**KKL-JNF House for Excellence in Ofakim**

KKL-JNF is involved in establishing a KKL-JNF House for Excellence in the Negev city of Ofakim. The 100 square meter facility will be built in the city's youth complex, located between Ofakim's new and veteran neighborhoods.

In addition to building the facility, KKL-JNF is collecting the relevant data towards formulating annual activities and recruiting teaching teams together with the local authority. As well, suitable instructors from among college students, recipients of scholarships in the exact sciences and mathematics, will be integrated into the program. Simultaneously, KKL-JNF is seeking relevant partners, a community that will adopt the project, and raising funds.

The state-of-the art KKL-JNF House for Excellence will serve as a venue for closing the scholastic achievement gap between the central region and the periphery; a dynamic place for learning, broadening horizons and personal empowerment. The project will also provide an enriching dimension to the city at large, with positive ramifications.

**Implementation status:** Planning of construction will begin as soon as the forthcoming agreement with the Ofakim Municipality is signed. Planning will take about three months. Construction will completed in about one and a half to two years.

**Cost of construction** **(preliminary estimate before detailed planning):** Approximately NIS 10 million, according to the estimate received from the KKL-JNF Planning Department.

**About Ofakim**

Ofakim was founded in 1955, and its first residents were immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia followed by waves of immigration from various countries. Today, Ofakim numbers 26,600 residents with the percentage of new immigrants since 1990 comprising 20.2 of the population. The city ranks three out of ten in the socio-economic index and the percentage of 12th grade students who earn matriculation certificates required for university entrance is 34.8.

KKL-JNF has been involved in developing Ofakim with the help of its friends throughout the world. Projects include developing educational institutions and activities for the city's children, creating green areas, and providing mobile bomb shelters in times of emergency. The Ofakim Forest Grove, adjacent to the city's eastern side, was established by KKL-JNF, with leisure and recreation sites, seating areas, picnic sites, playground facilities, cycling trails, and a promenade that serves as a public park and green, urban open space for the city in the desert. KKL-JNF continues to develop the park in the Ofakim Forest Grove.