

# Indicators for successful Israel engagement

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## Introduction

What do we mean by quality Israel education and engagement?

The Makom agenda involves critically questioning many existing assumptions and practices of Israel education and engagement, and challenging partners and communities to think afresh about how they work with Jews young and old to create engagement with Israel that takes into account the dynamic, evolving and complex nature of both Israel and Jewish identity.

But what does this kind of "new" Israel engagement look like? Are we perhaps guilty of the Justice Potter Stewart definition: "I know it when I see it"?

This document begins to respond to this situation. It is a "standards" document for Israel engagement. Before looking at the document, it is important to understand what "standards" and "indicators" are.

A **standard** is an overarching learning outcome within a particular domain of learning, exhibiting a synthesis of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. In other words, a standard describes what a set of knowledge, skills, dispositions and habits that we hope the learner will attain after going through our educational program.

An **indicator** or benchmark is a more specific learning outcome that is a component piece of a particular standard; a discrete piece of skill or knowledge that we expect the learner to attain in the course of meeting the larger standard.

Standards and Indicators are therefore descriptions of concretized vision. Educational vision, which so often remains removed from practice, sitting on a shelf, a poster, or a website, is concretized into actual, measurable, learning outcomes; we can then build our formal or informal curriculum in such a way as to enable our learners to achieve those outcomes.

This document also contains a third kind of thing: brief descriptions of programs, activities, events, lessons, peulot, etc (either real and documented or imagined and potential) that serve as models and exemplars for the kind of thing we are talking about. In other words, these are glimpses at "visions of the possible:" activities that might be created in order to enable learners to achieve particular desired indicators.

## **The four standards of successful Israel Engagement**

### **1. Arts and Culture**

Members of Jewish communities will be proactive consumers of Israeli arts and culture, making myriad and diverse connections between Israeli arts and culture and their own Jewish lives and identity.

### **2. Travel**

Members of Jewish communities will travel to Israel at several stages in their lives, on trips that enable them to experience and converse with the multivocal, enriching, diverse, complex, beautiful, yet sometimes frustrating reality of contemporary Israel.

### **3. Religion**

Members of Jewish communities will infuse their "time-based" local religious experiences, ceremonies and practices with "place-based" references to, dialogues about, and interactions with both ancient and modern Israel.

### **4. Education**

Members of Jewish communities will learn about, converse with, and make personal meaning through engagement with Israel's past and present, through a wide variety of prisms, including (but not limited to) the political, artistic-cultural, social, linguistic, military, and religious.

## **The Standards broken down into Indicators**

In the pages that follow, you will see our initial attempts at building a full standards and indicators document. You will notice that the document is intentionally incomplete at this stage; it is being written collaboratively and the input of groups like yours is critical to its continued development. This document should not be seen as a finished product in any way, shape or form, but rather as an invitation to you, the reader, to think about the issues raised and contribute to its continued development. Many thanks for your thoughts, comments, feedback, and, most importantly, your collaborative writing of further indicators (and even standards).

**Standard 1. Arts and Culture**

**Members of Jewish communities will be proactive consumers of Israeli arts and culture, making myriad and diverse connections between Israeli arts and culture and their own Jewish lives and identity.**

Example indicators	Example programs
<b>Early years</b>	
Sings popular Israeli children's songs.	Hebrew immersion pre-schools; or play Hebrew songs in regular pre-schools.
Watches Rechov Sumsum or similar Israel/Hebrew-oriented children's TV shows.	
<b>Middle School years</b>	
Articulates personal preferences and tastes for specific selections of Israeli art or music.	Invite an Israeli artist to present their work followed by discussion. □
Reads a piece of fiction by an Israeli writer about once a year.	
Has Israeli popular music on his/her ipod.	
<b>High School, College, and Adult years</b>	
Watches an average of 2-3 Israeli movies per year on DVD. □	Play a recent Israeli pop song and explore the cultural, religious, linguistic, political and social nuances embedded within it.
Attends an Israeli arts and culture event at least once a year. □	Mail out an Israeli movie on DVD each year with your Synagogue High Holyday package.
Reads a piece of fiction by an Israeli writer about once a year.	Book clubs, poetry evenings, etc.
	Israeli wine-tasting evening with stations for different vineyard regions; stations address issues from other standards tied to particular regions (e.g. Arab-Israeli co-existence with Galil wine; Samson as Israeli role model with Tabor wine; etc).

## Standard 2. Travel

Members of Jewish communities will travel to Israel at several stages in their lives, on trips that enable them to experience and converse with the multivocal, enriching, diverse, complex, beautiful, yet sometimes frustrating reality of contemporary Israel.

Example indicators	Example programs
<b>Early years</b>	
Visits Israel with family.	Set up a series of mifgashim, either in person or by web, with interesting people from different communities in Israel who talk about their life and answer questions.
Identifies different Israeli communities (e.g. Russian, Ethiopian, Arab, Mizrahi, Ashkenazi).	
Knows characteristics and background of some of the major cities and sites in Israel.	
Hears and processes experience of older peers who have visited Israel.	
<b>Middle School years</b>	
Visits Israel with family or school around Bnei-Mitzvah year.	Mix "touristy" sites with visits to smaller, perhaps thicker and more generative experiences.
Describes, reflects on, posts photos of, etc., sites or places visited on blog, website, Facebook page, Flickr, or similar.	
Has at least a limited vocabulary of Hebrew "get-by" words.	
Gets involved in a social justice project in Israel; follows it on an ongoing basis; directly engages with it on a visit to Israel.	
<b>High School, College, and Adult years</b>	
Visits Israel at least once every 5-10 years during adult life.	Include multiple mifgash components in Israel trips to enable people to meet and dialogue with a variety of Israelis.
Lists five favorite cafes or restaurants in Israel. □	Give B'nei Mitzvah children a \$100 gift certificate to be used towards a future trip to Israel.
Contrasts political, social or cultural opinions held by at least three different Israeli friends/acquaintances.	
Grapples with question of "homeland," its meaning and relation (if any) to Jewish identity.	



### Standard 3. Religion

Members of Jewish communities will infuse their religious experiences, ceremonies and practices with inspirations from, references to, dialogues about, and interactions with both ancient and contemporary Israel.

Example indicators	Example programs
<b>Early years</b>	
When lighting Chanukah candles, listens to Israeli music during gift-unwrapping.	Sing modern and classic Israeli songs at synagogue kids' services.
<b>Middle School years</b>	
Relates concept of freedom on Pesach to an aspect of modern Israel. □	B'nei mitzvah children are given gift of itunes collection of Israeli songs for their ipod, or subscription to Israel-oriented teen magazine, or similar.
<b>High School, College, and Adult years</b>	
Brings print-out of article/essay/op-ed etc from Haaretz/Jerusalem Post/etc to read during quiet moment at shul. □	Before breaking of glass in wedding ceremony, couple announces a cultural, environmental, or historical question about Israel that they have committed to explore during their first year of marriage, to be cemented by an email relating their discoveries that they will send out to guests on their first anniversary.
Infuses the week of Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut with more intense engagement with Israel and Israeli friends.	Shabbat Kiddush group that spends 20 minutes looking at diverse reports from previous week's Israeli press.
Plays Israeli children's music or uses other Israeli resources during baby-naming ceremony.	Rabbis or educators offer study session on modern Hebrew names for expectant parents.
Engages with groups, people, campaigns etc within Israel that fight for liberal Jewish religious rights.	

**Standard 4. Education**

**Members of Jewish communities will learn about, converse with, and make personal meaning through engagement with Israel's past and present, through a wide variety of prisms, including (but not limited to) the political, artistic-cultural, social, linguistic, military, and religious.**

Example indicators	Example programs
<b>Early years</b>	
Knows the names of 5-6 politicians from across the political spectrum.	Mifgash interactions (e.g. pen-pals, school twinning, FaceBook groups, web-based joint curricula)
Interacts with Israeli kids through the internet in a variety of contexts.	Israeli food day.
Compares home religious community to various others in Israel.	
Understands Israeli kids' cultural practices that are different from own (e.g. shorter school day, tiyulim, Bamba).	
Understands Israeli kids' cultural practices that are similar to own (e.g. TV, movies, internet, sports)	
<b>Middle School years</b>	
Offers personal responses to contemporary Israeli dilemmas (e.g. argues for or against civil conversion, peace process questions, environmental issues).	(Day school) semester-long social studies research project on identifying one of Israel's great environmental challenges and the top three currently debated solutions to solve it.
	(Summer camp) Peulah in which shilichim and Americans present a favourite song, relate why it is meaningful to them, and give campers the chance to choose a song that they will be given for their ipod.
	(Congregational school) Google Maps satellite pictures activity investigating issue of permanent borders.
<b>High School, College, and Adult years</b>	
Understands historical events as they are interpreted differently by different Israeli societal groups (e.g. withdrawal from Gaza as perceived by left/right; Moshe Katzav affair as perceived by Ashkenazim/Sephardim).	
Responds to critiques of Israel in a	

knowledgeable and thoughtful way that takes into account multiple Israeli positions.	
Demonstrates development of personal theological language for Israel's place in Jewish identity.	

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