



the
iCenter
FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization



Government of Israel
Ministry of International Affairs and Strategy
Ministry of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs
Ministry of Education

First International Dialog on the Israel Educator

7-10 July 2014 Jerusalem 9-12 Tamuz 5774

RATIONALE

Effective Israel education means facilitating exploration into the meaning of Israel in one's own life, with the ultimate hope of seeing more Jews embrace Israel as the great collective Jewish peoplehood project of the 21st century. It involves enabling people to make sense of Israel for themselves in a manner that will foster a personal and enriching relationship with the Jewish state while also motivating them to engage in building the Jewish future. It means facilitating a broader conversation about identity -- asking "who am I?" -- in the context of a conversation about how engaging with Israel in all its complexity helps stretch and complete a young Jew's persona in all its multi-dimensionality.

With growing evidence that fostering attachment to Israel among members of the next generation is a gateway to building Jewish identity, and against the background of concern regarding levels of that connection, the need for this sort of education is urgent. For it to happen, however, the Israel educator needs to be attuned to the importance of these processes and understandings in addition to being able to tell Israel's story in innovative and reflective ways.

To that end, a gathering of Israel educators of diverse backgrounds, working in both formal and informal frameworks, from Israel and around the world, including both veterans in the field and those representing a new generation, is being convened by the World Zionist Organization, the Government of Israel and the iCenter for four days of dialog, encounters, field trips and reflection. They will join in a uniquely structured conversation which will engender critical thinking in regard to:

- a contemporary agenda for Israel / Zionist education
- what it means to train and nurture the effective Israel educator
- how existing programs might be leveraged to train more and better professionals for the field
- the sort of framework for professional support and mentoring that is called for
- what educators in Israel and around the world have to learn from one another and how to facilitate that

The innovation of this gathering is not only that it will be multi-generational and international, but that the participants will consciously and collectively be "modeling a model" - benefiting directly and immediately from the experience themselves while also reflecting on how it might evolve to benefit many more in the future. Its design will reflect the conviction that the best Israel education takes place beyond the four restrictive walls of the traditional classroom, and that a conference on Israel education will be similarly enhanced if it is built on a series of field experiences that will segue into educational moments of genuine introspection and candid deliberation.

At the foundation of this conference is the absolute conviction that meaningful Israel education is the cornerstone of any serious effort to counter the impact of the campaign to delegitimize Israel, in addition to being an essential ingredient in the formation of Jewish identity.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

In addition to providing an experience which will be enriching in and of itself, the objective of the conference is to engage the participants in:

- shaping new models for the professional development of Israel educators, including but not limited to a year-long program for certification of Israel educators working outside Israel, 10-day in-service training seminars in Israel for Israel educators from abroad, and an advanced academic program for Israelis working with Jewish youngsters from around the world
- establishing a professional international association of Israel educators for support and enrichment
- mapping the needs for the development of Israel education curricula and materials

As the conference will be taking place against the background of the **Joint Initiative of the Government of Israel and World Jewry for Securing a Thriving Jewish Future**, due consideration will be given throughout to practical proposals that might be integrated into that undertaking.

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