Nitzanim Association: Mission and Structure

Introduction

Nitzanim's activity is directed towards "Jewish renewal." This term holds dual meaning, relating to two types of processes that take place simultaneously and feed each other:

The first is a renewal of the connection Israelis who hail from various approaches form to Jewish tradition, Jewish culture, and the classic Jewish texts, with regard to their knowledge, experiences, feelings, and involvement.

The second consists of a renewal that take place while activists and innovators, both individuals and groups proceed to integrate innovation and tradition in order to forge meaningful contemporary Jewish life in their modern communities, set in an egalitarian and democratic society.

These two processes gain special significance when the context and platform to the many different activities, innovations, and experiences that form a shared Jewish renewal milieu, is the community and the entire local space.

Nitzanim, that views the individual's municipality and community as the institutions that have the greatest practical influence over his or her life in the long term, takes the local authority as its domain, making it and local activists responsible for carrying out the program.

Vision

Cultivating, strengthening, and enriching the Jewish-Israeli domain in local authorities, where communities with a deep commitment to all shades and values of Jewish-Israeli culture are being developed.

Mission

On a municipal level: strengthening Jewish-Israeli education and culture; integrating them into the local agenda.

On a national level: Creating a critical mass of local authorities where the Nitzanim program operates on a long-term basis –

1. **Develop** a network of local authorities where Nitzanim operates.
2. **Create** nationwide impact through awareness of a Jewish-Israeli agenda in the local authorities.

3. **Advise & mentor** professionals and volunteers in the development of a strategic citywide plan.
4. **Acquire**, **manage, pool, and disseminate** knowledge & technologies in shared information.
5. **Rise** awareness and **increase** funding and visibility for Jewish-Israeli cultural diversity in Israel.

Clients

a. Leadership: Policymakers in local authorities and interested parties in the municipalities where Nitzanim operates.
b. Local authorities where Nitzanim does not yet operate, government ministries, policymakers, funders, organizations, researchers, union of Local Authorities, etc.

Key Values

Human equality (respect and acknowledgment to human beings being different), Jewish literacy (study), justice, personal and social responsibility, community life (mutual responsibility), cooperation, democracy, professionalism.

Goals

1. **Developing** sustainable locally based models, running programs that promote diverse Jewish-Israeli culture in the municipal, educational, cultural, and communal systems and public space.
2. **Assisting and advising** local authorities in strengthening and integrating Jewish-Israeli education and culture into the community agenda in its organizational, logistical, fiscal, pedagogical, and legal aspects.
3. **Creating** a network for local authorities, groups, communities, organizations, and professionals to cooperate and dialogue to promote a Jewish-Israeli cultural agenda.
4. **Cultivating and empowering** local leaders (professionals and volunteers) who work to develop, implement, and run activities related to Jewish-Israeli identity in local authorities.
5. **Acquiring** knowledge and information and **conducting** research and evaluation related to Jewish-Israeli culture in local authorities and disseminating that knowledge (both created and collected) to activists in this field.

6. **Increasing** the volume of public and private financial resources, in Israel and abroad, allocated to activities and programs that advance Nitzanim's goals

7. **Enhancing** public awareness and the visibility of Nitzanim's activities and programs, and branding them.

Responsibilities

1. **Creating** optimal conditions for successful local Nitzanim programs.
2. **Ensuring** that local Nitzanim programs meet the criteria and correspond to Nitzanim's goals (quality, indicators for success, personnel profile).
3. **Developing** a discipline (organized knowledge, methods, and tools) for a local model in the field of Jewish-Israeli identity, education, culture, and renewal.
4. **Transferring** knowledge amongst the various local Nitzanim programs.
5. **Fundraising** for Nitzanim and the local programs.
6. **Maintaining** the existence of a professional infrastructure in support of Nitzanim local programs.
7. **Presenting** the need for a Jewish Israeli renewal on the agendas of relevant local and national decision-makers, **ensuring** Nitzanim's growth.

Jurisdiction

1. **Setting** the conditions for becoming a Nitzanim program by defined criteria, as well as conditions for an exit plan.
2. **Determining** professional criteria for staff (e.g., local program coordinators, facilitators).
3. **Defining** basic and uniform criteria for running local Nitzanim programs operation.
4. **Carrying out** external evaluation and oversight of the local Nitzanim programs.
5. **Allocating** designated resources to develop Nitzanim's programs and/or professionalism (e.g., knowledge organization and management, evaluation, programs, developing models, documentation).
6. **Representing** achievements of Nitzanim community programs, **promoting** Nitzanim's goals at various forums.

The local programs are responsible for setting local agenda, budget, programs, priorities, qualified personnel to be hired in accordance with Nitzanim, the activity model best suited to the community, and the values to guide local program's activities.

Tasks

1. Infrastructure

Developing Tools, Training Kits, and Action Principles for Content and Organization

- Developing a community model
- Developing diagnostic tool for local evaluation
- Developing overseeing tool for internal evaluation of a local program
- Developing strategic planning tools
- Developing developmental tool for an annual work plan
- Creating materials and strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Creating programs to train community leaders
- Developing and maintaining partnerships
- Developing survey methods and creating an updated database

2. General

- **Developing** across the board initiatives to apply to all local programs participating in the Nitzanim's network, e.g., peer learning forum, local authority heads conference, activists conference, long term materials drafting
- **Identifying** areas of strength and models for action to be used by all local programs in the Nitzanim communities network and developing them into a "work doctrine"
- **Establishing**, **managing** and **sharing** all knowledge learned and amassed
- **Evaluating**, **measuring**, and **studying** work conducted in the network and the local programs
- **Guiding** local programs through the process of systematic internal monitoring and evaluation
- **Encouraging** additional communities to become significantly involved in Nitzanim's area of activity on a continuing basis
- **Identifying**, **developing**, and **assisting** in raising and pooling funds for maintaining and developing the association's activity
- **Advocating**, **marketing**, **branding**, and PR toward the development of the local programs & association's activity

3. Joining

- **Identifying** potential local authorities suitable for the Nitzanim network

- **Examining** feasibility for community's development & integration of a Jewish-Israeli agenda (using a diagnostic process)
- In light of the association's decision for a municipality to enter the Nitzanim network: **Setting up** a meeting with the local authority's head and officials to draft an understandings to the nature of the program and the conditions the municipality must provide (see "Nitzanim: Characteristics of a Local Model")
- In light Nitzanim's decision not to engage in a given local authority: **sending** a letter to or holding a meeting with the local authority's head and his or her senior representative to explain that decision

4. Planning

- **Guiding** the strategic planning process, including the establishment of a mechanism for implementing the program, such as: appointing a program director, forming a planning staff and steering committee, and establishing the necessary forums
- **Approving** the new program first year and recommending that the AVI CHAI foundation supports it

5. Implementing

- Pedagogical assistance with content and methods
- Ongoing professional guidance for local program director (individual, via peer learning, and group, as necessary)

A. *Content such as*:

1) **Jewish-Israeli Identity** such as transferring relevant materials and knowledge, assisting with methodologies for tailoring content to the local needs, passing along content for activities relating to the Jewish calendar and lifecycle, *batei midrash*, seminars, and study sessions.

2) **Community Development** such as work in a multicultural society, cohesion and belonging, strategies for the reaching of certain audiences, empowering residents and volunteers, and developing personal, organizational, and community capabilities.

3) **Professional and Administrative Leadership Development and Training** such as team management, budgets, annual work plans, resource development, and systematic work with organizations and with local institutions.

4) **Community Leadership Development for Activists and Volunteers** by delegating authority and power, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, and taking responsibility for leading processes.

B. *Logistical Support such as:*
- Helping with preparing a work plan and a mechanism for implementing it
- Helping with developing tools and methods for internal evaluation and oversight within the community
- Helping with submitting of funding applications

C. *Professional Training such as:*
- Training program directors and staff
- Identifying and evaluating needs, such as the program's strengths and weaknesses, helping it address challenges and create appropriate response
- Helping with creating contacts with relevant networks in the areas of expertise
- Participating in local forums thus meeting with senior local leaders as necessary

D. *Legal Assistance such as:*

In accordance with the program's status, power, and authority in the locality; helping submitting funding applications to government ministries

E. *Opportunities such as:*

Identifying and locating economical, PR & marketing, etc., opportunities suitable with the needs of the association and the local program

6. Exiting

Planned Exit from a Program:
- Helping the local programs to anchor themselves to ensure their continued existence as an integral part of the municipality's agenda, for example: identifying and locating economic opportunities for continued funding

Unplanned Exit from a Program:
- In the case a program does not satisfy the association's criteria, a meeting with the local authority head and its officials will be called to explain the decision

7. Expertise
- In Jewish-Israeli identity as a communal agenda
- In training processes (such as leadership development) and organizational learning
- In managing partnerships
- In community building and development; empowering residents; strategic planning; innovation; processes of change
- In profiling organizational culture and behavior
- In modeling a local program in accordance with identified trends and shifts in Israeli society, and attitudes and conceptions in the Jewish world
- In creating a dynamic roadmap of the relevant entities and topics in the local program's activity, steering it in light of recognized opportunities and risks
- In applying and utilizing the wealth of professional tools that is Nitzanim in serving local programs, by tailoring them to the needs of the community through diagnostics, training in methods of data collection, planning, documentation, evaluation, financial management, interaction and cooperation with stakeholders (politicians, donors)
- In locating and recruiting funds and developing financial resources (including donor retention)
- In managing information
- In branding, marketing, and PR