

JFNA Investment Institute Table Topic: Israel Advocacy in the Economic Arena

Background

The economic arena has grown to be as influential as the political sphere for advocacy. It encompasses two related movements, Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). SRI has grown exponentially over the past decade, with over 1/4th of all professionally managed assets worldwide (over \$22 trillion) now aligned with social values. In Europe, responsible investing is even more widespread, representing nearly 50% of all managed assets. Many European pensions and asset managers are legally required to take into account environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors; and corporations must report on non-financial social concerns including respect for human rights.

The cost of the Jewish community's lack of engagement in the CSR and SRI movements has been immense. The BDS campaign has grown unchecked for years with no communal response. Most of the Jewish community's attention on BDS has been focused on the "tip of the iceberg," including the hearts and minds of young people on campus. But the economic arena represents the invisible rest of the iceberg: actual movement of capital, including investors representing trillions of dollars who have already embraced the BDS campaign's framing.

JLens

JLens explores a Jewish lens on investing and serves as the bridge between the Jewish community and the responsible investing arena. JLens is the only investor organization claiming a seat at the table on behalf of Jewish communal concerns, including Israel advocacy/anti-BDS.

In the CSR field, JLens is the only organization building long-term advocacy relationships with CSR professionals from major companies on behalf of Jewish communal concerns. JLens' relationships with the most influential public US companies enable us to serve as a resource on Israel and the BDS campaign and counter calls for divestment.

In the SRI field, JLens participates in investor convenings and coalitions (over 100 in 2019) to represent the Jewish community and Jewish communal concerns. As responsible investors, we have a seat at the table and are respected in the field, and are able to speak out when Israel gets unfairly targeted.

Jewish Advocacy Strategy

JLens' credibility comes from representing nearly \$70 million in Jewish communal capital, from more than twenty Jewish institutional investors, engaging in Jewish values-based investing through JLens' Jewish Advocacy Strategy. Investors include national Jewish organizations (ex: [Hadassah](#)), Jewish Federations (ex: the [Chicago Federation](#)), Jewish community foundations (ex: [JCF San Diego](#)), and private foundations. JLens is a non-profit and most of our advocacy work is funded by grants.

JLens advocates FOR:

- ❖ **Coexistence** and against Anti-Semitism and hate
- ❖ **Israel** and against BDS and delegitimization
- ❖ **A Just Society** and against exploitation and discrimination
- ❖ **Protecting Our Planet** and against environmental degradation

For more information, please visit jlensnetwork.org or contact Rabbi Jacob Siegel at rabbisiegel@jlensnetwork.org