



Israel Movement for Reform
and Progressive Judaism

התנועה הרפורמית יהדות מתקדמת בישראל

Between Liberty and Social Responsibility

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 | 5778/5779

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Graphic Design: Stephanie & Ruti Design

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Executive Summary

In 1973, the World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its headquarters to Jerusalem, establishing an international presence of Progressive Judaism in Zion and uniting some 40 countries worldwide in their quest for renewing Jewish identity. The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism has since flourished from five communities to 50 congregations and regional initiatives nation-wide with hundreds of thousands impacted each year, immigrants and native Israelis alike.

The past twelve months have been a period of tremendous growth. The IMPJ is very proud to count 50 congregations across Israel's length and breadth. Today, we operate programs that span all age groups, cultivate young leadership and engage families and communities. We are proud to provide accessible pluralistic Judaism and lead social change among struggling populations across Israel. And we are incredibly proud to have doubled, in the last five years, the percentage of Israelis who identify with the Reform

Movement and almost tripled the figure of Israelis who have attended a Reform-spirited lifecycle event, including B'nai Mitzvot, egalitarian weddings, Britot and burial ceremonies.

It is truly heartwarming to witness the change that Israeli society is going through. More and more secular and traditional Israelis have opened their eyes and their hearts looking to experience renewal of their Jewish identity. Our innovative programs provide a meaningful and refreshing way to connect to Judaism and spirituality – whether via our young leadership social activism, Jewish holiday activities for young families, lifecycle ceremonies, Bet Midrash Torah study, or Yom Kippur spiritual retreat for young adults.

We have fought for liberal and democratic justice for minority groups, for egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall, for the right to hold services in our congregations in a proper synagogue, and against the Nation State Law. We founded five new congregations in the past year alone,

one each in the Jordan Valley, Givatayim, Bat Yam, the Golan Heights and Ramat HaNegev, enabling thousands of Israeli residents to express their Judaism pluralistically. We have fulfilled the needs of many who wish to practice and celebrate liberal Judaism outside of the monopoly of the Orthodox Rabbinate.

Keren b'Kavod, the center for social and communal activity of the IMPJ, has launched several new and exciting social activism projects, such as our "Meeting Neighbors" program – creating genuine and lasting connections between Arab and Jewish families in neighboring communities, with the objective of reducing animosity and cultivating a real, on-the-ground shared society with our neighbors.

As we grow, we are encouraged by the ongoing positive feedback around us. We are proud of these accomplishments and look forward to continued fruition in the years to come.

A Message from the Chairperson

Reuven Marko

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This annual report of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) summarizes yet another significant period in the life of the Movement. By diligently following our 2020 Strategic Plan, which aimed to establish 20 additional Reform communities by the year 2020, we fulfilled and even exceeded our goals. Among these: the significant increase in the number of communities and congregations of the Movement throughout Israel, increased state funding of our activities, funding diversification, and first and foremost - the central mission that called for significant expansion of the exposure of Israelis to Reform Jewish lifecycle events, that are now impacting 250,000 Israelis!

Exciting as this progress is, we face significant challenges moving forward. As funding from traditional sources continues to decrease, we must secure consistent and ever growing sources of support in order to ensure ongoing growth and prosperity of our vision. Moreover, we must reserve funding in order to enable quick and effective action in response to challenges that come our way.

While issues such as an egalitarian terrace of prayer at the Kotel remain a priority, we must expand our sights to a demand for immediate equality to all Jewish streams in the State of Israel. We can no longer remain patient and silent as the government of Israel surrenders to political pressures and deprives us from the basic rights every Jew in the free world enjoys. It is time for unconditional equality. Equality that will send a message worldwide that Jews from all streams are welcome here; that respects not only their right to citizenship, but the fundamental right to equal treatment by the state of Israel in all of life's facets.

At present, the IMPJ board is developing our 2025 Strategic Plan. We will need to do more: develop and operate innovative content and programming, utilize advanced technologies and retire those programs that are not effective in the world as it operates today. We will be supported by our past accomplishments, we will learn from past errors, and we will continue to enjoy and leverage the partnership, help and support received from you – our wonderful friends and partners.



The commitment of world Jewry to the IMPJ is manifested in many ways. Recently the board of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) unanimously adopted the Jerusalem Program, thereby affirming its commitment to Zionism and the State of Israel. Together with the URJ, ARZA, ARZENU and the WUPJ, we work the corridors of our National Institutions in order to bring the voice of Reform and Progressive Judaism into Israeli discourse. We are now working together towards the next elections of the World Zionist Organization, the largest body representing Jews, through which we can make significant impact. We look forward to your support in this endeavor.

We were delighted to see many of you with us at the last Veida, our 2018 Biennial. It will be joyful to have many more of you attend our next one scheduled for June 5-6, 2020. You will have an opportunity to meet a vibrant Israeli community of Reform Jews that will ignite your imagination with the opportunities this may bring to the Movement at-large. Thank you for your continued support which makes it possible to take all of our dreams and aspirations and molding them into an ever growing and expanding reality.

Yours,



Reuven Marko
Chairperson

A Message from the CEO & President Rabbi Gilad Kariv

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is my pleasure to present to you the 5778-5779 IMPJ Annual Report. There have been many exciting developments in the Israel Reform Movement over the course of the last year, and we are grateful for this opportunity to provide you, our dear friends and partners, with a recap of our activities, a lens into our accomplishments and our shared path forward.

Reform Judaism in Israel is growing in unique patterns within Israeli society. Over the past year, we have seen great strides in Reform Judaism becoming a legitimate expression of Judaism within Israel. In the courts, we are winning cases that prove that treating progressive streams of Judaism in an unequal manner is simply not right. In the regional municipalities, we are seeing more recognition and support for progressive congregations and activities. And in the public sphere, more and more Israelis are vocalizing their affinity with the Reform and Conservative Movements in Israel.

A study conducted by the Jewish Peoplehood Policy Institute (JPPI) found an estimated 13% of Israeli Jews identify with progressive Judaism - this totals 800,000 individuals! Every Reform Rabbi throughout the country has felt this shift in recent years, and we are encouraged by the recognition of our work. Progressive streams of Judaism are becoming increasingly significant factors in Israeli society by providing an unbreakable net to hundreds of thousands of families who are interested in living Israeli Judaism without barriers, and who wish to have an egalitarian and pluralistic connection with Jewish tradition and roots.

Despite the fact that the Movement has entered the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Israelis, who view Reform Judaism as a legitimate expression of their Jewish life and identity, there remain forces in Israeli society that do not embrace our dual commitment to both Jewish and democratic values. We believe that both of these values, working in harmony, are integral to a strong and prosperous State of Israel for all.



This issue is also connected to the growing rift between the State of Israel and the Diaspora, especially following recent events. Together with the URJ, ARZA, ARZENU and the WUPJ, we are at the forefront of a global network of Jewish unity, dedicated to promoting progressive streams of Judaism in Israel and around the world. We thank you all for your friendship and support!

Despite all the political and legal obstacles, we are determined to serve Israeli society, nurture the familiarity of millions of Israelis with Judaism, strengthen the bond between Israel and the Diaspora, and promote gender equality, community life, religious tolerance and social justice. When one way does not work, we change our direction – one foot follows the other, and that foot follows something new.

Next year, we look forward to shifting to an even higher gear, to ramping up our efforts to create equality in Israel for all. Thank you for joining with us on this essential journey.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Adv.
President and CEO

Vision of the Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) for the State of Israel and Israeli Society

The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) is a leading communal, spiritual and social Israeli movement. The Israeli Reform Movement acts to promote the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state according to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, enrich Jewish identity among the vast and diverse Israeli public, and merits to significantly influence religious, educational and public discourse in the State of Israel and in the entire Jewish world.

During the past two decades, a growing sector of Israel's secular and traditional public has begun to view Reform Judaism and other phenomena of Pluralistic Jewish Renewal as an appropriate, attractive, and legitimate channel for expressing their Jewish identity – mostly through celebration of Jewish holidays and significant life-cycle events. This process was the result of a variety of trends, including the dislike of the Orthodox establishment and religious coercion. But most importantly, this comes from the desire of major numbers of the Israeli public to find deeper meaning and opportunity to express their Jewish identity, in a way that fits their modern, liberal world-view. Many public opinion surveys and research studies show that a clear majority of Israel's secular Jewish population and half of Israel's "traditional" population feel a straightforward sense of support and positive attitude towards Reform Judaism. In Israel today, Reform Judaism is viewed as a legitimate expression of Jewish life.

Our Objective

The IMPJ seeks to promote Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic state by nurturing the values of Jewish pluralism, religious tolerance, gender equality and Tikkun Olam. To this end, we work in a wide range of areas, including: education, building and developing of pluralistic Jewish communities, young adult leadership, enriching the contemporary Jewish library, social justice, and activities for immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. Based on values of social justice and Tikkun Olam, the IMPJ works every day to make progressive and pluralistic Judaism accessible to all Israelis.



Leading Israel's Jewish Renaissance Strengthening Israel's Democracy

A GLANCE INTO WHAT WE DO

Enrich Jewish Communities across Israel with Reform & Progressive Jewish Activities

Fifty congregations scattered across Israel from Rosh Pina to Eilat, 28 established over the past decade alone. These congregations serve tens of thousands of Israelis, and approximately 250,000 Israelis are exposed to Progressive Judaism each year. Recent surveys show that 13% of Jews in Israel now identify with Progressive Judaism, and every third Israeli Jew has witnessed a Reform rabbi in action.



Bring Children, Teachers and Parents closer to Reform & Progressive Judaism

We operate in over 50 preschool classes, five elementary schools and two high schools, as well as close to 100 Public Schools with a wide array of curricula. Our programs raise awareness about the different streams of Judaism including pluralistic practices and democratic values, and are approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education. "Yachdav" builds bridges between twinned schools in the US and Israel, with unique interactive programming that establishes meaningful ties with youth in the diaspora.



Engage in Public Action

The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) fights for equality for all sectors of Israeli society, protecting the rights of those most marginalized, including women, new immigrants, victims of racism and minorities. IRAC advances equal status for progressive Jewish streams, opposes gender segregation and exclusions of women, fights racist incitement in the public sphere, defends the rights of converts and immigrants, and promotes freedom of marriage and divorce.



Celebrate Reform & Progressive Judaism through Lifecycle Events

Including: the “Bat Mitzvah Revolution” to encourage girls and women to discover and develop their Jewish identity and take an active role in Jewish communal life; “I’Chaim” – the one-stop Center for Lifecycle Events, with 3,000 Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, 1,500 egalitarian weddings and 500 burial ceremonies annually; the “Hagim” (holiday) website offering pluralistic content and materials for families, accessible to all Israelis via its online platform; and The Beit Din for Conversion of the IMPJ, where each year, 300 people convert to Judaism (recognized by the State of Israel) in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere via the Israeli Council of Progressive Rabbis.



Strengthen Israel’s Society through Tikkun Olam

The IMPJ advances the wellbeing of all Israeli citizens, regardless of race, religion, language, gender or sexual orientation. Led by “Keren b’Kavod,” the center for social and communal activity of the IMPJ, members of Reform congregations, our young leaders and youth movements partake in social action projects such as: co-existence and life-skills courses for minorities, Arab, Ethiopian & Bedouin women, and other struggling sectors of society; the “Meeting Neighbors” program, which connects families of neighboring Arab and Jewish communities; working with foster teens, people with special needs and emergency relief in times of humanitarian crises.



Nurture the Next Generation of Jewish Leaders

“Noar Telem”, the nation-wide network of youth groups, cultivate the future generations of young, liberal, Jewish leaders in Israel. Programs for the network include: the “Havaya” Summer Camps that include “Hamula” program for inclusion of youth with developmental disabilities; the Pre-Army Mechina in Jaffa and Holon; “Mishlachat” youth delegations to overseas URJ camps; the unique post-army “Zirei Kayitz” Young Leadership Seminar program in Emek Yizrael; and “Tlamim”, the IMPJ young adult communities in



Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa.

Reach out to Israel's Russian Speaking Population

With Kehillot "Shirat HaYam", "Shirat HaGan" and "Shirat HaBe'er" for Russian-speaking immigrants, Jewish Identity Seminars for young leaders and families and widespread multi-media exposure in Russian – we enable this unique target population to deepen their connection to Judaism, in a welcoming and communal environment in their native tongue.



Build Global Partnerships

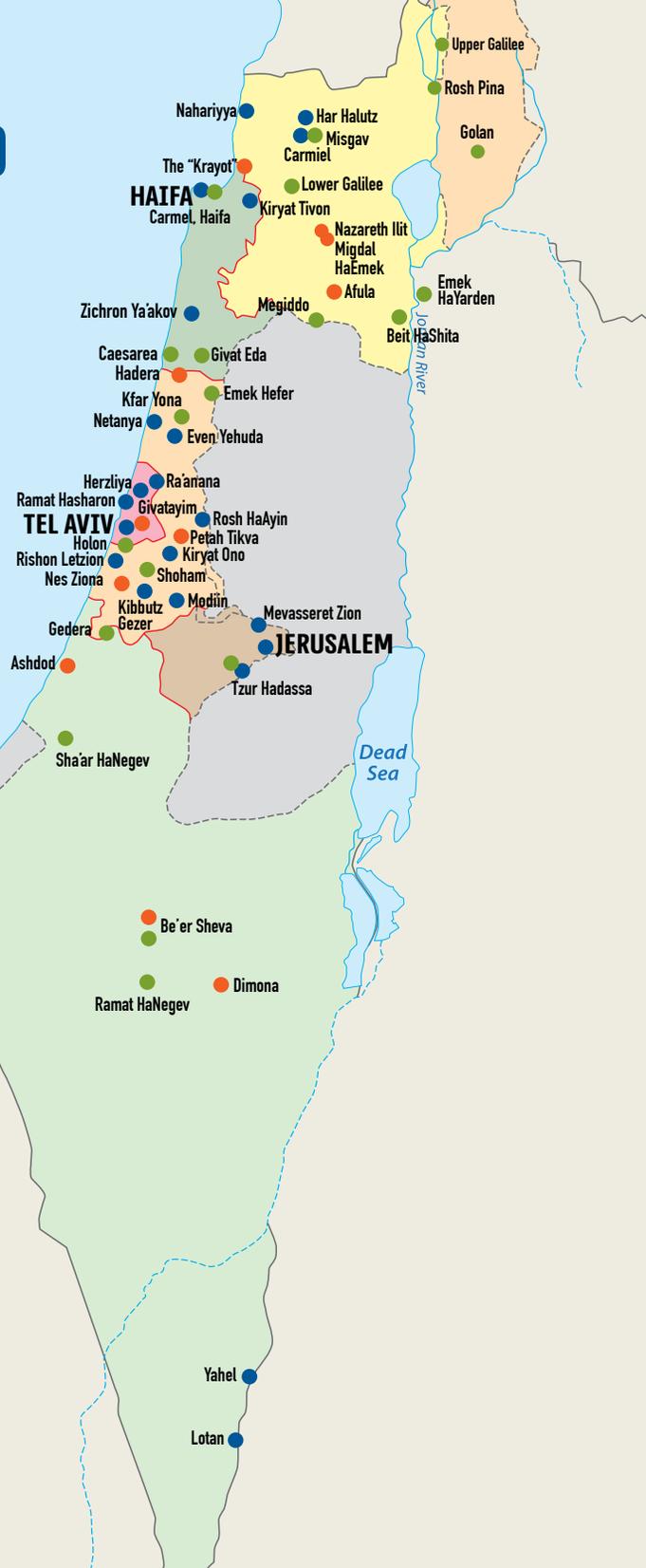
Leading Jewish peoplehood programming including: 100 School to School twinning programs of "Yachdav" and "Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Friends"; "MASA" program for Diaspora Jewish young adults on Kibbutz Lotan, and the "Tikkun Olam" multi-national program at Daniel Centers in Tel Aviv. DOMIM-aLike: Israel-Diaspora relations project has established



We invite you to join us as partners in building the future of pluralistic Jewish society in Israel – a Judaism without barriers!

IMPJ COMMUNITIES AND CONGREGATIONAL CENTERS

- **STAGE 1**
COMMUNITIES AND CENTERS
BUILT PRIOR TO 2010
- **STAGE 2**
COMMUNITIES AND CENTERS
BUILT AS PART OF THE "2020
STRATEGIC PLAN" (2010-TODAY)
- **STAGE 3**
POTENTIAL NEW CENTERS
TO BE BUILT IN THE NEXT 7 YEARS
- "2025 STRATEGIC PLAN"



We are proud to
have reached 50
congregations
and communities
nation-wide!



Israel Movement for Reform
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התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה הקונסרבטיבית בישראל

IMPJ HIGHLIGHTS

"If I am not for me, who is for me; and if I am (only) for myself, what am I. And if not now, when?" (Mishna Avot, 1:14)



In June 2018, the IMPJ celebrated 70 years of Israel's Independence and over six decades of the Reform Movement's presence in Israel at our 23rd Biennial Veida! The theme of this IMPJ Biennial was "Between Liberty and Social Responsibility". The yearning for liberty lies in the heart of the human and Jewish story, beginning with the freedom of choice that was attained by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, to the national aspirations of the people of Israel to be a free people in our land.

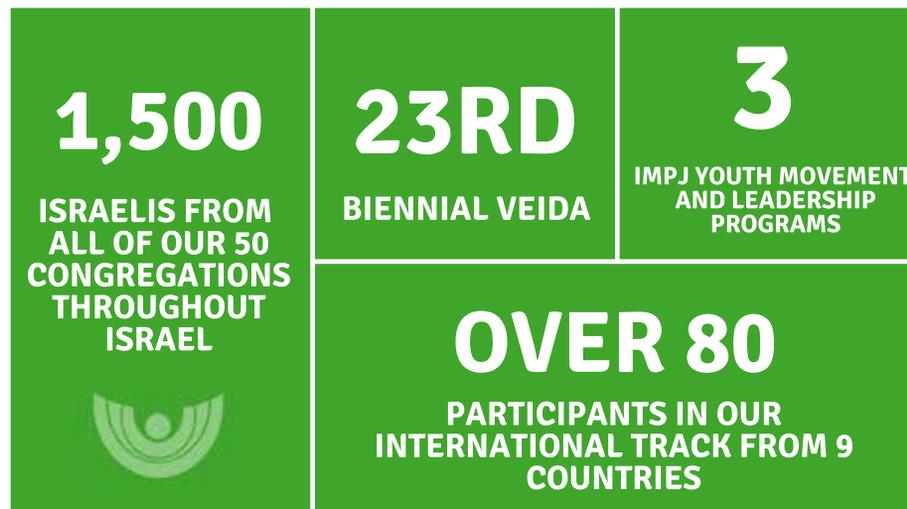
The concept of freedom can also hold the risk of one ignoring their responsibilities to others and to society as a whole. The individualistic society in which we live preaches freedom and liberty as central values. But other values such as solidarity,

equality and justice – which in some cases may be conflicting to the value of freedom – might be pushed to the corner.

This summer, at Shefayim, we completed an incredibly inspiring and successful 23rd IMPJ Biennial Veida. In addition to over 1,500 participants from Reform congregations and communities all over Israel, we also hosted some 100 participants from Australia, South Africa, Germany, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Hungary, the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. There was truly a level of representation,

involvement, and integration that surpassed all of our expectations!

The 23rd Biennial Veida offered a Shabbat weekend full of engagement, learning, music, and prayer with fellow Israeli Reform congregants, leadership, rabbis and friends and partners from around the world. Participants got to meet with some of Israel's leading public figures, enjoy interactive spiritual musical sessions, learn about our communities' current developments and challenges, and discuss Israel-Diaspora relations, female leadership and Jewish pluralism in the modern state of Israel.



We would like to acknowledge the partnership and delegations sent by: ARZENU, ARZA, ARZA Canada, ARZA Australia, the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ), the World Union for Progressive

Judaism (WUPJ), and Women of Reform Judaism. We are grateful to all who participated in our International Track, and we hope that you bring this experience back home to your

communities. This would not be possible without all of your dedication and commitment to Reform and Progressive Judaism in Israel.



The "Bat Mitzvah Revolution"

Empowering Young Women, Lighting the Flame of Judaism

IMPJ HIGHLIGHTS

The "Bat Mitzvah Revolution" accompanies girls on their journey to become young women through the beautiful spiritual ceremony of reading from the Torah at their Bat Mitzvah. The program includes a workshop of several weeks on Jewish identity and social responsibility, empowering these young girls to connect to their Jewish roots and bring out their true potential as they develop into inspiring young adults.

"I was so proud to stand next to my daughter and hear her read from the Torah, as a young woman who takes responsibility for her society and community." - Ma'ayan, from Kehillat "Shoham".

"I think this is something that every girl should have the chance to do. It has really connected me to my Jewish roots!" - Daria, from Kehillat "Birkat Shalom".

We are proud to have pioneered this significant program in Israel, empowering mothers and daughters to connect and learn, experience and inspire.



"I was so proud to stand next to my daughter and hear her read from the Torah, as a young woman who takes responsibility for her society and community."
- Ma'ayan, Kehillat "Shoham"





Learning From the Past, Leading Change for the Future

Combatting the Nation-State Bill

The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) is a leading Jewish force of the IMPJ promoting democracy within Israeli society, and the principal civil and human rights organization addressing issues of religion and state in Israel. As the public and legal arm of the Reform Movement, IRAC advocates for a broadly inclusive Israeli democracy based on the principles of social justice and equality.

Over the past year, IRAC has been at the forefront of the opposition to the so-called Nation-State Bill, which would limit the rights of several groups of Israeli citizens. Contrary to the discriminatory and exclusionist vision of the authors of this law, millions of Israelis want to raise their children in a nation where Hebrew and Arabic are both official languages; in a country where people choose where they want to live without regard to their religion or national identity; and in a society where, in addition to the Jewish festivals, other holidays are also celebrated, in a way that reflects the traditions of the diverse groups in Israeli society, and demonstrates our joint heritage.

Anat Hoffman, IRAC's executive director stated: "IRAC holds that Israel's Jewish character is measured by the extent to which its Jewish citizens honor our ancient commitment to equality, pluralism, and tolerance. If any of the Bible's prophets were alive today, they would be criticized for their incessant preaching that we must do right by the widow, the orphan, and the stranger among us. The real Nation-State bill is Israel's Declaration of Independence, which explicitly and categorically calls for equal rights.

Although the Nation-State bill was eventually passed into law, IRAC's advocacy efforts provided a platform for the general public to resist the law, and ensured that several significant amendments were made that moderated some of the law's more extreme proposals. This is but one example of IRAC acting as a driving force for a democratic and pluralistic Israeli society.

This work also extends to ensuring that all voices are heard within the public discourse—sometimes

literally. This year, IRAC won the first-ever class-action lawsuit brought in Israel because of gender discrimination. IRAC brought the case against Kol Barama, an ultra-Orthodox radio station that refused to hire women or allow them to speak on the air. The court ruled that the station must pay One Million ILS (approximately \$300,000), which will be directed to organizations that work towards the advancement of Orthodox women. Additionally, the station is now obligated to hire women and allow them to speak on the air. This is in addition to other major court victories, including securing building rights for progressive synagogues, and fighting for the rights of victims of discrimination and racism.



The Time Has Come for Equality



2018 has been a landmark year for civil rights in Israel and reaching a greater parity between the religious streams. In a direct response to the tragic anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh and the ongoing discrimination against progressive Jewish streams in Israel, we called for unity & equality for all. The IMPJ and IRAC, in cooperation with the Conservative (Masorti) Movement in Israel, organized an historic conference in the Knesset that brought together members of the

coalition and the opposition as one. The conference, which was attended by nearly 30 Members of Knesset and by dozens of participants, focused on the issue of equality for all streams of Judaism, as well as advancing the goal of formal recognition of the Reform and Conservative Movements by the Israeli government. We will continue to demand less rhetoric and more action when it comes to full equality for Reform and Conservative institutions

and rabbis, and for Progressive Jewish movements to have equal rights, whether at the Kotel, when it comes to governmental allocation of funding, or in egalitarian marriage.

With so much violence and hatred directed at Jews around the world, particularly today, the time has come to stop the infighting and to stand together in solidarity. The time has come for equality for all, particularly within the Jewish state.

Rabbi Gilad Kariv, the president and CEO of the IMPJ, said: "The Israeli government continues to ignore non-Orthodox streams of Judaism, and worse, keeps erroneously claiming that they will disappear in a generation or two. Our job is to remind the public in Israel of the importance of the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel, and to stop the government from ignoring a large sector of the Jewish people."

This conference was just the first step. We will continue to demand that Israel firmly and clearly state that progressive Jews, both in Israel and abroad, are brothers and sisters in all of life's facets.

“Mishlachat” Israeli Youth Delegation to URJ Summer Camps

Developing Jewish-Zionist Identity in the Diaspora

Every year, dozens of Israeli youth attend Jewish Reform summer camps in the USA via IMPJ’s Mishlachat program. Alongside the positive and fun camp experience, the youth are mentored by senior IMPJ staff to help them acclimatize, prepare them for the experience in a different language and far from home, and follow up after their return to Israel. The children develop a sense of Jewish peoplehood in the Diaspora, form long term friendships and deepen their Jewish-Zionist identity.

“The camp really strengthened my Jewish identity, and the friends I made there will stay with me for life!” Roi, aged 15.

“The decision to go to the camp is one of the best and most important decisions I’ve ever made. I’m really glad I decide to go,” Adi, aged 14.

“I prayed more at prayers in the camp than at home, and yet I felt a solid connection to my homeland. A sense of belonging that had never been so strong,” Michal, aged 16.

“I learned to connect with new people, to be independent and organized, and to live together in companionship with others,” Gideon, aged 13.

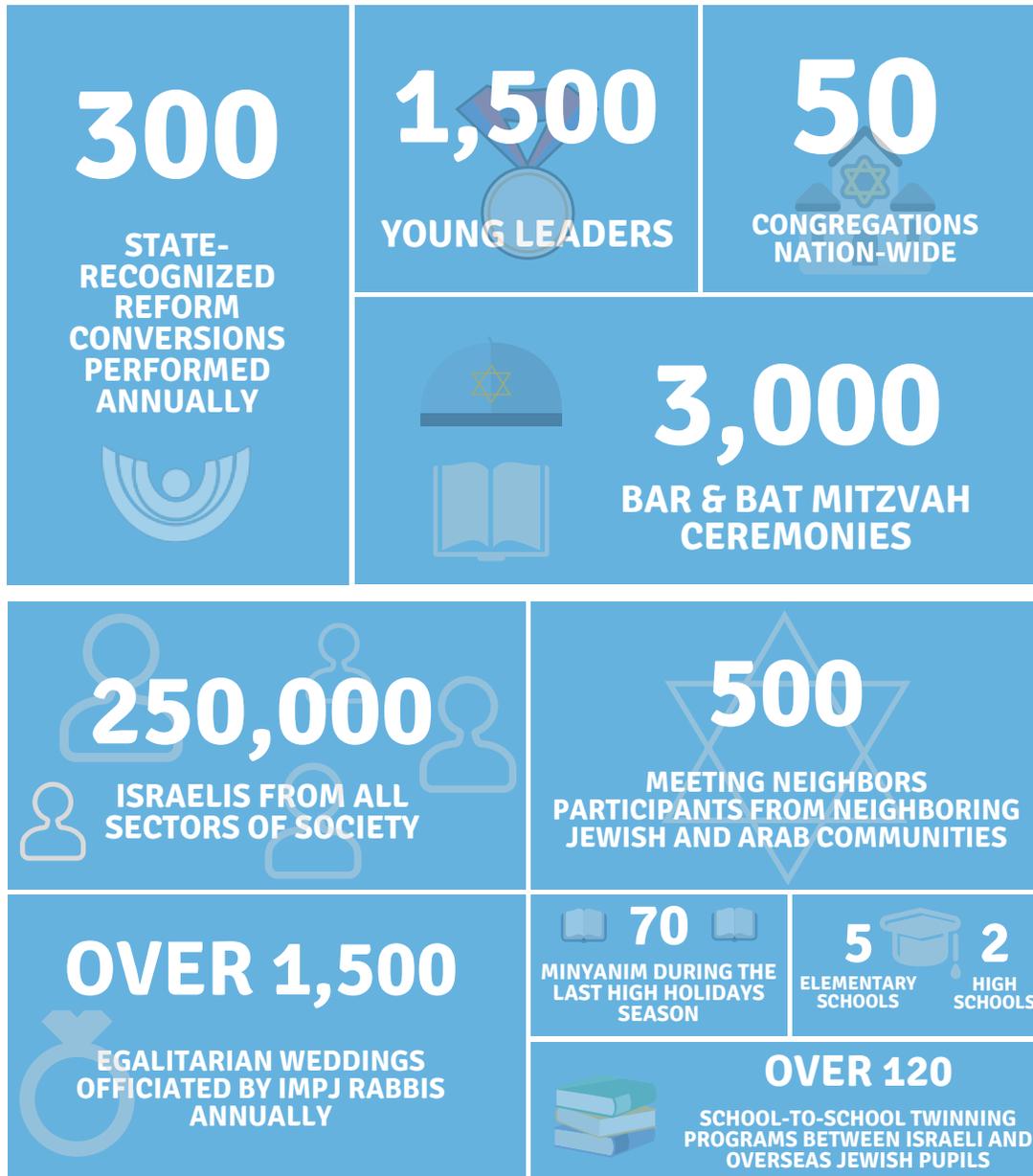
We look forward to many more participants enriching their Jewish identity and making friendships through this fun experience overseas!



“I learned to connect with new people, to be independent and organized, and to live together in companionship with others.”

Gideon, aged 13

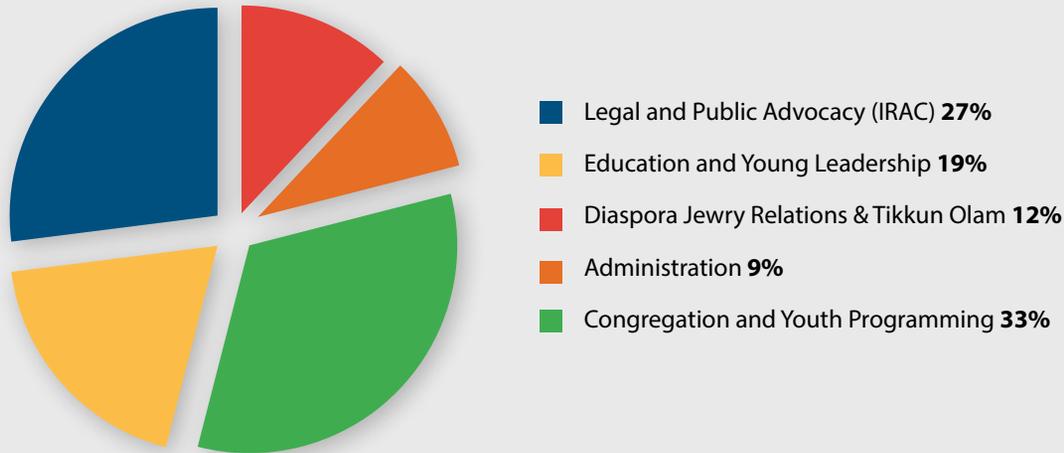
IMPJ in Numbers



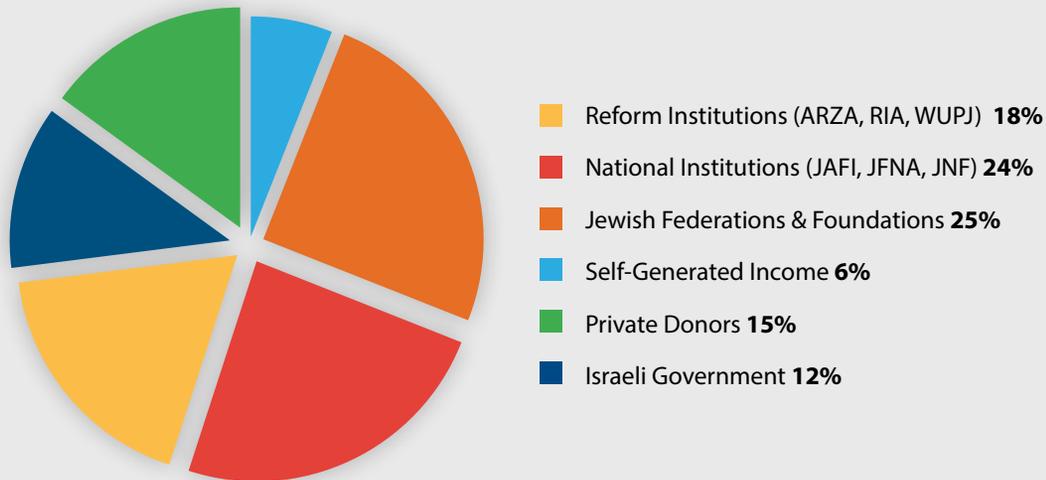
*All figures are based on participation rates in activities, and surveys by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Financial Overview

Expenses



Income



*The IMPJ's annual budget for 2018 is \$8,080,000. This sum does not include the budgets of local congregations and institutions.

Thank You to Our Donors

None of the important work laid out in this report could have been accomplished without the partnership and support of our generous donors. Below is a list of the major donors to the IMPJ and IRAC during the 2018 fiscal year. We thank them, as well as our countless unnamed donors, for their ongoing friendship and support. Together, we continue to create, cultivate and renew Jewish pluralistic life among hundreds of thousands in Israel.

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World Union for Progressive Judaism
The World Zionist Organization



Taken at the IMPJ's 23rd Biennial Veida at Shefayim, June 1-2, 2018. Photo Credit: Avrohom Steinberg





**Israel Movement for Reform
and Progressive Judaism**

התנועה הרפורמית יהדות מתקדמת בישראל

For more information about IMPJ and to find out how you can get involved please contact:

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