



THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY INSTITUTE
המכון למדיניות העם היהודי

JPPI – 2021 Jewish World Dialogue

THE STATE OF ISRAEL, THE DIASPORA, AND THE NATION-STATE LAW

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FOREWORD

The State of Israel has upgraded its commitment to Diaspora Jewry through a constitutional obligation enshrined in the Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People. This Basic Law, which is part of the state’s emerging constitution, stipulates, among other things, that Israel will act to preserve ties between the state and Jews living outside it, and that it will act to preserve the Jewish heritage of Diaspora Jewry. What is the meaning of this commitment, and how should we work to fulfill it? This is the topic addressed by the Jewish People Policy Institute’s 2021 Jewish World Dialogue.

In the past, a large majority of Jews in Israel and abroad shared a natural sense that we are one people, that the ties between the different parts of the people are strong and clear. However, this feeling seems to have diminished in the past generation. Jews in Israel and abroad do not always experience the natural solidarity with each other that they did in the past. There are general, universal reasons for this (the post-modern age, identity politics, the impact of social media, and more) that have also led other groups (such as American society and Israeli society) to division and increasing strife. But beyond this, the distancing between Diaspora Jewry and Israel is the result of significant differences between the life experiences of Israeli and Diaspora Jews, as well as concrete disagreements over national, religious, and cultural issues.

Can these distancing trends be addressed and mitigated? Can actions be taken to bring us – Jews in Israel and Jews abroad – closer together? Can the commitment made by the State of Israel in the Nation-State Law serve as a starting point for a beneficial effort in this area?

It is fascinating that the tragic crisis in Ukraine, which is deepening at the time of this writing, has actually rekindled the natural feeling of being “one people.” The State of Israel, the Jewish Agency, and the major Jewish organizations in the Diaspora are cooperating on behalf of the Jews of Ukraine, who are in real trouble. The dormant musculature of solidarity between Jews has been reactivated and is once again being exercised. Thus, a recent Jewish People Policy Institute survey,

conducted against the backdrop of this tragic development, found that three-quarters of Israeli Jews feel close to Diaspora Jewry. But, of course, this is not enough. We must work systematically toward a long-term goal of unity within the Jewish people, even under routine conditions. How?

The fascinating Dialogue presented here between Jews of different continents, different ages, and diverse backgrounds, shows that there is a basic desire to renew the connection between Jews in Israel and outside it, and measures should be undertaken that are tailored to different target populations:

First, with regard to Israeli Jews, a significant meaningful educational effort must be undertaken, with the goal of bringing the history and experience of Diaspora Jewry into the awareness Israeli Jews. There is a lack of basic knowledge, which causes alienation and indifference to their brethren overseas. We at the Jewish People Policy Institute hope to address this problem through a defined course of action.

Second, regarding the Diaspora Jews who feel distant from Israel and sometimes dissatisfied with it, an organized effort is required to dramatically scale up opportunities for interpersonal encounters that advance mutual understanding, despite the differences and disagreements. As the Dialogue shows, most participants feel that resources should be invested in promoting the physical accessibility of Jews from both Israel and abroad. Person to person encounters are the best remedy for the alienation we are currently experiencing.

Third, some Diaspora Jews show, in part, a willingness to allow Israeli involvement in Diaspora Jewish education, either through economic support (in formal and informal education systems) or the preparation of relevant curricula (with an emphasis on Hebrew learning). However, many of them caution against politicization in this sphere, and against patronizing attitudes on Israel's part, which, of course, must be avoided.

The authors of this Dialogue report – Dr. John Ruskay and Dr. Shlomo Fischer, both Senior Fellows at JPPI – recommend a polyphonic approach to our shared identity. This means opening our hearts to each other – not out of agreement with each other's views, but as a basis for understanding them. The secret of maintaining Jewish brotherhood, even in an era of disagreement, lies in our ability to be tolerant of one another. Our life circumstances differ, our choices – personal and collective – are not identical, but we are still family, one people.

Many thanks to the hundreds of Dialogue participants and, of course, to John and Shlomo, who conducted it with great sensitivity and talent. We at JPPI will do everything in our power to make the policy recommendations contained in this report accessible to decision makers in Israel and abroad.

Prof. Yedidia Stern, President
The Jewish People Policy Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JPPI's 2021 Jewish World Dialogue sought to aggregate the views of global Jewish leadership on how Sections 6 b and 6 c of Israel's 2018 Basic Law: "Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People" should be actualized. In these two sections (6 b and 6c), Israel assumes responsibility for acting in the Diaspora to "preserve the ties between the State and members of the Jewish People," and strengthening the "heritage" (read Jewish education) of Diaspora Jews. The Dialogue provided a context for Jewish leadership to express their view(s) on how these commitments should be operationalized. Sixteen Dialogue sessions were convened in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Israel, with a total of 301 participants. (See page 3 for the demographics of those participating). All participants completed a questionnaire (providing a shared database) and took part in a 60–75-minute focus groups.

The recommendations that emerged (discussed in greater detail on pages 17-18) can be summarized as follows:

1. Broad agreement that if the objective is to strengthen relations between Israeli and Diaspora Jews, the Government of Israel should significantly invest in developing Diaspora Studies for the Israeli public school system.
2. Opportunities for encounters between Diaspora and Israeli Jews should be scaled up substantially so far greater numbers of them have the chance to meet, interact and learn from and with each other.
3. To strengthen Jewish education in the Diaspora, a collaborative Israeli/ Diaspora planning group should be established by the Prime Minister's Office and/or the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, the Jewish Agency, JFNA, and leadership representatives from Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and Australia.

INTRODUCTION

Israel-Diaspora relations have been a subject of discussion and debate among policymakers and engaged Jews in the Diaspora and Israel since the founding of the state. However, these relations have possibly reached a new level of commitment on the part of Israel with the passing of the BASIC LAW: ISRAEL - THE NATION-STATE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE by the Knesset in July 2018. This law has conferred constitutional status in Israel to these relations. The law, devotes Article Six to these relations:

6. The Connection with the Jewish People

- A. The State shall strive to ensure the safety of members of the Jewish People and of its citizens, who are in trouble and in captivity, due to their Jewishness or due to their citizenship.
- B. The State shall act, in the Diaspora, to preserve the ties between the State and members of the Jewish People.
- C. The State shall act to preserve the cultural, historical and religious heritage of the Jewish People among Jews in the Diaspora.

The aim of the Dialogue was to solicit the views of Diaspora and Israeli Jews and global Jewish leadership concerning the implementation of Article 6 of the Nation-State Law. We asked Diaspora participants whether and how such an implementation could be appropriate for Jewish communities who are citizens of a country other than Israel. We then asked both Diaspora and Israeli Jews whether these commitments of the State of Israel were desirable or practical in a general way, and if so, how they should be put into practice. What is the best way the State of Israel should act to “preserve the ties between the State and members or the Jewish People,” and how should it act “to preserve the cultural, historical and religious heritage of the Jewish People among Jews in the Diaspora?”

The first part of the discussion was devoted to recent changes in Israel-Diaspora relations. The Dialogue sessions were organized in this way to contextualize the discussion of the Nation-State Law commitments in the current reality of these relations. As discussed in numerous books, articles and studies, Israel is today much

less dependent upon Diaspora financial support and growing segments of Diaspora Jews today do not fully identify with Israeli government policies in regard to the Palestinian population, territory and peace, and in regard to religious pluralism in Israel.

The new developments in Israel-Diaspora relations, however, are not just the product of relatively recent phenomena such as military conflict in Gaza or the Women of the Wall. They reflect structural and long-term differences between the conditions of Jewish life in the Diaspora and in Israel. This is especially true regarding the American Diaspora, but it applies, to one degree or another, to other Jewish communities in Western democracies.

A number of observers have commented on developments in Israel-Diaspora relations in recent years often deploying the term “distancing.” The purpose of this Dialogue was not to explore the reasons for such alleged distancing – multiple articles and conferences have focused on this – but to explore how they bear on a practical question: whether and how the Government of Israel should advance Jewish education in the Diaspora and ties between the Diaspora communities and the State of Israel.

The Dialogue Sessions

The 2021 Dialogue process began in June 2021 and continued through February 2022, with most of the sessions having concluded by November 2021. The Dialogue comprised 16 sessions with 301 participants. The sessions were conducted in cooperation with communities and organizations in North America, Israel, and Melbourne, Australia with participants from those locations as well as the United Kingdom. The following North American Federations convened Dialogue sessions: New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Northern New Jersey, Vancouver, and Nova Scotia. These sessions included 138 participants. Thus, the Dialogue process incorporated some of the largest and some of the smallest Federations. Two sessions were conducted with the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (24 participants). Another two sessions were convened by the Jewish Education Project and included educators from across the United States (36 participants).

A younger population cohort participated through a number of frameworks designed for them, including 55 participants, most in their twenties and thirties, enrolled in

the Masa Israel Teaching Fellows (MITF) program. Forty-eight Israeli students in a special course for outstanding education students at the Kibbutzim College for Education, Technology and the Arts in Tel Aviv, also mainly in their twenties and thirties, participated in two sessions. We also convened a session with the Columbia University Hillel (16 participants). Unlike in previous years, the majority of Dialogue participants were women, and 64% were under the age of 45.

Participants

The participants did not constitute a representative sample of the North American Jewish population. The participant pool contained 17% Orthodox and 36% Conservative Jews, both of which are practically double their percentage in the general Jewish population. The Orthodox participants, though, seem to be more liberal than the Orthodox population is generally. Among those who identified as Orthodox, only 22% said they were Republicans, far less than the national percentage of 75%. This may be explained by the fact that these participants were largely Modern Orthodox, who are generally more liberal than the Haredim. Although the religious and political affiliations of the federation participants differed from the national profile, it is likely that they reflect, to a certain extent, the population that is engaged and active in organized Jewish life as well as its leadership.

The younger participant pool was also not representative. Fifty percent of this population identified as Reform, which is far greater than their percentage in the general Jewish population. The Israeli student teachers were far more left leaning than the general population – 43% placed themselves on the left-wing of the Israeli political spectrum, whereas only 8% of the Israeli population identify as such. Sixty-two percent of the MIFT group also identified politically as left leaning. The Masa fellows and the Columbia Hillel may be somewhat representative of the engaged young Jewish population.

The composition of the Melbourne group differed from those of North America. Among the younger participants, over half identified as “religious,” “Orthodox” or “attend an Orthodox synagogue occasionally.” Forty-five percent of the Melbourne participants in the under 45 age cohort identified as politically right-wing. Among the Melbourne group as a whole, 64% identified as “religious,” “Orthodox,” or “attend an Orthodox synagogue occasionally” and 33% identified as right-wing. Among the North American group only 9% identified as Republican or Republican leaning.

As in previous years since the onset of Covid-19, the Dialogue sessions were conducted via Zoom. The Zoom technology permitted the participants to break out into small focus groups. Our experience has been that participants are more willing to express their more intimate thoughts, feelings, and experiences in these breakout groups.

In the course of the Dialogue, two kinds of data were collected – quantitative and qualitative. All participants completed a short survey and were then asked the same or similar questions in the small focus groups. As noted earlier, the survey responses do not necessarily reflect the attitudes or the demographic realities of the Jewish population of North America just as the Melbourne group cannot be taken as a representative sample of Australian Jewry. The survey does, however, give us the opportunity to compare answers across the entire range of participants. In the small focus groups, participants were able to expand upon their responses and give them further explanation, nuance, or qualification.

Israel and the Diaspora – Two Worlds of Judaism?

There is a significant difference between Israeli Jews living in a Jewish state where religion is a public matter and American Jews who live as a minority in a diverse population that considers religion a personal choice. Furthermore, in Israel, the Hebrew language and Jewish-Israeli culture constitute the dominant cultural frame, while Jews living as minorities in the United States and other Diaspora communities often live in cultures defined by other faiths and identifying as a Jew is voluntary. It stands to reason that these different contexts would produce widely differing understandings of what it means to secure the Jewish future. Despite this, the “We are One” slogan expressing the core ethos of North American Jewry, as captured in Jonathan Woocher’s 1985 book *Sacred Survival*, prevailed as the dominant communal mantra until the late 1990s. This was fueled by the Jewish leadership that emerged shortly after the Shoah, which having witnessed, from near or far, the powerful formative experiences of Israel’s first decades and the events of 1967, fell in love with Israel.

That paradigm began to weaken during the 1990s and has accelerated recently for multiple reasons – Israel became more self-reliant economically and as a result, North American Jewish philanthropy became less significant; North American Jewry remained liberal as much of Israel’s leadership was increasingly perceived, particularly

over the last decade, as embracing policies considered by growing numbers as illiberal: settlement growth, continued occupation, the prospect of territorial annexation, and the Nation-State Law itself, among others. The suspension of the Kotel Compromise (2017) and continued discrimination against the liberal streams of Judaism further solidified this illiberal image. Those tensions, those trends – discussed in numerous studies, articles, and the subject (in various ways) of prior JPPI Dialogues – have deepened in recent months.

Various spokespersons of the Israeli government under former Prime Minister Netanyahu (such as the former ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer) made it clear that the Netanyahu government increasingly turned to Evangelical Christians for support of its policies rather than the liberal mainstream of the American Jewish community.

Despite this, it is not clear that this paradigm shift is occurring equally in all Diaspora populations. In regard to several questions, the Melbourne group's survey answers differed significantly from those of the North American respondents. It is very difficult to form conclusions on the basis of such small samples, nevertheless, this difference is suggestive, and we offer some ideas below as to what it might mean.

In accord with these concerns, as background to the discussion regarding the Nation-State law, we wished to gauge how participants viewed Israel- Diaspora relations in general and the extent to which Israeli and Diaspora Jews identify with one another and feel the sense of shared history and solidarity. Thus, in the survey we asked two questions relating to these issues:

Q7 Being Jewish in the US and Israel takes different forms. In the US, Jews are a minority, in Israel a majority. In the US, religion is private and voluntary; in Israel, it is public and embodied in the state. Reflecting upon these distinctions, do you think that:

1. Despite these distinctions, in essential matters all Jews are similar and can identify with each other.
2. There is a great distance between American and Israeli Jews.

The majority of older participants, who were more connected to federations and Jewish organizations, answered that “in essential matters all Jews are similar and can identify with each other.” (North America, 60%), (Melbourne, 58%). Similarly,

the majority in this age cohort answered that despite the differences listed in the previous question, “Diaspora and Israeli Jews share history and solidarity to a great extent.” (North America, 53%), (Melbourne, 66%). As can be seen, the Melbourne participants answered along the same lines as the older federation participants. Given their more religious and right-wing identity and orientation, this is not surprising.

In the breakout groups these participants referred to the foundational events of Jewish history and the Jewish religion, such as the giving of Torah on Mt. Sinai and the shared history of persecution. These, they indicated, provided the basis for the ability to identify with other Jews and the sense of shared history and solidarity. One participant from Chicago thought of the shared history of the Holocaust: “We as a people were almost wiped out and now we owe it to each other to have unconditional love and support...” A participant from Northern New Jersey stated, “we do have a shared history that goes back thousands of years. We all came from somewhere and we have all been Diaspora Jews at some point...” In the New York session one of the participants remarked, “my thought on shared history goes back to when we all stood on Sinai together.”

By contrast, 55% of participants in the English-speaking younger groups (MITF and Columbia) indicated that there was “a great distance between Israeli and Diaspora Jews.” Among the Israelis, 52% agreed. Similarly, 60% of the English-speaking younger cohort said that Diaspora and Israeli Jews shared history and solidarity only to “a certain extent.” Among the Israelis, the percentage giving that answer was 71%.

In the breakout groups, these young participants provided their rationale. They said that although there was, in the past, certainly a shared historical experience, in the last two generations the experience of various Jewish communities has differed sharply. The Israelis have had the experience of establishing their own nation-state and that has included unique, particular experiences such as military service. At the same time, the experience of the American Jewish community has been of living as a minority in an advanced post-industrial society and democracy. Thus, one MITF participant said: “History way back is shared but individual Jewish histories are no longer shared which may affect solidarity.” Similarly, a participant in Cleveland said that he does not “feel history in the same way... I know that there is shared history, [I] connect more on issues. I don’t feel the same shared history.”

The data here are in line with many articles and studies that have explored generational changes in the American Jewish community. What emerged in the small focus

groups can perhaps provide additional insight. The Jewish identity of the younger age cohorts is less primordial and “mythic” – less “in the kishkes.” Hence, it does not only reference the foundational and “mythic” events of Jewish history but refers to the Jewish history that was experienced during the lifetime of the participants or during that of their parents. It is more rational and more dependent upon empirical data, such as the actual differences in the respective life experiences of young Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora.

Among the Israeli students, there were some who spoke about the asymmetry of the relations – that the Israelis lack empathy for Jewish life in the Diaspora and that Israel does not afford any place to the Reform movement in Israeli life. They asserted that the Israelis expect money and political support, but they do not give anything in return.

Views on the Implementation of Article Six of the Nation-State Law

The commitment to the Diaspora within the Nation-State Law, indeed fits the law’s internal logic. Article 1(b) of the Law states:

“The State of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish People in which it realizes its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination.”

If the State of Israel actualizes the right of national self-determination for the Jewish people as a whole, then it stands to reason that Israel should maintain and enhance its connection and commitment to the Jewish people as a whole, including the communities that live outside of Israel.

Questions arise, though, in regard to the Diaspora communities themselves. How do they view this commitment of the Israeli government, especially given all that has occurred in Israel-Diaspora relations in the past three decades? Furthermore, and just as importantly, how do Diaspora Jews view the implementation of such a law? What sorts of activities and programs should arise from it? How should it concretely advance ties between the Diaspora and the State of Israel and preserve the religious, cultural, and historical heritage of the Jewish people among Jewish communities in the Diaspora?

We devoted the main part of the Dialogue sessions to these issues. While Article 6 of the Nation-State Law contains three paragraphs, we did not address paragraph (a), which deals with security issues, leaving that up to the appropriate agencies. The Dialogue sessions focused on ties between the Diaspora and Israel and on preserving the heritage of the Jewish people, that is, Jewish education.

How do Diaspora Jews feel about the increased involvement of the State of Israel?

In completing the survey, all groups gave an overwhelmingly positive response to the question of whether they would welcome increased involvement of the State of Israel in preserving the ties of the Jewish people to the state and preserving its heritage in the Diaspora. Nevertheless, there were differences between the groups. Over 93% of the North American federation groups and the Melbourne group said that they would welcome such involvement. Among the young Israelis, 83% said that they would welcome such involvement. Among the English-speaking MIFT groups of young teachers, 74% said that they would welcome such involvement.

While the survey solicited a yes or no answer, participants in the focus groups gave expanded, more nuanced answers. Some expressed reservations about such involvement as exemplified by this remark from a New York participant: “[It is] Chutzpadik to tell individual communities how to do Jewish education.” A Cleveland participant indicated that he would welcome Israeli support but only as part of a dialogue: “[Israel] can be a bull in a china shop and can cause more damage than help.” Some participants, including educators convened by the Jewish Education Project, expressed suspicion regarding the Israeli agenda and the strings it might attach to such involvement.

The Dialogue pursued two issues in some detail. The first was that of preserving the cultural, historical, and religious heritage of the Jewish people. While this can refer to a wide range of activities, we focused on Jewish education in its broadest sense, including not only schools but also summer camps, Israel trips, and other programs and activities. The second issue involved preserving ties between Israel and Jews in the Diaspora.

Israel Involvement in Jewish Education in the Diaspora

We then inquired further about the kind of involvement and support the Israeli government should provide Jewish education in the Diaspora. Specifically, we asked about both developing curricula and providing funding to reduce financial barriers for those who wish to attend Jewish schools, camps, and other educational programs. Slightly more than half (53.7%) supported the idea that the Israeli government should offer funding, either together with involvement in curricula and other forms of content design, or that it should just provide funding without any involvement in programming.

Some of those who supported the idea of Israeli funding suggested that it be directed toward specific programs, such as Jewish summer camps (which they felt were especially effective in promoting Jewish identity) or experiential programs in Israel. Others felt that the support should be wider; as one participant from New York put it: “Lots of folks liked reducing financial barriers for enrolling in Jewish schools, camps, and educational programs.”

At the same time, some participants expressed reservations. These related again, first and foremost, to concerns about the strings the Israeli government might attach to such funding. As one participant in Cleveland remarked: “Financial support is nice and if it’s forthcoming it is great – but maybe strings are not good.” Another Cleveland participant expressed himself more sharply: “[Such support] worries me. It could become propaganda of government in order to get its message to the Diaspora.” Another participant worried out loud that he would welcome “reducing financial barriers in education, camps etc. But are there strings attached?” Perhaps the clearest expression of such reservations appeared in one response to an open-ended survey question: “I am uncomfortable with partisan political Israeli governments shaping Jewish education in the USA; I would rather see the government either investing in affordable tourism or promoting education for Israelis about Jewish life in the USA.”

Other participants expressed their reservations differently. Some, as indicated above, thought that such involvement was paternalistic and thought that Israel should invest the money in its own educational system, especially in regard to the Diaspora. Thus, another participant in Cleveland stated that the Israeli government should “invest in Israelis learning about the Diaspora.” This is a theme that repeatedly cropped up

in the Dialogue sessions in response to several questions we posed. A participant in New York expressed the sentiment that “Israel should worry about their own education on Judaism before they start coming in strengthening Jewish education in the Diaspora.” This assertion was echoed in many groups.

A larger majority (63.6%) endorsed the idea that Israel should work to strengthen Jewish education curricula and content. Here too, this endorsement was nuanced. As one woman from Northern New Jersey emphasized: “The real need is not with Orthodox or Conservative Jews. The State of Israel should concentrate on non-affiliated or marginally affiliated Jews... Israel should stay out of subsidizing Yeshivas; they don’t need it.” Some participants argued that while Israel can help with Israel education and especially the teaching of Hebrew, its contribution to Jewish education in America was limited because Israelis do not sufficiently understand the American Jewish community. As one educator from Chicago stated, “there’s too big of a disconnect between American and Israeli Jewish life so [Israeli governmental involvement] is not helpful in many areas, but we need huge help in Hebrew education.”

A number of Israeli students also thought that the Israeli government should not intervene in Jewish education in the Diaspora, arguing that that it should be left to the Diaspora communities themselves to convey their own understanding of Judaism and Jewish life.

Israel-Diaspora Ties

We opened this section of the Dialogue sessions with the following question, asked both in the written survey and in the focus groups:

What do you consider to be the primary objectives of strengthening ties between Israel and Diaspora Jews?

- to strengthen solidarity
- to strengthen capacity for effective Israel advocacy on the part of Diaspora Jews
- to strengthen mutual understanding – Diaspora Jews of Israelis, Israelis of Diaspora Jews
- to broaden knowledge of the other and the breadth of views in Israel and the Diaspora
- to develop relationships among and between Israeli and Diaspora Jews
- other

The option that received the most responses overall was “to strengthen mutual understanding.” It netted 38% of the responses among the entire group. Below is the breakdown of the responses.

- North America – 42%
- Israelis – 35%
- MITF – 38%
- Melbourne – 16%

As indicated above, with respect to a few survey questions, Melbourne was the outlier. The option that garnered the highest response among this group was “strengthening mutual support and assistance.” The Jews of North America, and especially in the United States, are aware that they have different views than the recent Israeli governments and many of the people of Israel. That seems to be a principal reason why they think that “mutual understanding” is a central aim of Israel-Diaspora ties. They hope that deepening “mutual understanding” will lead to enhanced awareness of the variety of perspectives on key issues and the reasons different views are advanced both among and between Diaspora and Israeli Jews. Given the Orthodox religious and relatively right-wing identity of the Melbourne participants, they might experience fewer disagreements with Israel. Hence, they place less emphasis on “mutual understanding” and concentrate more on the practical aspects of existing solidarity and therefore stress “mutual support and assistance.”

Another survey question asked if one thought that increased meetings between ordinary people from Israel and the Diaspora could enhance Israel-Diaspora ties. The following options were given:

- It’s nice, but what really matters is cooperation and understanding between leaders.
- I think that it can make a significant contribution.
- This is what it is really about: regular Israeli and American Jews forming friendships and social ties of cooperation and solidarity.

The most-selected response was that it “can make a significant contribution” (44% overall). Thirty-eight percent answered that “this is really about: regular Israeli and American Jews forming friendships....” Together, both responses constituted 83% of the answers.

Finally, we asked: “What frameworks can most usefully promote Israel-Diaspora ties?” The answer that received a plurality of responses was “spending time with people that you disagree with.” In North America this response received 41% of the replies. One example of this would be having liberal Jews from Manhattan’s West Side spend a week or more in Kiryat Arba, a West Bank suburb outside of Hebron, or having Jews from Boro Park, Brooklyn spend two weeks in Tel Aviv. This question continues the same line of orientation we saw earlier – that Israel-Diaspora ties should encourage encounters between people who disagree and that the contending parties should get to know and understand each other in order to maintain good relations despite their disagreements. While it ought to be acknowledged that religious and political differences: secular/religious, hawk/dove, right/left, also exist within Israel and Diaspora communities, Israel’s democracy enables some to aggregate state power. This can accentuate policy differences (settlements, the Kotel agreement) as this cannot take place in the voluntary Jewish communities of the Diaspora.

Here too, the Melbourne responses were the exception. In Melbourne only 8% answered that the Jewish Agency or the Israeli government should promote visits between people who disagree with each other. At the same time, 41% answered that the Jewish Agency or the Israeli government should promote a Jewish peoplehood curriculum. Thus, for the Melbourne group it does not seem that disagreement between the Jews of Israel and the Diaspora is a major issue, an attitude that is unsurprising given their relatively religious and right-wing cast. They seem to take the frameworks of Jewish peoplehood and solidarity as a given and wish to enhance them.

The Melbourne group was quite small – 24 participants. It would be rash to draw hard and fast conclusions based upon it, even with respect to the broader Melbourne Jewish community. Nevertheless, it might represent a different “ideal type”¹ – from the North American participants – more right-wing, more Orthodox religiously, and less at odds with the Israeli state and society. Further research is certainly needed to determine the extent and the social and geographic location of this “Ideal type,” as well as its characteristics.

1. “Ideal type,” a term created by the sociologist Max Weber, refers to an abstract model of a social phenomenon, which contains in pure form all its parameters. Ideal types are not empirical but are used to measure and analyze empirical phenomena. The word “ideal” does not at all entail a good/bad or correct/incorrect value judgement but rather designates a pure and complete model.

Responses to the survey questions were echoed in the focus groups. In the North American focus groups, too, many of the participants talked about mutual understanding as the goal of Israel-Diaspora ties. Thus, one Chicago participant pointed to mutual understanding as the goal, which he insisted has to work both ways – (the Diaspora’s understanding of Israel and Israel’s understanding of the Diaspora). Thus, missions and education have to function in both directions. Or as another Chicago participant formulated it: “There is a sense that the relationship between Israel/America is one telling the other what the right thing to do is as opposed to the mutual understanding and knowing each other well.... Getting to know one another 1:1 is most important part of that relationship.”

This insistence on the mutuality of understanding was repeated in many of the focus groups and seems to be related to the feeling many Diaspora Jews have that Israeli Jews do not know much about, nor understand Diaspora Jewry. As another Chicago participant put it: “[We] really need to focus on that to make sure Israel understands American Jews. We spend a lot of time trying to understand them and aren’t sure how much time they take to understand us.” Or in the words of a Cleveland participant: “Israelis need to understand more about the Diaspora, its creativity, what it does for certain different Jews.” Or as one rabbi from New Jersey bluntly put it: “We need to be teaching Israelis about the Diaspora.”

Some of the Israeli students agreed with this assessment. They said that for there to be a meaningful connection with Diaspora Jews they have to learn a lot more about them – who are they? What occupies them? What are their concerns? There were a few members of the Israeli group who indicated that that they would not actively participate in the discussion insofar as the subject of the Dialogue – Israel-Diaspora relations – does not speak to them at all. They know nothing about the subject and have never thought about it. They said that while they would not speak, they would be happy to listen. At the same time, a number of participants indicated that they had served as shlichim or shinshinim in Diaspora communities and took part in the discussion enthusiastically.

When participants discussed how in practice to put ties in place, they expressed themselves on different levels. Some participants emphasized abstract ideals such as “peoplehood” or “solidarity,” but most advocated personal ties and connections. “Personal experiences are the most powerful way to strengthen ties,” said one participant. Another elaborated, “One on one relationships are incredibly powerful.”

A New York participant emphasized that “We need to be creative about the connection not only at the leader level but at the Jew on the street level.”

Many participants coupled the goal of mutual understanding to personal ties and connections: “Everything will stem from the understanding – it’s important to have that personal connection.” A woman from New Jersey said: “I am a believer that developing relationships between people will bring about everything else.... when we see each other in friendship we see each other for who we are.” Even those who started off by talking about peoplehood and solidarity contended that they are best achieved through personal connections and friendships among ordinary people.

Conclusion: From Monophonic toward Polyphonic Relations

Judging from the quantitative and qualitative findings of this Dialogue, it appears that Israel-Diaspora relations are gradually assuming a new character. In earlier decades the relationship could be plausibly characterized by the slogan “We are One,” but this is no longer the case today. Diaspora and Israeli Jews are too aware of their divergent histories, experiences, and attitudes to simply agree with the notion that “they are one.” As noted, Diaspora Jews are also somewhat wary and suspicious of Israeli government motives and agendas. It is interesting to note that those who were more suspicious and critical of Israel were those who were more knowledgeable about the Jewish world and Judaism, and more engaged with them. Among the most suspicious and critical participants were the Jewish educators who were convened by the Jewish Educators Project and the Columbia Hillel. Columbia has an internationally renowned Jewish and Israel Studies program and has many Orthodox and Conservative students.

Yet as we have seen, Diaspora Jews also very much want connection with the State of Israel and with the people of Israel.

The slogan “We are One,” which emerged during the Yom Kippur War, was never meant to be taken literally. No one thought that the life of Israeli soldiers, then fighting in bunkers in the Golan Heights and along the Suez Canal, and American Jews living in relative safety had shared daily experiences. “We are One” reflected a recognition that despite different day-to-day circumstances, there was a shared

world view among global Jewish leadership about what was required to secure Israel and the Jewish people.

We may term this sort of relationship “monophony” (one sound in Greek). This is a relationship populated by different people, but in crucial matters, there was great similarity between them, and hence they all speak with “one voice.” In a monophonic conversation the speakers share the same assumptions, perspectives, and goals just as in a monophonic musical piece there is one dominant theme or melody shared or served by all the voices or instruments. In contrast to this, polyphony consists of several voices each playing an independent melody. In successful polyphonic music, such as that of J.S. Bach, the different voices and melodies form a harmonic or otherwise pleasing sound. Hence in a polyphonic interaction or conversation very different perspectives, assumptions and goals encounter each other and interact.

What seems to be gradually happening (starting in the closing decades of the 20th century) is that Diaspora voices are becoming increasingly independent and separate from the Israeli voices. Our data point to this in various instances – from the nearly half of the participants who saw a “great distance between the Diaspora and Israel” to the sentiment, repeated again and again, that Israelis neither know a lot about nor understand Jews in the Diaspora, and they might not even care that they don’t. Similarly, while Diaspora Jews are aware of the advantages of Israeli involvement in Jewish education in the Diaspora and in strengthening ties between the two communities, especially in terms of funding, they are also wary of it. They are wary of Israeli governmental agendas and the strings it might attach to its support. They also wonder about where Israel might intervene in a productive way, and where such intervention could be problematic.

At the same time, the Diaspora participants in this Dialogue really do want have connection with Israel and Israeli Jews. They seek a personal connection that leads to friendship and “mutual understanding.” However, they understand this connection to be between two different communities that have different assumptions, perspectives, and goals. In other words, they envision a “polyphonic” encounter. Thus, Israel-Diaspora relations appear to be moving from a “monophonic” format to a “polyphonic” one. While having different goals, perspectives and assumptions could result in Israel and the Diaspora talking past each other, many dialogue participants seemed to hope that by achieving “mutual understanding”, they could achieve a fruitful, polyphonic conversation. These participants articulated that they see benefit

in such an encounter; as a participant from New York put it: “All Jews are enriched by connection with the other, not just something that we should do but something we benefit from.”

Ultimately, the different perspectives of the North American Diaspora communities and Israel have been percolating for some time. The differences are rooted in the disparate contexts and circumstances of Jewish life in North America and Israel. These have been reinforced and amplified by the political developments we have mentioned – such as the continuing occupation of the West Bank and the increased North American familiarity with the Palestinian perspective. In the 2021 Dialogue, the differing perspectives and attitudes between the North American Jews and Israel was also reflected in how Diaspora Jews think that Israel-Diaspora events and programs should be conceived, organized, and conducted.

The Dialogue also demonstrated differences between Diaspora populations. The Diaspora is not monolithic, it includes different orientations and needs. With its relatively religious and right-wing orientation, the Melbourne community seems to be experiencing disagreements with Israel to a lesser extent than other communities. Accordingly, it did not place “mutual understanding” as the aim of Israel-Diaspora ties. Rather, a significant plurality of the Melbourne participants chose “mutual aid and support.” Similarly, the Melbourne group, in contrast to those in North America, did not choose “meeting those we disagree with” as a useful framework for promoting Israel-Diaspora ties. Instead, it recommended strengthening Jewish Peoplehood curricula. While for the liberal Jews of North America, achieving “mutual understanding” with Israeli Jews with respect to fundamental aspects of Jewish life and the Jewish future seems important, the Melbourne participants were more focused on concrete programs that express and reinforce Jewish solidarity.

Policy Recommendations

1. The government of Israel ought to make a major investment in introducing curricular space in the Israeli public school system for the study of Diaspora history and contemporary Jewish life beyond Israel's borders. This will require, a concerted effort to mobilize the Israeli educational leadership to allocate "Diaspora studies" time and resources in educational agenda. Such a mobilization will first require a shift in educational priorities and values as well as an investment in curriculum design and professional development for Israeli educators in Israeli public schools. Such a change will require the deployment of substantial political and financial resources.
2. Dialogue participants widely agreed that programs and initiatives that bring Israeli and Diaspora Jews together are critical in forging relationships and increasing mutual understanding. While many frameworks exist for such encounters, many are limited to leadership and those most engaged in Jewish life. Thus, it is recommended that the government of Israel provide substantial financial investment along with matching funds from the Diaspora in subsidizing missions from synagogues, Jewish community centers, and campus Hillels in the Diaspora and pair them with Israeli counterpart entities (municipalities, community centers, etc.). Dialogue participants, in multiple ways, expressed the view that substantially increasing the number of such programs would have a positive impact on strengthening Diaspora-Israel relations.

Within this framework, we also should consider arranging encounters involving groups that disagree with one another. Such encounters should be carefully planned and prepared. The preparation should include training facilitators and testing various formats.
3. To strengthen Jewish education in the Diaspora, a collaborative Israeli/Diaspora planning group should be established by the Prime Minister's Office and/or the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, the Jewish Agency, JFNA, and leadership representatives from Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and Australia.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Q1. Age group:

Answered: 133 Skipped: 21

- 18 – 25 (11.49%)
- 26 – 35 (16.67%)
- 36 – 45 (15.52%)
- 46 – 55 (17.24%)
- 56 – 65 (15.52%)
- 66 – 75 (17.24%)
- 76 – 85 (4.02%)
- 85+ (1.15%)

Q2. Gender:

Answered: 133 | Skipped: 21

- Male (36.99%)
- Female (63.01%)
- Other\prefer not to say (0.00%)

Q3. Do you identify as:

- a. Orthodox (17.24%)
- b. Conservative (36.78%)
- c. Reform (20.11%)
- d. Reconstructionist (1.15%)
- e. Non-denominational (20.11%)
- f. Other (4.60%)

Q4. Politically, do you:

- a. Identify as a Democrat (53.53%)
- b. Lean Democratic (21.76%)
- c. Lean Republican (6.47%)
- d. Identify as a Republican (2.94%)
- e. Identify as independent (15.29%)

Q5. Approximately, how many times have you visited Israel?

- a. I have never visited Israel (3.45%)
- b. 1-5 (22.99%)
- c. 6-10 (21.26%)
- d. More than 10 (52.30%)

Q6. When was your first trip to Israel? (open question)

1	1978, I was 8 years old
2	Summer 1988
3	1997
4	When I was about 2 years old
5	Senior year of High School (12th grade, age 17)
6	2011
7	1986

8	1982
9	1976
10	Birth
11	12 years old-1996
12	2007
13	After my Bat Mitzvah age 13. I moved to Israel shortly thereafter. Spent the next eight years living in Israel.
14	When I was 12 years old. 1982.
15	USY Poland/Israel Pilgrimage, 1996
16	1999 at age 15
17	1994
18	UJA Bnei Mitzvah trip in summer of 1995
19	Summer 2000
20	In college-1992
21	2009
22	2001
23	1987
24	When I was an infant
25	September 1999- January 2000, URJ EIE High School in Israel
26	Age 20 (2008)
27	1991
28	1974
29	Machach Ba Aretz - Moshava (Orthodox) 9th grade?
30	2004 - March of the Living
31	1997
32	June, 2021
33	At 16 years old
34	1996 - family trip
35	When I was a year old
36	2010
37	2019
38	When I was six years old for a family bar mitsvah
39	A Birthright trip in the winter of 2017
40	I was in third grade, 8 years old.

41	Have not been to Israel
42	Born there.
43	2012 (age 12)
44	1999 - summer between 8th and 9th grade
45	1969
46	When I was a baby to visit family.
47	September 2017
48	N/A
49	At age of 1 or 2
50	I was born in Israel
51	Age 13
52	1963
53	1973
54	1970
55	1988
56	1999
57	1955
58	2008
59	1979
	First trip at 10
60	Made Aliyah at 13 lived there for 15 years
61	1984
62	1979
63	6 years old
64	1968
65	Was born in Israel, moved to Canada in 2008 and visited Israel every 2 years since.
66	Lived there age 8 to 31
67	I grew up in Israel until I was 23.
68	1995
69	Born and raised in Israel
70	1969
71	When I was in Grade 8 with my family on a synagogue trip.

72	When I was 17, in 2016, with Bilum Israel
73	1995
74	1977
75	1970
76	February 2020
77	At 14 years old. School trip from Mexico City
78	1953
79	1975
80	Birthright 2014
81	1963
82	After college graduation - 1989.
83	1974 with my parents
84	1973
85	When I was 20 years old
86	Birthright - 2017
87	1971
88	1970
89	2012
90	1994
91	1994
92	1987
93	1971
94	When I was 16 on a USY Poland/Israel pilgrimage
95	When I was 17 on a BBYO summer trip.
96	2014
97	2009
98	1990
99	1979
100	With my family at age 7
101	1970
102	1960s
103	2010
104	N/A
105	1981

106	1968 after 1967 war - I was 20 yrs. old
107	1965
108	When I was less than one year old
109	When I was 17 years old on March of the Living in 2007
110	In 1975,teen tour
111	2008
112	2007 on a Birthright trip
113	2007
114	1999
115	1968
116	1962
117	1 year old
118	Late 1980s
119	1982
120	1972
121	1971
122	1968
123	1968
124	1963
125	As a teenager
126	2006
127	2010
128	11 years old 1999
129	2008
130	2018
131	Around age 16
132	2007
133	Born and raised
134	1972
135	1969
136	2019
137	1996
138	I'm an Israeli!
139	1983

140	2016/2017
141	2016
142	2006
143	2003
144	1967
145	N/A
146	2003 or so
147	n/a
148	1979
149	1966
150	1972
151	1969
152	1967
153	2004
154	1969
155	Jan 2020
156	1971
157	My first trip was a child with my family.
158	In high school
159	I was born in Israel
160	1987
161	Age 16 (1985)
162	1997
163	1996
164	When I was 16 years old on Ramah Seminar.
165	Age 16 (1984)
166	2004
167	2019
168	2019
169	1998
170	1997

Q7. Being Jewish in America and Israel takes different forms. In America, Jews are a minority; in Israel a majority. In America, religion is private and voluntary; in Israel, it is public and embodied in the state. Reflecting upon these distinctions, do you think that:

- a. Despite these distinctions, in essential matters all Jews are similar and can identify with each other. (53.22%)
- b. There is a great distance between American and Israeli Jews. (46.78%)

Q8. Given the differences listed in the previous question, can American and Israeli Jews share history and solidarity?

- a. To a great extent (52.30%)
- b. To a certain extent (47.70%)
- c. Not at all (0.00%)

Q9. What does being pro-Israel mean to you in three sentences or less (open question)?

Supporting the democratically elected government of Israel in all its decisions, even if I disagree with those decisions. Providing material support to Israel when needed. Promoting Israel in the public sphere, which includes education at all levels.
“Pro-Israel” means affirming the right of Jews to be a free people in our land. And it may include a broad range of views and perspectives on how this right is actualized.
It means having an intrinsic connection to the Land that has belonged to our nation since the time of Avraham. To that end, it is our responsibility to ensure that it remains ours and we each do our part in that.
Supporting the existence of Israel as an individual state.
I support Israel’s right to defend itself. Israel’s politics have a dynamic unique to their society. Israel is the homeland forever for the Jewish people.

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I support Israel’s right to defend itself. Israel’s politics have a dynamic unique to their society. Israel is the homeland forever for the Jewish people.
I don’t define myself as pro-Israel. I have a deep love for Israel but there are times that I feel pro and times that I feel anti and that doesn’t change the baseline of Ahavat Israel.
Believing that Jews can go to their homeland, being Israel.
Believing in Israel’s right to exist.
At this point in my life, I am not sure.
“Pro-Israel” is a complicated formulation for me; in a reductionist way, it is as meaningless as “pro-peace” and in a maximalist way, it is equivalent to saying “I stand with all the policies of the government of Israel, right or wrong.”
Simply put, Israel’s right to exist as a nation. There are different variations, but the minimum is agreeing that Israel has a right to exist. It does not mean that you agree with all policies without question.
Pro-Israel means you support and care about Israel. It does not mean that one does so blindly or without reservation.
To me, being pro-Israel means supporting the right to a Jewish state while being able to critique the Israeli government just like one would with any other government. Pro-Israel is supporting the idea of a Jewish state, not every action said state takes.
Supporting Israel’s right to exist as a state and as a homeland for the Jewish people. Supporting Israel’s right to defend herself. Supporting Israel as a state and a homeland even if we do not agree with all of the politics Supporting the right for the state of Israel to exist, loving Israel while simultaneously engaging in challenging dialogue on the many complexities of the state, which can result in not agreeing with all of Israel’s policies/politics.
It means taking seriously the responsibility to ensure Israel’s continued existence. It also means internalizing the idea that no nation is perfect and most are deserving of rebuke. As a “lover of Zion” I have the obligation to hold Israel accountable and love her despite her flaws.

Advocate for Israel, support Israel in both resources and thought, make sure kids and future generations visit Israel and it becomes part of their identity
I support the state of Israel, and its right as a sovereign Jewish, democratic nation State in my words, actions, voting. I visit, understand and relate to Israeli society in all of its diversity. I ensure that the next generation of Jews understands that Israel is part of our past, present and future.
Supporting the right of the Jewish State to exist. Advocating for Israel when you hear detractors and misinformed individuals repeating half-truths and misinformation. Going to Israel and experiencing it yourself, getting to know Israelis and building a relationship.
Recognition of Israel's right to self-determination, supporting her right to exist, working to support her from terrorism and other existential threats
Pro-Israel means identifying with shared culture and history of Israel and the Jewish people, supporting Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and desiring a strong relationship with the state and its people
Israel has the right to exist.
I believe Israel has the right to exist, and a need to exist; a right to defend itself. Being Pro-Israel to be also means that I don't always agree with things going on there, and actions taken by the government, that I may even be disgusted by such things. That disagreement or even disgust does not sway my belief in its right and need to exist, nor my love for the country.
For me, it means that I support the existence of Israel and recognize it as the Jewish Homeland, but it doesn't mean I agree with all of its policies or actions just as I don't always agree with the United States.
Supporting the right of the Jewish people to national self-determination in their ancestral homeland. Today that means supporting the existence of the State of Israel, but not necessarily the politics of the government of Israel.
Supporting Israel's right to exist. Being committed to learning and engaging in difficult conversations around Israel.
It means encouraging visits to Israel, making Aliyah to Israel, developing a relationship with the Land/People/State of Israel. For American Jews, it means supporting Israel financially and through the political process of strengthening ties between the US and Israel.
Being Pro-Israel means that you are an advocate for the State of Israel and its peoples, but I think this term has taken on right leaning connotations in the United States and often aligns with Hasbara efforts.
A devotion to Israel that is unflinching, even when it is time to be critical of Israel, as she is not perfect. Also, teaching Ahavat Zion with the understanding that Israel is very complicated is key. I want shy away from the challenging questions, but admit there is often more than one right answer.

I believe that Israel should exist. I believe that we have a right to the Jewish homeland that is Israel. I support and defend Israel as a country but not necessarily always politically.
Feeling a positive connection to the land and people of Israel. Supporting the continued existence of a Jewish and democratic state in the land of Israel.
1. Caring about Israel as a core element of one's identity over all 2. elevated to the top tier of one's Jewish identity.
Believing in the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state.
It doesn't mean much. It's a professional requirement, but my personal relationship is limited.
Believing in and acting on the importance of supporting Israel and the Israeli people from abroad. For me it involves being a Zionist, and a supporter of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish/democratic state.
It means supporting Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and Democratic state.
Pro-Israel means having a state for the Jewish people; however, it also means embodying my Jewish values of kindness and equality. Therefore, democracy is essential in a Jewish homeland.
Being pro-Israel means that I believe Israel has a right to exist as a homeland for Jewish people, but not only for Jewish people. Being pro-Israel means that when I criticize the Israeli government or actions of the IDF, it is done with love and respect for a place that I care for deeply.
Supporting the creation and consolidation of a Jewish state that is dedicated to ensuring safety to every Jew in the world.
Supporting Israel but also making sure she does better and becomes a better neighbour, a better example to the world.
Being pro-Israel means supporting Israel's right to exist, providing communal, physical, and financial support when possible, celebrating Israeli successes, and being constructively critical when the Israeli government is not living up to its ideals.
Being pro-Israel means acknowledging that the Jews have historical and religious ties to the land of Israel, and have a right to establish a home there for themselves. At the same time, it means respecting the history and ties that other people have to that land as well, and so it also means a responsibility to ensure safe living for everyone in the region and advocating for Jews and non-Jews alike.
Accept, respect and support Israel's right to exist.
1. Supporting decisions made by the Israeli govt, respecting that I am not there under the gun
2. Respecting our common heritage and Israel as keeper of that heritage.
3. Enjoying the cultural and social smorgasbord that is the current Israeli society

Supporting the existence of a Jewish and Democratic state. This includes working to make Israel better.
It means believing that Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state. It means supporting Israel and standing up for it.
It means believing in the right of Jewish self-determination and statehood in the territorial region to which Jews can trace an ancestral homeland, irrespective of political views on governance.
Being in favor of the existence of a Jewish state in the land of Israel. Supporting the existence of that state through political, social, economic, means.
I believe Israel has a right to exist and I strive to have Israel represent a certain set of values
Supporting the right of the Jewish people to Jewish sovereignty in Palestine-Israel
Supporting the State of Israel in its right to exist and ensuring the welfare of its citizens.
That I support THE JEWISH PEOPLE's right to self-determination and that while I may disagree with things happening Israel's existence is important to me
Israel is a fulfillment of the ancient dream of the Jewish people. It should be a light upon the nations. I have strong ties there and visit often.
Ensuring the survival of the Jewish people even though for the most part I have always felt comfortable in America. More recently I have felt some discomfort but know that because of Israel there is deep support in this country from the evangelic Christians although I'm conscience that their reasons are different than mine.
Israel has the unequivocal right to exist in safety and security. I will do all I can to advocate and fight for this.
Going to Israel. Advocating for Israel on key issues (unless I disagree on a particular now) and supporting Israeli organizations. Instilling a love for Israel in next later generations.
Support Israel's right to exist
Anti-Israel equals anti-Semitic
Pro Zionist, Anti BDS, Supportive of Israel's right to exist, defend its people and borders as the Jewish State.
Actively (being involved) in support supporting state of Israel and being active in Israel connections
While Israel is not perfect, it is imperative that we support Israel in all facets. Socially, emotionally, politically and financially (not just donations but with investments)
Supporting Israel publicly, financially and visiting

Prioritizing the safety & security of the state and its people.
A love of Israel, a belief the state has the right to exist.
Supporting and promoting Israel- Canada relations and peoples
Pro-Israel means: a. that your views give value to Israel's best interests b. you strongly support the right of an Israeli Jewish state to exist in the context of it being the only Jewish state in the world c. Adopting into your life a special connection that differentiates between - for e.g. - "I'm pro Taiwan vs China" and "I'm pro-Israel". It's like family - you can disagree - but still be pro.
Loving the land/people/state of Israel. Enjoying being there, participating in the cultural, religious, civil life there. Caring about what happens to all those who live there.
I believe in the existence of this state as and will advocate for it everywhere.
Be knowledgeable about the history of the Jewish people and the state of Israel. be able to voice pro-Israel voice based on knowledge and facts
Supporting the Jewish nation state of Israel
Understanding the legitimacy of the Jewish homeland; advocating for Israel's right to exist and defend itself.
Supporting while questioning Israel's policies
Supporting the existence and prosperity of the state of Israel.
Standing up for the State of Israel without apologizing for the government's actions
Recognizing the symbiotic relationship between Israel & the Diaspora
Being pro-Israel to me means supporting the idea that the Jewish people have a right to a homeland. It means not necessarily agreeing with everything the government does, but working towards the goal of peace and equity.
Knowing that the Jewish people have a right to self-determination in the State of Israel
Being pro Jewish, pro freedom of speech, human rights, freedom of religion, healing the world.
Historical identity.
Concern with issues like settlements and need for religious/state divide.
Standing firmly and proudly with Israel. It's the only democracy in the area AND the only really safe haven in the world for U.S. Jews.
Being supportive of Israel and performing actions such as volunteering, informing friends, visiting Israel or giving to show support.
I support Israel as the homeland and state of the Jewish people. I relate to Jews around the world. I do not have to agree with Israel's politics and have limited political rights there as a non-citizen.

To love the people and the land and defend the Jewish state from enemies
Supporting Israel as the State of the Jewish People. Might not agree with politicians always but Jews need a state
Supporting Israel - its security, its economy, and its people.
Recognizing that Greater Israel is our Homeland and we are living on borrowed time outside Israel. A sincere love and concern for our Homeland in every way possible including educating our fellow Jews in the Diaspora that Israel should be as important to them as eating and breathing.
Israel has a right to exist.
Believing in Israel's right to exist in peace.
Being pro-Israel means that you support the state of Israel entirely and crave for the success of the state as well as always supporting the existence of Israel no matter what
Supporting the safety, security and vitality of Israel as world's only Jewish state.
Supporting the Jewish state, the right of Israel to exist, supporting Israelis
Recognizing and securing the connection between the Jewish people and our ancestral homeland.
Knowledgeable about Israel, concerned about Israel, making it part of your family life with visits etc. supportive of Israel though not necessarily all its activities. Concern about its citizens
Being a Zionist who embraces Israel's promise of democracy and equality for all Jews and other citizens within its borders
Peoplehood, shared values, common destiny
Unequivocally supporting the idea of a Jewish state in our ancestral homeland, publicly supporting the State, and working productively to build cohesion between the State and Diaspora.
Share a strong belief in Israel's right to exist and defend herself.
It means that I support Israel, the people of Israel, and the unity of the Jewish people.
An unwavering and apolitical commitment to the survival and resilience of the Jewish people in their homeland.
An absolute imperative for Jews in the US. A supporter and defender of Israel and its people. It doesn't mean you have to agree with everything she does, but you also shouldn't disagree in the broader world.
That Israel has a right to exist and is the Jewish State
Supporting the people of Israel and advocating for the country
I support Israel as the homeland of Jews.

I support the need for Israel to exist as an independent country. It is a haven for Jews.
I feel very connected. Supporting the state clearly while still being a comfortable critic of policy.
Being pro-Israel, to me, means supporting Israel and its right to exist as a country. It does not always mean supporting their governmental decisions, just as I do not always support/agree with US governmental decisions and politics.
Advocating for Israel, US politics (AIPAC) and globally (AJC)
Advocating for Israel among friends and community
Visiting Israel - I have an apartment in Israel
Support it on the world stage, try to encourage American Jews to support and visit Israel. Interest others in the benefits of supporting Israel
Praying for the welfare of Israel and monitoring it daily; supporting Israel philanthropically and ideologically; visiting as often as possible
It means backing Israel but recognizing Palestinian rights too
Ensuring the safety of the Jewish state, supporting Jews of all positions, praying that Israel lives up to its potential as a Jewish state
To stand up for Israel when it is being held up unfairly in the world. To help educate others and to take pride in Israel. To advocate for Israel politically.
That you care for the welfare of the state of Israel even if you are critical of it.
It means understanding that while all nations are flawed, we live in the time of the actualization of our 2,000-year-old dream to have a state of Israel. It means to help others realistically assess the strengths and difficulties of having a nation
It means supporting the State of Israel, financially, speaking up, reading current issues of Israel, visiting Israel
Believing in the Jewish state; critiquing and educating
Believe in the historical, religious and cultural similarities that bring us together.
Supporting the existence of the State. Working to make Israel more democratic and inclusive. Helping to make Israel a better place by reducing the influence of the Rabbinut.
Standing with Israel but recognizing its many flaws
Loving Israel but working to make her a true beacon to the nations. Also, educating others about the complexity of the issues that many on both the right and left otherwise see and present as black and white.
It means supporting there being a state of Israel. It can sometimes also mean supporting what is done there, decisions made there.

It means supporting Israel, but NOT necessarily supporting Israel's government policies. As diaspora Jews, I believe we have a responsibility to voice our opinions, though Israel has the right to make its own policies
Great question that I struggle with
Affirming right of Jewish people too Jewish homeland in Palestine
Unequivocal support for a Jewish State.
Supporting the existence of a Jewish state of Israel. Believing that Israel is a fundamentally good country, even with all its challenges.
Jewish Survival
Supporting Israel and defending it against its detractor. Send money to help the country.
Being pro-Israel means believing Jewish people have a right to self-determine in their Indigenous land of Israel and supporting their actions to do so.
It is my country even though I have not been able to live there. I am pro-Israel even though I may disagree with the politics of Israel
Believing that the Jewish people have a country and are able to live free of persecution. A Jewish country that is respected by neighbouring countries.
Support Israel on social media and among locals.
Want to keep my and my family's connection with Israel.
Tribal loyalty
Preservation
Heritage, identity
Support the right of Israelis to define their own politics
Advocating for Israel on the global stage.
Identifying with the Jewish homeland (roots)
Jewish identity.
Supporting Israeli government no matter what
I am a voice in my community to advocate for the Jewish state. I am a voice in my community to educate Jews and non-Jews about the connection between Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.
Being supportive of the nation state and recognizing that its imperfections are not a justification for abandoning it
Bringing Israel to the Diaspora.
Having an ongoing relationship with Israel. believing in the Jewish people's right to self-determination
Supporting the values of the country and of the Jewish people.
Stand up for Israel

Maintaining the viability of the STATE economically, politically and culturally. Assuring the continuity of the State as a Jewish nation.
It means supporting the decisions Israelis make in the governance of Israel. It means defending Israel's rights to peacefully exist and to insist that Israel be treated as all other countries are.
It means supporting the state as a haven for Jews, even if you don't always agree with its politics or political actions.
Being pro-Israel means that Israel is accepted as a sovereign nation and is not subjected to double standards.
Support of the is real as a Jewish state
It means supporting the notion of a Jewish State but not necessarily supporting the government at all times.
Stand for existence of the State if Israel and its people
Being unconditionally supportive of Israel even if you don't always agree with the Israeli government's policies. Coming to Israel's defense in a world that is largely hostile to it.
Whether or not I agree with every Israeli policy, Israel is a legitimate state with an unquestionable right to exist. The existence of a Jewish state provides me with security and confidence to live proudly and openly as a Jew.
Supporting the government and the State of Israel, even when I don't necessarily agree with it. Advocating for it politically.
You believe in Israel's right to exist.
You believe that you can be pro-Israel and anti-specific government policies of the state. You believe that you must advocate for the rights of Israel as a legitimate state within the community of nations
Ensuring a homeland for the Jewish people. However it does not mean blind support for everything The Israeli government does
Supporting Israel financially and politically and being a strong Zionist
Israel is the Jewish Homeland. Israel has the right to exist safely and securely, and I actively support that right. I also engage with Israelis to improve life for all citizens.
Supporting the need for a Jewish homeland for the Jewish people. Ensuring Israel is both Democratic and Jewish. Israel's values of social justice align with mine.
Having solidarity with the Jewish state
Actualizing Jewish values and religious tenets
Pride in the accomplishments and independence of the Jewish state

Being pro-Israel mean supporting a Jewish democratic state in the land of Israel. It means supporting the existence and legitimacy of the county. However, it is not “blind” acceptance of everything the government does.
Supporting Israel, visiting Israel, standing with Israel, connecting with the people of Israel, advocating for issues of mutual benefit and importance.
I believe in the existence of Israel for the strength and solidarity of Jews EVERYWHERE. Having a Jewish state is important to me as a North American Jew - it give me safety and rights.
Foremost, doing what I can to support the security of the State of Israel. Beyond that imperative, to be part of cohort of people working to establish mutual understandings on matters of interest to Israel and Jews in the Diaspora.
The right to exist. The dire importance of Israel to diaspora world Jewry. Complicated.
Supporting the people and institutions of Israel, it’s right to exist, and its ability to prosper.
Supporting the existence of a Jewish state
Affirming the right of the Jewish people to create a homeland in Palestine ... now Israel.
To me, it means supporting Israel economically and politically. Being an ally in the many causes that the Israeli government sets forth.
Thinking carefully about which American political leaders I vote for - considering their stance on Israel.
Believing in Israel’s right to exist; generally feeling positive about Israel, even if not always agreeing with policies
Supporting a place where Jews can be safe and practice their religion.

Q10. During the past year, a few leading Democrats distanced themselves from policies of the Government of Israel (then led by Prime Minister Netanyahu). They assert that despite differences over policies, they remain strongly pro-Israel with increased divisions in the Democratic Party. Do you understand or experience their policy differences as reflecting a growing distancing from the State of Israel and its people? Alternatively, do you see the policy differences as differences with government policies? Do you think that Israel-Diaspora relations have shifted in recent years?

- a. Growing distancing from Israel (41.92%)
- b. Policy differences with the Israeli government within the framework of strong support for Israel. (59.28%)

Q11. Would you welcome increased involvement of the State of Israel in preserving the ties of the Jewish people with Israel and in preserving Jewish heritage among the Jews of the Diaspora?

- a. Yes (93.10%)
- b. No (6.90%)

Q12. Do you think the Israeli government should:

- a. Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education (26.44%)
- b. Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps, and educational programs (25.29%)
- c. Both (12.64%)

Q13. If the government of Israel could only do one of the options presented in the previous question, which would you choose? (open question)

Funding
Strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education in collaboration with diaspora educators.
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education.
Partnerships in some ways.
Funding for Jewish experiences and education.
Neither. I am uncomfortable with partisan political Israeli governments shaping Jewish education in the USA; I would rather see the government either investing in affordable tourism or promoting education for Israelis about Jewish life in the USA.
I am really not sure that I am comfortable with the current government of the State of Israel setting education policy or providing funding for Jewish education.
Funding
Education about Jewish life in the Diaspora.
Curriculum--but must be in partnership.
Neither
Jewish schools so that all students can afford Jewish school if they would like to. Cost is prohibitive for many.
Strengthen curriculum

I guess the first. Or they could assist American Jewish educational organizations in generating better vehicles for mifgash.
HOWEVER...the American Jewish community has MUCH to do about reconciling its own educational mishigas (including ensuring an embrace for young people who are staunchly critical of Israel within its institutions). There is very little that the State can or should do until the American Jewish community sorts itself out.
Support schools, camps and educational programs
Education
Content of Jewish education in Israel about the diaspora
Working to strengthen ties with collaborative education/curriculum
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education.
Q 13 is unclear - do you mean in the Diaspora, or in Israel, or both???
Provide funding to schools, camps and educational programs
The first one
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education. (I'd be concerned that funding would come with too many strings attached.)
Provide funding
Funding of educational programs
Funding for schools, camps, etc. We in America should be empowered to develop the appropriate content.
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education
Strengthen Israel education and connection in the diaspora.
Provide funding for Jewish experiences where (grand)parents could see the direct support.
Provide resources to enhance Jewish identity and Jewish peoplehood in the diaspora - but from the diaspora
The Israeli government's version of Judaism and Jewish education comes through a specific lens that is not aligned with much of North American liberal Jewry. Therefore, Israel should not be in the business of producing Jewish educational content but can fund the instruments through which it is carried out.
Provide funding. We do not need a top down curriculum issued by a government. That never ends well.
None
Strengthen Jewish education
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education
Work and strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education.

Strengthening the curriculum. I went to a Jewish school and camp most of my life, and while I had great Israel and Jewish exposure, I felt that the education still was lacking in many key parts, especially in education of Israeli history and discussions about current events in Israel. While exposure to Israel broadly through camps/schools is present, the education itself should be improved.
Strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education (provided that includes experiential and informal education)
I'd like to see Israeli influenced content in American schools and society - better PR!!
I think its controversial for a foreign political body, the government, to sponsor other countries' education on itself. Although there is much misinformation out there about Israel, I fear that Israeli sponsored education may just promote further propaganda, which is just as harmful. If Israel is able to be true and inclusive, then they can strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education. Just giving money is dangerous because being sponsored by Israel will already make people think of an institution to be a certain way.
Provide funding.
N/A
It should provide funding for Jewish schools, camps, and educational programs.
Educate world Jewry better
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education
See above
Neither
Strengthen curriculum
See above
Funding
Content of Jewish education should include the history of the State of Israel, specifically that Jewish people are indigenous to Israel.
Strengthening Jewish education but both in Israel and overseas
Provide funding for Jewish Schools, Camps and Educational Programs.
Funding for camps and educational programs
The chosen option
Strengthen curriculum
Provide funding, especially for programs that would including bringing people to Israel.
Funding for Jewish schools

Content
Work on curriculum
Support with material, not curriculum
Strengthen Jewish education
Strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education
Strengthen curriculum & content
Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps and educational programs
None. They should invest in Hasbara
N/A
Educate non-Israeli Jews
Education
Curriculum of Jewish Education
Shlichim in both directions.
Funding Jewish educational programs
Find ways to engage with young Jewish people abroad in any way shape or form
Strengthen curriculum
Strengthen curriculum - but not religious - must give people cultural and secular ways to connect.
Strengthen Jewish Education
Education!
Content
Provide funding for Jewish schools camps and educational programs
Jewish ed content and curriculum
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education. Israel can provide valuable resources, but a Jewish education funded by Israel will appear to be propaganda to too many people.
Strengthen curriculum
Provide funding and allow opportunities for Israelis and Diaspora Jews to get to know one another
Help build a curriculum that will connect diaspora Jews to Israel.
Funding for infrastructure and visitation to Israel
Support trips to Israel
Strengthen relationships
N/A
Work to strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish education.

The second because people to people connections overcome lots of obstacles.
Strengthen curriculum and content.
Strengthen curriculum
Add to content and curriculum
Jewish education
Strengthen curriculum
Curriculum
Schools, camps, and educational programs
Provide funding for every Jewish young person to visit Israel
Greater presence--physical, online, written--in Jewish education (and synagogues)
Funding for educational programs
I would lean towards funding. My fear is that a curriculum by the far right would be detrimental.
I would choose a third option, a curriculum in both school systems that honors the global existence of Jews, our shared values and our shared history
Funding for Jewish schools, camps, etc.
Fund camps and Jewish education
Education programs
Work to strengthen curriculum and content
Strengthen curriculum to help Israeli students understand the importance of being part of world Jewry
Strengthen curriculum and content of Jewish Education for Israelis in particular
Strengthen content of Jewish education
Funding
A
Investment in pluralistic Jewish identity experiences for Israelis.
#2
work to increase Jewish education
Help small communities in Canada
Funding to make Jewish programming that already exists more accessible to North American Jews
Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps and educational programs. I believe this should also extend to synagogues and the Jewish community (i.e., Kosher food/wine, supplies, having a Rabbi).

The first item
Strengthen Jewish History & Geography in Education
History and culture.
Develop stronger ties to Jews to Diaspora.
Provide funding
Israel should work to facilitate more person to person bridging programs so that North American Jews can feel personally connected to and have a voice in Israeli issues and affairs.
Embolden diaspora Jews with knowledge
Both
Work to strengthen ties to Jewish education.
The first
Funding for camps and educational programs
Education support
Strengthen curriculum and content
I would choose educational programs since many young Jews in today's world are unaware of Israel's history.
Provide funding for Jewish education
Funding
Work to strengthen Jewish education.
Funding. I'd prefer governments to stay out of curriculum content.
Education of children and adults in Jewish history and vulnerability when we divide ourselves into factions.
Strengthen curriculum
Hire an effective communications company!
Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps, and educational programs
Education. The Jewish community here should do the other
None!
To have a dialogue and understand the needs
Increase connection of Israelis and American Jews by teaching more content and creating more experiences.
Camps and educational programs
Work to strengthen the programs
Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps and educational programs

If I were forced to pick, I would select “provide funding for Jewish educational programs.” However I’d have strong reservations about any restrictions or limits placed on the content as a result of funding from the State of Israel
Funding for schools
Funding
Provide funding for Jewish schools, camps and educational programs
I am not sure I feel that is the job of the Israeli government at all.
funding
Jewish education.

Q14. If the State of Israel substantially increases its financial support for Jewish education in the Diaspora (or North America), they might attach a range of conditions to such support as is customary with much funding. Do you believe it would be acceptable if the Government of Israel required institutions that received such support to:

- a. Affirm the legitimacy of the State of Israel (33.33%)
- b. Acknowledge the importance of celebrating Yom Ha’aztmaut (2.92%)
- c. Include education to strengthen the ability of young people to advocate for the State of Israel (16.37%)
- d. Include some educational component about the history of the State of Israel
- e. Affirm the importance of aryvut — responsibility for Jews globally (22.81%)

Q15. What do you think should be the most important aim of Israel-Diaspora ties?

- a. Keeping in touch and maintaining familiarity (as with friends and family) (8.09%)
- b. Strengthening mutual understanding and empathy (28.90%)
- c. Strengthening mutual support and assistance (20.81%)
- d. Strengthening the ability to understand differences and learn from one another (42.20%)

Q16. Do you think that increased meetings between ordinary people from Israel and the Diaspora and activities involving them can enhance Israel-Diaspora ties?

- a. It's nice, but what really matters is cooperation and understanding between leaders (15.88%)
- b. I think that it can make a significant contribution (49.41%)
- c. This is what it is really about: regular Israeli and American Jews forming friendships and social ties of cooperation and solidarity (34.71%)

Q17. What frameworks do you think can usefully promote Israel-Diaspora ties:

- a. Congregational missions to Israel (15.29%)
- b. Curriculum on Jewish peoplehood — in Israel and the Diaspora (21.18%)
- c. Dialogues between senior officials (6.47%)
- d. Spending time (a week or a month) with people you disagree with, for example: The Israeli government/Jewish Agency should facilitate Jewish liberals from J Street spending time in Kiryat Arba or Jews from Boro Park spending a week in Tel Aviv (41.18%)
- e. Spending time with people who seem similar to you and exploring how similar or dissimilar you really are. For example: Jews from the Upper West Side of Manhattan with Israelis from Tel Aviv (15.88%)

**Q18. In 3 sentences, what is the most important/most impactful experience you have had in learning about and connecting with Israel and Israelis
Where? When?**

Long term experiences in Israel - gap year, etc.
My son served for 3 years in the army and living through that helped me understand in a very raw way how to connect to Israelis.
Relationship building, partnership
When I went to Israel as a 15 year old and spent six weeks living in Israel with fellow North Americans and Israelis (madrichim and fellow participants).

My Junior year abroad at Hebrew University was impactful. Lived with Israelis, learned Hebrew, and walked the land. Still am connected with Israeli friends.
For above question #18 I think both are important. Most impactful experiences for me involved social events with Israelis, including non-Jews, AND WITH PALESTINIANS.
Family in Israel
Culture.
Long-term opportunities to study and live in Israel.
I have gone on two school organized trips to Israel and have experienced getting to know many Israelis by working at overnight summer camps. To me, these have been the most influential experiences I have had. Getting to know real people, has made me feel the most connected to Israel as whole.
Growing up in Israel (age 13-18) was an incredible experience that afforded me the opportunity to live in Israel and experience Israel as opposed to hearing about it on the news or in a textbook. Being immersed in the culture changed my life and perspective on Israel as a whole and its integral role in my Jewish identity as a (now) diaspora Jew.
My teen trip to Israel in 1986. I spent time with Israeli teens, built relationships and grew my identity as a Jew and supporter of Israel.
Most impactful was spending time in a regular Israeli neighborhood (Nahalal) with regular people as they were an emerging liberal/spiritual community, having dinner in their home, engaging in conversation about what their every day lives look like, rather than visiting classic touristy sites.
Every opportunity to NOT feel like a tourist but rather a sense of familiarity, comfort, authenticity and realness in Israel (including things that were hard to experience), these have for sure been the most impactful.
I lived in Israel for one year attending Pardes.
Traveling with teens to Israel and seeing the lack of misunderstanding and stereotypes they held at 16 year olds last summer led me to believe we have a lot of work to do in order to connect them to Israel and Israelis.
Studying with Israelis at Hebrew University
Living in Haifa for 6 months, getting to know Israelis, living with Israeli druze, living in Israel during times of peace and times of upheaval.
From really living there in rabbinical school - being on both sides of the fence. Meeting Israelis, Palestinians, Druze, Christians etc.
Being in Israel, talking to real Israelis
Being in Israel and interacting with Israelis on the various organized trip I participated in.

Spending a year learning and living in Israel was certainly the most impactful for me personally. For many of my campers, having an Israeli counselor is the first time they feel personally and meaningfully connected to Israel.
My year spent volunteering with Young Judea Year Course
Living in Israel as a student for a year. Living amongst Israelis, paying bills, seeing the Land, studying, experiencing a world beyond the Jewish “bubbles” of most American metropolitan cities (NYC, DC, etc.).
I currently work in an International Jewish organization where I both work with and serve Israelis. This has been very impactful in terms of understanding deep cultural differences and commonalities. This has been more impactful than living in Israel where I was largely in an Anglo bubble.
Being in Israel and interacting with Israelis both there and here are the most impactful experiences I’ve had.
Spending a year during college learning at Pardes while actually living in an apartment and traveling around Israel without the tours and without any limitations.
Living in Israel for a year.
JTS trip meeting communities in Israel (and beyond) that I had not met before also Qushiyot.
Living in Israel for a year (twice in my lifetime)
I grew up with an Israeli father and an American mother and have spent significant time in both places. The most impactful Israel experiences I’ve had have been personal and have given me a chance to experience Israeli life beyond tourism.
When I lived there for several years.
After my Birthright trip, I participated in a 4-day extension that took our small group of students to East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Meeting with Jewish Israelis, Arab Israelis, and Palestinians, I learned about their personal experiences of the occupation and saw first-hand just a glimpse of the realities of the occupation. The experience inspired me to use my voice as an American Jew to advocate for policies that promote the end of the occupation.
When visiting Israel for the first time, learning about Israeli culture and the rich history of the state of Israel.
As a Taglit North American staff member, strengthening the understanding between mostly unaffiliated American Jews and Israeli soldiers and opening dialogue about the differences of living Jewishly in the US vs Israel for “regular” Jews
Trips to Israel
Conversation with Israelis

Readings about current events in Israeli govt and politics
Shared beliefs and respect of everyone's point of view.
Living in Israel was by far most impactful for me. Since that isn't accessible to all, sustained contact with shlichim and shinshinim is ideal, as well as trips to Israel whenever possible.
In an Israel program I did senior year of high school, we had a week where we went all around the country and talked to people from all different political views, ranging from Haredi Jews in Mea Shearim to anti-settlement leaders in the West Bank. It showed me the true diversity of Israel as well as enhanced the need to fight for representation and equality for all the people in Israel, and strengthened my love for Israel while at the same time showing me where its faults lay and where I should focus my attention as I grow my Israeli advocacy.
I was in Israel on a trip with my summer camp and we heard from a kibbutz founder in the north. Among other things, he spoke of the dire need to maintain Israel for without it, we have nowhere to go.
I am Israeli so... :) But, most impactful experience I had connecting with American Jews and learning from them would be on Columbia Campus, during Hillel and Chabad events, etc.
Spending a semester at Hebrew University/living in Jerusalem.
My most impactful experience was taking a gap year in Israel. I got to experience life in Israel as an American, but try to connect with Israelis through this lens. It allowed for a lot of dialogue and understanding, as well as learning from each other, as the exposure was key.
In Jewish day school, there would be representatives from an array of backgrounds to speak about Israeli life and culture. They would also ask for information about Jewish life in the United States. This all culminated in what was intended to be a class trip to Israel in the last year of elementary education.
Going to Israel and connecting to Israelis as people. Not talking about politics. Being welcomed by them in their homes.
I'm Israeli
Visiting Israel and learning about the true extent the government goes to protecting Jews both inside and outside its borders.
Day spent in west bank including Efrat, meeting with a crazy guy who founded an outpost, meeting a haredi feminist in her home in Bnei Brak I think, and going to Shorashim/Roots village with settler and Palestinian all while on a Berrie fellows trip with Jewish Federation of NNJ-
Visiting Israel over 30 times; meeting with friends and family there
My trips to Israel and the ability to meet with Israelis here in America

Visiting absorption center with Jewish Agency in 2018. Spending time with citizens of Nahariya (our sister city) in 2018.
Multiple visits to our family in Israel. Teaching a U of Tel Aviv in my 20s. Federation missions to Israel
I live in Ten-Aviv NJ (Tenafly NJ). Over 50% of my local friends and neighbors and my kids' friends are Israeli Americans. Celebrating Shabbat and life's cultural moments with them every week 52/52 has helped me learn about and connect with Israel, Israeli culture and shared values and experiences.
Every time I am in Israel I am impacted. From the most mundane moments to the most profound.
When I spent a year living/studying in Israel in 1988
I was part of a fellowship program that brought a cohort of 18 people from all facets of the religious spectrum to Israel. Even though I have been to Israel dozens of times, that experience was the most impactful. I learned from my cohort and hopefully was also able to share some of my thoughts in a productive and constructive manner
I am Israeli so I think this is not really directed to me.
Spending time in Israel in 8th grade and high school, a gap year there, and time there in college. Also, working for FIDF and meeting the soldiers.
Camp Massad in the 70s
Rama in the 70s
Many trips to Israel ever since the 70s
Speaking with young students
N/A
JAFI's Partnership Together program
It actually was when I read the book "Israel" by Noa Tishby. That book really opened my eyes and made me understand more about Israel and the history of Israel.
I spoke with the late Saeb Erkat. He said, you cannot be pro-Israel or pro-Palestine, you are either pro-peace or you're not. This struck a chord for me, for some form of narrative has to be able to integrate both communities. I want to see an end to the conflict in my lifetime.
Being in Israel; connecting with Israelis in the Diaspora; being Jewish.
Being in Israel and spending time with colleagues and professionals
Learning Hebrew and travelling to Israel
Every visit/mission is impactful.
Meeting with leaders of Israeli-Arab NGOs I worked with and learning that they felt like second class citizens. (About five years ago).

Visiting Ethiopian kids in an after school program with our grandkids. They are still in touch with some of them.
In the Golan. The year Jews were evacuated.
Birthright by far, and some instances in growing up and going to overnight camp with Israelis
Spending time with Israelis, both family and friends as well as those I meet on missions and through P2G
Worrying about the days prior to the 6-Day War firmly embedded within me a very pro-Israel attitude
People to people connection - P2G
Going to Israel on missions and traveling with and meeting regular, secular Israelis - like me.
Being in Israel
When I spent a semester in Israel for 5 and a half months to really get a proper Israeli experience
Attending Birthright was the most impactful experience.
Walking the streets of Jerusalem where I saw Jews of all shapes, sizes, colors, and observances.
Living in Israel amongst Israelis and Israeli culture
I currently live in Israel
Being in Israel and having Israelis in my home...shared experiences
Traveling on missions and meeting real people who live in Israel.
Spending time with ordinary Israelis in their home environment, seeing the challenges and benefits of living in the State on a day-to-day basis.
Living in Israel, and studying in Israel (junior year abroad)
Leading a birthright trip and seeing Israel through the eyes of those Jews who are less affiliated than me. Also the appreciation from Poland to Israel with the feeling of success/survival.
I have too many to pick one. The theme among all of them is person to person connections. I am fortunate to have them often through my work with JAFI.
Visiting Israel, walking the land, seeing the diversity.
Being in Israel and meeting with Israelis
Curated, purposeful missions to Israel, as UJA-Federation does
I was married to an Israeli, traveled there frequently, and was on boards of some Israeli NGO's. So, I met and worked with many different Israeli.
Staying on a religious kibbutz and understanding different Israeli views
Being in the country. being on UJA committee. being in Jewish day school.

Working at Hillel and having a Shaliach on staff.
Making lifelong friends through the shlichut program from my camp when I was on staff
Leading Birthright trips, living with an Israeli family for 6 months, being part of AJC
I think to focus on opportunities to explore/share our common backgrounds, our shared religion/our shared rituals
UJA committee work introduced me to Israelis and gave me the opportunity to actually work them
Traveling as a professional to Israel and meeting with heads of civil society
Moriah process
Jewish Planning Missions.
In different contexts - through media/news, meeting different people, hearing new experiences, being in Israel and experiencing it and the issues there firsthand
Experience on UJA Fed committee on Peoplehood
Structured visits - as a teen and later as an adult.
Spending three weeks in Israel when I was in high school participating in the International Bible Contest. I spent time with Israelis my age, was roommates with an Israeli, our "counselors" were Israeli soldiers. This was in 2010, all over Israel
Where they came from before.
In 2008 in Jerusalem I met a group of Israelis and we worked together trying to find way to bring peace.
I can't tease apart my Hebrew elementary school and summer camp experiences, but from both for me it was connecting to Israeli culture through music and actually speaking to Israelis who still lived there and chose to stay (vs those who left)
Missions to Israel
When I moved to a community with a small Jewish community, I befriended Israeli young adults to feel connected to Judaism. Every time I meet Israelis I feel an instant connection.
Visiting Israel
Trips to Israel hands on experience.
There are. Any Jewish vultures in the world. Israeli culture is distinct. As is American, Canadian, Sephardic etc.
Summer camp, kibbutz experience, aliyah program work experience

The most impactful experience I had in connecting with Israelis was when I actually went to Israel in 2019. I got to spend time with my Israeli family and learn from them their values and beliefs. I also believe that joining Hillel in 2019 was a great way to learn about Israel being in the Diaspora.
Time spent in Israel
I'm an Israeli who volunteers as a Hebrew and religious studies teacher in Atlantic Canada.
Yom Ha'azmaut celebration
The visit to Israel has had a long lasting impact on my love and respect for the country. Travelling there has shown the vulnerability (and strength) of Israel.
Being in Israel and learning about the history, land, and its people in 2016/2017.
As a volunteer in the Six Day War. Six of us were sent from Winnipeg. My first time in Israel.
"Gesher Chai" immersive programs where I spent extensive amount of time with regular Israeli kids/families - just hanging out and learning informally from one another
When you are in Israel it's so wonderful to see that the whole country is celebrating your holidays, speaking Hebrew, preparing for Shabbat. I love that the whole country prepares for, and celebrates, Shabbat.
At Hillel as a university student
Learning about Israel through various educational events and speaking with those who are from is real
Developing relationships with Israelis in experiential educational settings in either North America or Israel.
Living in Israel
I connected with many Israelis during a study/travel program right after high school, a junior year abroad at Hebrew University and volunteering twice teaching English in Beit Shaan about 12 and 4 years ago.
My Jewish education; reading Jewish and world history, which demonstrates that Israel, like the nations of eastern Europe in the 1940's and under Communist domination were dispensable to the West when it was expedient.
1973. I was a high school exchange student living on a moshav in Netanya, living with the backdrop of the Yom Kippur war. The Israelis were sanguine (it seemed to me) and carried on with what needed to be done.
Walking the markets in Israel. Visiting non-Jewish sites in Israel. Hearing the stories of non-Jewish Israeli's.
Adler community mission. The Cleve federation took no Jewish and Jewish leaders. I saw Israel from a different perspective
Working on cross-border cooperation programs with Israelis and Jordanians. Spending 3 days with the Commander of Havat HaShomer.

My 11 trips to Israel, hosting a shin shin, a shaliach, supporting soldiers through FIDF, and working professionally for UJA. Being involved in federations overseas connection committee, especially the ISF committee.
Working in the Jewish community in the diaspora and getting a better understanding of life in the diaspora
Visiting Israel and talking to non-government officials about the reality of how folks of different Jewish observance levels interact and how the various religions in Israel co-exist.
Trips to Syria and Israel (1994,97,99); leading tours (many times); first visit to Kotel (1987)
For me education combined with meeting people who illustrated or illuminated the topic. Like learning about the kibbutz movement, and going to a kibbutz. Learning about Arabs history in Israel, and then meeting Arabs who experienced issues.
Welcoming an Israeli young adult into our home (in the US) for the summer who came to us to teach at a summer camp and who left us as family.
One through a program (Wexner Heritage 2005) where we opted in for a Israeli Arab content filled 2 days - both "sides" presenting their views; two, we had a shin-shin living with us in CLE two years ago - and had many of them spending time with us; asking them questions about Israel etc. Completely different experiences as the first didn't involve my kids, where the second one impacted me and my whole family
Missions to Israel. Programs that provide opportunities for direct interaction (vs. show and tell) among participants, particularly those which also highlight what insights the Israeli participants can provide on what we can learn from them.
Visiting Israel with organized programs like Camp Ramah, junior year abroad, Wexner Heritage
Participate in weekly dialogue with an Israeli woman through federation program
Jewish Agency's new program 248 was the most impactful. However we avoided the most pressing issue in Israel-Diaspora relations: the ongoing occupation of Palestine
In Moriah process in the 1980s — intense dialogue with Israelis about important issues. Learned primary divide is not Israel- diaspora but hawk-dove, religious-secular
It was when I was in Israel meeting with Israelis and talking about their lives vs ours here in the states. Even though life was different there were many similarities, and we were able to find a lot of common ground.
Federation mission to Israel and connecting with shlichim
Spending time in our partnership region Beit Shaan
Visiting Israel and making friends there.

Appendix 2

Participant List

Jewish Federation of Cleveland (8.16.2021)

Oren Baratz	Abigail Levin	Debra Rosenthal
Benjamin Becker	Gregg Levine	Stephanie Silverman
Susan Borison	Keith Libman	Scott Simon
Amy Budish	Leah Markowicz	Scott Spiegle
Lydia Frankel	Ari Milgrom	Carla Tricarichi
Barry Guttman	Jonathon Nisenboum	Karen Tucker
Rubin Guttman	Dan Polster	Laura Vexler
Ilanit Kalir	James Ratner	Lori Wald
Deborah Klein	Adam Rosen	Warren Wolfson

Atlantic Jewish Council (8.18.2021)

Sarah Atkins	Victor Goldberg	Leo Mednick
Phil Bloom	Sara Greenblatt	Jack Novack
Jason Brown	Sharon Jacobson	Roni Omessi
Ilana Clyde	Marilyn Kaufman	Ally Pedvis
Eva Cohen	Jasmine Kranat	Ricky Peled
Bayla Dolman	Gali Latariya	Aviva Rubin-Schneider
Alex Elgin	Linda Law	Sondra Rutman
Yulia Elgin	Naomi Levine	Michael Soberman
Jon Goldberg	Julia Lisker	Joanna Wexler
Judith Goldberg	Gaby Macklin	

UJA-Federation of New York (8.24.2021)

Nicole Agus	Alan Gaynor	Barbara Pollard
Don Bernstein	Billie Gold	Heidi Rieger
Rachel Bluth	Jodie Goldberg	Ruth Rothseid
Amy Bressman	Larry Gottlieb	Barbara Salmanson
Rebecca Citron	Evelyn Kenvin	Darci Sheena
Ted Comet	Gil Kulick	Shahla Weiner
Ken Eisman	Alisa Levin	Diane Werner
Michael Foreman	Joel Meyerson	
Danny Frelander	Amy Millard	

Jewish United Fund - Metropolitan Chicago federation (8.25.2021)

Scott Aaron	Eva Lynn Gans	Molly Rupnick
Roberta Abrams	Leo Gans	Elyse Saretsky
Ethan Behling	Dan Goldwin	Sylvie Siegel
Leonard Cole	Brooke Mandrea	Lauren Silverstein
Deborah Covington	Steven Nasatir	Dara Weinberg
Edward Dauber	Elissa Polan	

Jewish Community Council of Victoria (8.30.2021)

Noa Abrahams	Eli Janover	Noa Shaul
Dvir Abramovich	Mark Joel	Dean Sherr
Daniel Aghion	Jean Katzen	Hayley Southwick
Sarah Bendetsky	Lexi Kowal	Andrew Strum
Ellyse Borghi	Jeremy Leibler	Brian Swersky
Michael Borowick	Eddie Lichtig	Simone Szalmuk-Singer
Jaimie Braun	Ellie Moskow	Dan Sztrad
Ronit Chrapot	David Opat	Lily Tamir-Regev
Gabi Crafti	Leon Orbach	Sam Tatarka
Jaime Dorfman	Sam Parasol OAM	Bridgette Venier
Erez Feinberg	Daniel Rabin	Abe Weiszberger
Josh Feldman	Ian Samuel OAM	Joey Wilkinson
Yossi Goldfarb	Ginette Searle	Eden Yadegar
Michael Gruber	John Searle	
Nat Gunn	Helen Shardey	

Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (10.1.2021)

Lucy Adirim	Limor Fridman	Michelle Nifco
Jon Avery	Rabbi Goldman	Shelley Rivkin
Adam Bendov	Bella Haasz	Ezra Shanken
Adam Dobrer	Meggie Karpilovsky	Dafna Silberstein
Geoffrey Druker	Karina Khartanovich	Ted Zacks
If'at Eilon-Heiber	Candace Kwinter	Aluma Zweifler
Katia Fermon	Samantha Levin	Gilad (Surname Unknown)
David Fox	Adin Mauer	

Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey (10.18.2021):

Marin Schloss Carosia	Dustin Hausner	Ron Rosensweig
Noa Fay	Andrew Kent	Rena Donin Schlusssel
Eva Lynn Gans	Yehuda Kohn	Donna Weintraub
Leo Gans	Nathan Lindenbaum	
Lisa Harris Glass	Rabbi Randy Mark	

Columbia/Barnard Hillel (11.21.2021)

Rob Bressman	Jillian Robin Harrison	Liz Lebeaux
Maia Cattan	Branden Holzer	Aidyn Levin
Ann Dachs	Rebecca Faye Isenberg	Ingrid Romero
Jeremy Evan Faust	Mila Jovanović	Yakov Shapiro
Noa Fay	Katya Kantor	Kate Sosland
Eden Halpert	Alissa Lynn Lampert	Eden Yadegar

Onward Mesa Israel Teaching Fellows (10.31.2021)

Rebecca Adda	Ari Fagan	Mia Millard
Adam Ash	Melissa Friedman	Sophie Mittman
Skyler Aspir	Talia Glass	Danielle Neschis
Jessica Bard	Alexa Greenstein	Giselle Nissenbaum
Ronnie Baruch	Marnie Hackman	Katherine O'Neill
Jessica Bell	Rebecca Herman	Alon Peres
Noah Bennett	Hayden Hibner	Shaked Salem
Zev Bennett	Kate Hill	Hannah Salman
Alexandra Berkowitz	Ashleigh Jacobson	Isabel Schack
Bella Bogle	Lauren Jolles	Emily Shapiro
Alexandra Bolot	Ariel Kahn	Anabel Shneider
Zachary Caplan	Sanam Kamran	Morgan Schreiber
Emma Carrol	Michala Katz	Alexandra Spadacenta
Hanna Clark	Lily Klein	Annie Transport
Molly Copley	Sydney Lefton	Sharon Vainshtein
Edward Daniel	Isabel Levine	Liat Wasserman
Allison Doherty	Sam Light	Lexie Weiss
Avital Dubnitzky	Ahuva Mahgereteh	Chelsea Wexler

The Jewish Education Project (1.2.2022)

Danielle Alexander	Marlyn Jaffe	Dena Shaffer
Rabbi Mitch Berkowitz	Saul Kaiserman	Avi Siegel
Melissa Bernstein	Jordyn Kay	Rabbi Jodie Siff
David Bryfman	Dahlia Kronish	Stacey Smalley
Rabbi David Burstein	Rabbi Maura Linzer	Jordan Soffer
Kelly Cohen	Liron Lipinsky	Trisha Swed
Peter Eckstein	Rabbi Joshua Lookstein	Samantha Vinokor-
Rabbi Janice Elster	Reuben Posner	Meinrath
Rabbi Danielle Eskow	Matt Rissien	Mason Voit
Josh Foster	Isaac Saposnik	David Wallach
Adina Frydman	Rabbi Charlie Savenor	Rabbi Rachel Wiesenberg
Jodie Goldberg	Ivy Schreiber	Amanda Winer
Amanda Herring	Michelle Schwartz	
Madi Jackson	Rina Cohen Schwarz	