

## **Nitzanim Jewish Israeli Identity: The Characteristics of a Local Municipal Model**

### **The Association's Vision**

A network of local authorities in which Jewish Israeli culture is an essential element of the social and ethical communal fabric, where Municipal commitment & engagement in this field, enables individuals, families, and groups, to express & experience all shades and values of their Jewish Israeli identity, while taking responsibility for molding it in the way they find most appropriate and meaningful.

### **The Local Model's Characteristics**

All local programs in the Nitzanim network share similar principles, on which each municipality designs its own unique program, as a function of its unique profile, desires, needs, abilities, and priorities.

Based on this integrated local perspective, all of the programs in the Nitzanim network relate to residents' lifecycle on an individual, family, community, and society levels, with the intention to affect every aspect of the municipal Jewish Israeli cultural milieu. Thus local leadership, agencies, departments, and institutions dealing with education, culture, leisure, and community life, take responsibility for designing and operating the program, providing the conditions for its long-term existence, while enjoying residents' significant input.

### **Special emphasis is placed on encouraging local activists, volunteers, and leaders initiatives.**

Prior to entering a local authority to its network, Nitzanim requires a thorough examination as to a feasible development of an integrated Jewish Israeli cultural agenda in the community. Using a diagnostic process, Nitzanim present the funders with a detailed recommendation.

### **The Working Principles**

- The program operates with the blessing of the local authority's head, under a defined mandate that he or she sets.
- A local team to include representatives of the local authority institutions, local communities, sectors, initiatives, and residents is assembled, and responsibility is assigned for planning and implementation.
- This team leads a planning process that produce:
  - A Three-year strategic plan
  - An annual work-plan for the first year
  - A define short-term budget framework of one to two years
  - A wide circle of residents at various levels of involvement
- The program has a half-time salaried local coordinator to spark the processes needed for the program's implementation and success in accordance with the products of the planning team. The job (and salary) might change as a function of the program's development.
- The local municipal program is to operate during the initial years based on a matching grant and leveraging at a 1:1 ratio relative to AVI CHAI foundation and the municipality.

- The program is to coordinate, partner, and operate in concert with existing municipal institutions and organizations such as the local authority, community center, schools, youth movements, etc.
- The program is a local and a national partnerships thriving on cooperation.
- The program represents interested parties and a variety of local sectors and subsectors.
- The program operates and develops in accordance with a long-term communal vision showing sustainable change.

## **The components of a viable, growing, sound, program**

### ***1. Spheres of Activity***

The diversity present in Nitzanim's mission can be seen in various spheres of activity, each emphasizing different target groups with different work methods in an ongoing dialogue. Function and form both characterizes each sphere, offering the program leaders new opportunities, while presenting them with new challenges for catering to their unique population.

The three main spheres of activity are:

- a. The formal educational system - K through 12 grade.
- b. The informal educational system - community centers, youth movements and councils, parent and child clinics, local entrepreneurship, etc.)
- c. The public space – shared events that take place in the municipal public space to be experienced by all in the community.

### ***2. Content Areas***

Nitzanim's variety of content and range of activities, all weave a cultural tapestry, manifested in a tolerant society and a diverse communal life.

The four main areas of content are:

- a. **Literacy and Learning** expressed in study as in an open *beit midrash*; teaching and mentoring in the formal, informal, and public educational systems; literacy activities with a cultural and artistic focus, all enriching the local Jewish Israeli aspects and identity.
- b. **Discourse among Groups with Different Conceptions of Judaism in Israeli Society** bring together many cultures and views, creating a dialogue within the common space for joint learning.
- c. **Community Engagement to be Guided by Jewish Values** invites solidarity and altruism; encourages involvement and responsibility; calls for action on behalf of an inclusive community, based on common Jewish values.
- d. **Arrangement of a Meaningful Ceremonial Communal Life Cycle** allows the individual citizen and cultural groups to set many ceremonial practices, expressing Jewish Israeli culture, within the family, the community, and the shared local space, designed for either defined groups in the municipality, or for the entire population.

**All four Content Areas that are valuable in and of themselves are interlinked, drawing from and reflecting on one another.**

### ***3. Development of Local Leadership and Professional Cadre***

As a local program designed for touching on social, cultural, and ethical characteristics of the municipality, a strong emphasis is placed on the development of a viable and active local

leadership as well as strong alliance with the local council. That commitment to the program's vision and goals from the planning stage onward, is an ongoing investment in a widened circles of residents, both volunteers and activists, who take charge: get involved in the program's initiatives, to lead and execute projects, including the training of local professionals in Jewish-Israeli culture and in community development.

#### ***4. Planning, Learning, Oversight, and Evaluation Processes***

The local program is strategically planned, so that all growth and activities associated with the program derived from and guided by that plan. Beginning the first year and advancing in every subsequent year, a detailed work plan is drawn in accordance with the program's vision and goals, defined by the strategically planned process, in light of the coming year's missions and challenges, maintaining a constant updated database of activities and agencies partaking in Jewish Israeli culture in the local authority arena. Scheduling accommodates set times for monitoring and evaluation processes for learning and lesson drawing to apply in further development of the program.

#### ***5. Infrastructure***

In all its stages, the local program is based on a clear organizational infrastructure, which is a prerequisite for achieving its goals, and which is built up in tandem with the program's development. This infrastructure includes:

- A clear and accepted address, for both in house and outside parties, enjoying a mandate and the authority to develop the program as part of the local municipal agenda
- A program steering committee to formulate policy
- Orderly decision-making processes and procedures
- A division of labor and areas of responsibility and expertise
- Forums of professionals and volunteers involved at various levels of the program's activity in charge of planning, coordinating, implementing, and developing it
- Structured activity to expand, deepen, and strengthen partnerships with the municipal institutions

#### ***6. Sustainability***

With an eye towards a long-term future, formal processes create an economic infrastructure for resource development from a variety of funders, ensuring the program's ability to develop and entrench itself independently, even after AVI CHAI foundation's support is no longer in place.

#### ***7. Local Authority Commitment***

From the outset, the program relies on the blessing of the local authority, its head and officers. In every subsequent stage, it continues and develops thanks to established mandate and support of the local municipal council, and presented in a clear and formal manner in the local council's annual work plan and budget.

#### **Indicating a Program's Success**

The program's success will be considered by:

- The presence and visibility of a diverse and vibrant Jewish Israeli life, produced locally and tailored to the unique needs in the community
- The willingness of various municipal institutions to integrate learning and dialogue regarding Jewish Israeli culture into their annual plans
- Quality and variegated programs that are relevant to people whose lifestyles and view of their Jewish Israeli identity may be similar or very different
- The emergence and assimilation of a respectful discourse based on Jewish values among people and groups from different communities, ethnicities, origins, and heritage, in the municipality
- The recruitment of local leaders who are dedicated and committed to the program's vision and goals, and to working for its continued existence
- The strengthening of local infrastructures and traditions that will continue to operate and to flourish even without significant external funding in the future.
- The construction of unique local work models to serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement to other local municipal programs
- Diverse processes and programs to exceed the main work plan, a result of the independently developed initiatives by local activists and leaders
- The residents' developed sense of belonging to the local municipality, Jewish Israel culture, the land of Israel, and to Jewish peoplehood.