



# Getting Israel Back to Work

March 2021

## COVID-19 Unemployed Israelis at Risk of Becoming Entrenched in Poverty

**The COVID-19 pandemic has led Israel to one of the worst employment crises in its history**, during which up to one million Israelis have lost their jobs. Low-income, low-skilled workers have been disproportionately affected, with most of the COVID-19 unemployed (approx. 85%) without post-high school education. It is estimated that 20% unemployed Israelis will not be able to return to their previous jobs and as such are at high risk of becoming Israel's "new poor." This would be devastating for individual workers and families, as for the whole Israeli economy.

As such, JDC has been working tirelessly to innovate new services and adapt existing employment programs which will answer the new needs of the disrupted workforce.

We are ***Getting Israel Back to Work*** by

- **Helping vulnerable jobseekers**, who will be reskilled and (re)placed in quality employment, in partnership with training organizations.
- **Introducing new tech solutions** including a new website for career guidance to help job seekers make better decisions and a new online *career counseling service* for vulnerable older adults who are finding it increasingly hard to find work.
- **Assisting vulnerable low wage workers**, either recently furloughed or at high risk of unemployment who will be upskilled through new training courses in partnership with their current employer.
- **Providing Support for small business owners in the periphery** to help them gain a digital presence and improve the outcomes of their commerce.

All these employment responses are being developed together with the GOI as *pilots*. Once this initial stage is over, the models will be refined and scaled up to a national level- so that everyone can benefit from these services.

In all cases, innovation is paramount. These responses will include-

1. Implementing a new contracting model together with the state to pay participating organizations according to social outcomes, to ensure they help participants to find good jobs with respectable salaries.
2. Emphasis on developing essential skills for the job market, especially digital literacy and life-long learning to build long term resilience in jobseekers.
3. Leading the government to recognize and invest in the retraining of at-risk unskilled workers *as well as* jobseekers and recognizing the essential role of small and medium sized employers in advancing this.

JDC's focus is providing for the most vulnerable jobseekers and as such there is special emphasis given to supporting older adults (aged 45+) who have been having an especially hard finding jobs and reintegrating into the job market over the last 12 months.

[Click here](#) to read an extract from Ma'ariv about our program with employers ("Skill-Up").