

Eastern | Western Galilee Regional Knowledge Center Newsletter

April 2026

The Regional Knowledge Center – East | West Galilee works to advance the local authorities of the East Galilee cluster by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating relevant information and data. The Center serves as a professional support body for local authorities, organizations, residents, government ministries, and state institutions, and assists in making informed decisions based on research and data.

This issue presents findings from the Northern Creative Ecosystem Study, conducted in partnership with the Beracha Foundation and presented at the Annual Study Day of the Regional Knowledge Center.

Annual Study Day – A Regional Mosaic

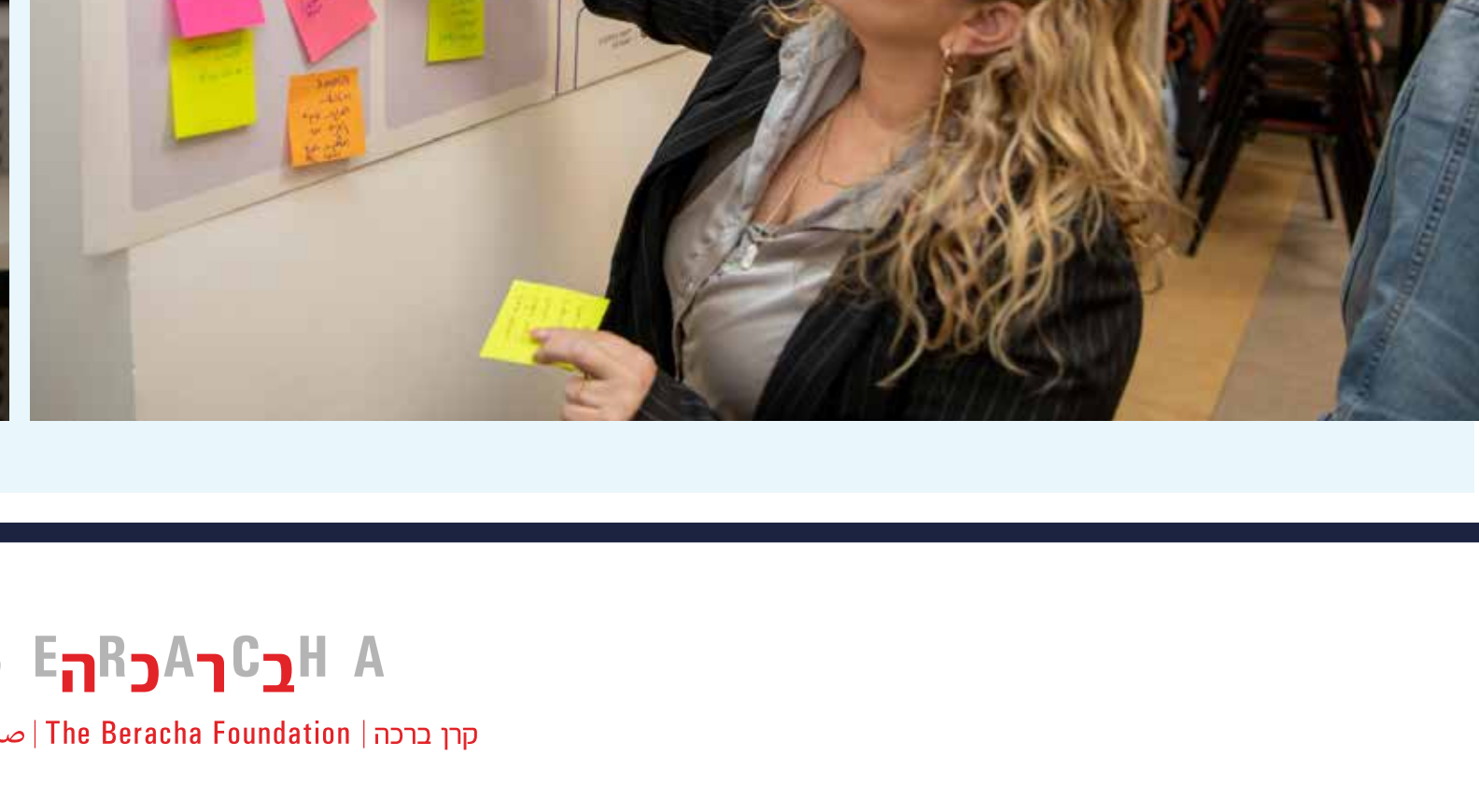
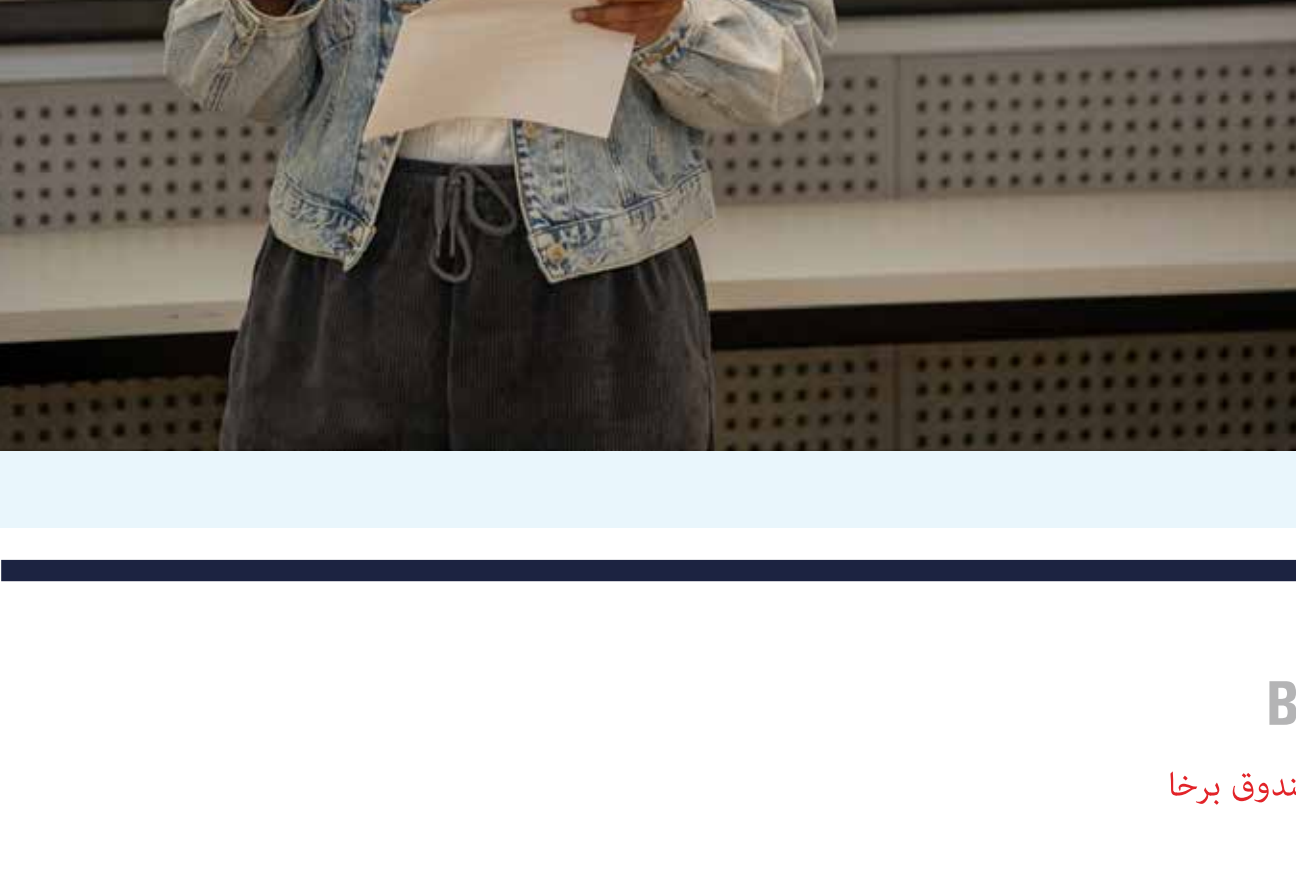
On Thursday, February 26, we gathered at the Rudberg Campus of Tel Hai University of Kiryat Shmona in the Galilee for the Annual Study Day of the Regional Knowledge Center – East Galilee. Nearly two hundred people came from across the region, and together we created exactly the mosaic we had envisioned: colorful, diverse, and full of life.

None of us knew then that just a few days later, we would again be confronted with the very questions of the heart of that day: **What are our sources of strength as a community?**

The renewed outbreak of war with Iran and the massive Hezbollah attacks from Lebanon transformed the discussion on resilience from an academic exercise into something alive and breathing – and reminded us that the work we do here – understanding the region, strengthening the communal fabric, building partnerships – is not merely research. It is infrastructure.

The morning session opened with welcoming remarks and moved into in-depth conversations on personal and community resilience in the Eastern Galilee, led by **Prof. Ayala Cohen**, Head of the Knowledge Center, and **Dr. Keren Or-Chen** from the University of Haifa. Five parallel sessions then took place, presenting the latest research findings across our core areas of study: the Creative-Cultural Ecosystem, Local Economy, Regional Health, Business & Data, and Young Adults in the Galilee.

The Study Day facilitated the creation of new partnerships, the strengthening of existing ones, and underscored the critical importance of regional collaboration of forces across all domains.



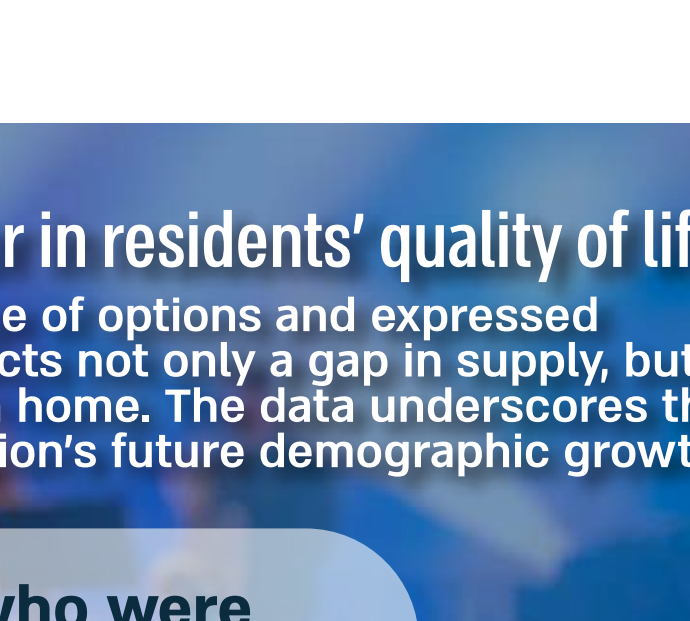
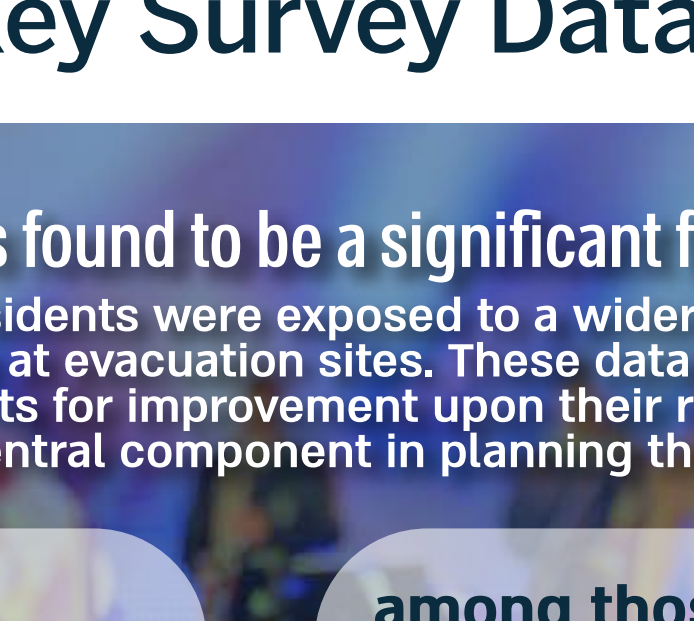
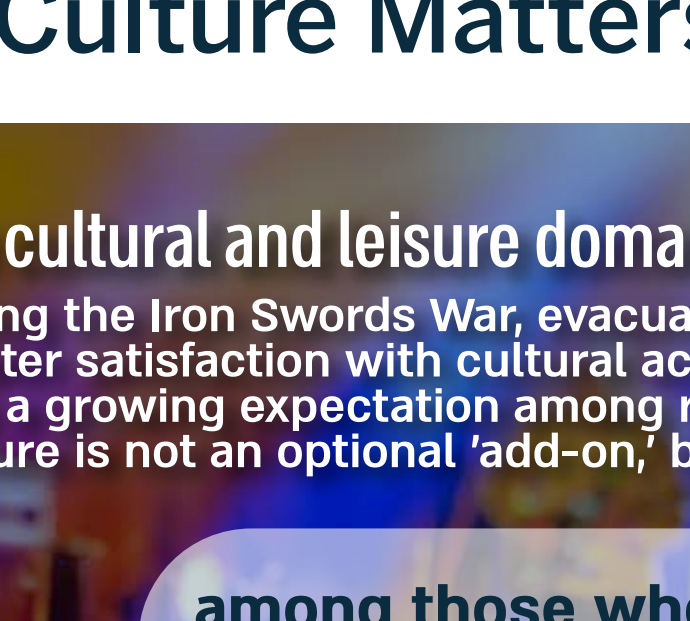
ב ע ר א ח א
 קרן ברעכא | The Beracha Foundation | صندوق برعجا

The Northern Creative Ecosystem



Between July and December 2025, the Beracha Foundation, in partnership with the Regional Knowledge Center – East Galilee at Tel Hai, University of Kiryat Shmona in the Galilee, led a comprehensive cultural mapping study to advance and develop the creative regional ecosystem across the North. The study was conducted in broad partnership with municipal clusters, local authorities, philanthropic foundations, cultural organizations, and artist communities, with the aim of creating a shared regional asset that would serve all partners as a platform for thinking, planning, policy formation, and future action that is responsive and tailored to local needs in the cultural field in the North.

The study spanned the three northern clusters:



46 Authorities including cities, local/regional councils, villages, moshavim, kibbutzim, and communities

The municipal clusters are characterized by a diverse human mosaic and a broad spectrum of national, cultural, and religious identities. The research methodology included data collection, in-depth interviews, and mapping of existing cultural institutions, documentation of cultural and artistic activities, identification of active creators and artists in the region, characterization of creative and cultural spaces, and documentation of cultural events.

Culture Matters: Key Survey Data

The cultural and leisure domain was found to be a significant factor in residents' quality of life¹. During the Iron Swords War, evacuated residents were exposed to a wider range of options and expressed greater satisfaction with cultural activities at evacuation sites. These data reflects not only a gap in supply, but also a growing expectation among residents for improvement upon their return home. The data underscores that culture is not an optional 'add-on', but a central component in planning the region's future demographic growth.

among those who remained in their homes during the war

only **19%** satisfied with cultural and leisure options in their area

among those who were evacuated during their homes during the war

46% satisfied with cultural and leisure options

1. Based on the Resident Status Survey conducted by the Regional Knowledge Center in November 2024.

What factors drive young adults to return to the North, or influence their decision to stay?²

53% of respondents rated cultural and leisure services among the five most impactful factors in their quality of life.

A second key data point highlights that cultural opportunities are among the top factors influencing young people's decisions about whether to remain in or return to the region.

2. Brookdale Institute survey of youth in the North, April 2025

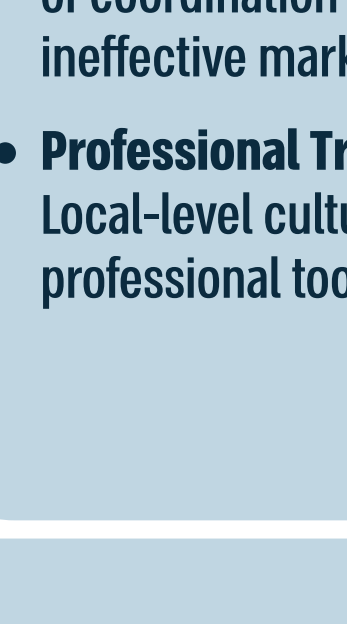
Key Challenges:

The study presents a distinct picture of each cluster and its unique challenges, while also offering a comprehensive regional perspective. The following are the main mapped challenges:



Infrastructure & Physical Space

- Lack of cultural spaces**
A shortage of anchor cultural institutions, performance halls, galleries, and dedicated creative workspaces.
- Abandoned Assets ("White Elephants")**
Existence of public buildings constructed for cultural purposes, but abandoned and underutilized.
- Access Barriers & Costs**
Limited supply and high production costs stemming from geographic distance, alongside an inadequate public transportation system that prevents audiences from reaching events.



Governance, Management & Cultural Institutions

- Absence of a coherent policy**
Most authorities operate without a long-term cultural strategy or defined local policy.
- Budgetary Dependency & Decentralized Management**
Over-reliance on external funding sources, alongside lack of coordination leading to duplicated events and ineffective marketing.
- Professional Training Gaps**
Local-level cultural managers often operate without the professional tools or training required for the role.



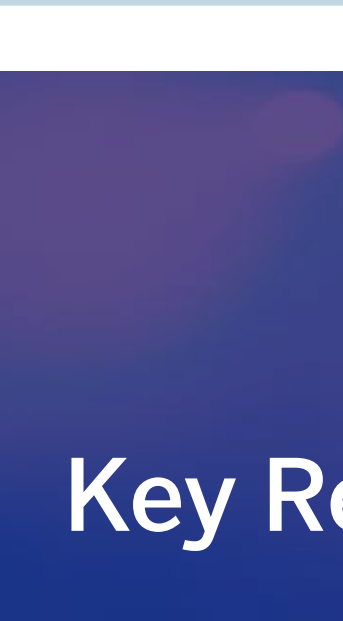
Economy & Sustainability

- Absence of Business Models**
Difficulty in establishing sustainable economic models to ensure the stability of cultural institutions.
- Insufficient support for independent artists**
Shortage of support and development mechanisms for independent artists, especially in times of crisis.
- Culture Perceived as a 'Luxury'**
Treatment of culture as surplus expenditure rather than socio-economic investment, leading to significant budget cuts during wartime.



Human Capital & Professional Development

- Talent Migration**
Continuous migration of talents and creators from the North to the center of the country in search of opportunities, alongside a shortage of qualified teaching personnel in the arts and creative fields.
- Workforce Burnout**
Concentration of authority and high dependency on a small number of 'key figures', leading to overload and burnout.
- Lack of Professional Continuity**
Absence of training tracks, knowledge transfer mechanisms, and employment solutions for graduates of arts programs in the region.



Arab and Druze Society

- Under-Representation & Structural Gaps**
Insufficient institutional response to the cultural domain in Arab and Druze communities, alongside a lack of physical infrastructure.
- Unregulated Cultural Activity**
Existence of extensive cultural activity operating 'below the radar' without recognition or official support.
- Personal security barriers**
Escalating violence and crime serving as a physical and psychological barrier to participation in cultural events, especially during evening hours.

Key Recommendations:

Strengthening local rootedness and local leadership
Develop local human capital to lead cultural entrepreneurship that represents the values of place and strengthens community resilience.

Promoting Diversity & Shared Spaces – The North's Unique Advantage
Strengthen cultural diversity through shared spaces, intercultural programs, and strengthening cultural institutions with diverse audiences.

Developing a Culture Policy Tailored to the North
Plan and advance a strategy for sustainable culture, resource pooling, and regional partnership. Act at the policy level to represent the cultural needs of the North on the national stage. Create and develop permanent mechanisms for managing, coordinating, and advancing the cultural domain through a regional approach – including resource pooling and expanded access – to ensure systemic change and long-term continuity.

Economic, Employment & Tourism Development – Connecting to the North's Unique Assets
Strengthen the cultural domain as a regional economic growth engine through entrepreneurship, connection to the business sector, tourism, and agriculture – by creating accelerators, developing small businesses, and growth grants.

Expanding the Cultural Audience in the Region
Expand opportunities for young people, develop formal and informal education in the cultural domain, and increase access to cultural activities for all ages.

Investment in Physical Infrastructure & Strengthening Institutions
Establish, renew, and upgrade existing institutions; create new creative hubs and multi-use spaces; increase access and equality.

Strengthening independent artists as the cultural infrastructure in the absence of institutions
Support independent artists and artists communities through training and economic tools, activity spaces, and professional networks of artists – especially in areas remote from activity centers.

All recommendations carry added weight with regard to Arab and Druze communities, where gaps are even greater – with particular emphasis on connecting heritage and strengthening community.

Summary

Now, as the North faces complex challenges but also a unique opportunity for growth and prosperity, it is essential to prepare and invest wisely in cultural and artistic infrastructure. The right investment today will not only nurture creativity, professionalism, and community resilience, but will also establish a stable, multi-layered, and sustainable creative ecosystem that will serve the North for many years to come.

This opportunity demands immediate, coordinated, and multidimensional action to ensure that young adults and families choose to live in the North.

Looking ahead, the study emphasizes that positioning culture as strategic infrastructure is not merely a cultural initiative, but a necessary condition for strengthening regional resilience, social cohesion, and sustainable growth. Investing in cultural and artistic infrastructure today can help nurture creativity, expand opportunities for young adults and families, and build a stable, diverse, and vibrant creative ecosystem that will serve northern Israel for years to come.

[See the abstract](#) →

For more information:
Regional Knowledge Center
 meiraat@telhai.ac.il