

# Select Core Priority

*AM ECHAD, LEV ECHAD* — ONE NATION, ONE HEART  
EMBODYING THE JEWISH AGENCY'S COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM AND PEOPLEHOOD

## Executive Summary

The Jewish Agency for Israel proudly works to uphold an Israeli society that openly embraces every Jew. As the organization that founded the Jewish State, we work today to help realize the promise of Israel's Declaration of Independence: ensuring "freedom of religion and conscience along with equality of social and political rights, irrespective of religion, race or gender." We direct our efforts towards maintaining balance among diverse venues of religious expression, and towards resolving critical questions of Jewish identity that persist at every level of society. It is a core priority of the Jewish Agency to support Israel's unique identification as both a Jewish and a democratic state, with the instrumental help of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Events in Beit Shemesh at the end of 2011 highlighted the need to maintain diverse venues of religious expression in Israel, and to cultivate diversity and avoid extremism. The pluralistic values that underlie many Jewish movements in the Diaspora are not as well understood in Israel, and yet their presence in Israel must be assured if the State is truly to be a home for all Jews. **The Jewish Agency is the single largest funder of the full spectrum of religious streams in Israel.** We offer support to a wide variety of Progressive (Reform), Masorti (Conservative), and Modern Orthodox initiatives, including formal and informal educational frameworks, rabbinic training, women's empowerment programs, support of at-risk youth and more. Together with our generous donors across the world, we endeavor to ensure that each of the Jewish people's chosen paths enjoys full representation in the Jewish State.

Many questions regarding 'who is a Jew' remain without resolution in today's Israel. These matters become urgent when immigrants are denied citizenship or when the validity of conversions is challenged, and Israelis are unable to be married as Jews or to lay a loved one to rest in a Jewish cemetery. As part of our effort to help resolve some of these questions, in 2002 the Jewish Agency founded **Nativ**, a pluralistic Jewish and Zionist education program, in partnership with the office of the Prime Minister and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Nativ educates thousands of new immigrant soldiers each year about their Jewish identity and heritage. As the Jewish status of many of these individuals is not recognized by the Chief Rabbinate, Nativ directs eligible graduates to seminars that prepare for conversion through IDF rabbinical courts.

The Jewish Agency is committed to pursuing policies of maximum inclusiveness on the part of the Jewish State. Our **Committee on the Unity of the Jewish People** actively advocates with the Israeli Government on every matter pertaining to Jewish status and citizenship. The Committee brings together Jews of every religious stream under the leadership of our Chair, Natan Sharansky.

Between unrestricted funds and Select Core Priority funding, the Jewish Agency must secure a minimum of **\$3,356,000** to help meet our commitment to Pluralism. Other funding will come from designated funds, fee for service, and commitments from our philanthropic partners to complete the Jewish Agency's \$5.46 million total budget in these areas.