

AN APPROACH TO ISRAEL PROGRAMS FOR FEDERATIONS

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Federations should adopt as a strategic goal the maximum participation of their members in high-quality Israel programs as a means of strengthening Israel-Diaspora relations and increasing Jewish identity and commitment. As the central communal address, federations are uniquely suited to assume the responsibility of marketing, coordinating, and developing Israel programs. Each federation should create an Israel Programs Department with the appropriate staff, lay leadership, budget, and authority to implement that responsibility.

Federations should adopt as a *strategic goal* the maximum participation by their members of all ages, and especially their youth, in quality Israel programs. Doing so will bring far-reaching benefits, both immediate and long range, and will powerfully serve the interests and needs of Diaspora Jewry. As does Jewish education, Israel programs cut across ideological lines, representing a general, community-wide interest that will continue to gain further importance.

Precisely in order to protect and advance this interest effectively, a basic change in the Diaspora attitude to Israel programs is needed. Israel programs are not something external to Diaspora communities; that is, some additional service that they perform in order to help Israel or even a service that they receive from Israel (although there is truth in both). Until Diaspora communities can accept the proposition that Israel programs are a precious Jewish resource of which they are the joint *owners*, together with Israel, they will not succeed in exploiting, promoting, and benefiting from them properly.

As joint owners, or parents of Israel programs, Diaspora Jewry must take the appropriate steps to nurture and develop them, making them as much a part of normal Jewish living as a Passover seder or a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

In fact, Israel programs are even more than a critical resource: they are the embryo of the Israel-Diaspora relations of the future. The extent to which the maintenance of Israel-Diaspora relations is crucial to the future of the Jewish people provides a measure of the importance of Israel programs today. According to recent research, the rate of participation in Israel programs is far below potential and can be very substantially increased. In fact, a major study commissioned by the Israel Experience Subcommittee of the Jewish Agency's Jewish Education Committee concluded that such participation could be doubled (Hochstein, 1986).

ISRAEL-DIASPORA RELATIONSHIP

The link between Israel and Diaspora Jewry is a critical component of Jewish life today. In fact, Israel and the Diaspora have grown profoundly dependent on one another in many ways and have a paramount interest in each other's well-being. Any erosion of the link weakens both sides and threatens Jewish survival. Any reinforcement of the link enhances creative Jewish continuity, both in the Diaspora and in Israel.

The generation that witnessed the Holocaust and the founding of Israel has a deep-rooted commitment to the State of Israel. The experience of the 1967 War also

had a powerful impact on an entire Jewish generation. However, the events of recent years have not reinforced the Israel-Diaspora link, but rather have exposed strains in the relationship. There is particular cause for concern regarding the younger Diaspora generation, whose attitudes to the Israel-Diaspora link are the least consolidated and the most vulnerable to the negative stereotyping of Israel in the mass media and on campuses. The younger Israeli generation is an equal source of concern: their sense of Jewish peoplehood and mutual responsibility appears severely attenuated (religious youth excepted) and in need of reinforcement.

A steady decline in pro-Israel sentiment among American Jews along generational lines has been documented in a recent study (Cohen, 1989). Although a strong Israel commitment characterized almost three-fifths of respondents over 65, less than half of those aged 55-64, over two-fifths of those 45-54, and under two-fifths of those 35-44, only a quarter of those under 35 felt similarly. The data do not permit firm conclusions about the reasons for this generational slide in Israel commitment. However, Cohen offers some useful speculation. Two important and relevant differences between younger and older Jews are that the latter are more likely to have visited Israel and to be active in Jewish organizations. May we infer from this finding that as today's younger generation grows older, they will "straighten out" and follow the pattern of their elders? Surely some will, but it seems overly optimistic and hazardous to assume that all or most will, without various initiatives and extraordinary efforts on the community's part.

Cohen draws similar conclusions. He shows that political differences over Israel's policies only explain in part the gradual distancing of the younger generation, together with a growing feeling of successful integration and freedom from anti-Semitism in the United States. More important fac-

tors in causing the long-term erosion in commitment are the sheer passage of time and the growing chronological distance from the dramatic events surrounding Israel's birth. These factors are, of course, much more alarming because they are so much more difficult to counteract.

Israel visits are a crucial factor in reversing this gradual distancing. Cohen concludes, "The policy implication is quite clear. In light of the decline in pro-Israel sentiment among young people, in light of the probable powerful impact of Israel travel upon those sentiments, policies and programs to encourage travel of younger American Jews to Israel should occupy a prominent place on the Jewish communal agenda" (Cohen, 1989, p. 56).

TWO FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES

This situation raises at least two strategic challenges for the mainstream Diaspora Jewish leadership in the federation and fund-raising campaign ranks at the local and national levels.

The first is how to raise Jews to be Jewish, i.e., committed to and knowledgeable about their Jewishness and involved with other Jews in various ways. As Jewish leaders and as parents, lay leaders must be preoccupied with this question of continuity.

No formulas exist, but in simplified terms both inputs of the kind provided by formal educational frameworks and those influencing feelings and emotions are necessary. The latter type of inputs derive more from experiences and relationships in families, home communities, summer camps, and, most compellingly, in Israel. The experience of years of Israel programs, as well as the available research, confirms that exposure to Israel, particularly within quality frameworks, is a powerful stimulus to Jewish identity and commitment. Israel is not a panacea, but it can and often does provide the intangible but critical elements of Jewish pride, inspiration, and motivation that make the difference in Jewish com-

mitment. And there is no substitute to being there and experiencing Israel directly: this is the *only* means by which the basic feeling and commitment toward Israel can be passed on to future generations.

The second challenge is to determine what role federations and campaigns can properly play in the development of Jewish awareness and involvement. One view sees federation as strictly an umbrella framework for central fund raising and allocations for local social, health, and welfare services and a certain level of financial support for Israel. In this view, Jewish awareness is the proper concern of synagogues, schools, youth groups, *shlichim*, and the like, and not of federation per se. The alternative view defines the role of federation much more broadly, going beyond the traditional philanthropic concern for aiding the needy, to include functions that complement Jewish education, socialize large numbers of Jews, and lay the foundations for Jewish communities of the future.

The broader view of federation's proper functions has gained currency as federations have emerged increasingly as the central communal "address" of Diaspora Jewry (Elazar, 1976, 1989). Fund raising has come to be understood as entailing much more than the transfer of money alone and is seen today as a basic Jewish activity with extensive potential for Jewish identity-consolidation and education. By funding Jewish education and in numerous other ways, federations have illustrated that the future cohesiveness of the Jewish community is a major item on their agenda, deserving the serious investment of communal resources. The same reasoning should lead them to a long-term commitment to Israel programs.

This broader view of the federation's responsibility clearly involves risks. It makes a certain sense, after all, for federations to continue doing what they know best, rather than entering new and unfamiliar areas of activity. Yet, doing so entails far greater

risks of a longer-term, and hence less obvious nature. Federations have to be sufficiently flexible to modify their traditional activities in response to changing conditions lest their own communities erode away.

WHY FEDERATIONS?

To nurture the Israel-Diaspora link, to help create and sustain Jewish awareness, and thus to secure the basis for the next generation of Jewish community life, federations should adopt the following strategic goal: *To encourage and assist the maximum participation of community members in high-quality Israel programs.* Because this goal is fundamental to the Diaspora community's enlightened self-interest and will to survive, it should be taken just as seriously as fund-raising targets. Indeed, success in the Israel programs sphere will become an increasingly important factor in the success of the fund-raising campaigns of the future. Federations are the *only* vehicle in Diaspora Jewish communities capable of seriously handling overall responsibility for Israel programs.

The Need for Marketing at the Grass-Roots Level

Ultimately, Israel programs have to be marketed at the local level where people live and can be reached directly. Because national marketing is effective to some extent, advertisements in the general media will generate some response and are worth placing. However, broad appeals in the general media will not attract the approximately one-third of American Jews in *no* way affiliated or interested in their Jewishness or in Israel.

A central point of Steven M. Cohen's 1986 study on Jewish travel to Israel is that the "primary market" most worth concentrating on is the approximately one-third of American Jews who do indicate some interest in visiting Israel, but have not

been there before nor have yet made a concrete decision to go there. He counsels policy makers to "(shift) personnel and budget for marketing Israel away from broad-based campaigns, and instead use these resources to support the design and promotion of programs aimed at those interested in visiting Israel but unaware of the right frameworks in which to do so" (Cohen, 1986, p. 33). It has also been reported that, although 27% of this "primary market" were unaffiliated with any Jewish organization, 41% *did* affiliate with one Jewish institution, 21% with two, and 12% with three (Hochstein, 1986). Based on this data, a recent marketing study for Israel programs in North America concluded that the main emphasis should be placed on reaching this "interested" group with the highest potential for growth and that outreach to the totally unaffiliated should be a secondary objective, using experimental pilot projects (Ruder et al., 1987).

Ability to Deliver Information and to Coordinate Among Programs

Recent research has documented the existence of over 300 different Israel programs, including all the tours, seminars, college and yeshiva programs, and work or volunteering programs from different Diaspora countries (Kaufman & Aronovitz, 1986). Even if we assume that many of these programs are not relevant for a given Diaspora community at a given time, what mechanism is there for an interested member of that community to gain quick access to the information about the different programs that *are* relevant, as well as some insight into the pros and cons of each?

This is an information bottleneck that has not been dealt with adequately up to now. It should be clear that *shlichim*, who serve 2- or 3-year tours of duty, cannot be expected to solve this problem on their own. Computer technology and the use of a constantly updated data base connected

to a toll-free telephone number would certainly help. Yet, the key factor is a stable, reliable, central "address" at the local level that is widely acknowledged and publicized as the authoritative source of information on Israel programs. Federations are in the best position to provide such a service.

Because of their power at the local community level, federations can also mediate the problem of competition among the different Israel programs. Competition between specific programs can serve as a constructive influence if it focuses on the content and quality of the programs themselves, rather than on their marketing. However, competition for participants can cause confusion and negative reactions. A recent marketing study cited the example of competition among Israeli universities for American students who wish to study in Israel. "One increasing problem is a proliferation of [study] programs, each with its own rep clamoring for the attention of the same campus office. In a few cases this lack of coordination has resulted in a cessation of cooperation by the university office" (Ruder et al., 1987, pp. 43-44).

Federations can serve as the "honest broker" in an Israel programs marketing network as no other Jewish body can. As representative of the community as a whole, they should be less susceptible to promoting specific programs on ideological, personal, or other grounds. By virtue of their long experience with service agencies, federations should be better able to approach Israel programs objectively, based on their ability to meet the actual needs of the people they are meant to serve.

Ability to Coordinate Among Local Agencies

In most Diaspora Jewish communities, there are a number of Jewish organizations and agencies with a stake in given Israel programs, such as Zionist organizations, synagogues, schools, fund-raising campaigns, youth movements, and fraternal

organizations. In certain communities, non-Jewish bodies, such as universities with Israel academic programs or travel agencies specializing in Israel package tours, may even play an important role.

Some of these organizations might well regard a federation initiative on Israel programs warily, as an incursion on their turf, whereas others would welcome it in the expectation that it would result in more participants in their respective programs. These turf concerns and the competition among local bodies around Israel programs must be taken into account by federations. Yet, no other Jewish body could manage this task of "rising above" the parochial interests of the different local actors to achieve an aggregated, ongoing, community-wide effort on Israel programs. No other Jewish body is positioned to find a formula for working *with*, rather than against, the various relevant local agencies in maximizing participation in Israel programs.

It should be clear that federations that run their own Israel programs, on a larger or smaller scale, but do not initiate the community-wide approach advocated here, are themselves part of the problem. They are simply competing with the other Israel programs under Zionist, denominational, educational, and other auspices. They only rise above the struggle over the same limited audience when they consciously adopt a "federated" approach, requiring a pooling of efforts and resources designed to expand the audience to the maximum.

IMPLEMENTING FEDERATION INVOLVEMENT IN ISRAEL PROGRAMS

Structure: A Federation Israel Programs Department (IPD)

Ensuring that Israel programs will be given the appropriate place on federation agendas and within the federation structure requires the creation of Israel Program Departments (IPDs) in federations, with the appropriate lay leadership and budgets needed to im-

plement the strategic goal described above.

The staff of these departments should be professional, permanent, and full-time and be supplemented by part-time outreach workers. They should be fully informed about the details of the different Israel programs, and their primary concern should be finding the program that best fits the particular needs of each individual. It is crucial that they fully grasp the differences among the programs, even when they are subtle, so as to achieve the optimum match of participant and program. They should therefore understand the programs not as competing with one another—even though several may serve the same age group—but rather as offering different emphases and activity mixes to serve different needs.

The first task of the IPD when dealing with individuals considering spending time in Israel will be to help them clarify what they are looking for, in programmatic terms and then to inform them—clearly and comprehensively—of the options available. Subsequently, they will also assist them with the important mechanics of applications, payments, travel arrangements, and the like.

The IPDs will not work solely with individuals. IPDs should actively initiate, develop, and promote Israel programs for a wide range of schools, universities, and community organizations. As an arm of federation, it will also be their job to coordinate all the local Jewish agencies already in the Israel programs field. Each IPD will convene a consortium of such local agencies and transform it into a coalition working to maximize participation in Israel programs at the local level. There will be advantages to dealing with some of the technical requirements of Israel programs (e.g., travel and logistical arrangements) in common. Conflict over division of the Israel programs "pie" can be forestalled by enlarging the pie through better marketing. The IPD must also have financial clout.

Israeli *shlichim* should continue to work in the IPDs in the role of resource people with an outreach emphasis. They should

be selected on the basis of their communication skills, knowledge of the language and culture of the country in which they are serving, and their ability to excite people about Israel. *Shlichim* with such qualifications should spend most of their time in the field, meeting and speaking with Jews in high schools, universities, JCCs, shopping malls—wherever they can be found. Local IPD workers should all have direct Israel programs experience themselves and should visit Israel regularly for updates on the different frameworks and to participate in evaluations of the programs.

The creation of IPDs would provide a refreshing departure from the conflicts in recent years over the allocation of campaign proceeds to local and overseas (primarily Israeli) needs. The current trend is to decrease the percentage of allocations going to Israel. One appealing aspect of the Israel programs emphasis is that it clearly straddles both Diaspora and Israeli needs and bridges the gap between the two communities. It represents the reciprocal nature of the Israel-Diaspora relationship and constitutes a central element in ensuring its future.

Budget

The IPDs will need sufficient funding in three areas:

1. Direct administrative expenses of the IPD, such as staff salaries and postage, printing, etc. In the larger communities, IPDs will be staffed by teams of workers, together with a *shaliach*, entailing a substantial payroll.
2. Promotion: advertisements in the local media (print and broadcast), special events, travel, telephone, and direct mail campaigns.
3. Meaningful scholarships or subsidies to participants in Israel programs. Although the data on the effects of cost on participation are not conclusive, there is good reason to expect that a communal policy of providing scholarships to those

needing it—provided it is well publicized—could have a marked positive influence on participation in Israel programs. Stephen Cohen's 1986 survey on Jewish travel to Israel found that the high costs were a deterrent for between 66–76% of the "primary market." Even 72% of those who claimed that they had already decided to travel to Israel cited cost as a factor.

Program Planning

As the central address in Diaspora Jewish communities, federations should work primarily with the central Israeli address for relevant programs: the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the Jewish Agency. Yet, the IPDs should adopt a selective, constructively critical, and creative approach to WZO-Agency programs. There are other organizations (even though interlocking in many ways) in the Israel programs business—the Melitz Centers for Jewish Zionist Education, the Reform and Conservative movements, the universities of Israel, and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel—and their offerings should form part of the repertoire. None of them pretends or attempts to replace the program range of the WZO-Agency, but they do provide some healthy competition.

Moreover, federation IPDs—after accumulating the relevant information and experience—can participate actively in modifying existing Israel programs to their specific needs and in working with their Israeli counterparts to create new programs for unmet needs. They will probably find considerable openness in today's WZO-Agency to such initiatives, provided they are not too revolutionary or expensive.

The programmatic emphasis should be on young people and on such programs as High School in Israel, universities, Kibbutz Ulpan, Pardes Institute, the WUJS Institute in Arad, Sherut La'am, and Otzma. However, new programs should be designed that are geared to specific interests and ages; for example, professions (doctors,

lawyers, accountants, computer programmers, insurance brokers), sports (enthusiasts of tennis, golf, bridge, chess), hobbies (art or music lovers, stamp or coin collectors), age (senior citizens), and family status (families with children under 10, families with teenagers, families with twins, single-parent families). What, for example, is the Maccabiah if not a large-scale Israel program for Jewish athletes? Can smaller-scale offshoots of the Maccabiah be held at more frequent intervals, with perhaps less competition and more educational content? The Zionist Organization of America, sponsors of the Masada Institute for Water Sports ("see Israel and learn to scuba dive") would almost certainly respond in the affirmative. The IPDs should creatively develop any feasible means of assembling groups to visit Israel and to interact there with their Israeli peers.

It should always be remembered that merely bringing people to Israel is insufficient because shoddy programming can turn the experience into a nightmare, thereby achieving the exact opposite of what was intended. Israel programs, if they are worth doing at all, must be done well in terms of content, logistics, facilities, and attention to special areas of interest. As the data of different studies confirm again and again, word-of-mouth remains the chief vehicle through which people are recruited to Israel programs. This means, of course, that poor-quality programs will simply boomerang, by negatively influencing recruitment. The Jewish Agency study findings supported this point. The study differentiated between "good" and "bad" programs according to several qualitative criteria. Nineteen percent of the participants in the "bad" programs were satisfied and willing to recommend them to others, in contrast to more than 50% of participants in the "good" programs (Hochstein, 1986). Yet, the fact that only a slight majority of the "good" program participants were satisfied with them is disturbing and suggests an additional role for the IPD of monitoring program quality.

One feature well worth building into every program is contact with Israeli peers, which goes beyond the limitations of tourism by "personalizing" the Israel experience. Such contacts are as important for strengthening the Jewish awareness of the Israelis (especially the younger ones) as they are for the Diaspora Jews. The successful activities of the Israeli Forum, the Chicago federation-sponsored summer programs for Israeli and American Jewish teenagers, and the Kibbutz Yedid Program are just three examples of the enormous potential in this approach.

Such creative program planning could lead in the direction of "integrative" programming, in which diverse program strands are woven together. For example, the WUJS Institute's educational program could be supplemented to include courses on a specific Diaspora community (history, sociology, literature, etc.) for the benefit of a group of students from there, as well as on Project Renewal and its social, economic, cultural, and political background. After the 6-month ulpan and educational program, these students would go on to volunteer positions in the Project Renewal neighborhood or town twinned with their home community.

The IPDs could also initiate more programs in these areas, which were recommended by the Jewish Agency marketing study (Hochstein, 1986).

- intensive basic tours of the country that explore Jewish connections with Israel
- family trips, an option surprisingly preferred by children of different ages as much as parents
- individual (nongroup) visits, which are highly popular with 18- to 24-year-olds, who want to travel alone or with a few friends and select from among short-term activities while in Israel
- high-level educational or professional enhancement programs in the form of short-term study courses and workshops or longer-term working experiences

Publicity and Recruitment

As the research confirms, the essential messages—for whatever reasons—are just not reaching the vast majority of the target audience. They neither know of the existence of special Israel programs (beyond the regular tourist packages) for various special interests nor where to turn for aid in covering the costs of visiting Israel (Cohen, 1986).

Therefore, energies and resources should be pooled so as to attain the maximum effective coverage of the potential audience, starting with the affiliated or interested but relatively inactive, and moving on—resources permitting—to the unaffiliated. Thus, assuming word-of-mouth remains a critical instrument of recruitment, it should not be left to chance, but should be seriously organized and expanded. This means systematic telephone networks and parlor meetings, staffed by program alumni and community volunteers, such as the parents of participants. It also means much more concerted efforts to generate stories for the local media on local young people who have participated in Israel programs. In addition, anyone likely to be advising young Jews about visiting Israel, such as rabbis, Hillel directors, JCC staff, university Study Abroad officers, Jewishly identified campus faculty, and, perhaps most of all, parents, should be informed about Israel programs.

Within budgetary constraints, it is still important to place advertisements in the places where the target audiences are likeliest to see them. Examples include local Jewish newspapers and student publications; national Jewish publications, such as *Commentary*, *Moment*, and *Tikkun*; the international edition of the *Jerusalem Post*; and in selective general, non-Jewish publications, e.g. the Education or Summer Camp classified ad sections of the *New York Times* and other major newspapers, or in *New Republic*, *Sports Illustrated*, or *Vogue*. The objective is to get the message

out to where the audience actually is.

The marketing study commissioned by the Jewish Agency (Hochstein, 1986) suggests a variety of techniques, including direct mail campaigns, generic videotapes, celebrity endorsements, and even a communal "Israel Incentive Savings Program" (as pioneered in the Cleveland Jewish community). All this is to the good, and each IPD will no doubt select the mix most appropriate to local conditions.

Israel Offices and Representatives

A communications, and indeed a credibility gap, exists between the Diaspora organizers and the Israeli implementors of programs. In response, "a number of Diaspora organizations have closed the credibility gap by setting up their own infrastructure and running programs independently. Others have established their own facilities in Israel to represent their interests and mediate with local program organizers" (Hochstein, 1986, p. 35).

The 1987 "American Jewish Organizations with Offices in Israel—a Directory" lists 32 such bodies. These include a wide gamut of Zionist and Israel-related organizations (America-Israel Cultural Foundation, AIPAC, Hadassah, New Israel Fund, UJA, the Zionist Organization of America, etc.), denominational bodies (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform), the defense organizations (American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, and the Anti-Defamation League), and federation-related bodies (the Council of Jewish Federations and the Los Angeles and San Francisco federations).

Communities with direct representation in Israel can open a new dimension of their activity by involving these Israeli offices directly with participants in Israel programs from their area. Such involvement can include participation in program planning and implementation, home hospitality and social gatherings, assistance in finding jobs for participants, and providing various

services to volunteers serving in the Project Renewal twinned neighborhood. This involvement could develop into the arena in which contacts between Diaspora communities and "their" olim in Israel find one of their finest expressions. The olim could —by helping visitors and volunteers from their communities of origin to experience, understand, and enjoy Israel—truly become the "living bridge" between Israel and the Diaspora.

For South African and Canadian Jewry, there are already infrastructures in place in Israel—the South African Zionist Federation, and UIA of Canada—that perform these functions to a greater or lesser extent. Other individual communities have offices in Israel (Los Angeles and San Francisco) or maintain liaison staff with their Project Renewal neighborhoods, and their functions could be broadened in the direction recommended above. The expansion of Israel programs participation will make it increasingly cost effective and convenient for Diaspora communities to maintain some sort of Israel representation, with the primary task of caring for the needs of visiting groups.

National and Regional Coordination

Once communities take up Israel programs seriously, the advantages of scale will become evident and lead to cooperation between communities on a regional or national basis. This is obviously relevant to smaller communities without sufficient numbers to "populate" program frameworks on their own, but has applications for larger communities as well. For example, once a number of North American federations have established IPDs, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) might consider creating a specialized professional agency to service them. Its tasks could include establishing qualitative educational criteria for Israel programs, developing tools for evaluation, and assisting in program planning and marketing efforts. The CJF office in Jerusalem could assume additional

duties in monitoring and troubleshooting specific Israel programs.

The Jewish Community Centers Association of North America is already running an outstanding Israel educational program for JCC professionals through its Jerusalem office, and its graduates (among others) could well provide the staff leadership for the IPDs.

International cooperation among Diaspora communities could also develop; for example, a session of the WUJS Institute offering French-language courses and services for students from Quebec, France, Belgium, and Switzerland.

Follow-Up with Program Alumni

Program alumni make up a select population with enormous potential for Jewish communal involvement that federations have not yet mobilized systematically. Their skills and knowledge can be applied to fund raising, Jewish education, Israel programs recruitment, youth work, publications, special communal events, campus work, or lobbying for Israel. Their potential can be maximized by translating their Israel experience into communal involvement while it is still fresh. Scholarship assistance could be awarded in return for some communal service upon return. The program alumni constitute an elite who will, 10–20 years down the line, provide the next generation of community leaders—and that is how they should be treated and mobilized.

CONCLUSION

Federations should set the maximum participation by their members of all ages—and especially their youth—in high-quality Israel programs as a strategic goal for two reasons. First, Israel-Diaspora relations are the passageway to the future of the Jewish people, and Israel programs are the key to unlocking this passageway. Younger Jews must be provided with the same attachment to Israel as their elders, and the only way to accomplish this aim is through their

participation in Israel programs. Second, federations are uniquely suited to assuming the responsibility for Israel programs on the Diaspora side. They have emerged as the central communal address, and are better equipped than any other Jewish body to market Israel programs at the grass-roots level, where it really counts. Doing so is in their direct, survival interest, which is exactly why federations have become involved in Jewish education. The same reasoning applies to Israel programs.

To achieve this goal, each federation should create an Israel Programs Department (IPD) as one of its official arms, with the appropriate staff and lay leadership, budgets, and jurisdiction. IPDs would promote and recruit actively for Israel programs and would initiate and plan new programs to meet local needs. Participants in the programs would return Jewishly enriched, willing, and able to serve as a valuable human resource for Jewish communal life. The critical test of a community's commitment to this goal is the staff and budgets allocated to its implementation. Montreal is an example of one community that has already invested a great deal in this field. Its rich array of Israel programs, as well as its federation's involvement in a number of special programs with an emphasis on interaction between Montreal Jews and Israelis, illustrates that the strategic goal proposed in this article can be implemented feasibly (see accompanying article by Finkelstein and Simon).

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