

# UPDATE TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Spring 2019



הסוכנות היהודית  
JEWISH AGENCY  
FOR ISRAEL  
ישראל

Every one of us, together.

**Dear Friends,**

We are pleased to send you the Spring 2019 update to the Board of Governors on activities, challenges and ongoing issues.

**With the arrival of spring and in honor of the upcoming Passover holiday, we extend to you our warmest blessings and wish you, your loved ones and the entire Jewish people a happy holiday.**

	
<b>Isaac Herzog</b>	<b>Michael Siegal</b>
Chairman of the Executive	Chairman of the Board

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# Summary of February Board Meetings



Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel

Much discussed at the February Board meetings was the fact that The Jewish Agency is undergoing a **process of change**.

**Chairman of the Board Michael Siegal** and **Chairman of the Executive Isaac Herzog** stressed that the arenas in which we function have changed and The Jewish Agency must evolve accordingly. They said that the organization must examine its narrative, define its challenges and its mission together with its partners, and discuss its course of action moving forward. The Board will be closely involved in the process. At the end of the journey, we hope to be an “upgraded” organization that works effectively on the contemporary world stage and for the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel for years to come.

At the meeting of the Executive, **Professor Maurizio Travaglini** led round-table discussions about developing The Jewish Agency’s narrative and modes of operation. The process will be led by our Director General Amira Ahronoviz and the Head of the Strategic Unit, Dr. Shivi Greenfield.

The February meetings began with **site visits** to Jewish Agency programs. One of the groups visited the Eshkol region and met Jean Berman, an immigrant from Belgium who lives in the Gaza perimeter. Four years ago he was seriously injured by a mortar shell. And more recently an incendiary kite burned his flower-growing business nearly completely. Jean received a grant from The Jewish Agency’s Fund for Victims of Terror. He thanked the donors and said “we want to continue living here, to grow flowers and raise our children.”

At a special **Resolutions Plenary**, the Assembly passed an amendment to the Reconstitution Agreement, to reduce the number of Board meetings to not less than two regular sessions in each calendar year, and added the option to receive Board decisions by email, fax or other similar means of communication.

At the Opening Plenum, the Board adopted a resolution to formally elect **Amira Ahronoviz** as the new Director General and wished her much success in fulfilling her duties.

**Jeff Finkelstein**, President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, addressed the Board about the brutal attack on the Tree of Life synagogue on October 27, when 11 people were killed and seven injured. He spoke about the Federation’s actions in the immediate aftermath of the attack and its cooperation with various parties, including the FBI and Jewish organizations. He also talked about the powerful memorial events and the work of The Jewish Agency’s Fund for Victims of Terror and its partnership with Israel’s Trauma Coalition, through which the community received immediate assistance. He thanked Isaac Herzog, who spent Shabbat with the community the week following the attack.



Isaac Herzog introduced **Sam Grundwerg**, the new **Chair of Keren Hayesod**, noting the significant and long-standing partnership between our two organizations.

**Danny Liwerant, Chair of the Government Relations Committee**, and **Josh Schwarcz, Secretary General and Director of International Relations**, spoke about the importance of the Government Relations Unit in strengthening the ties between The Jewish Agency and the Government of Israel.

Isaac Herzog sent greetings to the **Chief Rabbi of Argentina**, Gabriel Davidovitch, and his wife, who were injured in a violent attack at their home.

The Board considered resolutions on a number of topics, including absorption programs for young adult olim (immigrants to Israel), expediting Aliyah from Ethiopia, a new “Shalom Corps” initiative and Crowd.IL. You may find [here](#) the full text of approved resolutions.



# From the Chairman of the Executive's Office

## Massacre in New Zealand

Following the horrific massacre of Muslims in Christchurch in mid-March, that have generated overwhelming responses from around the world, for the first time since Jews arrived in New Zealand, the synagogues remained locked on Saturday. All the mosques and synagogues were instructed to close their gates on the weekend of the massacre. Chairman Herzog expressed sorrow and solidarity with the Muslim community and announced that we stand in solidarity with the bereaved families and that we are united in fighting violent hatred and racism.

## Visit to Warsaw

Isaac Herzog participated in a conference of European Shlichim in Warsaw, Poland in early March and was incredibly moved by the experience. He wished success to those who stand at the forefront of our activities throughout Europe.

Together with Israel's ambassador to Poland, Anna Azari, Chairman Herzog also visited a site at the Warsaw Ghetto walls where his father, President Chaim Herzog, had hung a memorial plaque commemorating the heroes of the ghetto and its warriors. He said he was profoundly moved by the chance to stand in this city with members of the Jewish community, knowing that we are working to continue the Jewish story.



Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel

## Surrogacy Procedure Support

The Jewish Agency set an important precedent by granting financial loans to employees who decide to search for a pregnancy surrogate overseas. The initiative was led by Chairman Isaac Herzog, who sought to acknowledge the right of each employee to realize his or her dream of starting a family, regardless of the employee's gender identity, sexual orientation or marital status.

In Israel, people who seek to become parents through surrogacy face legal hurdles when it comes to using an Israeli surrogate, and therefore they turn to potential surrogates who live abroad. However, overseas surrogacy is not covered by Israeli health insurance providers, and can cost hundreds of thousands of shekels. With this new policy, The Jewish Agency is seeking to alleviate some of the financial burden of this complex process.

The decision applies to anyone who wishes to have a baby with the assistance of an overseas surrogate, whether the employee is a single man or woman, or part of a gay or heterosexual couple. The loans are approximately 40,000 NIS per employee.





## Visit to Argentina

Chairman Herzog met with Argentina's Minister of the Environment Sergio Bergman and Minister of Education Alejandro Finocchiaro, who agreed to increase cooperation with The Jewish Agency in the fight against anti-Semitism and other bigotry, and to increase Holocaust studies in Argentina.

Chairman Herzog also met with the Chief Rabbi of Argentina, Rabbi Gabriel Davidovitch, following a brutal attack on the rabbi and his wife in their home just a few weeks ago. Rabbi Davidovitch is recovering and said he is moved by the outpouring of well-wishes he is receiving from around the world.



In addition, he held an inspiring meeting with FEJA - the Federation of Presidents and Principals of Jewish Schools throughout Argentina and was thrilled to find an excellent team working together to strengthen Jewish identity and connect Israel to the next generation!

Isaac Herzog visited the ORT Jewish school in Buenos Aires, where he spoke to the children about the escalation in Israel and told them that children their age did not sleep well because of the attacks from Gaza. Herzog asked that together they bless Israel's children for peace and security. Click [here](#) for the exciting welcome video the school children gave to the Chairman.



Together with Israel's ambassador to Argentina, Ilan Stollman, and survivors, Herzog laid a wreath in the place where 27 years ago, the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was destroyed in a deadly terrorist attack. Two years later the building of AMIA - the Jewish community organization - was destroyed in another terror attack.

Isaac Herzog was also honored to inaugurate the renovated building of AMIA in the setting of the Mezuzah.



A highlight of Chairman Herzog's visit was a chance to see the CISSAB World Cup club at the Jewish Sports Center in Buenos Aires and to meet young members of Argentina's vibrant Jewish community.

Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel





### Visit to Brazil

In Rio de Janeiro, in addition to meeting with the current leaders of Brazil's large and highly engaged Jewish community, Chairman Herzog met with counselors from Brazil's active Zionist youth movements and visited a Hillel community center. He also had a memorable experience at a local Jewish school, where he participated in a "Kabbalat Shabbat" ceremony with the children.



Together with Keren Hayesod Chairman Sam Grundweg, Chairman Herzog met with leaders of the Jewish community in Sao Paulo, who are facing great challenges and leading an impressive Zionist community.

It was a special experience for him to read and hear the Book of Esther in the Sephardic synagogue of Beit Yaakov in the name of the Safra family in the heart of Sao Paulo and to hear about Zionism and love of Israel.



At the A.L. Peretz School in Hebraica, the beating heart of the Jewish community in Sao Paulo, the Chair was exposed to the power of Education and Jewish and Zionist identity and met with strong and impressive leadership.

During his visit to Brazil, Isaac Herzog met with the CONIB leadership, the Jewish Confederation of Brazil. During the meeting it was agreed to increase cooperation between the two organizations.

Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel

### Visit to Uruguay

During the visit to Uruguay, a conference was held in which hundreds of senior members of the Zionist youth movements in Uruguay took part. Isaac Herzog, who participated in the conference, said that although the youth wear different shirts, they understood long ago that barriers should be removed and we all should be united.



He visited “Yavneh” School in Montevideo and was very moved by the warm welcome by the children.

Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel



Chairman Herzog wished warm welcome and much success to a wonderful and high quality group of olim coming soon from Montevideo, Uruguay to their new home in the old homeland under the responsibility of the Jewish Agency. We look forward to welcome them here in Israel soon!



### ***Visit to Washington DC***

The Chairman held a meeting with senior members of the Jewish Federation in Washington DC and addressed them.

Michelle Rojas Tal, Head of the Israel Fellows delegation in North America, met with the Federation's senior officials and spoke to them about her personal story, as well as her activities and the activities of the Israel Fellows in general. A major feature of her story was published in La'Isha, a major Israeli journal. Click [here](#) to read it.

### ***Visit to Miami and Palm Beach***

Chairman Isaac Herzog spent two days in Florida. During his visit he attended a Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County event to honor Irwin Levy, an Honorary Member of the Board and father of current Board member, Mark Levy, and was honored to serve as a keynote speaker.

Click [here](#) for an interview with Isaac Herzog on the community TV.



Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel

## From the International Relations Unit

### *Visit of Delegation from Greece and Cyprus*

A distinguished delegation from Greece and Cyprus came to Israel to consult with Jewish Agency leadership about strengthening ties with Diaspora communities. The group was headed by Greek's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Terens Quick, and the Presidential Commissioner for the Cypriot Diaspora, Mr. Photis Photiou. The delegation attended our February Board meetings and also met President Reuven Rivlin at his residence.



Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel

### *Visit of Delegation from Cape Verde*

During their recent visit to Israel to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Cape Verde, Ulisses Correia e Silva, accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications Luis Felliipe Lopes Tavares, met with The Jewish Agency's Deputy Chairman of the Executive, Dr. David Breakstone, and Secretary General Josh Schwarcz. They held a discussion on working with diasporas; most citizens of Cape Verde live outside the country.



Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel

## From the Strategy Unit

### Makom's "Parallel Israeli Election"

Makom, The Jewish Agency's Israel Education Lab, is excited to offer "Parallel Israeli Elections," open to Jews worldwide, along with resources about the Israeli election for the 21st Knesset that will take place April 9.

The Parallel Election is meant to encourage world Jewry to learn about the salient issues in Israel today, to engage them in the elections, and ultimately to strengthen the conversation between Jews around the world and Israelis. Given the vast number of parties, we've put together an [easy-to-read chart of the main parties that are running](#) to help readers evaluate the parties based on important issues, from religious pluralism to international security to Palestinians.

We encourage each of you to [vote in our Parallel Election](#), and to share the chart and voting with your students, friends and family. After April 9, we will share the results at [makomisrael.org](http://makomisrael.org) and on our social media channels.

### Policies for Knesset Election, April 9, 2019

**makom** מקום  
Israel. In Real Life.

Party and Leader	Support a two state solution	Support PM facing indictment continuing in the job	Support Haredi draft bill	Public Transport on Shabbat	Jewish Nation State Law	Support the Iran Deal (JCPOA) to limit nuclear weapons	Support social democratic economic policies	Support Civil Unions not authorized by Rabbanut
Likud Binyamin Netanyahu	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Labor (HaAvodah) Avi Gabbay	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Kachol Lavan (Blue and White) Gantz & Lapid	✓	✗	?	✓	✗	✗	?	✓
Meretz Tamar Zandberg	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Hayamin Hachadash (The New Right) Bennet and Shaked	✗	✓	✓	?	✓	✗	✗	✗
Iggud Miflegot HaYamin (Union of Right Wing Parties) Peretz, Smotrich and Ben-Ari	✗	✓	?	✗	✓	✗	?	✗
Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) Avigdor Lieberman	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Yahadut HaTorah (United Torah Judaism & Shas) Litzman and Deri	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Kulanu (All of Us) Moshe Kahlon	?	✗	✓	?	✓	✗	✓	?
Hadash, Taal, Raam & Balad Ayman Odeh, Ahmad Tibi, Mansour Abbas, Mtanes Shehadeh	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	?



Agree



Disagree



Position not clear

\* These policies are our interpretations based on media reports, and may not reflect the parties' official and changing positions.





## From the Marketing & Communications Unit

### ***“Great to Meet You” Project with Yedioth Ahronoth***

The Jewish Agency has embarked on a joint project with the Yedioth Ahronot media group and their YNet website, called “It’s Good You Came” (“Great to Meet You” in the English version). The project will include a total of 28 articles.

Through Yedioth Ahronot and Ynet, we will reach almost every Israeli home. YNet is the most popular online source of news and other content in the country, with two million unique visitors every day viewing 17 million web pages. The Hebrew print edition of Yedioth is the second most widely read newspaper in Israel.

This project invites native and veteran Israelis to meet new immigrants from a variety of countries, whom we have identified through the Unit for Aliyah and Absorption. The “introductions,” in the form of written profiles, will be published in the print newspaper in Hebrew and on YNet in Hebrew and English. There may also be opportunities to meet in person, such as at gatherings, on trips, at meals, and more. Additionally, we will publish the stories of veteran immigrants who have closed the circles of their immigration journeys and are now contributing to Israeli society through Jewish Agency programs.

The primary goal of this joint project is to raise awareness of Jewish Agency programs that strengthen Israeli society. From our research we know that when Israelis are made aware of the ways The Jewish Agency makes an impact on their own lives and on their communities, they become more favorable toward the organization and our brand.

Of the more than 30,000 new immigrants moved to Israel in 2018, we chose twelve different olim who demonstrate true Israeli spirit: families, couples, singles, young people and retirees. These Israelis are the faces behind the word “Aliyah” — the struggles, the effort and the hopes along the way.

Please read the [first installment of the English version of this project](#). ([Hebrew version](#)) We will keep you informed as the project continues.



**ידיעות אחרונות**



## From the Aliyah, Absorption & Special Operations Unit



Damaged home in Mishmeret.  
Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel

### **Fund for Victims of Terror: Central Israel**

A rocket that launched from Gaza early in the morning of March 25 made a direct hit on a home in Mishmeret, 12 miles north of Tel Aviv, injuring seven people, including two small children, and causing significant property damage. Within hours, the four families who had been affected received thousands of shekels in urgent aid from The Jewish Agency's Fund for Victims of Terror. Jewish Agency representatives visited the families and delivered this financial aid in person, while also conveying messages of solidarity on behalf of diaspora Jewry.

The Fund for Victims of Terror is supported by The Jewish Federations of North America, Keren Hayesod, and other Jewish donors and foundations worldwide. The Fund makes it possible for The Jewish Agency to quickly provide 4,000 NIS to victims for their immediate needs. In addition, within the first two years of an attack, the Fund provides grants of up to 25,000 NIS for long-term recuperation efforts such as psychological care, job retraining and more.

### **Fund for Victims of Terror: Gaza Perimeter**

The Jewish Agency's Fund for Victims of Terror is now providing grants, to be used toward therapy for some 200 children and youth who have been physically or emotionally harmed due to the current security situation in the Gaza perimeter. The funds will be transferred to children treated in Gaza Strip resilience centers managed by the Israeli Trauma Coalition. Our assistance will support activities such as therapeutic horseback riding, hydrotherapy, movement and music therapy, and more.

4,000 NIS per child is being provided thanks to a special donation from Keren Hayesod communities worldwide.

In addition, the Fund for Victims of Terror will run a ten-day summer camp for children aged 6 to 16 who were injured by rocket fire or kite-terror attacks in the Gaza vicinity and southern Israeli communities. Child victims from other parts of the country will join for a shorter time period. This will provide them with a respite from tension and enable them to enjoy a vacation that includes trips and other interesting activities.

## From the Shlichim & Israel Fellows Unit

### Preparing for Israeli Elections

Absentee voting is generally not an option for Israelis living outside the country, but Jewish Agency Shlichim are granted special privilege to vote at their local Israeli embassy or consulate.

To help our Shlichim prepare for the upcoming national elections, this month the Shlichim Unit held Zoom discussions with Shlichim and other leaders around the world, with four goals in mind:

- To explain voting rights and the voting process to Shlichim themselves
- To update and educate them about political activities and campaign issues in Israel right now
- To educate the Shlichim supervisors about Israeli politics
- To share educational content that the Shlichim can use to teach in their communities about the Israeli elections

Over 80 Shlichim in Latin America, North America and Europe took part in an online video conference about the elections with Channel 12 news and Knesset reporter Dafna Liel.

Additionally, we held a briefing with Ynet political commentator Attila Somfalvi, who spoke with supervisors of Shlichim, explaining the Israeli electoral system, the issues at stake in this campaign, the parties running for election, and the parties' viewpoints about diaspora Jewry.

Shlichim from Mexico, Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States are operating a dedicated online exchange platform about the elections to allow for easier sharing of content relating to different Shlichut tracks and countries.

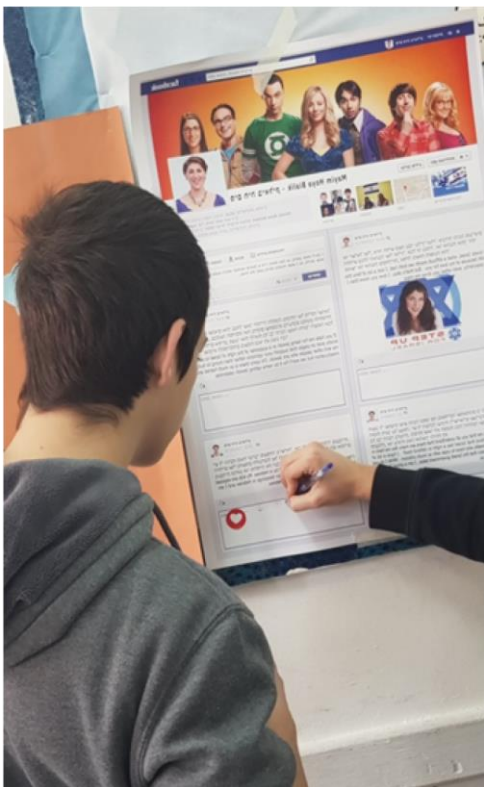
### Returning Shlichim Making an Impact in Schools

One of the Shlichut Alumni Network's projects, "Returning Shlichut to the Classroom," is in progress for its second year. In this program, Shlichim who have returned from long-term and summer positions run modular experiential education activities in elementary and junior high schools across the country. The activities are subsidized by the Ministry of Education. Locations include Ramla, Haifa, Holon, Megido, and more.

The activities, including escape rooms and other games, address topics such as Jewish-Israeli identity, pluralism and relations between Israel and the Jewish diaspora.

The project expands the Returning Shlichim's sphere of impact, exposes children to the world of Shlichut, and expands their views about Israel and the global Jewish family.

"Returning Shlichut to the Classroom." Photos: The Jewish Agency for Israel





## From the Russian-Speaking Jewry Unit

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### *Summer Camp in Kazakhstan*

We are pleased to announce that after a 10-year hiatus, The Jewish Agency is once again holding an overnight summer camp program for children from Kazakhstan.

Most Jews of Kazakhstan lost their ties to their Jewish identity during the 70 years of the Soviet regime. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Jewish life there was revived by Orthodox Jewish organizations which offer limited services – and only to halachic Jews.

This summer, we expect 70 children to enjoy our inspiring 9-day residential camp experience.

### *Digital Innovation for Sunday School Students*

The RSJ Unit is launching a groundbreaking Digital Innovation program throughout the FSU starting at the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year of our Sunday Schools. At the end of February, we held the first training seminar, for 23 teachers and camp counselors, who hailed from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Israel.

The program aims to engage youth in coding, gaming and cross-border teamwork as a conduit for learning Jewish subjects. They will use the online platform EurekaWorld (which incidentally was developed in Israel) to learn coding and Jewish culture.

Our intention is to create a “virtual world” for the study of a variety of Jewish and Israel-related subjects. We are planning to pilot this project with select groups of children from different FSU locations.

Once the basis of this “virtual world” is developed and launched, it will be open to other participants and their siblings, friends, etc. Using a digital platform will allow kids from different communities across the FSU and beyond to connect to each other, creating new networks of Jewish peers.



## From the Partnerships Unit



Top photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel.  
Bottom Photo: Attraction Productions Ltd.

## From the Israel Experiences Unit

### *Mexico Day*

In early March, the Eshkol–Mexico Partnership held its second annual “Mexico Day” in Israel. The day featured Mexican food, South American music (including singer and the musical ensemble “Trio Indio” who came in from Mexico), and a Mexican dance troupe.

Residents from all over Eshkol participated. Additionally the Partnership arranged for transportation from central Israel for immigrants from Spanish-language countries.

Among the guests was Danny Liwerant, a prominent leader of the Mexican Jewish community. It was a wonderful opportunity to thank him for the good work he does for the Partnership and for the State of Israel.

### *Central Galilee–Michigan Partnership Celebrates 25 Years*

The Central Galilee-Michigan Partnership held a week of activities in Israel at the beginning of March to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> year. At the end of a week-long visit by 24 members of Michigan’s Steering Committee and Israel and Overseas Committee, around 200 people attended the closing party, including Israelis from the central Galilee, partners and volunteers. Also in attendance were the young Israelis who will serve next year as Service Year Shlichim (Shinshinim) in Detroit.

Please watch our [new video about the Partnership](#).

### *Record Increase in Masa Participation from Mexico*

The number of participants in Masa Israel Journey who hail from Mexico has already reached 406 this year, compared with 321 the previous year. Of all countries, Mexico now sends the highest percentage of its Jewish community on Masa Israel Journey programs.

### *College Credits for Machon Leadership Training Participants*

The Jewish Agency is cooperating with Hebrew University to offer a new opportunity to the hundreds of young Jews from around the world who undergo leadership development in the Machon Institute on our Kiryat Moriah Campus in Jerusalem. The project, called “In Depth,” engages participants in their chosen subject related to Israeli society. They will choose from two courses: either Music and Cultural Politics in Israel or Media in Israeli Society. Students who successfully complete the course will earn two academic credits from Hebrew University.



## From Community Services Worldwide



Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel

### *Israel Education Seminar*

In February, The Jewish Agency held its three-day Israel Education Seminar at the Yavneh school in Mexico City, in cooperation with several partners from the Jewish community of Mexico. About 100 teachers from 14 schools attended.

The purpose of the seminar is to enrich teachers' understanding of the relationships between Mexican and Central American Jewry, the State of Israel and Israeli society, so that they may bring their knowledge into their classrooms. The seminar also offers opportunities for networking and collaborating.

The seminar was led by Dr. Michael Ben-Shitrit, the Director of the Branco Weiss School in Modiin; Professor Nimrod Aloni, Doctor of Education; Professor Yehuda Bar-Shalom, the Rector of the University of Mexico; and Dr. Amira Bar Shalom.

### *Entrepreneurship Day in Mexico*

For the first time, we held an "Entrepreneurship Day," designed to promote Israel's image as a nation of innovation. The initiative was launched in cooperation with the Hebraica University in Mexico, the Israeli Embassy in Mexico and the Mexican Ministry of Education.

The event promoted future collaborations between the hosting organizations, and was attended by about 500 people from a variety of disciplines and professions. The intention is for Entrepreneurship Day to become an annual event.



Some of the 500 participants in Entrepreneurship Day. Photo: The Jewish Agency for Israel





# June 2019

## Board of Governors Meetings

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The June 2019 Board meetings will take place from Sunday, June 23 through Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem.



הסוכנות היהודית  
JEWISH AGENCY  
FOR ISRAEL ישרא

Every one of us, together.