activities, managing the place, building facilities and food production.
4. Create long-term impact through an active alumni program, which creates cross sector collaboration and supports alumni through grassroot grants.
5. The MJC, and soon the MJA, will continue to support and accompany the implementation of this project.

THE MJ LABEL

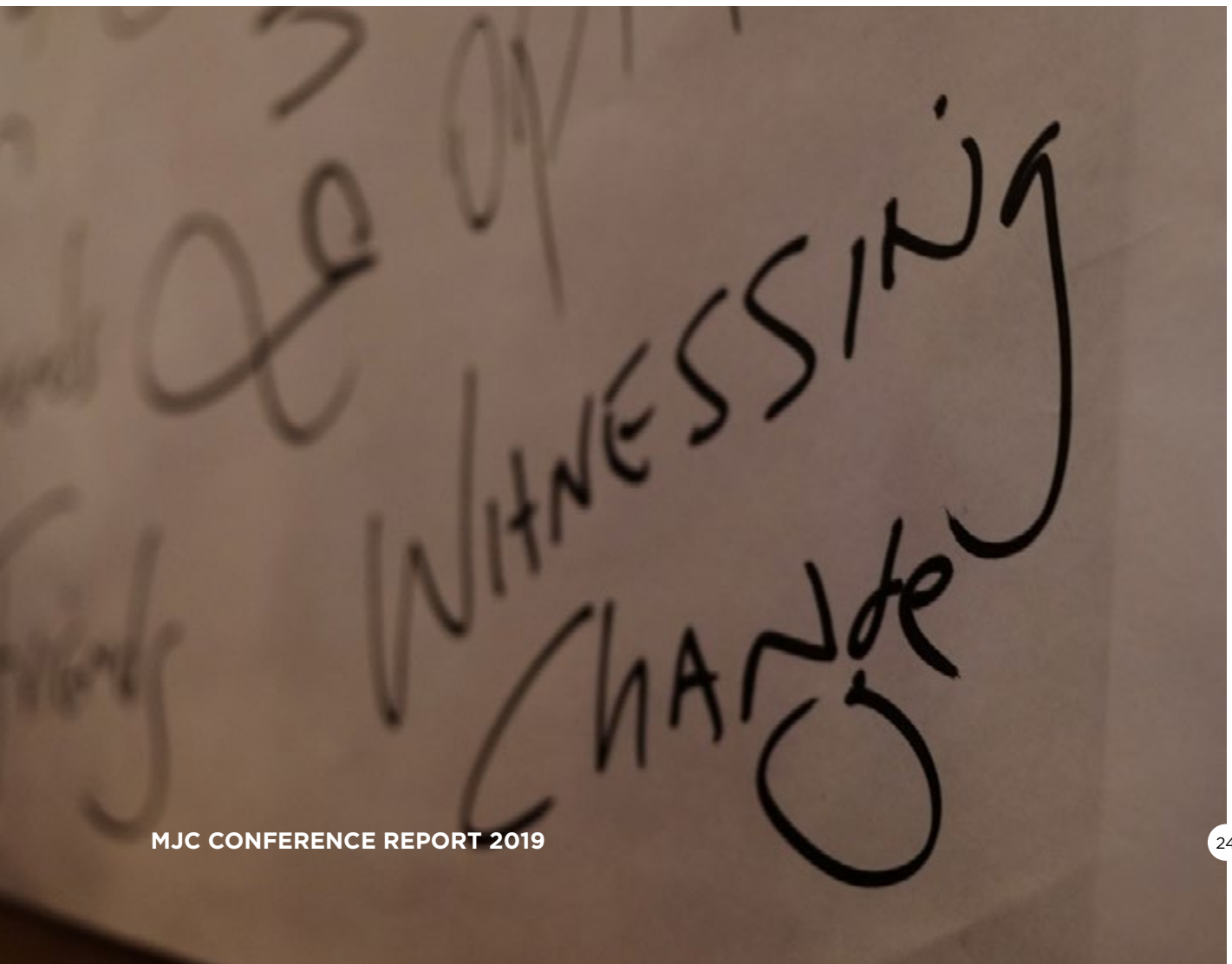
RAMZI SPINOZA

Ram Spinoza, alias DJ Ramzi, whose family originally comes from Syria, defines himself as an Arab Jew. His grandmother led him to discover Arab music. From then on, he started trying to find ways to connect his Jewish and Arab heritage together, so he began training to become a DJ. He met and became good friends with an MC (Master of Ceremony, or a host) from a refugee camp in Palestine, at an event where Muslims and Jews were partying together. Since then, Ram has managed to build a network of MCs across Israel and Palestine.

Ram's goal is to create a cultural revolution in Israel, by ensuring the music aired on radio and TV truly represents the diversity of the country. Only 3 years ago the first person of color became famous in Israel. Ramzi

wants it to be the norm, and to combat racism in Israel through intercultural music. He met Ilja at ROI, and Ilja invited him to the MJC-Connecting Actions Hub in 2018. That helped him increase his network as well as his confidence about the relevance of the project. So Ramzi created a label, with which he intends to produce a new Middle East album with those MCs from Egypt, Jordan, Syria and other MENA countries. The label is supposed to produce idols across the region.

Future collaboration plans between DJ Ramzi and the MJC include organizing a studio session during the next MJC and creating a space for talented Muslims and Jews to produce a music album together. Launching the MJA with a sustainable structure will enable it to incubate and support this transformative project.





THE DIVERSITY NETWORK

ALAN DOSORETZ

The “Diversity Network” is a team of young Muslim, Jewish and Christian professionals who are well-trained in the skills of conflict resolution, who work together dealing with the differences amongst themselves and as a facilitation team conducting training workshops for young adults all around Argentina. The cornerstone of their work is to highlight the assets of intercultural youth dialogue, and add value to other fields where this approach is not yet a part of the equation.

The Diversity Network started in 2017 as an intercultural retreat on conflict resolution for young Abrahamic leaders. This retreat would not have been possible without the existence of the Muslim Jewish Conference as many participants had already been a part of the MJC (directly and indirectly) so the atmosphere of trust was already

established before the first session started. Everyone could connect on a deep level with the other’s necessities and learned new approaches to adopt in cases of discrimination or conflicts between Jewish, Muslim and/or Christian communities in Argentina. In fact, after the retreat concluded, the group decided to remain together as the Diversity Network: a platform to develop coexistence initiatives organized by youth Abrahamic leaders.

Since then, the Diversity Network has been facilitating workshops in intercultural co-operation and conflict resolution skills for Jewish and Muslim community leaders, for public officers, and also for regional dialogues of the Y20. In 2018, a delegation of the Diversity Network participated in the 9th MJC held in France. Based on the feedback received by the participants, “it was the opportunity to both help and learn how to take the interfaith work to the global level.”

THE FAITH IN YOUTH PROJECT WITHIN THE BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN INTERFAITH FORUM

PARIN BEGUM

Blackburn with Darwen is a very diverse but small town, where a third of the population is under the age of 20 and where the politics are sharply divided between minorities and the majority population. It is the center of much of the UK Home Office's attention through « The Building a Stronger Britain Together » (BSBT) programme, which supports society and community organisations working to create stronger communities, standing up to extremism in all its forms and offering vulnerable individuals a positive alternative, regardless of race, faith, sexuality, age and gender.

The goal of the Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum is to increase public knowledge and mutual understanding of different faith communities in Blackburn with Darwen. It also aims to celebrate the different features of each faith, to promote working together on common ground, and to encourage good relations between people of different faiths and no faith.

The MJC helped Parin with this project when she participated in the MJC-CA 2018 event. She was inspired by the process of the conference, especially its project incubator track, to set up her own projects engaging schools and youth to build bridges across communities in Blackburn with Darwen. Such projects include social media engagement, small projects with schools, social events with youth groups, an Open Café, and dialogue activities.

ROPES - REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PEACE, ECONOMICS & SECURITY

MJC 2017 alumnus and journalist Ben Birnbaum started the Regional Organization for Peace, Economics & Security (ROPES), an organization that aims to promote an Arab-Israeli peace accord. ROPES promotes peace and security through economic development and partnership. The group has shared interests in terms of regional cooperation.



THE MJC INCUBATOR

In this conference-long leadership development training module, MJC participants collaborated to develop a social entrepreneurship organizational model that addresses a social challenge near and dear to their hearts and to the MJC mission.

Among the requirements, participants were to create an organizational name, a clear objective, a logo, simple marketing materials, and a short business plan. The business plan included:

- **MISSION STATEMENT:** What are they trying to create or offer?
- **DESCRIPTION:** What service does the organization provide and what social challenge does it address?
- **DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS:** How is the service different from what already exists?
- **MANAGEMENT TEAM:** What are the key roles that need to be filled and how will they contribute to the organization's success?
- **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:** What strengths and weaknesses are inherent in the idea; what challenges, regulatory, social, or otherwise, will one face and how can one overcome these challenges?
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Tying the plan into a summary of no more than one page, which briefly addresses the various components detailed in the remainder of the document.



To aid participants in their task, the MJC team provided a brief lesson at the onset of the conference explaining the different components of the project, and how successful social endeavors are built. At the end of the conference, participants presented their new social entrepreneurship projects to the group. Participants then provided feedback on all projects.

The resulting projects all revolved around the use of new media to strengthen positive interactions in society, as a way to counter the forces of division. They included:

1. A mobile application connecting people from many different identity backgrounds.
2. A social media initiative to display positive narratives and constructive campaigns that counter hate speech.
3. A journal producing positive stories that inspire hope, sharing positive interactions between people from different identity backgrounds.

Beyond this exercise, the MJA will continue to support and accompany the development of those ideas in the months to come.

BUILDING THE MUSLIM JEWISH ALLIANCE VISION AND STRATEGY

On the second and third day of the conference, the group looked toward the future and examined the vision and strategy of the upcoming Muslim Jewish Alliance.

One of the main objectives of this 10th Muslim Jewish Conference was to prepare the ground for a successful launch of the Muslim Jewish Alliance in 2020. On the first day of the conference, Ilja Sichrovsky introduced the general vision of such an Alliance and the group was then invited to examine the vision and strategy. With the intention to learn from our past, the MJC team wanted to examine what it had done right and what it had done wrong. The blunt question asked to participants was: Should the MJC continue for another 10 years? And if so, how?

The MJA was envisioned to be an umbrella organization that oversees and supports a variety of different activities. Participants were divided into smaller groups and asked to come up with ideas to address the following challenges:

- 1. Alumni Engagement**
- 2. Team Management**
- 3. Fundraising**
- 4. Communication and Public Relations**

The ensuing discussions on each of those challenges allowed participants to not only come up with immediate fixes and advice, but also to significantly shape the general MJA vision, such as described by its founder.

Here are the results of those reflections:

1. MJA ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Acknowledging that over 1,500 people from 65 countries have participated in MJC events over the last 10 years, the MJA intends to engage this community to drive its agenda on all levels, including the Muslim Jewish Conferences, Connecting Actions, local chapters, projects, and fundraising.

The group discussed the importance of the name used internally and externally to describe the collection of former participants in MJC events, preferring to use “MJC Community” to the term “family” often used in MJC gatherings, to avoid the feeling of exclusivity and encourage positive emotions of belonging and support. The group was also wary of the use of the term “alumni,” as it denotes a passive, historical association with the MJC organization, rather than viewing the experience as a gateway towards ongoing participation in the MJC Community.

The discussion led the participants to agree on the need to create an engaged group of people among the alumni to be a resource pool for everyone's projects. The goal, according to guests, should be to count on those alumni to advance the MJA mission.



The participants discussed the following components towards delivering sustainable alumni engagement:

NEWSLETTER – The MJA must engage its alumni by producing and distributing a periodical newsletter that contains content about the alumni community and the activities of the MJA. The newsletter is expected to invoke a “fear of missing out” emotion from events and gatherings, which will encourage the alumni to participate in the community more often. The newsletter will keep the community, distributed around the globe, connected to one another, and informed and engaged about the happenings in different corners of the world. The Schusterman’s ROI newsletter was mentioned as an example of a well-organized and engaging newsletter, which includes personal information and projects, as well as those pertaining to the organization. Concretely, an immediate step would be to share congratulations for good news and grief for bad news related to alumni’s personal lives on the newsletter, on the website, or on social media platforms. Each newsletter could feature a person or a project to focus on.

OFFLINE, IN-PERSON, and LOCAL MEETINGS are essential for maintaining the active alumni base. It may be useful to have a broad format for the meetings and a local community manager. The events, online and offline, need to happen on a regular basis, need to be coordinated by accelerated outreach via email, and need to be supported by the MJA website.

MJA WEB PORTAL - Currently, members of the MJC community do communicate with each other on their own and do organize small local meetups, but what is lacking is a central communication channel that would facilitate these processes. The MJA website could include an online portal, where events can be proposed and where participants can pitch project proposals, look for partners or collaborators, or ask for feedback and recommendations. The platform could match assets and needs: an online tool mapping participants in terms of geography, specialty, skills, etc. so that others can look for them and their projects. It was suggested that a chart be created to explain what being an MJC alum entails. Applicants and participants of the MJC conferences should be presented with a set of core values and expectations of participation in the MJA community following the conference.

FACEBOOK - There are MJC Facebook groups that have remained active throughout the years, but are secluded from the main MJC page. The main MJC Facebook page could play a bigger role, especially for sharing information, seeking out partnerships, and organizing events. It would be good to bring the activities in smaller groups into the main group — via communication outreach, informing alumni which group is the home base for the MJA community, and inviting the previous groups to take part. It might be useful to have Facebook groups or Whatsapp groups for individual countries or regions—utilizing online spaces where most former participants are already gathered—to keep local activities alive.

2. FUNDING SOURCES

MJC has been supported by individual's family foundations, including:

- Karl Kahane Foundation, 2010 - 2018
- Daniel Pincus and the Penny and Claudio Pincus Foundation, 2011 - 2019
- Stanley and Marion Bergman Family Trust, 2013 - 2018
- Alwaleed Philanthropies, 2015 - 2017
- Russell Berrie Foundation, 2019
- Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, 2018 - 2019
- Non-recurring local/federal government grants from the MJC host city/country.

In 2019, the MJC alumni community contributed through a crowdfunding campaign.

Going forward, the MJA intends to solicit funding and support from:

- Government and intergovernmental (e.g. EU) grants
- Private foundations
- High net worth individuals
- Friends and family
- MJA Alumni/Community
- Crowdsourcing

The MJA should seek unrestricted, multi-year donations.

The following are some of the reflections shared by guests.

MUSLIM JEWISH FUNDING: Funding from the EU is more successful when there is a consortium in place – thus it would be useful to have the MJA based in Berlin, the MJC based in Vienna and Connecting Actions in Paris.

CONSULTING SERVICES: The MJA may consider offering services to the communities where they operate, and to organizations, governments and municipalities, through consulting or workshops on diversity, inclusion and corporate culture. MJA alumni can serve as bridge-builders on various continents, which can be used as a strong base for issues beyond the traditional MJC scope. For instance, the MJA community within the EU can be used as a sounding board for questions of identity, conflict resolution, social cohesion, diaspora, minority questions, etc. Similar MJA communities would exist in Africa and the Middle East.

DONOR RELATIONSHIP STRATEGY: Each prospective donor is different, and it is important to know the donors' interests and tailor communications accordingly before soliciting funds or other support. It is crucial to approach the donor through engaged conversations, beyond an impersonal email with a pitch. Funders are interested in developing relationships with the grantees; thus, it is important to approach personally, talk to people, and create thorough proposals. Applicants and donors learn a lot through these conversations, even if the application is not successful in the short run.

FRAMING MJA ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT: The MJA should consider its activities in a context of broader societal and global trends and phenomena, not strictly interfaith relations. With this broader vision, the MJA will be poised to successfully solicit support from organizations whose missions may not be specifically focused on interfaith relations and Muslim-Jewish relations in particular. To appeal to a broader base of supporters, the MJA may consider describing itself as: "a systematic response to the fear of the 'Other,' which is being weaponized by extremist groups. The MJA is not only about building bridges across religious boundaries, but also across racial, ethnic and other identity barriers." To be effective in garnering support, financial or otherwise, the MJA must formulate a statement of vision, mission, approach, organization and metrics for internal and external communications.

USES OF FUNDS: Funds need to be secured in order to run the organization — the MJA will have administrative costs as well as local project costs. With the diversity that comes with a broader portfolio of activities, we are better able to attract new donors, depending on the donor preferences and foci.

FUNDRAISING PROCESS: The MJA's fundraising process should be streamlined, with plans in place to pitch projects and approach prospective donors. The timing of the solicitation of funds is essential. Foundations and governments that are required to spend their annual budgets may have remaining funds that need to be spent and allocated, therefore it may be beneficial to approach such donors in August-October as opposed to November-December, when the next year's budget has already been determined.

3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

For the group who discussed PR challenges for the MJA, the main challenge identified was the framing of the MJA. The group perceives the MJA as a lot broader than a platform for developing Muslim-Jewish relations so it was important to identify the core message.

SOCIAL MEDIA: With so many social media platforms and younger generations engaging on different platforms (e.g. TikTok) than older generations (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), it is tempting for the MJA to have a presence on every platform to meet the audience where they are – for example, Instagram is a platform that can combine several of the mentioned goals. However, some platforms are not worth the investment of time and effort, so it is important to hone in on the platforms that are already in place and how to best use them. People respond differently to different types of messaging, but storytelling seems to be a universal outreach tool for engagement. The MJA should have a streamlined social media strategy instead of trying to do everything on all platforms at the same time.

BRAND STRATEGY: The MJA should develop an approach for the communication of its brand and core values throughout the year. For example, the MJA may share stories of solidarity during stressful events (e.g. political crises, environmental disasters, violent extremist attacks) or invest into researching community responses to emphasize positive reactions. The MJA will support like-minded organizations to bring in interest from like-minded communities and to identify potential ambassadors from outside traditional MJA circles. The MJA will have a regular PR output, especially geared towards the alumni – for example, through the newsletter – to share a story every two weeks or so, always maintaining the MJA's core identity and message.

BRAND AMBASSADORS: We will engage people who feel comfortable being ambassadors and will naturally promote the MJA's values.

STORYTELLING: The MJA has many compelling stories to tell. It is important to be able to tell the story (orally, written, pictorially, graphically) in a concise, compelling way from beginning to end.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS: A communications manual has been suggested—a brief guide on how to respond as a community to crisis events. It is also necessary to stay engaged so that we don't respond only to crises – after all, crises often arise from existing problems that grew too large. The MJA should be outspoken on analyzing, identifying and pointing out problems before they turn into crises. The MJA should also be ready to answer tough questions from skeptical or accusatory audiences, or circles that may be suspicious of Muslim-Jewish cooperation. How do we respond to accusations and suspicions? How does the MJA communicate its messaging towards governments to build alliances, promote cooperation, and strengthen participation, including from countries that are generally difficult to engage?



4. TEAM MANAGEMENT

The group first identified the following main challenges linked to team management:

- The large, distributed size of the MJA community (former participants and conference organization teams).
- High turnover rate.
- Centralization of decision-making.
- Lack of clarity for systems and processes for the people outside the core team.
- Lack of documented processes, procedures, guides, communicable how-to guides for conferences and events.

ADVISORY BOARD: Subject matter experts should be engaged in MJA processes on an ongoing basis through an MJA Advisory Board.

FULL-TIME STAFF: There should be a core team (paid) to cover the main tasks and rely on volunteers for peripheral tasks.

MJA INTERNSHIP: The internship program will benefit interns coming from universities or established institutions.

VOLUNTEERS: The MJA should not engage volunteers to handle full-time operations, but will rather hire the people necessary to get the core activities done. Volunteers can help in various fields.

OFFICE SPACE: It is important for the MJA to have a physical workplace for the staff to carry out essential activities.

The overall feedback from participants was that the MJA should develop a strategic plan with clearly defined goals, milestones and benchmarks.

The MJA should not be an event-driven organization, but a mission-driven organization. From that point of view, it makes sense to regroup alumni efforts with local chapter efforts.

The MJA should be a movement and a community; it should be focused on action. The movement should be quasi-constant. In the end, there would not be any difference between alumni and current participants. The MJA should start incrementally, without trying to accomplish everything at once; starting with what works first is a valuable strategy. The MJA needs internal guides for program design, fundraising, communications, alumni, etc. to make the organization more sustainable.



SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Skill building was one of the main values of the 10th Muslim Jewish Conference. 5 workshops were conducted for the group, 3 of which were offered by participants themselves.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION BASICS FOR DIALOGUE PRACTITIONERS (CONNECTING ACTIONS): Through a discussion and presentation, participants learned the basics of conflict dynamics and conflict resolution for improved group engagement.

MASTERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS (PRECISION LEARNING): Participants learned about nervousness management, audience reading, visual aids and time management, among other great tips.

MANAGING DISENGAGEMENT: Participants were presented with the principles of why people drift away from their organizations and how to keep everyone engaged in the long term for the benefit of the mission.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION AS A TOOL TO COMBAT PREJUDICE, ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA (SEEDS OF PEACE): Participants experimented with examples of interfaith education and dialogue through bias awareness and breaking down stereotypes.

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ON “PITCHING THROUGH STORYTELLING”: Participants were invited to explore how to master 20 seconds of storytelling to pitch an idea through the PSI strategy: Problem – Solution – Impact.



FINDING SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE MJA AND ITS NETWORK

Networking was an essential part of the 10th Muslim Jewish Conference. The idea of the Muslim Jewish Alliance is all about creating synergies between its operations and the constellation of organizations, initiatives and actors revolving around it and supporting it. The objective is to build strong and long lasting relationships between the MJA and the initiatives represented by the participants. The need to cultivate dialogue about our work, among practitioners and within each of those organizations was highlighted by many participants.

Through the “Brain Dates” and “Marketplace” set-up, participants were invited to put their “proposals” on a board for everyone to see and they managed to share information and proposals to help advance each other’s projects. More importantly for the MJA, significant time was taken formally and informally to get concrete ideas and action items on how to collaborate. Two questions were asked:

“What can you do for the MJA? What can the MJA do for you?”

The following are some answers from our participants.

Our participant representing **SEEDS OF PEACE** offered to share pools of facilitators and methodologies as well as provide advice on managing Alumni relations. In the future, some SoP participants could come to the next MJCs and could provide facilitation training, new volunteers can also participate in gatherings to share their own experiences.

Our participant from **DEPAUL UNIVERSITY (UNITED STATES)** intends to have the University’s School of Citizen Diplomacy be an institutional platform to feature the work of the MJA, amplifying its message and impact. The school intends to invite resident citizen diplomats to help him illustrate the concept of “Transprofessional Diplomacy” and create connectivity between all 3 tracks of diplomacy. Framing our work in the frame of “Citizen Diplomacy,” as a field that complements first track Diplomacy, would also help us reinforce our credibility. It is an opportunity to think about our work in an academic framework, and to offer researchers information about what we do. It can also be an opportunity to inspire publications about what the MJA does and about interconvictional work in general. Finally, such a partnership would provide an invaluable opportunity to make connections with people who could help support our work.

Our participant from **COEXISTER (FRANCE)** would like to continue to provide more members of Coexister as participants to the Muslim Jewish Conferences. She also suggested the possibility of sharing methods and methodologies on how to run certain activities, including a discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The MJA could provide information on mapping different interfaith initiatives for Coexister’s InterFaith Tour program, and Coexister could provide a space for our workshops and gatherings.

Our participant from **DIALOGUE PERSPECTIVES (GERMANY)** came specifically to find ways to partner with the MJC/MJA. They are offering to assist with E.U. funds and grants as well as to help with finding venues and other logistics in Berlin. In turn, the MJA can help her recruit individuals for her programs.

Our participant from the Gemeinsam Für Vielfalt's **"INTEGRATION WORKSHOP" (GERMANY)** wants the MJA to leverage the exposure his group got for fundraising and profile-raising. He also offered to have his team, specifically the refugees, to help tell the story of how the MJC is responsible for their success. Through the Church of Sweden's "World of Neighbors" program, where he also works (thanks to the MJC network), he is now trying to map European organizations working on refugee integration to help consolidate refugee and migrants integration efforts across Europe. The MJA could help facilitate the process of mapping Jewish, Muslim and Muslim-Jewish organizations helping with migrants and refugee integration, or with social cohesion between people on the move and receiving communities. It would be great to have a Muslim and a Jewish organizer to prepare for the next refugee crisis by coordinating between various NGOs focused on refugee integration. United Religions Initiative, who, like the Integration Workshop, is a part of the European Institute For Dialogue, could also help.

Our participant from **UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE** offered to continue helping with the organization of annual conferences. He also would like the MJA to help him put together a kickstarter campaign to raise money (about \$300,000) for rebuilding Bosnia's synagogue and cultural center.

Our participant from **COSMIC CAMELS (ISRAEL)** wants to organize Muslim-Jewish cultural events, parties, festivals, etc. that can serve as fundraising events for the MJA. The MJA can help him by introducing him to more Muslim and Arab talents and artists.

Our participant from **ROPES** would like to become an MJC facilitator and also develop a local project in Israel. She would like to have access to the MJC alumni network to invite to ROPES's own conferences and initiatives.

Our participant from Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum's **"FAITH IN YOUTH" PROGRAM (UNITED KINGDOM)** can help develop and strengthen the MJC/MJA's online presence. She offered to manage the MJC and MJA social media accounts. She also offered to provide funding sources for the MJA. She would like some resource material for her own projects (shared practices, strategies, facilitation models, etc). It would be particularly useful to have an "MJA guide book" that standardizes all the knowledge and experience of the former 10 conferences.

Our participant from **ERGO** offered to receive MJC alumni in his organization as interns. He also stated his readiness to share personal experiences to support the restructuring of the MJC into the MJA. He can also recommend people from his interfaith network (Roma and Sinti) to be part of future MJC/MJA conferences.

Another participant from **SAUDI ARABIA** with over 5 years of experience in corporate social responsibility and systems development in the Middle East has offered her experience in project management. She will help systematize the MJA by documenting the MJC's established best practices and processes in creating safe spaces, content and event management, recruitment and selection of participants. She will also provide assistance in developing the organizational structure and management of the MJA.

Our participant from **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** offered his knowledge and expertise to the MJA, along with his contacts and personal network around the world. He shared his past experience of hosting study tours to Srebrenica and peace conferences in Israel, meeting organizations and religious leaders, politicians and ambassadors and how it evolved and grew to his involvement with the Muslim Jewish Conference, which he considers serendipitous. He also encouraged the idea of hosting the MJC and MJA activities in Sarajevo as an optimal and neutral location for Jews and Muslims alike to meet and work together.

Finally, our participant from the **UNITED STATES** who is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Germany offered her local connections in Berlin and Potsdam for spaces and universities as a potential host for future MJC's or even an office space for the MJA. She also offered to assist in sharing her ideas in creating and developing the content for future MJC's and offered her professional experience in grant writing and editing.



GUEST EVALUATIONS

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

78%

of participants rated the networking sessions as great or really great.

89%

rated the various participants' presentations as great or really great.

75%

rated the Muslim Jewish Alliance visioning and strategizing sessions as great or really great.

76%

rated the informal time as great or really great.

98%

rated the overall conference as great or really great.

100%

are convinced the Muslim Jewish Alliance is worth building and are ready to contribute to it.

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

"I think that the MJC has achieved the impossible and proven wrong the majority of the world who think that Jews and Muslims are adversaries — in fact, the MJC has proven the exact opposite, that we are much more similar than we are different, and must unite together in the face of discrimination and persecution. The MJA mission to continue this work is ambitious but hugely important, and I am honored and excited to play a role."

"The MJC takes down stereotypes, even small ones, that exist in everyone's mind, by bringing people to sit and talk to each other. The MJA needs to focus on local chapter building, special projects and implementing the MJC methodology in local interfaith dialogue."

"The MJC developed the network of people ready to learn about the other, respect other traditions, share good practices, and break boundaries, while the MJA will continue the same on different levels, and with more concrete initiatives and projects."



“The MJC has contributed greatly in building strong relationships beyond any difference or border and in establishing productive networks. The MJA intends to go beyond an annual retreat, and to make their activities sustainable and broader than the MJC.” “I am incredibly inspired by what the MJC has accomplished in the past ten years: building interfaith dialogue and solidarity between individuals and groups; nurturing professionals, leaders, and scholars; and addressing urgent issues of global importance. As we face increasingly violent anti-Semitism and Islamophobia – as well as other rising injustices across the globe – the work of the MJC/MJA is vital. Interreligious conflict has become, more than ever before, a battlefield for fighting gender inequality, environmental injustice, and racialized violence, and the volunteers and actors of the MJC have proven more than capable of addressing these urgent issues through a professionalized alliance. I believe that the ambitions of the MJA, to create a broad-based and collaborative coalition of citizen diplomats and intercultural initiatives, are achievable, and will attract the attention of high-profile donors across Europe, North America, West Asia, and beyond.”

“I think the MJC has achieved a lot over the past years; it has probably contributed to a lot of grassroots-level work that the MJC is unaware of. I’m proud of this organization and look forward to unlocking the potential of the MJA.” “The MJC has modeled a way of creating community across multiple boundaries of difference in a manner that matters. The MJA will provide an umbrella to coordinate and elevate multiple organizations/efforts that will build on and amplify the work that the MJC began and served to incubate.

“I think the MJC has built a global network of people from different identities who now share a common goal: to break down stereotypes and understand how to do it. The MJA now is the multiplier. After developing the MJC over ten years it’s time to scale up and build on other people’s and other organization’s capacity in their own hometowns. I think the MJA with its experienced founders now have the ability to do that on a grand scale.”

2020 MJC ORGANIZATION & TEAM

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TRUSTEES

Daniel Pincus, Director of the Board
Ilja Sichrovsky, Founder & Co-Director
Mohamed Abubakr, Co-Director
Rafael Tyszblat, Director of Programming
Sami El Mansoury, Head of Facilitation

TEAM

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Mohamed Abubakr, Co-Director
Rafael Tyszblat, Director of Programming
Alan Dosoretz, Director of Operations
Daniel Pincus, Director of the Board
Shaina Hirsch, Head of Applications & Visa
Inbal Drue, Head of Team Travels
Daniel Shaked, Head of Photography
Manuel Molzer, Film Production
Sarah Bencherif, Head of Press
Abd Alraheem Omer, Head of Logistics

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Sami El Mansoury
Alan Dosoretz
Dagmar Kusa
Nassr Eddine Errami

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2017 President Bakir Izetbegovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
2016 President Frank Walter Steinmeier, Germany
2015 President Frank Walter Steinmeier, Germany
2013 President Bakir Izetbegovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
2010 President Heinz Fischer, Austria

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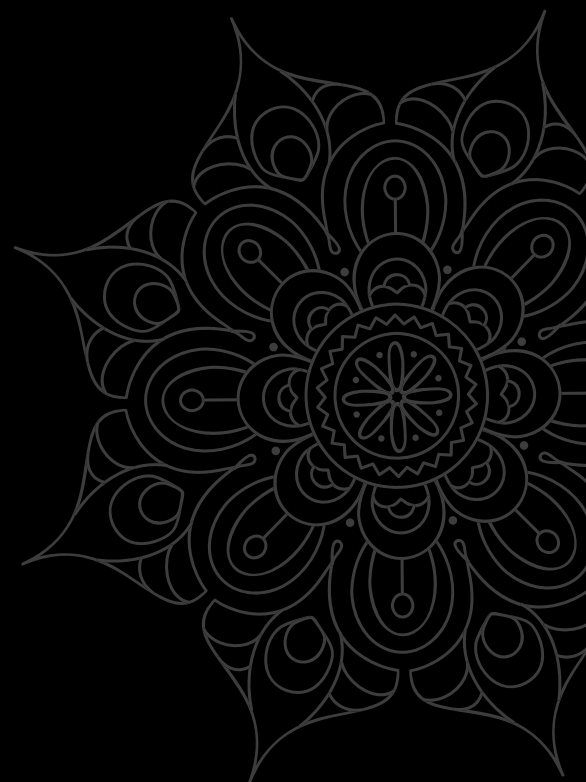
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The Muslim Jewish Conference has been supported in various ways by the following organizations and institutions:

AlWaleed Philanthropies
American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research
Blue Star Strategies
Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts, Slovakia
Bruno Kreisky Forum, Vienna
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EVZ - The Federal Foundation "Memory, Responsibility and Future"
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Irving and Dorothy Rom Charitable Foundation
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Ost Club, Vienna, Austria
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Stanley & Marion Bergman Family Charitable Fund
The Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Bratislava
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