

Moving Israel Education

Report about Israel Education within the UK
Jewish Community commissioned by
Pears Foundation

Prepared by
Makom: the Israel Education Lab

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Executive Summary

- The foundations of Israel Education in the UK are sound.
- Participation in trips to Israel is higher than in nearly every country in the world.
- Commitment is deep and strong, and Jewish educational and communal leadership in general are intelligent, nuanced, and realistic. The UIJA is an established central body that now defines Israel education as its primary mandate, and other organisations such as the New Israel Fund, The Jewish Agency for Israel, Yachad, Zionist Federation to name but a few have Israel at their heart.

The challenge for Israel Education in the UK is to bring the quality of its vision, reach, and programming up to the level of those who lead, plan and fund them.

We have five key recommendations:

1. Rethinking the Israel-engaged Jew

There is a lack of understanding as to what we are aiming toward. Why does Israel matter to Jewish life? What are our ultimate goals? Israel Education in the UK is an interwoven eco-system, that can be best influenced when driven by a rigorous ongoing sophisticated process of goals articulation.

Establish a think-tank process for leaders to develop their dynamic and evolving definition of the ideal “**graduates**” of Israel Education. This will act as the North Star for all ensuing enterprises, aiming not for a lowest common denominator but for the highest common factor in Israel educational endeavours.

2. Realising Israel Tour

The place of Israel Tour in the eco-system of Israel Education should be recalibrated to acknowledge changes in Israel and in Jewish life for 16 years olds in the UK.

Rather than relating to Israel Tour as the primary hook on which to hang our Israel Education hopes, we recommend the development of a range of interventions, of which the Israel Tour would be a fundamental component. Israel Tour should then act as the anchoring experience for a broad range of Israel education interventions, including a flagship Israel education festival for pre-University students.

3. Reimagining Long-term Immersive Programmes in Israel

The dramatic fall in the numbers of Israel Gap Year participants is extremely serious, bringing with it long-term damage to the future leadership of the community.

We recommend convening an incubator process involving all stakeholders, to seriously and fundamentally alter the nature and structure of Long-term Programmes in Israel. This incubator would include a Summit, where participants would thrash out a radical approach to long-term programmes according to what we call the 4 c's – Convictions, Connections, Content, and Conversation.

4. Embracing the vibrant complexity of Israel

Complexity tends to be approached with trepidation, through the lens of politics in the public Jewish discourse. We would instead recommend *galloping towards complexity with the energy of the arts and public celebrations*.

a. Celebration Recommendation

The inauguration of an Israel Festival, that empowers people and groups in the community to celebrate NGOs in Israel that inspire them and give them hope for **Israel's future**, while reinvigorating the language of Partnership.

b. Arts Recommendation:

The community should work to maximize the multi-dimensional role that Israeli arts can play throughout the community's interactions with Israel, presenting **Israel's complexities in inspiring ways**. Educational opportunities abound, but are as yet to be taken up. To this end we recommend the creation of the position of an Israel Arts and Education Coordinator.

5. Enhancing professional capacity

To enable the adoption and creative implementation of the visions that are articulated as a consequence of Recommendation 1, there is a need for a portfolio for **Israel Education Training and Development**. Teachers and youth and community educators need the professional opportunities to expand their own knowledge, develop their own educational stances, and create and use programming that speaks to the sophisticated ideas and realities of contemporary Israel. This function would coordinate and expand training opportunities, and would also lead the drive for the creation of a GCSE in Israel Studies.

About this report

Background

The UK Israel Education Initiative emerged from an imprecise yet urgent impression that the dynamic complexity of Israel was presenting new educational challenges in the UK Jewish community. The initiative aimed to enrich Jewish life in the UK by cultivating a thoughtful and resilient eco-system that engages with Israel's vibrant complexity.

Mapping Project

In order to assist the British Jewish community, and the vibrant and varied community of organisations within it, to better understand and articulate its own identity and its relationship to Israel, we embarked on a project to understand Israel education designed for British Jews aged 10 to 22 years old. We analysed curricular and programming materials, travel itineraries, existing social research, and conducted interviews and convened focus groups with educators and leaders.

The UK Israel Education Mapping project was initially commissioned by Pears Foundation as an internal strategy document to inform **the Foundation's planning and decision-making**. It was run in partnership with a cross-communal advisory group including representation from UJIA and other key Israel education providers, and was researched and written by Makom, the specialist education unit of the Jewish Agency, in cooperation with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. We discussed our conclusions with JPR senior staff before presenting this document.

Scope and limitations

Israel education takes place through formal lessons in schools, through activities in youth movements, through the home atmosphere, through trips to Israel, through films watched and music heard, through articles read and chance comments dropped. While changes in certain areas and organisations might be more likely to affect the whole, we must never lose sight of the way in which the formal, the informal, and the environmental all form an eco-system of learning and development. Hence we looked for interventions that might impact more than one agency, in different areas of activity.

The information on which this report is based was gathered from those we defined as the **"gatekeepers" of Israel Education in the UK for 10-22 year olds**. Participants were selected in conjunction with the Pears Foundation, members of the project advisory group and JPR. These included head teachers, teachers, lay leaders, student leaders, youth movement leaders, tour guide educators, and senior educators. We worked to gauge where and how their visions of what they believe Israel education should achieve meet their actual purposes and practices. Their words appear in blue boxes throughout this document.

Whilst this strategy carried the limitation of not hearing the voices of students/participants and parents, it had the strength of providing a coherent overview of how the programs (educational, cultural and social) are conceived and constructed. Thus **the picture we gained is of the perceptions of the leaders of the community's Israel education work, not of the "graduates"** - the young people themselves.

We are therefore offering our analyses based on the limited yet significant data gleaned from the gatekeepers, and what information is available in writing (JPR reports, Israel travel statistics and itinerary breakdowns, organization websites, etc). Our research into Israel Education in non-Jewish schools and after-school educational options such as **"Cheder"** was very limited. We would also strongly recommend initiating in the near future a qualitative research project into the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of young British Jews.

We should also say that our analysis, recommendations, and indeed the questions we **asked in the focus groups, are also based on Makom's experience in the field. We have spent the last eight years focusing solely on the creation of thought-models and practical materials for Israel education throughout the world, and have developed an "ear" for Israel education questions. We are what you might call Israel Education "geeks"**. Geeks in the sense of obsession and focus, but also in the sense that we are forever learning, testing our own assumptions, and ever enthusiastic for the future of the field. It is with these Israel Education instincts that we approached this work.

Thanks

We would like to thank the Pears Foundation for their persistence, guidance and support throughout the process of preparing this report. Many thanks to the team at JPR for their extensive logistical assistance, their wisdom, and their intelligent advice. And of course many thanks to the Advisory Group and all participants in our focus groups and interviews – your commitment and generosity were invaluable in the writing of this report.

What is Israel Education?

Israel education aims to positively affect the Jewish identity of learners while respecting their autonomy, such that knowledge of and commitment to Israel becomes a dynamic aspect of their Jewish lives.

Israel education seeks to provide a structured set of opportunities for Jews to engage with the vibrant complexity of Israel and to resolve for themselves as to what this means for their lives. Israel is history, literature, politics, religion, culture, language, economics and society. It draws its strength from the idea that Israel is a core aspect – only one, albeit a multi-dimensional one – of Jewish civilization. It does not depend on Israel’s adversaries for its *raison d’etre*, but rather on the ongoing story of the Jewish People.

In January 2012 Bethamie Horowitz published a working definition of Israel Education gleaned from the North American field.

The purpose of Israel education is to *build a relationship* between the learner and Israel, and to *create a sensibility* that Israel in its varied aspects figures centrally in the *experience of being a Jew...*

Israel education can **be contrasted with... Israel studies...** Israel studies differs from Israel education in that its focus is to deepen and expand knowledge about Israel, remaining dispassionate about the affinity of the learner toward Israel.

Horowitz’ definition is spot on in its recognition that Israel Education aims for a relationship with Israel that is a significant aspect of the learner’s Jewish identity. However the nouns “relationship”, “sensibility”, and “experience” can leave room for those who believe Israel education could flourish with little content or knowledge. The focus of Israel studies, “deepen and expand knowledge about Israel”, should also be a central aim of Israel education. Indeed sustainable “relationships” can rarely be built without knowledge.

How might we square this circle? How can we define an Israel education that certainly wants to develop a relationship and affinity but not at the cost of blissful ignorance? Our work with the Makom Matrix¹ argues for a blend of knowledge (hi-res/lo-res) and connection (inside/outside).

The language of sensibilities and loving relationships refer to the extent to which the learner is brought “inside” the discourse on Israel. If the learners are “inside”, this means

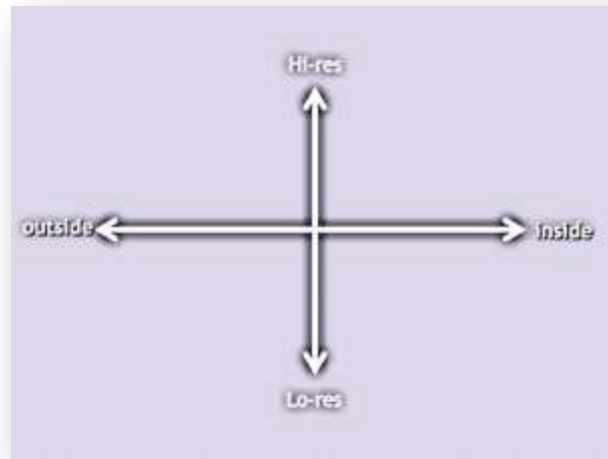
¹ Developed collaboratively by Esti Moskovitz-Kalman, Robbie Gringras and Dr. Alex Sinclair in the Makom Lab

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they identify themselves with Israel, they feel intimate with Israel and regard their relationship with Israel as a key component of their Jewish identity. Israel is, in this sense, **inside them**. **On the opposite end of the scale, someone on the “outside”, would place him/herself on the outside of the Israel discourse, talking of Israelis and Israeli concerns in the third person plural, rather than the first. The Wicked Son’s removal of himself from the Jewish collective at Passover Seder night springs to mind.**

Outside  Inside

The above scale would be sufficient for the educator focused on a content-free “affinity”. In order to allow us to express a careful combination between knowledge **and** connection, we added the axis of high resolution/low resolution:



Low resolution would suggest that green is green. In hi-res, green breaks down into its component parts and becomes blue and yellow. And Hamas. And Environmental Issues. And Egged buses. And the Maccabi Haifa soccer club. **And and...** The higher the resolution, the more knowledge, detail and nuance we are able to access.

Horowitz correctly suggests that academic Israeli studies are concerned only with the vertical axis. We would suggest that Israel Education is concerned with the horizontal axis **together with** the vertical axis. The aim of Israel Education, in this context, is to empower the learner to enter and thrive inside the top-right-hand quadrant that embraces the complexity of both the affective and the cognitive.

Israel Education in the UK – an international perspective

In this sense of Israel Education, the UK is in a relatively good state. Trips to Israel are higher than in nearly every country in the world, the UJIA is an established central body that defines Israel engagement as its primary mandate, several other Israel-centred bodies such as NIF and BICOM thrive, Jewish schools, youth movements, and Israel studies departments populate the landscape, commitment is deep and strong, and there is an almost unanimous understanding that Israel is to be celebrated, defended, and also questioned.

In the language of the [Makom Matrix](#), we might say that the leadership of the UK Jewish community is familiar with and even comfortable in the top right-hand quadrant. Most of the gate-keepers **we spoke to were “inside”**: committed emotionally and ideologically to the well-being of Israel, and **“high-resolution”**: knowledgeable enough to appreciate the complexity of Israel and its relation to Jewish life and to the world.

This is rather unique... In France we spent two years working to find a language to talk about Israel that was acceptable to the mainly-Haredi school system. In the United States in particular we had become used to working against a prevailing understanding of Judaism as a only religion with no peoplehood dimension. Research would suggest that this sensibility is a prerequisite for connection to Israel.

The UK has few of these problems. Educators and Jewish leadership in general are intelligent, nuanced, and realistic. This is a great asset, and places the UK ahead of the game. Yet at the same time there is a growing concern for UK Israel Education in practice, and the community recognizes a need to address this concern. The United Jewish Israel Appeal has reshaped itself to focus on Israel Engagement, the Union of Jewish Students has created a new post of Israel Engagement Officer, the Jewish Leadership Council has stepped into the world of advocacy and public demonstrations, JW3 has begun a consultancy process on their approach to Israel programming, alternative voices such as Yachad and the Task Force on Israeli Arab Citizens have recently emerged, and the Pears Foundation has commissioned this report.

All these responses are proof, yet again, of the British community’s commitment, and awareness of a problem. Yet at first glance we would suggest there is little consensus on how the problem might be defined.

What is the issue?

We would say that in classrooms, in community celebrations, on campuses – **the Israel education that is taking place is not as sophisticated and passionate as those responsible for its design.** The communal will is there, the minds are there, but the policy and the practice are not. If this lack of combined sophistication and passion continues, we risk losing all the considerable gains the Jewish community has achieved up until now.

The challenge for the UK Jewish Community is to bring the quality of its vision, reach, and programming up to the level of those who plan, lead, and fund them.

Data Analysis: concepts, motifs, and milieu

During the research period and throughout the focus groups and interviews, certain motifs, concepts and observations continued to arise. The role of complexity in Israel education, the nature of the relationship between education and advocacy, the place of history in Israel education, and the unique nature of the British Jewish community in character and structure were the four areas we felt crucial to parse. This should allow us a broader base from which to address the final recommendations.

Complexity in Israel Education

- a) The **autonomy of the learner** – the ability of the learner to choose his or her attitude to what is being learned – is both a right and a necessity in 21st century Britain. Research is beginning to reveal that our young people do not, as previously feared, shy away from commitment or value-based behaviour. But **they no longer inherit commitments as smoothly as did previous generations.** Commitments must be earned, attracted, and inspired by encouraging and guiding the **learners' engagement, analysis, and judgment.**
- b) **It is not easy to maintain a complex relationship with Israel:** Motivation must be high, since evaluation and re-evaluation requires effort. In order for Israel to gain a deep and constant place in the identity of the young person, it must address the deepest and most constant issues in their lives. (What is the distinction between solidarity and discrimination? What does one do with power? What are the benefits and disadvantages of collectivity? etc) The deepest and most enduring questions of Jewish identity and of modern life are being played out and expressed in Israel. In this sense, we can be **confident in Israel's ability to "deliver".** But the requirement of **the learner's autonomy** demands that we provide the learners with the space and the **freedom to analyse and to judge for themselves.** This often requires that the educator does not offer answers, but instead helps the learner articulate questions, and draws the learner into further questions. This approach necessarily embraces complexity as a commitment-inducing ingredient. If we remember back to fixing

“So actually I do believe that they are grappling at a very young age with little bits of information that they don't like and that we are not high resolution enough to be able to deal with it and I think that's a real mistake. We're living in a very sophisticated world where actually children at a very young age are asking for nuance or they're talking about nuance. The lack of ability for an educator, whether informal or formal, to be able to listen to nuance is a real damaging concept in my mind.”

bike-punctures, we remember that we first had to sand away the smoothness of the inner tube so that the patch would stick. A coarseness, a gravelly non-smoothness to a subject offers many more aspects to hold on to.

- c) Finally, **complexity is not only an educational theory, it is also the subject-matter itself. Israel is a complex place. This is its nature.** This is the source of its energy and fascination. An Israel Education that neglects the complexity of Israel, that teaches about a simple place with a smooth consistent narrative and nature, is teaching about a place that does not really exist any more, if it ever did.







There is an in-built risk that this approach can create questioning yet detached young people who understand yet do not belong. Here is where pedagogy or andragogy (for adults) comes in to play. The more experiential the learning, the more it is infused with spending quality time in Israel, with the arts, with *mifgashim* (interpersonal encounters with Israeli peers), with creative outlets to engage experimentally, the more the learner becomes an active participant and not an indifferent judge from the sidelines. This may be why this approach to Israel Education is more often associated with informal and non-formal institutions that tend to emphasise the experiential, but it by no means rules out more formal settings.

The relationship between Education and Advocacy

1. **Much “Israel Advocacy” as currently practised is poor Israel Education that also tends to be fairly unsuccessful in helping Israel (those in the community who follow the unpublished research into advocacy efficacy might agree). This has been the case for so long that the word “advocacy” has become toxic to many concerned for Israel Education.** By contrast, in the student world advocates tend to see the open language of education as threatening to **“the campaign”**, as it breaks the seeming uniformity of Jewish opinion. This distrust and rivalry between education and advocacy is unhelpful to all.
2. Most secondary school head teachers are **passionate about “equipping their students for campus life”**, which in their opinion requires a firm grasp of advocacy techniques and information, so as to defend Israel in the world.

“The kids going at 16 to Israel and some people going on gap years, when they get back they are remarkably unable to defend Israel in a campus situation. Their lack of knowledge is phenomenal. I think they are absolutely blown away trying to debate with the Palestinians on campus. We are really letting **them down because I don’t believe we’re giving them the tools they need to adequately take the debate further, able to defend themselves.**”

3. As young adult Jewish life in the UK becomes more and more entwined with non-**Jewish society, and since we wish for Israel to become a component part of a Jew's** identity, so having to explain to a non-**Jew one's attitude to Israel** is becoming at least as frequent as having to explain Shabbat or Kashrut.
4. While the aim of Israel Education should not be to produce people keen to shout at radical pro-Palestinian protesters, an Israel Education that leaves a student incapable of **articulating their relationship to Israel and their opinion of Israel's** actions to those with whom they share limited common ground, would be a poor form of Israel Education. In short, Advocacy and Education, while having different objectives, share the need for a common skill: **Articulation**.
5. **Articulation does not mean regurgitation**. We are highly appreciative of Lee Shulman's taxonomy of learning that advises on six stages in the process from engagement to commitment:

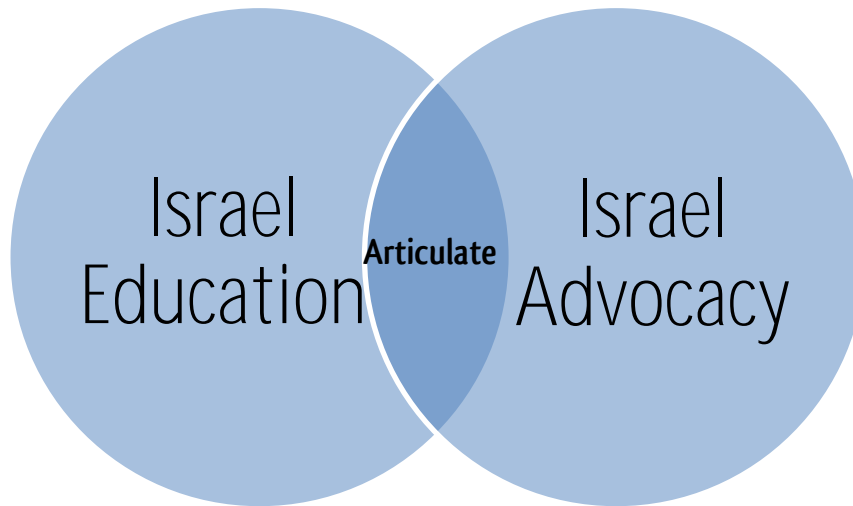
-  Engagement and Motivation
-  Knowledge and Understanding
-  Performance and Action
-  Reflection and Critique
-  Judgment and Design
-  Commitment and Identity

Shulman's suggestion is that "trying out" ideas, what he calls "Performance and Action" is a crucial stage on the way to commitment, but it is only one stage.

Following such "action", the student must then reflect upon the ideas, critique them, work them around in the mind, until reaching a more autonomous commitment at the end of a longer process. And then the cycle starts over again.

6. An ability to **articulate one's connection to Israel, an ability to build one's own authentic answers to "Why Israel?", and an ability to articulate this connection in a public language of the Western world and not just Jewish community in-speak,** should be one of the aims of Israel Education.
7. Articulation is a key aim of Israel Education, and is also a central skill required for Israel Advocacy. It is on this shared value of articulation that Israel Education and Israel Advocacy, whilst very different, share common ground.

"They love Israel but they just can't tell you why!"



We would argue that a Jew who is educated about Israel is a great asset for those working in advocacy. In this sense Israel Education can enrich and grow a “pool” of potential activists, while we remain aware that the autonomy of thought encouraged by Israel Education can work against a “campaign line”, and advocates’ occasional demand for uniformity can clash with the pluralist assumptions behind Israel Education.

“The first questions and conversations we had about Israel, there was always a **standard response, “Israel is wonderful, amazing, I want to move there.”** But when you broke it down and I asked them, **“Why is Israel important to you? Why is it important that we do have one independent democratic Jewish state?”** I had a row of blank faces... **This was a group of older teens... But they had no idea fundamentally about why it was important, it was shocking.”**

An awareness of the common ground between Education and Advocacy can open up doors of understanding and cooperation that have hitherto been lacking.

“Up until this current round of anti-Israeliness in the world I did take the view that Israel Education and Israel Advocacy were two separate things and never the **twain can meet. I don’t think we have that luxury at the moment. In this era I think we who come from the world of education have to be much more responsive to the world of advocacy... in actual fact education and advocacy are much more blended in the eyes of the recipient than they are in ours and we have to go with that.”**

The Sweep of Jewish History

Throughout the mapping process we were struck by how many people bemoaned the **“lack of basic knowledge” of young Jews**. Even if a young person was knowledgeable about a specific issue in Israeli current affairs, they would be incapable of placing this event into any broader Jewish historical context. This lack of deep, content-rich historical consciousness is not a phenomenon restricted to the Jewish community by any means, but without collective memory the Jewish People is dangerously weakened.

“I honestly believe the leveller of the Jewish People and most of the time the gateway into Israel text, ritual, language - all of it is our history, is knowing history and each of us feeling connected to that history and that destiny past and future. I literally just don't think it's being taught anymore.”

While remaining faithful to the Jewish People’s interpretive tradition, an ability to assess the emergence of Zionism as a Jewish response – amongst many others - to the challenge of thriving in the modern world, is crucial. Without such knowledge, perspective on Israel is lost.

It is this view of the sweep of Jewish history that allows us to appreciate that the establishment of the State of Israel was arguably the most significant event in Jewish history in the last 2000 years. This kind of approach does not preclude one judging the event to be positive or negative, but it most certainly ensures that the learner is capable of connecting to visions, aspirations, and intentions.

For this learner, the State of Israel lives in a rich tapestry of the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, The Rock of Israel, The Torah of Israel.

The Locale

Being Jewish in the public sphere

Israel was a fascinating place to contemplate and a thrilling place to visit for the British Jew of the late 20th century. **It was a place where one could feel free to play out one’s** Judaism – that delicate private affair taking place in the home, synagogue, or youth movement – in the public sphere. It was a place where a young Jew could experience for the first time what it felt like to be a member of the majority.

Much has changed. In multi-cultural anti-racist Britain, one's Judaism need not be hidden. The former Chief Rabbi is a broadcasting superstar, Jonathan Freedland openly writes of his Zionism both for the Guardian (of all places!) and the Jewish Chronicle, Maureen Lipman is no longer the only Jewish mother in the media, JW3 is on the BBC and the high street, and more Jews wear kippot in the open than ever before.

This is not to say that anti-Semitism does not exist. However we might, for example, look to the coverage in the Jewish Chronicle of the Lord Ahmed affair, and note that while **Ahmed's comments were revolting, their immediate and wholesale condemnation** from Muslims and government alike was worthy of equal if not greater attention. The nuance arising in the responses to the **David Miliband's Daily Mail's treatment, and the Tottenham Hotspur Y-word furore** was far more fascinating than worrying.

Tens of thousands of Israelis in the UK shake the simple uni-directional narrative of Jews leaving the Diaspora to go to Israel. Many flourish in the UK impacting the notion of the **"Promised Land"**, including a few that achieve national prominence in football and cuisine. In densely populated Jewish neighbourhoods, Israeli restaurants flourish and the shops are filled with Israeli produce, **"stealing some of the thunder"** of being in Israel, even as this also serves to sustain Israel engagement.

The **resulting confidence of UK's young Jews** means that Israel is no longer their first experience of behaving as a Jew in public. **That liberating feeling we know and love, of not needing to keep one's Judaism private, is no longer the sole preserve of the Jewish State, and as a result the impact of a visit to Israel is slightly diminished.**

Israel doesn't make our lives easier

In a community in which a significant majority of UK Jews (74% according to JPR data) are against the expansion of settlements in the West Bank/Judea & Samaria, and in favour of a Palestinian State (JPR: 78%), **the actions of Israel's government over the past decade have made "support for Israel" a more complicated affair.** Expressions of support for Israel now involve cognition as well as emotion. This kind of engagement is, physiologically, more tiring, and can be experienced as draining rather than exhilarating.

"We don't realise how many people are becoming disaffected with Israel because of the political tensions they're up against, particularly Jewish kids who don't go to Jewish schools who are encountering on a daily basis some sort of ill-feeling towards Israel born of the current political climate."

At the same time, as Limmud flourishes and other more liquid and egalitarian understandings of Jewish life gain a hold over aspects of UK Jewish consciousness, so **Israel's perceived resistance to religious pluralism has been challenging. For example, for growing numbers of young people, a visit to the Kotel is no longer the flowing experience of oneness with the Jewish Land, Religion, and People, it once was.**

We offer no solutions or comment on Israeli politics, but feel it would be counter-productive for us to ignore the way that Israel's evolving nature can affect our work.

Proliferation of Jewish schools is a game-changer

The proliferation of Jewish schools has also affected young Jews' minority experience. **Swathes of young Jews are being brought up without the key minority experience of constantly being "the only Jew in the room".** When one's entire school experience has been spent in the company of a majority of other Jews, **then wandering around Israel's Jewish majority is an entertaining extension of a British Jewish experience, rather than something wholly new.**

It would seem that the success of Jewish schools has brought with it two more challenges. **It has, inevitably, turned Israel into an establishment enterprise, rather than an alternative world-view.** The perception (perhaps coloured by nostalgia) is that self-motivation and passion have dipped as a result. It has also developed a cadre of young Jews with little to no experience of interaction with non-Jewish contemporaries. Some comment that this has led to **increasing difficulty in parsing the difference between an anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist barb on the one hand, and the awkwardness of the inquisitive on the other.** It is quite bracing to realise that some students' first ever experience of a conversation about Israel with non-Jews will be with Palestinians, during the "Yachad Day" of Israel tour.

"You're not living in a real world... There is no modern Jewish history being taught properly. And if you are not taught it and you don't have the facts and then you go off and you live with a bunch of other Jewish kids who also don't know the facts then when you go out into the big wide world you are a bit stuffed."

Secondary Schools in particular

The dual requirements of Israel Education as stated at the outset are imparting knowledge and building connection. This latter challenge, that involves enabling the student to develop a positive personal stance regarding Israel, is at best a morally complex task. When such a task is given to a school teacher, who is always going to be seen as a coercive authority-figure, it can become problematic if not counter-productive. Add to this the complications of some schools with non-Jewish (including Muslim) students, and publically-funded schools increasingly under the pressure of non-political clauses, so the **“inside-outside” scale in our matrix becomes challenging**. It is here where we might recognise an unrealised creative potential between the formal and informal wings of the **school system. Formal teaching might focus on the cognitive “hi-res/low-res” scale, and informal educators might concentrate on the more personal affective “inside/outside” scale.**

Every secondary school is driven by its own educational and ideological identity, and as such it is difficult to emerge with many generalizations that address the gamut. It has also **been difficult to gain access to many schools’ Israel Education curriculum**. This is either because such a curriculum does not exist in a structured format, is dispersed amongst many aspects of school life, or because the school was far too busy to share it with us. None of these possibilities necessarily imply poor Israel Education in the schools, but it does suggest that it would be a difficult task to affect Israel Education in schools via individual classroom-based curricula.

Personnel is also a conundrum. Israel is likely to be given classroom time by Limmudei Kodesh (Sacred Studies) teachers, who often refer to Eretz Yisroel rather than the State (Medinat Yisrael). This terminology places Israel firmly into the area of religious studies and removes it – conceptually at least – from explorations of current affairs, Zionism, and modern Jewish history. Indeed some teachers at some schools are ambivalent about the Zionist enterprise in general, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. On the other end of the spectrum, in what seems to be a problem-led approach of one school, staff might find it difficult to find a constructive tension between knowledge versus connection – perhaps preferring to prioritise knowledgeable critique over connection.

“I don’t think that the school DNA cares enough about Israel. I’ve never seen an indication otherwise. Israel will always have a place, it’s not that they’re anti-Israel, G-d forbid, it will have a place, but I’ll be really surprised if schools become the place where the revolution takes place.”

Informal education staff at schools seem to be the address for more adventurous or openly positive engagement with Israel, but they have few opportunities to deliver a structured

learning process, and training opportunities are limited for this cohort whose career opportunities appear to be inherently short-lived.

Even if the teachers were fully on-board, and the informal teachers in particular were long-term and well-trained, the question still remains as to the time and resources invested in Israel Education within the school timetable. [A long-term goal might be to introduce a GCSE in Israel Studies](#). This would lead schools to provide space and resources for such a subject whose demand might be student/parent led. This would be an ambitious project that would certainly be a game-changer. It would ensure that Israel as subject matter is multi-disciplinary drawing on history, social studies, literature, Jewish studies, language etc. While a GCSE might still be troubled by the **“inside-outside” axis, it would certainly solve** curricular challenges and draw in new teachers.

The Year Nine trip to Israel is seen as a universal success, and while numbers are constantly rising (from 162 students in 2003, to 503 students in 2013) they by no means cover the entire year cohort. The challenge remains as to how to engage with those who are left out.

There is clear resistance to a more complex approach to Israel education for those under the age of 16. Whether ideology leads developmental theories, or developmental theory informs pedagogy – either way all but one school were very wary of bringing up potentially contentious issues for students below Year Ten. Potential remains for upping the ante for Sixth Formers, beyond the advocacy Ambassadors Course.

“On Year Nine on our Israel Tour, we generally avoid doing politics, not because I have an issue with politics **but because they’re too young, they don’t get it. To try and do it at that age properly to make it meaningful is going to be very difficult and why do they need it? Please G-d they’ll go back to Israel again, let them engage on that in two years’ time.**”

Youth Movements

Reports of the demise of Youth Movements may well be premature. They are more than simply feeder systems to Israel Tour. While it is true that weekly meetings have all but disappeared (the argument that the proliferation of Jewish schools is to blame must only represent part of the picture, since Australian movements successfully co-exist with high Jewish school attendance), but this may either be a temporary realignment, or an **indication that traditional expectations of what a Youth Movement “does” may have to change.** It may be that the Youth Movements are ahead of the game, and are reimagining their work in accordance with the new generation.

While Hanoar Hatzioni has not yet managed to tackle their Israel Tour attendance, their innovative restructuring has led to a surge in their camps. Bnei Akiva has been extremely creative in their series of home-made educational youtube videos. The Israeli Scouts, energized by the cadre of young pre-army emissaries, is a bubbling phenomenon. The work recently pioneered by the UK Task Force on Issues Relating to Arab Citizens of Israel, whereby the Task Force inputted training and information, and then mentored each individual movement in the creation of their own, ideologically-appropriate educational materials, is a fascinating and impressive model. **The more the movements are invited to input into Israel Tour, as well, the better.**

All movements have a small team of full-time staff, at least one of which is a Jewish Agency emissary from Israel. This is a clear indication of commitment, and ensures that at least one person on staff is pushing the Israel Education agenda.

Recommendations

1. Rethinking the Israel-engaged Jew

Throughout our conversations with the gatekeepers, it became clear to us that there is great appreciation of the complexity of the **“subject matter”, and there is also growing understanding of the changing nature of the “student” in the UK. But there is a glaring lack of coherence on the goal or goals.**

“There doesn't seem to be any core consensus.”

There is an ongoing debate in the Israel Education world as to whether it is better to **identify what “manifestations” of Israel engagement would be the gauge of success** (ie what the student should end up knowing, feeling, and doing), or whether we are better **served by defining what the “motivations” of Israel engagement should be** (ie why the student should be engaged at all). We tend to put the weight on the latter. For example, if a school wishes its students to become active in the political advocacy arena (manifestations), but operates on the assumption that the best way for students to engage with Israel (motivations) is through personal relationships with Israelis, they are establishing a disconnect between motivations and manifestations that tends to lead to confusion and unwanted results.²

If one is looking to influence an interwoven eco-system, one must work to establish a shared set of goals. Otherwise the unspoken and the assumed – which tend to be far less considered – **will guide the community's efforts.** At the same time a shared goal that reaches a lowest common denominator in order to satisfy all is unhelpful to our efforts.

“There was a time when there was a very clear outcome which was Aliyah ... Now that paradigm, not for everybody in the Jewish or Israel education world but a significant proportion, is no longer **the only acceptable outcome... there's confusion as to what ‘engagement’ consists of.**”

² “Why Israel?” Re-Viewing Israel Education Through the Lenses of Civic and Political Engagement, Alex Pomson & Daniel Held, 2012

Individual institutions and the community as a whole should be constantly asking:

- What does the range of Israel-educated Jews ideally look like?
- What should be the motivating factors behind their actions?
- What should these people know, feel, and be able to do?
- How will we know we have succeeded?

Recommendation:

Establish a think-tank process for educational and communal leaders to define and refine their portraits **of the ideal “graduates” of Israel Education**, in an ongoing way. This will act as the North Star for all ensuing enterprises, aiming not for a lowest common denominator but for the highest common factor in Israel educational endeavours. Leaders would study together and debate in order to create their ongoing visions of Israel Education for the Jewish community, and for their individual institutions.

What might this require?

We would recommend the creation of a specially-crafted seminar/tour in Israel that deliberately raises and addresses educational issues arising from the land of cows and bees (the less glamorous aspects of milk and honey!) which will inform the think-tank deliberations. This **seminar should address Israel’s achievements** and shortcomings and its work-in-progress, **covering Gershom Sholem’s three vectors:**

- The Conservative Vector - preserving and maintaining the Good that is
- The Restorative Vector - restoring and returning to the Good that was lost
- The Utopian Vector - innovating and creating a new Good

This Israel seminar/tour would feed into a carefully facilitated process of working groups grappling with the questions and dynamics of the Israel-educated Jew. The process might also **involve two “town hall meetings” per year, opening up the issues to the broader community.**

One could imagine that over a three year period, between 300-500 lay, education and rabbinic **leaders would “graduate” from this cross-communal Israel seminar** and enter into **a structured, visionary conversation about Israel’s place in Jewish life fit for our times.** This kind of seminar has been piloted with the leadership of the Bnei Jeshurun community in Manhattan, and with MiNYanim young leadership program from Eastern Europe, with marked impact.

2. Realising the Israel Experience

Throughout our information-gathering, we could not help but notice a strain of ambivalence about Israel Tour. Almost all talk of Israel Tour was accompanied with a “yes, but...”. **This was baffling to us, since the UK’s success with Israel Tour is an internationally-respected phenomenon.** The ability to consistently recruit such high numbers (since 2004 numbers have never dropped below 50% of the non-Haredi year cohort), and **UJIA’s ground-breaking work** in training both British and Israeli madrichim, led us to expect more enthusiasm on the part of our interlocutors.

“I think the level of connectedness to Israel is very, very high. If you look at travel the figures are incredibly high. It’s absolutely remarkable the level of connectedness but I’m not sure about the depth and I’m not sure about the consistency of engagement.”

Our impression is that while Israel Tour can always be tweaked, the broader issues lie with **outdated expectations**. Israel Tour had once been seen as the magic elixir of Israel engagement. A quick jaunt to Israel, and one is committed for life. Instead the Tour should perhaps have been viewed as the perfectly-shaped object falling into an already super-saturated liquid. Israel Tour no longer falls into the same context.

1. For the past 10 years at least 80% of Israel tour participants had been to Israel before. Israel tour is not their firework-filled first time affair with Israel. Nor does Israel any longer have the frisson of the foreign. In the past few decades Israel has become far more of a modern westernized country, while more and more Israelis are to be found in London itself. Indeed international travel itself is less exotic than once imagined.
2. British Jewish identity is no longer a private matter from which Israel provides liberating release.
3. Politics in general is less respected in this post-ideological world, and Israel continues to be SO political!
4. Jewish day schools have hugely increased the number of young Jews whose minority experience is significantly cushioned. A visit to the land of Jewish majority is therefore less miraculous.
5. Identity is more liquid for much longer these days, such that life-commitments are formed in the mid-to-late twenties, instead of the mid-to-late teens.

“The amount of impact I had on the [Israel Tour participants] was relatively limited because of where they were coming from, what their attitudes were, the fact that they went to Jewish schools already.”

6. However much we love Israel, a cold-eyed researcher would question the “life-changing” potential of a 21-day experience for someone who by the age of 16 will have experienced 5,819 other days...

In raising these points we do not suggest that the Israel Tour is greatly lacking, but that our expectations of its impact be altered, and that its place in the eco-system of Israel Education be recalibrated.

Recommendation

Rather than relating to it as the only hook on which to hang all our Israel Education hopes, we should situate Israel Tour as the anchoring experience for a broad range of Israel education interventions before and after the trip.

Israel Tour as the Anchor, not the entire Ship

We recommend the creation of a system of Israel Education interventions, within which the Israel Tour would be a fundamental component. These interventions would begin at registration, and continue until college. While currently addressing a different age cohort, most of the following interventions would be applicable to Birthright participants, as well.

These interventions might include:

i. *Smart online registration form*

The Smart Israel Tour online registration form would require applicants to respond to a few Israeli music clips, some quotations from Zionist thinkers, or some other educational trigger. This registration form would also ask the applicant to mark their interests. An interest in fashion, politics, music, etc would then enable materials and learning tracks to be suggested to each person on a custom-made basis. Might the Tour itinerary itself be able to offer choices in accordance with the applicants' stated interests?

ii. *Responsive Itinerary*

Pretty much everyone we spoke to, from Israel Experience, UJIA, movement workers, and tour guides who work with Britain, felt that there was a certain rigidity to the tour structure that needed to be shaken up. This perception holds even in the light of the additional Yachad Days, and environmental issues being added to itineraries. Israel Experience organisers find their hands tied by the Movement workers, and Movement workers find their hands tied by Israel Experience.

“The educational mechanisms we’re using are often so lacking in innovation....as the situation becomes more nuanced, you have to move away from those traditional educational techniques in order to add value.”

The logistical challenges of summer tours in Israel are such that many decisions must be fixed many months in advance. By the time that new movement workers have completed their educational vision seminar (Chazon) at the end of the Summer, and been helped to clarify their educational approach, it is too late for them to fundamentally **influence the itinerary of the next summer's Tour.**

We would suggest either shifting the Chazon seminar to early June, or adding a [two-day Israel Tour Seminar for incoming Youth Movement Workers in June](#). The seminar could be guided by UJIA staff, together with, an experienced tour educator and tour planner, for a practical perspective on all logistical issues. This would allow the movements to develop their visions of Israel Tour early enough in the cycle to affect change in itineraries and programmes. We should expect that this process would address all programme components, including sites visited, interactions with Israeli peers, and issues to be explored.

iii. Arts and Culture on Tour and after Tour

Very few Israel tour itineraries engage in any serious way with Israeli arts and **culture. Barring the odd visit to a Sound and Light presentation at David's Tower** and a (very rare) visit to the Israel Museum, any engagement with Israeli music, films, art, literature, dance, theatre, TV is incidental or accidental. We should not be surprised that on their return, students see Israel first and foremost as a hot-bed of politics and not – additionally - a hot-bed of Jewish cultural creativity. If the itinerary were to place more attention on culture, and was coordinated intelligently with arts and culture events in the UK, the impact upon the returnees could be significant.

iv. Post-Tour GrapeVine

GrapeVine is an app for young North American Jews. We would recommend adapting the same technology for the UK, in an **“Israel-oriented” version:**

Similar to Pandora and Netflix, GrapeVine is your lifelong, personal virtual concierge that suggests Jewish opportunities (people, events, articles, content) that you might like based on your interests, friends, life stage, and geography. GrapeVine is adaptive and customizable, allowing you to simply navigate your Jewish journey as you evolve, move, and change.

We would recommend adapting the algorithms to allow the initial default settings to favour educational Israel-tinged events, and make sure the app introduces educational content as well as events into the flow of information sent out to spur Jewish engagement. (We would look to the thinking of [“Nudge” for ideas...](#)) At the

same time, the “Israel GrapeVine” would be used as a way of monitoring the participant’s interests and involvement, and to learn from them.

v. *Additional Interventions*

This “Israel GrapeVine” would also be able to target appropriate candidates for additional interventions such as:

- A high-level leadership track, possibly including a week-long seminar after Israel Tour, that would address both historical consciousness and appreciation of complexity.
- An online Multi-Media Study Course **of Israel’s engaging complexities**, that could be developed with in-built feedback for the independent learner, a la Kahn Academy.
- Internship and volunteer opportunities at Youth Movements, UJIA, JW3, the Israel Embassy, Film Festival, Book Week, BICOM, NIF, Yachad, etc.
- Information feeds on options for Long Term programmes in Israel.
- Volunteer projects, on completion of which, participants receive a subscription to jpost.com or haaretz.com (the participant will choose).
- Discounts for Israel cultural events taking place in the UK.

vi. *Campus Preparation Conference*

A Limmud-type educational festival on Israel, offering many tracks and choices, in late September, aimed at pre-University students. Wisely promoted, this could be adopted both by UJS, by schools, and by Youth Movements as a way to build a **cohort of potential leaders on campus. Aimed at the “floating days” of post-travel, pre-academic year**, this event could rapidly become an annual tradition.

These interventions would aim to:

- a. provide invaluable information about the participants for the Tour planners, and enable the tour to be planned accordingly.
- b. begin to create a **leadership cohort**, and add a seriousness to the Israel Tour experience. This might also allow for identifying potential recruits for Gap Year. A leadership seminar a year after Israel Tour can allow itself to address deeper more challenging issues, in the confidence that additional bonds with Israel will have already been established.
- c. Embed the Israel Tour into a richer Israel-engaged environment and in so doing greatly increase the chances of its ability to **impact on the learners’ identity**.
- d. **Leave less “down-time” between Israel Tour and Gap Year, allowing more opportunities for the promotion of Gap Year.**
- e. **Put the onus on the young Jews to direct their own journey.**

3. Reimagining long-term immersive programmes in Israel

There is wall-to-wall agreement that the dramatic fall in the numbers of Israel Gap Year participants is extremely serious. In 2008 over 20% of Youth Movement Israel Tour participants went on to spend a year in Israel. In 2011 that percentage had dropped to around 4%, and last year climbed back to only 8%. From a high in 2006 of 246 graduates, in 2011 the number was 54.

Any dip in the numbers of year programme participants carries with it long-term damage for the future leadership of the community. Fewer Gap Year returnees means fewer informed/inspired leaders on campus, fewer deeply committed and knowledgeable Youth Movement leaders, fewer high-quality Israel Tour leaders, fewer models to encourage others to go on Gap Year in Israel, and a less-informed community leadership in the future. The damage is exponential.

A straightforward reversal of a key factor behind the drop (ie significantly increased financial subsidies) will not necessarily bring the numbers back up to where they were. The slump opened the door to other options; a door that now cannot be closed. A year in Israel now has to compete with a year in Rwanda, or a three month trip somewhere plus a three month placement somewhere else. A structured year in Israel also has to compete with the attraction of a non-structured year anywhere! Quite apart from the perennial and ever-growing **pressures of 'getting ahead' on the professional ladder by beginning one's studies without delay.**

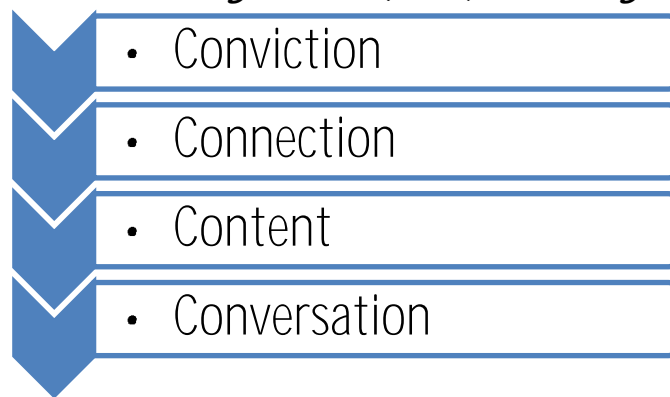
“The whole community model is based on people going on Gap Year, returning to their youth movements, being active in there, leading Israel Tour, then becoming movement workers. The lack of people going on gap year is seriously worrying because **there isn't any other model of activism.**”

The seriousness of the Gap Year crisis is clear to all, and we know that UJIA is already responding to the issue. Our suggestions come to support and reinforce these efforts.

Recommendation:

We recommend convening a strategic incubator to seriously and fundamentally address the purpose, nature, and structure of Long-term Immersion Programmes in Israel for participants and graduates. The incubator process would bring together key stakeholders including Masa Israel Journeys (the umbrella organisation for Long-term Israel Programmes worldwide) to work together on a creative analysis of options. These options would then be fed into a summit meeting that would reject, accept, or refine them into a strategy that might include sponsored experimentations as well as firm plans for implementation. The process should culminate in a radical new approach to Long-term programmes in Israel according to what we call the 4 c's.

Long-term Immersive Israel Programmes (LTIIIP) according to the Four c's



a. *What are our convictions about LTIIIP?*

Why is it important? What does it hope to achieve? How long should it be?

There are some voices, particularly those in Masa, who call for a shortening of the **required time commitment. Ten months is a 'hard sell', they argue.** In order to clarify our convictions we would look beyond marketing and also ask the **educational questions. While most "Immersion Experience" research does agree that less than three months' immersion will not yield the identity "crisis" that leads to transformation, there is less clarity as to the extent to which five or ten months' immersion have greater impact.** (Most research would point to 13 months being the ideal length!) Are 10 months twice as impactful as 5 months? Are five months better than three?

And are we aiming for a transformational "identity crisis", or just an increase in knowledge? If so, are three one-month summer seminars in Israel over three years as effective? How might a three-month programme in Israel and then a three-month Jewish service-learning programme in India with other Israelis (like Project Ten and Tevel b'Tzedek's new fellowship programme) fit into the scheme of things?

b. How can LTIP connect with the young people?

Who are we trying to connect with, and how? Given what we are learning about **young people in the “Why Generation”, are occasional choices during the year enough to satisfy the young adult’s expectation of interactive control?** Can a long-term programme be designed by the participants themselves, instead of demanding the participant fit into a structure decided for them? Can participants swap between programmes to gain alternative ideological perspectives? Can participants build their own programmes? What if the prospective participant could build a programme from a set of modules, and then recruit the minimum number of people to make the program viable? How structured and consistent are the opportunities for meeting and spending time with Israelis while in Israel?

Is there more that the surrounding eco-system can do to recruit for LTIP? Might informal educators in schools and youth movements be trained to build a personal portfolio for every kid that goes on Israel Tour? Does every Israel Tour include a visit from/with people on LTIP? What would be the engagement opportunities once graduates are back in the UK, to enable them to find their place in the community?

c. What Content is crucial?

Should there be a “core curriculum” for all those on long-term programmes? And if so, what should it contain? Here it would seem is the ideal opportunity for the **community to ensure that “knowledge levels” are raised and that returning LTIP graduates own a historical context to Israel and the Zionist enterprise.** A course on **something like “Israel in the Sweep of Jewish History” would seem to be a must.**

d. What is the required conversation, pedagogy and structure?

Is the balance between pedagogies calibrated across the entire year? How much time is spent in classroom-based learning? In service-learning? In interactions with Israelis? In creative workshops? On the road? On their feet? Might there be a need **to develop a travel “app” that combines a GPS, social media, and educational and cultural materials to enable the participants to direct their own Israel journey?**

4. Embracing the vibrant complexity of Israel in the UK

Complexity tends to be approached with trepidation through the lens of politics. We would instead recommend *galloping towards complexity with the energy of public celebrations and the arts*.

a. Celebration

Public celebrations of Israel tend towards the monolithic, often because while named as celebrations, they are conceived as demonstrations, and because of the British traditions of the pageant. **But what if Israel's complexity, and UK Jewry's complex relationship with Israel, were to be itself the cause for celebration?**

Significant resources over past decade have been invested in public cross-communal celebrations of and demonstrations of support for Israel. While left excited at the **community's ability to pull** off such events as We Believe in Israel and Closer to Israel Parade, even the die-hards were left commenting that while attendance was broad and multi-faceted, nevertheless British **Jewry's passionate, pluralistic, and complex** relationships with Israel were not given expression at these events.

We suggest that the Jewish community of Britain is in need of a new structure for their cross-communal Israel celebrations. A structure that more accurately represents the range of attitudes to Israel in the community, a structure that maximizes and stretches the educational impact of the event beyond one climactic day, and a structure that feels authentic and locally-owned, and most importantly, that turns complexity and multi-vocality into a strength to be enjoyed and celebrated.

"You're asking me about some of the challenges that we face as a school in terms of our Israel Education and for me, one of the challenges is how do we do the celebration in a communal way that is also reflecting the challenges of that relationship? And the community as a whole I don't feel does that in a public way."

Recommendation: Israel Festival

A year-long process that has institutions throughout the country identifying the organisation (NGO or Governmental body) in Israel that works towards healing an issue that they feel is most pressing; **connecting and committing to the inspirational people and organisations that gives them hope for the future of Israel**. Bnei Akiva might choose **B'Maagalei Tzedek**, that works for social justice through Jewish values, and JW3 might choose **Festival B'Shekel**, the non-profit that produces music festivals in the periphery of Israel while empowering local youth.

Some may choose the IDF, some might commit to Women in Black (who protest the occupation), while others might connect to Women in Green (who support settlement in Judea and Samaria).

Throughout the year each institution is encouraged and supported to develop its **relationship with their “Hope for Israel”**. **This might involve educational events, fundraisers, volunteering visits, home hospitality, etc.** This process has the potential to reimagine the entire discourse around Partnerships with Israel, **fusing Partnership with Tikkun Olam. It may well be the way in which the energy of social justice might join forces with Israel engagement.**

The cross-communal Israel celebration in May/June would be the Israel Festival, which could take the form of a parade or a party, where everyone promotes and celebrates the organisation that gives them hope for the future of Israel. **It would be a celebration of unity in diversity – of the British Jewish community, of the community’s relationship with Israel, and of Israel itself.**

b. The Arts

Complexity can be celebrated and enjoyed, when, for example, a new Israeli pop song turns out to be taken from the Shabbat prayer book, or when a book is written about religious settlers whose backgrounds are as varied as secular kibbutzim and Wall Street, or when a TV series deals with two gay men adopting a child in Tel Aviv and arguing about the Brit Milah.

The arts of Israel can offer an alternative experience of complexity that is enjoyable, multi-dimensional, open to individual preference, and often inspiring. We should aim to enable young British Jews to become *gourmands* of Israeli culture: with an appetite and a taste for Israeli arts. For those lacking Hebrew this is far more difficult to achieve without mediation.

Recommendation:

We would recommend the creation of a role or place or strategy of **Israel Arts and Education Coordination (IAEC)**.

What would IAEC do?

Broaden the reach

The IAEC would introduce up-to-date knowledge of what is hot and spicy in Israeli arts, and encourage organisations to take more courageous and culturally rich choices in their arts programming.

Incorporate the educator

Israeli arts are a concise and energising source of Israel Education. But they need to be made accessible for meaning. Literal and cultural translations would be provided by IAEC, together with additional information and expert interpretations. IAEC would ensure that an encounter with Israeli arts be accompanied by an educational **envelope that both enhances the experience of the art itself (you'd be amazed how much more enjoyable it is to listen to an Israeli band if you understand the lyrics!)**, and leverages the energy of the arts experience into educational impact.

Maximise what there is

The Jewish Book Week and the Jewish Film Festival are two excellent institutions whose Israel fare is rich and varied. But their reach (while gradually increasing over the years) is still limited. IAEC would work with these institutions to – for example – bring appropriate films to schools, or build educational programmes around appropriate books that might be read in schools or campuses. The Film Festival in particular is run by a thoughtful director who understands the power and sensitivity of Israeli film, and her reach into educational institutions has only been limited by resources and capacity. Through the LJCC, JW3, ZF, Israeli Film Festival and others, what Israeli arts events there are can be shared, publicised, and spread beyond their individual organisations, including through the Israel GrapeVine.

Build international partnerships to increase the yield

Israeli artists and Israeli arts can stop in on the UK on their way to or from North America. They can add in the UK to their European tours. IAEC would plug in to **international “circuits” and in so doing increase the choices and bring down the costs of Israeli arts.**

Act as the advocate for richer Israeli Arts encounters throughout the community

IAEC would advise and encourage Israel Tours and Long-term Israel programmes to incorporate more and more interesting Israeli culture into their programs. It would act as an adviser/encourager to all venues to broaden their reach and extend their options for Israeli arts. It would also work with non-Jewish venues that can draw Jewish audiences on their Israeli cultural choices.

Work closely and carefully with Israeli ex-pats in Britain

It has been noted throughout the Jewish world that culture is the key portal for ex-pat Israelis to connect with their local Jewish community. In this sense Israeli arts are an excellent opportunity to reach out in the way that the Israel Center of San Francisco so successfully did in the 90s. The more crucial and sensitive work of IAEC **will be to make sure that the “ownership” of Israeli arts is not transferred to the Israelis, but instead shared and made accessible to all.**

5. Enhancing professional capacity

It is a tall order to expect Jewish educators to be cutting-edge in the way they teach about Israel if they themselves are not constantly learning about and engaging professionally **with Israel, in Israel. Given the cost of travel, and the limitation of educators’ salaries, it is little wonder that this is not yet happening across the system.**

There are opportunities for Israel Education training that are being offered mostly by UJIA (**Israel Tour Leaders’ Seminar, Chazon Youth Movement Workers’ Seminar, School Partnerships Senior Educators’ Seminar**, etc) and some ad hoc courses by the Task Force, Yachad, and Youth Movements. These opportunities are crucial, need to be expanded, and would hugely benefit from being guided according to an overarching educational purpose.

Recommendation

We recommend the creation of a strategy and role of **Israel Education Training and Development (IETD)**. This function would coordinate and expand training opportunities, and strive to ensure that every Jewish educator has a professional development seminar in Israel at least once every seven years.

In the short to medium term, the IETD would be concerned with training and development in the UK, for example:

- Growing out of the Vision Statements emerging from Recommendation 1, IETD would create profiles of what educators would need to know and be able to do to run the programmes that are recommended by the Think Tank. These profiles would shape the entire training strategy.
- IETD would be constantly searching for cutting-edge Israel educational programming, curricula and resources from around the world, and disseminating them to appropriate partners. IETD would also commission materials and training according to needs identified in the field.
- While student leadership will be fully involved in the Think-Tank of Recommendation 1., there is room for IETD to **work with UJS’ current Israel**

Education initiatives begun in partnership with UJIA and the Jewish Agency. As their efforts begin to spread across campuses, can local student leaders be supported by a Community of Practice?

- Informal educators in schools and Youth Movements could be offered training on implementation of the Israel Tour envelope course and the Gap Year rethink, so as to incorporate policies and programmes adopted in Recommendations 2. and 3.
- IETD could create and maintain Communities of Practice for leaders of Year Nine Israel Tours. Are there skills and information that can be usefully shared between the schools? Is there a structure whereby the Year Nine Israel Tour people can share **notes with those who implement the 16 year olds' Israel Tour**?
- Israel Education training for Hebrew teachers could be offered so as to maximize the Israel teaching potential in their classes and in the PAJES curriculum. Schools **see Hebrew teaching as the natural "address" for Israel education. Great** expectations are attached to the new Hebrew language curriculum being developed at PAJES together with The Centre for Educational Technology in Israel. The online multi-media curriculum leaves much room for the teacher to call attention to life in Israel while teaching the language.
- IETD could create and maintain Communities of Practice for Primary school teachers. There is an appetite and capacity for cross-curricular Israel education work in Primary schools, and a general belief that this would be the optimum way to develop and share ideas.

"We've got to allow people to learn Hebrew to a higher level and encourage people to experience that, not just as a Youth Movement game where you turn words into Hebrew."

Conclusion

We present these recommendations confident that their implementation can bring to the UK Jewish Community a substantial increase in the quality, quantity and variety of Israel Education, placing Britain at the cutting-edge of the field. **Britain's in-built** advantages of geographical proximity to Israel, intelligent leadership, and communal structures that are both solid and open to variety offer great hope for the future of Israel Education.

Yonatan Ariel and Robbie Gringras
October 2013, Cheshvan 5774

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Focus Groups and Interviews

All together 123 people were consulted in this process. This included private interviews with 32 individuals (6 in Israel). 12 separate focus groups were conducted. These included:

	Number of participants
Campus leaders	7
School Policy Makers	13
Community professionals	6
UJIA lay leaders	6
General lay leaders	6
Teachers (2 focus groups)	13
Professional educators (2 focus groups)	18
Youth movement activists	8
Israeli educators	3
Tour madrichim	8

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Moving Israel Education

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Judith Williams
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Alice Wood
Francesca Woolfe
Elizabeth Wulwick
Rabbi Dr Rafi Zarum
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* An asterisk indicates membership of the Advisory Group

Discussion points at focus groups:

Introduce the idea that education is an endeavour to affect the learners' cognition, emotion, and action: Head, Heart, and Hands.

Introduce the Makom Matrix

- Referring to Head/Heart/Hands, where would you say are the key successes in Israel education in your context? [what do you mean by Israel education, what do you mean by success?]
- What would you say are the factors behind this success?
- Where would you say are the key obstacles to success in Israel education in your context? How do you imagine these might be overcome?
- In teaching Israel, are there certain ideas or themes that should be prescribed, preferred, permitted, prohibited?
- How would you rate the quality of Israel education going on in the UK Jewish community [in your particular context and beyond it]? How could it be improved?

Pears Foundation

Pears Foundation is a British family foundation rooted in Jewish values. Its work is concerned with positive identity and citizenship. The **Foundation's approach** is based on research and inspired by the urge to ask questions and it has initiated a number of strategic research projects within the British Jewish community and beyond:

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Makom: the Israel Education Lab

Makom transforms “Hugging and Wrestling with Israel and the Jewish People” into innovative, honest, and practical education.

Makom aims to push the boundaries of what Israel can be for the Jewish People and what the Jewish People can be for Israel. Every year, through incubating ideas, training leaders, and creating materials, we **build the bridge between thinking and doing**.

We embrace the achievements, mistakes and challenges of Israel and the Jewish People, and transform them into innovative, honest and practical education. We are passionate but non-partisan, and proudly serve the Jewish Agency and its strategic partners throughout the world.

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